Our Firm Foundation

The 7th Day Sabbath | Immutable Law of God | The Everlasting Gospel
Non-Immortality of the Soul | Three Angels' Messages | The Sanctuary

Vol. 1, No. 13 November 1986

Needed: A Faith That Works

The Seal of God

Heart Worship, Hero Worship

A Blurred Understanding

Test of Faith

What Greater Deception...? see page 8
"THOU HAST given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." Psalm 60:4

God has given us His banner, with His inscription of truth, to be displayed to all the world.

But let us remember that the Jews neglected a similar opportunity. They fraternized so long with worldlings that their lifestyle was worldly; yet, clothed with hypocrisy, they claimed to be God's people. They paid their tithe and offerings as many today would pay their insurance agent. But they had no power to evangelize the heathen around them, for the worldlings were aware of their hypocrisy. The church of Christ's day was a giant corporation run by a powerful committee, the Sanhedrin. They believed that their decisions were the decisions of God. They were very sincere in these positions of policy and power, and held to them, until the Roman armies sacked Jerusalem, and the sacred temple was burned with not a brick left upon another.

What the Jewish church refused to understand is that they could only be the voice of God on earth when they were obedient to His commission and commands.

God could not be their Leader while they were in apostasy, but He did not leave them in this rebellion. God worked many miracles to help His people understand that He was their Leader, but they rebelled and refused His leadership. For hundreds of years He suffered with them in their captivity and wanderings, but they refused to yield their will to Him. In fact, Bible history shows that there has been apostasy most of the time.

In our 140-year history, Seventh-day Adventists too have witnessed what God will do when we go contrary to His blueprint, His orders. Battle Creek is a prime example of how God intervenes with tragedy to put the church back on track. Today, with nearly 5 million members, with tremendous wealth, our investments with the world exceeding $400 million, our laity and ministry holding high degrees in education, and our institutions of learning and healing encircling the world, our statistics are very encouraging—until we understand that each day 325,000 babies are born. Then we must confess that our programs will never accomplish the finishing of the work until the church is willing to repent of all rebellion and apostasy. When God can see in our hearts a true sorrow for our sin, "a sorrow not to be repented of," (2 Corinthians 7:9, 10) He can individually justify us, the Holy Spirit can then sanctify us, and Pentecost Two will come.

"But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." Selected Messages, Book 1, 366

God is now raising up an army from the grassroots of this church to carry His banner of truth to the world with the power of the loud cry. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12

The power to carry the banner of truth for God in this crisis hour can be experienced only by those who are completely obedient to God's orders in the smallest detail. When they are willing to be made willing to yield their will to God's will, then are they God's children, His leaders, His voice on earth.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:9, 14

Listen to God speak to us in 1986: "Those who feared God were to think for themselves. They were no longer to leave other men to do their thinking. Their minds were no longer to be chained down to erroneous maxims, theories, and doctrines. Ignorance and vice, crime and violence, oppression in high places, must be unveiled. The Light of life had come to this world to shine amid the moral darkness. The gospel would now be proclaimed among the poor, the poorest. Those in humble life would be given opportunity to understand the real qualifications necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God.

"And today men from the lower ranks are to take their place in obeying the command, 'Go forward.' By faith they are to meet difficulties, not daring to yield to the strife and babble of unbelieving tongues. They are to press forward with one degree of success to another, praying always, and exercising that faith which answers prayer...."

"The agencies of God are many! But all those who are willing to work according to God's plan are included in the words, 'Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.' (1 Corinthians 3:9) God's servants are to move so that no spiritual gift shall be lost. Their will is to be held in abeyance, and when God's time comes, the rod will blossom. What form the work will take no one can know, but God's servants are to be minutemen, able to understand the ways and will of their Leader." This Day with God, 31

RON SPEAR—EDITOR
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to give the straight testimony and to present Christ and Him crucified. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the truths that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—THE EDITORS

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Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (1800-2800 words) manuscripts (preferably typewritten) for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We are not in a position to give consideration to longer submissions. When sending material for our consideration, please retain your original manuscript and send us a photo copy. Should you desire advance notice of a decision to publish your article, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Address all editorial correspondence to Managing Editor, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328
The Test of Faith

The time has fully come when darkness is called light, and light is called darkness. [See Isaiah 5:20] We are living in an age when sham liberality is extolled; when those who scatter falsehood, false doctrines, and soul-destroying heresies are received and exalted by society, and the most terrible deeds of iniquity are glossed over and excused on the plea of charity. Even the voices from the pulpits of our land are saying, “It shall be well with the transgressor.” Sin is not dealt with as a thing of fearful consequence, destined to bring inevitable ruin upon those who persist in it. It is not pictured in its abhorrent character before the people of the world. Smooth things are prophesied by false teachers, and the multitudes are resting in their sin, unmindful of the solemn warnings and examples of the Word of God. The time has come when we should “sigh and . . . cry for all the abominations” [Ezekiel 9:4] that are done in the land.

While the law of God is being made void in our world, there is a decided testimony to be borne. The truth is to be presented in its native force and clearness, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. This cannot be done without exciting opposition. Those who refuse to receive the love of the truth will not rest without attempting to retard its progress. They have been turned unto fables, and will unite with the great adversary of souls to bring the message of heaven into contempt.

The apostle Paul warns us that “some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” [1 Timothy 4:1] This is what we may expect. Our greatest trials will come because of that class who have once advocated the truth, but who turn from it to the world, and trample it under their feet in hate and derision. God has a work for His faithful servants to do. The attacks of the enemy must be met with the truth of His Word. Falsehood must be unmasked, its true character must be revealed, and the light of the law of Jehovah must shine forth into the moral darkness of the world. We are to present the claims of His Word. We shall not be held guiltless if we neglect this solemn duty. But while we stand in defense of the truth let us not stand in defense of self, and make a great ado because we are called to bear reproach and misrepresentation. Let us not pity ourselves, but be very jealous for the law of the Most High.

Says the apostle, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” [2 Timothy 4:3, 4] On every side we see men easily led captive by the delusive imaginations of those who make void the Word of God; but when the truth is brought before them, they are filled with impatience and anger. But the exhortation of the apostle to the servant of God is, “Watch
These trials of opposition, and reproach, and even the spotless Lamb of God was tempted in all points like as we are. He bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself.

Every warning for this time must be faithfully delivered; but "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." [2:24, 25] We must cherish carefully the words of our God lest we be contaminated by the deceptive workings of those who have left the faith. We are to resist their spirit and influence with the same weapon our Master used when assailed by the prince of darkness, "It is written." We should learn to use the Word of God skillfully. The exhortation is, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." [2:15] There must be diligent work and earnest prayer and faith to meet the winding error of false teachers and seducers; for "in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." [2 Timothy 3:1-5] These words portray the character of the men the servants of God will have to meet. "False accusers," "despisers of those that are good," will attack those who are faithful to their God in this degenerate age. But the ambassador of Heaven must manifest the spirit that was displayed in the Master. In humility and love he must labor for the salvation of men.

Paul continues concerning those who oppose the work of God, comparing them to the men who made war against the faithful in the time of ancient Israel. He says: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." [2 Timothy 3:16, 17] We know that the time is coming when the folly of warring against God will be revealed. We can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for "nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest." [Luke 8:17] and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels. We are to share in the sufferings of the reformers. It is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." [Romans 15:3] Christ understands our grief. Not one of us is called to bear the cross alone. The suffering Man of Calvary is touched with the feeling of our woes, and as He has suffered being tempted, He is able also to succor them that are in sorrow and trial for His sake. [See Hebrews 2:18] "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." [2 Timothy 3:12-14]

God has provided abundant means for successful warfare with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places; [see Ephesians 6:12] for "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, throughly furnished unto all good works." [2 Timothy 3:16, 17] The Bible is the armor where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breast-plate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hands, the helmet of salvation shine upon our brows, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, be wielded to cut our way through the ranks of our bitter foes. [See Ephesians 6:14-17] We must be ready, at the command of our Captain, to follow where He may lead. We must be doers of His Word, not deceiving our own selves.

If we look to self, and trust in self, we shall surely fall from our steadfastness. The terrible tempest that is gathering will sweep away our sandy foundation, and leave our house a wreck on the shores of time; but the house that is built upon the rock shall stand forever. We must be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." [1 Peter 1:5] The apostle spoke some plain words to his Hebrew brethren that meet the condition of many of those who profess the truth for this time. "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. [They were not quick to discern the things of the Spirit of God.] For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that..."
useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." [Hebrews 5:11-14] It is positively necessary for those who believe the truth, to be making continual advancement, growing up into the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. There is no time for backsliding and indifference. Each one must have a living experience in the things of God. Have root in yourselves. Become grounded in the faith, so that having done all you may stand, with unwavering confidence in God, through the time that will try every man's work and character. Exercise your powers in spiritual things, till you can appreciate the deep things of God's Word, and go on from strength to strength.

There are thousands who claim to have the light of truth who take no steps in advance. They have no living experience, notwithstanding they have had every advantage. They do not know what consecration means. Their devotions are formal and hollow, and there is no depth to their piety. The Word of God offers spiritual liberty and enlightenment to those who seek for it earnestly. Those who accept the

Every word of doubt is carefully nourished by the adversary of souls

promises of God, and act on them with living faith, will have the light of heaven in their lives. They will drink of the fountain of life, and lead others to the waters that have refreshed their own souls. We must have that faith in God that takes Him at

His word. We can have no victory without cloudless confidence; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." [Hebrews 11:6] It is faith that connects us with the power of Heaven, and that brings us the strength for coping with the powers of darkness. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [1 John 5:4] "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." [Romans 10:17] In order to exercise intelligent faith we should study the Word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, communicates a correct knowledge of the character of God and His will concerning us. The duty and the destiny of man are defined in its pages. The conditions on which we may hope for eternal life are explicitly stated, and the doom of those who neglect so great a salvation is foretold in the most forcible language.

Had the Bible been received as the voice of God to man, as the Book of books, as the one infallible rule of faith and practice, we would not have seen the law of Heaven made void, and the swelling tide of iniquity devouring our land.

As men wander away from the truth into skepticism, everything becomes uncertain and unreal. No thorough conviction takes hold of the soul. No faith is exercised in the Scripture as the revelation of God to men. There is nothing authoritative in its commands, nothing terrifying in its warnings, nothing inspiring in its promises. To the skeptic it is meaningless and contradictory.

There are many among us who are not cultivating faith. They have a vacillating experience. They are "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." [James 1:6] Sometimes they seem strong in faith, then a blast of unbelief sweeps over them, and they are filled with gloom and doubt. They make no decided efforts to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, but are taken captive by him at his will. There are others who, when assailed by temptations of unbelief, flee to the Word of God and to earnest prayer, and they are not left to the power of the enemy. The day is coming that will reveal whether we are building on the solid rock or the sliding sand.

If men could realize the blighting influence of doubt upon their minds, if they could but see into the future, they would realize the imperative need of cultivating firm trust in God and implicit confidence in His promises. They would not sow one grain of unbelief; for every single grain blossoms into fruit. Satan is a living, active agent. It is his business to encourage skepticism, and every word of doubt is carefully nourished by the adversary of souls. While men sleep in indifference, suggestions that weaken faith are insinuated into the heart. Influences that confuse the perception of truth are brought to bear upon the life. In every way possible, Satan strives to turn souls from the narrow path that leads to heaven; and because men love darkness they follow the voice of strangers, and reject the call of the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. The plain, authoritative "Thus saith the Lord," is refused for some winding sophistry of error. Infidelity has increased in proportion as men have questioned the Word and requirements of their Maker. They have taken up the work of cheapening character, and lessening faith in the inspiration of the Bible. Men aiming great wisdom have presumed to criticize and cut and cut the words of the living God and have started questions to make shipwreck of the happiness of their fellowmen and to ruin their hopes of heaven. This is a work that is pleasing to the enemy of all righteousness. The arguments that men bring against the Bible are the result of the counsels of the evil one. The door of their minds was opened to the suggestions, and the more they drifted into error, the greater grew their desire to draw other souls into the same channel of darkness.

Many claim to believe the Bible, and their names are enrolled on the church records, who

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are among the most influential agents of Satan. The work they are doing they will not consider an honor to them in the Judgment. It will then be seen that every effort that weakened faith was made at a terrible loss. The tremendous price that must be paid will sink them into everlasting shame and ruin. The only safety is in rejecting instantly every suggestion of unbelief. Do not open your mind to entertain doubts, for even an instant; bid them a decided refusal as they come to you for admission. Fasten the mind upon the promises of God. Talk of them, rejoice in them; and the peace of God will rule in your hearts.

The fruits of doubt are not desirable. Oh! look around you and see what havoc has been wrought by the machinations of the evil one. Error and falsehood and heresy have held high carnival in the deceived hearts of men. From century to century the adversary has repeated his experiments with growing success; for in spite of the sad records of lives that have gone out in darkness, as moths fly to the fire, so men rush on into the ruinous deceptions that he has prepared to entrap them. If you desire salvation, I entreat you to shun his insinuations concerning the truth of God's Word. Come to the "sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." [2 Peter 1:19] If that is not authoritative, what is? If the Word of the Lord of heaven and earth is not solid rock upon which to build, then it is in vain to look for a sure foundation.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away,” [Matthew 24:35] but "the word of the Lord endureth forever," [1 Peter 1:25] and unwavering faith in His Word is the only faith that will endure through the perils of the last days.

Review and Herald, January 10, 1888

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A Captive Audience of Two Million
(and they need your help)

It's Christmas Eve. Someone even said it was snowing outside. He doesn't know. He can't see out. He can't get out. He's doing time, and he's got a lot left. He's in prison, and he's very, very lonely. After all, it's Christmas Eve.

And there are hundreds of thousands more just like him in the prisons of America and Canada. Most of the time they are forgotten. Lost relics of potential, every one a soul to be cheered by the love of Christ. Now there's a chance to help.

United Prison Ministries is reaching out to these men and women at the time they can best be reached—Christmas. The opportunity is wide open to distribute two million copies of one of the most successful soul—winning books available, *Happiness Digest*, by Ellen White.

Every prisoner in a Federal, State, or Provincial institution has the chance of getting his own copy, with an accompanying Bible Study Course. And they will, if there are enough people who care, enough people to help.

Does it work? Does it pay? Is it really worth the effort to try to reach such hardened hearts? Listen to a warden; he knows.

"This letter serves to inform and thank you for the positive influence the Bible Study Course you have initiated and conducted has had among the inmate population at the West Jefferson Correctional Facility.

"The enrollment in the Bible Study Course is constantly increasing, as well as the positive attitudes of the inmates attending. It is pertinent to note that the inmates attending are involving their families in this course as well.

"It has been observed by the Correctional Staff as well as myself, that the Bible Study Course is a favorite topic of conversation among the inmates and their families on visiting days...."

"I, too, have enrolled in the Bible Study course. I find it to be a very interesting and very challenging project.

"I believe that the book *Happiness Digest* and the study guide which you propose to supply to all the prison facilities in the United States [and Canada] for this Christmas Season will be most beneficial to the inmates. It will give them an opportunity to focus on Christ.

"Again I wish to express my appreciation to you and your staff for the concern you have shown the inmates here at WJCF.

"Leonel Davis, Warden

"West Jefferson Correctional Facility

"Bessemer, Alabama 35023"

You can help. Please do. Give now to meet the need for this Christmas project. Send donations to United Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 8, Verbena, Alabama 36091.

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What Greater Deception...?

THE Seventh-day Adventist Church was raised up in God's providence at the appointed time to finish His work on earth. In order to keep the church from repeating the same mistakes made by ancient Israel, He placed the gift of prophecy in her midst. The Spirit of Prophecy has been the hallmark to identify us as the remnant church. See Revelation 12:17

The mistakes and failures of the ancient church were recorded for our admonition, to serve as a warning that we might not repeat their history. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11

Sadly, we have repeated many of the same mistakes. Here is what the last-day prophet has told us in this final hour: "I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them. Said the angel: 'Ye have done worse than they.'" Testimonies, vol. 1, 129

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct." Testimonies, vol. 3, 252, 253

We have done worse than they. We think everything is all right when everything is all wrong. How could it be that we are so far off course when we had such carefully written orders from God Himself to take us to the Promised Land? Let us remember, it was not God's plan for the ancient church to wander in the wilderness for forty years.

When God finally sent word through Moses that the people could go into the Promised Land, they pulled up their tent stakes and left Mt. Sinai where they had camped for two years. An eleven-day march brought them to Kadesh-barnea. That eleven-day march had been delayed for forty years because of their insubordination to God's orders.

Let us review their history through the eyes of Ellen White: "Eleven days after leaving Mount Hor the Hebrew host encamped at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from the borders of the Promised Land. Here it was proposed by the people that spies be sent up to survey the country. The matter was presented before the Lord by Moses, and permission was granted, with the direction that one of the rulers of each tribe should be selected for this purpose. The men were chosen as had been directed, and Moses bade them go and see the country, what it was, its situation and natural advantages; and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; also to observe the nature of the soil and its productiveness and to bring of the fruit of the land.

"They went, and surveyed the whole land, entering at the southern border and proceeding to the northern extremity. They returned after an absence of forty days. The people of Israel

Ron Spear

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were cherishing high hopes and were waiting in eager expectancy. The news of the spies’ return was carried from tribe to tribe and was hailed with rejoicing. The people rushed out to meet the messengers, who had safely escaped the dangers of their perilous undertaking. The spies brought specimens of the fruit, showing the fertility of the soil. It was in the time of ripe grapes, and they brought a cluster of grapes so large that it was carried between two men. They also brought of the figs and pomegranates which grew there in abundance.

“The people rejoiced that they were to come into possession of so goodly a land, and they listened intently as the report was brought to Moses, that not a word should escape them. ‘We came into the land whither thou sentest us,’ the spies began, ‘and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.’ The people were enthusiastic; they would eagerly obey the voice of the Lord, and go up at once to possess the land. But after describing the beauty and fertility of the land, all but two of the spies enlarged upon the difficulties and dangers that lay before the Israelites should they undertake the conquest of Canaan. They enumerated the powerful nations located in various parts of the country, and said that the cities were walled and very great, and the people who dwelt therein were strong, and it would be impossible to conquer them. They also stated that they had seen giants, the sons of Anak, there, and it was useless to think of possessing the land.

“They left God out of the question, and acted as though they must depend solely on the power of arms....

“The people were desperate in their disappointment and despair. A wail of agony arose and mingled with the confused murmur of voices. Caleb comprehended the situation, and, bold to stand in defense of the word of God, he did all in his power to counteract the evil influence of his unfaithful associates. For an instant the people were still to listen to his words of hope and courage respecting the goodly land. He did not contradict what had already been said; the walls were high and the Canaanites strong. But God had promised the land to Israel. ‘Let us go up at once and possess it,’ urged Caleb; ‘for we are well able to overcome it.’

“But the ten, interrupting him, pictured the obstacles in darker colors than at first. ‘We be not able to go up against the people,’ they declared; ‘for they are stronger than we. . . All the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which some of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.’

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. Revolt and open mutiny quickly followed; for Satan had full sway, and the people seemed bereft of reason. They cursed Moses and Aaron, forgetting that God hearkened to their wicked speeches, and that, overshadowed by the cloud pillar, the Angel of His presence was witnessing their terrible outburst of wrath. In bitterness they cried out, ‘Would God we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!’ Then their feelings rose against God: ‘Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.’ Thus they accused not only Moses, but God Himself, of deception, in promising them a land which they were not able to possess. And they went so far as to appoint a captain to lead them back to the land of their suffering and bondage, from which they had been delivered by the strong arm of Omnipotence.

“In humiliation and distress ‘Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel,’ not knowing what to

arrow text

If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land.... Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land do to turn them from their rash and passionate purpose. Caleb and Joshua attempted to quiet the tumult. With their garments rent in token of grief and indignation, they rushed in among the people, and their ringing voices were heard above the tempest of lamentation and rebellious grief: ‘The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: Fear them not.’

“The unfaithful spies were loud in denunciation of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry was raised to stone them. The insane mob seized missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They
rushed forward with yells of madness, when suddenly the stones dropped from their hands, a hush fell upon them, and they shook with fear. God had interposed to check their murderous design. The glory of His presence, like a flaming light, illuminated the tabernacle. All the people beheld the signal of the Lord. A mightier one than they had revealed Himself, and none dared continue their resistance. The spies who brought the evil report crouched terror-stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents.

"Moses now arose and entered the tabernacle. The Lord declared to him, 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation.' But again Moses pleaded for his people. He could not consent to have them destroyed, and he himself made a mightier nation...

"The Lord promised to spare Israel from immediate destruction; but because of their unbelief and cowardice He could not manifest His power to subdue their enemies. Therefore in His mercy He bade them, as the only safe course, to turn back toward the Red Sea.

"In their rebellion the people had exclaimed, 'Would God we had died in this wilderness!' Now this prayer was to be granted. The Lord declared: 'As ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward. . . . But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.' And of Caleb He said, 'My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.' As the spies had spent forty days in their journey, so the hosts of Israel were to wander in the wilderness forty years." Patriarchs and Prophets, 387-391

Just before Moses died, while Joshua was taking the reins of leadership, God reminded them that "They had often felt impatient and rebellious because of their long wandering in the wilderness; but the Lord had not been chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan; He was more grieved than they because He could not bring them into immediate possession of the Promised Land, and thus display before all nations His mighty power in the deliverance of His people. With their distrust of God, with their pride and unbelief, they had not been prepared to enter Canaan. They would in no way represent that 1844, had we accepted the three angels' messages by experience, we could have been in the kingdom. The Holy Spirit would have been poured out in the latter rain and the loud cry would have been given. See Selected Messages, Book 1, 68; Testimonies, vol. 6, 450; vol. 8, 250; vol. 2, 440-445

Now before it is forever too late, we must admit that the same rebellion and insubordination that characterized the ancient church has become our rebellion and insubordination. Again, from the pen of Ellen White: "For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have de-

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It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan

people whose God is the Lord; for they did not bear His character of purity, goodness, and benevolence." Ibid., 464

"God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn." Ibid., 392

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.'" The Great Controversy, 458; See Hebrews 3:16-19

The same curse that God placed upon the ancient church has been upon us. Our church (Seventh-day Adventist) has been wandering in the wilderness for more than one hundred years. We are told that very soon after layed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

"We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action." Evangelism, 696; See also Testimonies, vol. 1, 608,609; vol. 5, 217, 94

How long will we, the church leadership and laity, continue to retreat toward Egypt? How long will we continue to disregard God's instructions given to us through the Spirit of Prophecy? Our open rebellion will surely
bring destruction upon the church as it did in the days of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the 250 princes, and the 14,700 rebellionary. Let us also not forget the fires of Battle Creek.

“Jerusalem is a representation of what the church will be if it refuses to walk in the light that God has given. Jerusalem was favored of God as the repository of sacred trusts. But her people perverted the truth, and despised all entreaties and warnings. They would not respect His counsel.

“So Christ sorrows and weeps over our churches, over our institutions of learning, that have failed to meet the demand of God. He comes to investigate in holocaust and the extinction of the human race are an imminent possibility, and Christ must soon come to destroy them that would destroy the earth. (See Revelation 11:18) The church is as ill-prepared for the second coming as it was for the first.

It is possible to walk into many of our own churches today and hear benignant homilies that can be better heard in the Sunday-keeping churches, and the majority of the laity is asleep, “asleep in carnal security.” “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1

Will we awake before it is too late? Have we developed the Christlike characters needed to stand in the Day of Judgment?

Battle Creek, which has been moving in the same track as Jerusalem.” (Testimonies, vol. 8, 67) Let us remember that our prophet has told us that we have done worse than they, and that material prosperity and numbers are never a sign of the blessings of God. “It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 32

“All the policy in the world cannot save us from a terrible sifting, and all the efforts made with high authorities will not lift from us the scourging of God just because sin is cherished.” Letter 55, 1886

“We have come to the end of all things. Ellen White tells us that “Only a moment of time yet remains.” (Testimonies, vol. 6, 14) The whole world is dangling over the edge of a precipice. Nuclear

“...and it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. . . . The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zephaniah 1:12, 14, 15, 18

Will we awake before it is too late? Have we developed the Christlike characters needed to stand in the Day of Judgment? “And that, knowing the time, that now is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:11-14

“If you wait for light to come in a way that will please every one, 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. Grasp every ray of light that God sends. Men who neglect to heed the calls of the Spirit and word of God, because obedience involves a cross, will lose their souls. They will see when the books are opened, and every man’s work, and the motives that prompted him, are scrutinized by the Judge of all the earth, what losses they have sustained. We should ever cherish the fear of the Lord, and realize that, individually, we are standing before the Lord of hosts, and no thought, no word, no act in connection with the work of God should savor of selfishness, or of indifference.” Review and Herald, Dec. 18, 1888

“God will accept nothing but purity and holiness; one spot, one wrinkle, one defect in the character will forever debar them from heaven, with all its glories and treasures.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 453

Let us all, pastors and laity alike, shake off the shackles that have bound us in our indifferent, careless, Laodicean condition. If we sleep longer, we risk awakening at the end of the millennium outside the New Jerusalem.
A Blurred Understanding

Francis D. Nichol

Many of our readers no doubt remember well the author of the following article. Elder Francis D. Nichol served the church for 21 years as the editor of the Review and Herald. "A Blurred Understanding," written in 1949 for The Ministry magazine, offers his insights into the distinctive quality of Seventh-day Adventist medical work. To those familiar with the perplexing difficulties now confronting our denominational hospitals, this article may seem like "20/20 foresight."

—Editors

There are those among us—and they are not all laymen—who ask soberly: "What is the difference between a sanitarium and a hospital?" I wish I could think there were only a few who make this inquiry. No question could more sharply reveal a blurred understanding of the real genius of our medical work. Was this Advent Movement ever commissioned of God to tie up millions of its limited resources and endless hours of responsible committees, simply to operate hospitals? True, a hospital can do a great service to humanity, and some may plausibly argue that we are commanded to heal the sick. But we are also commanded to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. Yet no one thinks we should therefore establish clothing factories.

We are commanded to clothe the naked, but no one thinks we should establish clothing factories

produces doctors, and our medical institutions, called sanitariums.

This last prophetic movement was not raised up to remove bad gall bladders or appendixes, except as such removing aids in removing bad hearts and placing new ones within. This movement was not raised up to perform orthopedic miracles of making the physically lame to walk, except as such medical miracles aid us in making the spiritually lame to walk with steady stride toward the gates of heaven. To see in medical work an end in itself—that is, to see in the physical blessing it brings, a sufficient justification for that medical work—is to be guilty of the chief heresy of liberal Protestantism. That heresy teaches that good deeds, social improvements, better medical care, better housing, are in themselves sufficiently worthy projects to consume the energies of churches and churchmen. That is the doctrine of the social gospel. Against that doctrine we have ever inveighed.

Our stand has been right and has protected us from dissipating our limited resources and men on endless social-improvement campaigns. Consistency demands that we relate ourselves to medical aid for mankind in the same way.

The Price of Running Hospitals

Some of us, with pardonable pride, declare that Adventist medical institutions should be second to none, that we should offer the latest in every branch of medicine, have the latest and
best of all equipment, and carry on extensive research. Did God set us in the world to compete with the world? I think not. If we seek, increasingly, to have our sanitariums offer standard hospital service, or essentially so, then these facts follow:

1. We shall be keenly and increasingly in competition with every local hospital.

2. We shall have little reason to hope that people will come a considerable distance to patronize our sanitariums. Why should they add travel expense to hospital bills?

3. We shall be involved in costly, elaborate, and ever-expanding outlays in order to provide medical service. And it is hard to compete with tax-supported institutions in this respect.

4. In turn, this means that we must spend the limited funds available for medical work on constant expansion of existing plants rather than on creating new ones.

5. Our institutions will need to be very close to cities to secure their share of patient business.

6. Most of our patients will be the kind who hasten in for medical and surgical care, and who, as soon as their heads are clear of anesthesia, and their feet steady, depart again.

7. Many private physicians, who do not breathe the Adventist spirit, will increasingly claim that their patients should be admitted.

8. We shall find ourselves increasingly perplexed by the advance of socialized medicine.

We are appointed of God, in our medical work, as in every other phase of our work, not to compete with the world, but to offer something that the world does not offer. If we were asked to describe the ways in which I think our sanitariums are, or should be, different from hospitals, this is what I would say:

Sanitariums are unique in at least three respects. Viewed medically, they are places where a primary emphasis is placed on three therapeutic procedures—mental hygiene, physical medicine, and diet therapy. Viewed educationally, they are places where an earnest endeavor is made, not simply to cure the immediate malady, but to instruct the patient in basic principles of health, and if possible, to generate in his mind an enthusiasm to carry out these principles in his future living. Viewed spiritually, they are places where these health principles are presented in a religious setting, with the hope of furnishing the patient a spiritual incentive to live in harmony

We are appointed of God to offer something the world does not offer

with physical laws, and to find release from the tensions of life in a fellowship with God.

To this end our sanitariums are operated as places of quietness, not too dominated by the odor of disinfectants, where men and women, sick in body and spirit, the victims of wrong habits of living and the tensions of our modern world, can come apart and rest in an atmosphere of faith and prayer, and be taught how to live aright.

It is no accident that some of our first medical institutions bore such titles as “Rest Home,” “Rural Health Retreat,” and “Health Reform Institute.”

In general we should leave to private physicians and to great hospitals the routine practice of medicine. And as we do so we may sincerely thank God for these agencies, even as we are thankful for numerous material facilities that care for great needs in society. But let us, as a religious body, use time and sacred money in the field of medicine only so far as medicine definitely advances the distinctive spiritual aims that are the justification for our existence as a religious body. If we focus on the distinctly sanitarium type of institution, here are some of the gains that come.

The Advantages of Sanitariums

1. We are no longer in keen competition with hospitals, for we are operating rather specialized institutions. Specialized practice and specialized institutions are surely in good standing. And there is nothing in my suggestions that would convey any other idea than that the doctors in our sanitariums should be specialists in the best sense of the word.

2. We may hope to draw patients from a larger area.

3. We are not involved in so costly or extensive an outlay. That means we ought to be able to start small sanitariums within financial means.

4. The sanitariums that we set up could be out a little distance from populous centers. That is imperative if these sanitariums are to do their best work for the patients.

5. Our patients will stay for longer periods of time, and thus provide us a real opportunity to instruct them in health principles and to help them spiritually.

6. We shall more completely control the program of the patients and of the institution, because the doctors who send in their patients will feel they are referring them to specialists.

7. We shall be specializing in therapies which the patient himself can be educated to employ in large degree when he returns home. I think it is no accident that our three distinctive therapies have that feature in common. And is it not the genius of our whole work to seek to help men permanently? Our sanitariums fall short if we are content simply to relieve the immediate malady. Hospitals can do that.

Our sanitariums should have as a goal more actual instruction of patients, practical classes in cooking, and simple physical therapy, for example. And if we have a more definitely sanitarium type of patient, we can more
cantly do this.

8. Our specialized institutions will be at a distinct advantage, as compared with hospitals, in meeting the rising tide of socialized medicine. That is the experience of our largest sanitarium in the world, the Skodsborg Sanitarium.

It is not that we would decry other branches of medicine, or that we would wholly eliminate them—not at all—but simply that we would put a prime emphasis on certain therapies. Nor would I say that we do not need a few large key institutions, which can serve as training centers for medical interns, residents, and nurses, and which must therefore deal more in hospital cases.

If I read the signs aright, a distraught world, troubled with increasing cases of nervous tension and breakdowns; a world where bodily ailments now stand revealed as being too often attributable to dietary errors; a world which is doctoring itself with every kind of medicament, most strikingly sedatives, stands singularly in need of the help of institutions that specialize in mental hygiene, diet therapy, and physical medicine. Such institutions, which seek not only to cure the malady but also to prevent its return, will not lack for patient business. I believe they will always have a waiting list.

A Remarkable Report

In the 1920s, when medical men and doctors were beginning to sense the significant relation of religion to medicine, which is mental hygiene at its highest level, a joint committee was created by the Federal Council of Churches and the New York Academy of Medicine to explore the field. This committee carefully studied many possibilities for translating their convictions into practice in the care of the spiritually, emotionally, and physically sick. As I read their report, my eye was caught by these words:

"Careful consideration was given to a project for helping to establish a Rest Home to be maintained by church groups under supervision of physicians, to which people who were tired in body, mind, and spirit (including those attending psychiatric clinics), could go for the physical recreation, mental re-education, and spiritual regeneration needed to prevent a serious nervous breakdown. This project had the heartiest approval of the Joint Committee and it was with great regret that lack of funds necessitated putting off its fulfillment."

History of the Committee, 7

That sounds to me strangely like an Adventist sanitarium. To think that this learned committee, when it sought to crystallize its thinking into institutional form, should have come forth with something so like the kind of medical institutions that God would have us operate today!

I plead for a reappraisal of our whole health doctrine—its uniqueness medically and its distinctive place in the Advent Movement. Surely the unfolding decades have revealed that this health doctrine is neither fanatical nor funny. Even with the limited use to which we have put our health principles we have obtained most gratifying results. Patients remember their visits to our sanitariums. But invariably their appreciation is not so much for the brilliant diagnosis or for the skillful surgery, as for the atmosphere of the place, the thoughtful attention, the evening prayers.

Would that we had sanitariums in every conference to dispense more of that atmosphere, and to teach men and women how to live, not simply for the next ten or twenty years, but for eternity!

The unfolding decades have revealed that this health doctrine is neither fanatical nor funny

Our Firm Foundation November 1986

Mélange

Bob Vun Kannon

Subject: Pork, and more

An article on page 37 of the July 19, 1986, issue of Science News dropped a real bombshell on meat eaters.

The bomb wasn't just in the surprising (to me) fact that pork, even in the U.S., is still not free from the infestation of the dreaded trichina worm. After all, trichinosis can be avoided by simply by thorough cooking.

The statement that pork commonly harbors a protozoa called Toxoplasma gondii, which can cause blindness, mental retardation, and even death, was surprising but not shocking. After all there must have been a good reason why God forbade the eating of pigs and other unclean animals. It certainly wasn't pleasant to find out that this particular menace routinely shows up in about one third of all pigs, and that it is particularly dangerous to developing fetuses. Pregnant mothers, take note: if you insist on eating pork, for your baby's sake make sure it is thoroughly cooked.

No, the real shocker for me, and any other Christian who wants to live according to God's expressed will, was "because an estimated six per cent of all hamburger may also be contaminated with pork during grinding, many people who eat rare or raw ground 'beef' may also risk picking up the Toxoplasma gondii infection." That statement should stop you cold the next time you consider grabbing a hamburger. If you eat any hamburger, how do you know you are not inadvertently eating pork?

I, for one, won't take the chance.
"Talk is cheap." Worn as it is, this phrase illustrates an important lesson true in both the secular and the spiritual worlds. Claims or promises made without corresponding actions to back them serve to damage the reputation of the individual or organization making them. Empty claims can also hurt others quite deeply.

The world is filled with double talk, excuses, and plenty of lies. People use other people to relieve their sexual tensions, all the while telling the lie that they truly love them. Products do not perform with the quality announced in the ads. Companies make promises to employees, only later to ignore those promises. Governments routinely use double talk or "disinformation" to cover corruption, dishonesty, and scandals.

Unfortunately, not even the Christian world is exempt from a gap between profession and deeds or faith and works. Christians profess to love God while neglecting prayer for TV programs. More than a few claim to believe the Bible, but let it collect dust on a shelf instead of reading it. Many Christians profess to love God while ignoring the Ten Commandments, especially the Fourth.

"Just have faith and only believe" is the battle cry of much of the Christian world. "Faith is all you need," shout many Christians. But a faith which does not transform actions from selfishness to loving concern, from indifference to compassion, is worthless no matter how loudly someone shouts it. It deceives neither God nor man. And a faith which doesn't reveal an increasing respect for—and a bringing of the life into harmony with—God's Ten Commandments, which are love defined, is a massive deception.

A "faith" which allows Christians to be indifferent toward suffering, whether it be emotional, physical, or spiritual, is little more than verbal noise. A "faith" which meets suffering with pious platitudes or religious clichés is an offense to both God and man.

Let us illustrate the importance of faith and works by means of a flat tire. Suppose you see a lady standing next to her car with a flat tire. You have several options: 1) you can ignore her plight; 2) you can walk up to her and say: "I hope you soon get your tire changed;" 3) you can offer to call a service station for her or drive her to one; or 4) you can change the tire for her.

It might even take going the third, fourth, or fifth mile

I think it obvious that only the last two options would make any type of positive impact on her. Why? Because by your actions you showed your concern in a tangible way. Your works vindicated your profession of concern.

The only wrong reason for doing works in the Christian life is as a means to earn salvation. Christian works should always be the fruit of salvation and never the root of it. Genuine works grow out of a deep love for God as well as for humanity.

Why should there be so much confusion in the Christian world over the importance of works in the Christian life? How else, except by your works, can you show the extent of your love for God and man? Talk, with no actions to back it up, fools no one for long.

Whether we like to admit it or not, the secular world is closely inspecting Christians to see how fully they practice the principles they profess to believe. And the wider the gap between one's faith and works, the deeper the disappointment in the Christian, and the firmer the world's rejection of the Gospel.

It does no good to profess separation from the world if we continually worship the latest clothing styles, watch silly TV situation comedies, or sex-and-violence-filled movies.

It does no good to profess love for our spiritual brothers and sisters if we do not help them. Many times this may be accomplished simply by listening to their concerns. Other times we may help them with thoughtful counsel. Occasionally it may be necessary to go the second mile and give them food or clothing. It might even take going the third, fourth or fifth mile by helping those who are unemployed to find a job or suitable housing accommodations.

So why, then, is a proper balance of faith and works important in the Christian life? For at least five reasons.

1. Jesus Himself said works are important. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) Jesus was not in the least confused about the importance of good works in the Christian life. Good works will cause people to praise God because the works reveal His loving, merciful character.

2. Works reveal the depth of our love toward God. In John
The National Reform Movement

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the powers of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Revelation 13:11, 12

"Here is a striking figure of the rise and growth of our own nation. And the lamblike horns, emblems of innocence and gentleness, well represent the character of our government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles, republicanism and Protestantism."

In 1888 and 1889 this prophecy almost came to completion. The message of righteousness by faith was heralded throughout the world like the morning sun casting its rays over the majestic mountains to lighten the valleys below. A message of hope and victory: a risen Saviour—an Elder Brother, He who was tempted in all points even as we are, offering forgiveness of sins and the grace to overcome every evil habit. To many who had become locked in a life of drudgery and gloom—whose religious life was only a form—came the glad tidings of an ever-present Saviour in Christ. At the same time, The National Reform Movement began to take shape.

The Beginning

Starting in 1863, John Alexander, the Father of the Reform, along with the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, Prof. J.R.W. Sloan, and the Reverend A.M. Milligan, began to fight for reform. The Reformed Presbyterian Church—the actual promoter and leader of the National Reform—was joined that year by another eleven Protestant denominations. Here we have the beginning of the false Reform which came before the message of Christ and His righteousness in 1888.

Here, in their own words is a statement of the goals of the Reformed Presbyterian Church: "The object of the society shall be to maintain existing Christian features in the American Government; to promote needed reforms in the action of the government, touching the Sabbath, the institution of the family, the religious element in education, the oath, and public morality as affected by the liquor traffic and other kindred evils; and to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, as will declare the nation's allegiance to Jesus Christ and its acceptance of the moral laws of the Christian religion, and so indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our Government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental laws of the land."

As Satan appeared to Christ in the wilderness as an angel of light, so now he clothed his true purpose, using reform as a friendly mask to hide the heart of a dragon. "The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not
themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending. Its professions are mild and apparently Christian; but when it shall speak, it will reveal the spirit of the dragon. 5

"The leaders of the Sunday movement may advocate reforms which the people need, principles which are in harmony with the Bible; yet while there is with these a requirement which is contrary to God's law His servants cannot unite with them. Nothing can justify them in setting aside the commandments of God for the precepts of men. 4

"Plans of serious import to the people of God are advancing in an underhand manner among the clergymen of various denominations, and the object of this secret maneuvering is to win popular favor for the enforcement of Sunday sacredness." 4

The advocates of the Reform professed to "give all men to understand that this is a Christian nation, and that believing that without Christianity we perish; we must maintain by all means our Christian character; inscribe this character on our Constitution; enforce upon all who come among us the law of Christian morality." 6

As faithful watchmen you should see the sword coming and give the warning

They also spoke of themselves as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness of public sins, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; measure all things by the rule of absolute righteousness rather than policy or expediency; cast out everything contrary to the will of Christ." 6 How good the intentions; how mild and apparently Christian the profession; but who will speak as the dragon? Those who interpret the will of Christ! And all who do not conform to that will are dissenters, troublemakers of the people, and soon to find themselves out of step with the majority. Thus church and state will be united.

Sleepy Indifference

Amid the strident voices of the day, God's Messenger spoke: "O awake, I pray you, awake! For you bear the most sacred responsibilities. As faithful watchmen, you should see the sword coming, and give the warning, that men and women may not pursue a course through ignorance that they would avoid if they knew the truth." E.G. White said, "The National Reform Movement has been regarded by some as of so little importance they have not thought it necessary to give much attention to it." 6

"If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit... They are not awake to the situation and do not realize the threatened danger." 6

Those who had become careless in their Christian walk, who absorbed themselves in the world, lost not only their first love, but also the eyesalve to see the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

The stage was well set: church leaders sought for control of the state to enforce its mandates, but this goal was to be brought about in such a way so as not to alarm the people. Here they used the temperance work as a means of gaining a foothold at state levels.

The church leaders first endeavored to create a crisis, and to portray the nation in upheaval and disastrous ruin, foretelling the end of all things if Christ was not soon put in control.

They claimed that Atheism was taking over the government

They also claimed that the government was not set up as a theocracy. Feeling pressed by the tide of popular opinion, and the alleged rise of atheism, many joined in to help establish a "Christian government." Little did they realize that by so doing, they were establishing corrupt church leaders who, while claiming to be the voice of Christ on earth and endeavoring to enforce morality, were sweeping away the freedom of conscience that our nation had fought hard to gain. How easy it is to be swept in when our living connection with God has been severed!

Holding Time

Through various means and instrumentalities, Christ stayed the Reform movement and allotted more time for God's people to prepare.

Almost one hundred years have passed. History is now being repeated, but how many realize the danger? Apostle powers are again seeking to enforce morality through legislation. First, they
plan to annihilate the homosexual and the abortionist, and punish the gambler. Next, they will restrain and discipline all who dare to differ with this majority which decrees morality: this "Moral Majority."

"All persecution, all force employed to compel the conscience, is after Satan's own order; and those who carry out these designs are his hellish agents."10

We as a people need to warn the world against the legislation of morality and the giving of power to those clergymen who trample the law of God underfoot and claim to be the voice of God, but who in reality are an antichristian power. "It should be apparent to every thinking person that a religion which needs a human law to make it a force in human lives can hardly be of divine origin. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not in need of any such assistance to enable it to accomplish its divine mission."11

We need to study the old landmarks of the faith, or many will be caught unaware. Our only safety is in living up to all the light Christ has given us in the little as well as in the large things of life. Obedience is our only safety, trusting that Christ can keep us from falling. (See Jude 24) It's time to study our Bibles as never before, that we may have the oil in our lamps and the eyesalve of discernment. See Matthew 25:1-10; Revelation 3:18

Throughout the growth of our nation, various church organizations have sought the aid of the state to enforce righteousness. Now, like an awakening lion, the Protestants are rising up, arousing the element in the religious world that has felt robbed of its prerogative to dictate to men in spiritual things and to enforce compliance with its decrees under threats, pains, and penalties.

Many see no danger, but "the same spirit which actuated papists in ages past will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who will maintain their loyalty to God."12

A Dramatic Picture

Thousands of people rush to and fro, amid the busy thoroughfares of smog-filled cities. Thousands of faces exhibit a quiet desperation, each day a struggle for existence amid crime, violence and general unrest, with little hope for a better tomorrow. Through the years people have banded together for peace rallies and have protested against those dangers which threatened their lives, and the lives of their posterity. But how can so few fight against such immense forces that seem to threaten our existence?

There has been arising a new power. Strong, demanding, calling for a moral reform of the nation. Its voice is heard around the world. Established and nurtured by church leaders who cry out against sin in high places as well as in low, its supporters have swelled to millions.

The New Religious Political Right (also called the Moral Majority) is called to apply all its might to building the perfect society—not the good society, but the perfect society, based on biblical righteousness and holiness."13

"We are crusading against abortion on demand; against pornography; against sex and violence on television and against attempts by the Internal Revenue Service to control religious schools." So states Moral Majority founder, Jerry Falwell, pastor of the "Old-Time Gospel Hour." He adds, "This country is ready for a moral revolution."14

Falwell is convinced that God is calling millions of Americans in the so-called "silent majority" to join the Moral Majority's crusade to turn America around in our lifetime: "Let us unite our hearts and lives together for the cause of a new America—a moral America in which righteousness will exalt this nation."15

Another organized party called the American Coalition for Traditional Values, (ACTV), whose executive board of 33 members are predominantly of the "electronic church," says, "the Bible demands that they as moral Americans occupy seats of power. Let the main-line churches complain about 'the post-Christian era,' for American's religious right, the true Christian era is yet to come."16

And the words come ringing, "Papists, Protestants and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium."17

The Political Move

In 1976, Evangelist Bill Bright, head of Campus Crusade for Christ, started using "Bible-study meetings and the Sunday-school lecture circuit to create a grassroots constituency for what would become a third political party of 'real Christians' only."18

Another politically active organization, "Intercessors for America," sent 120,000 US clergymen letters "urging them to purchase large quantities of pamphlets, written by Bright, and distribute them to their congregations. Bright's pamphlet, entitled, 'Your Five Duties as a Christian Citizen,' instructs its readers how to take over local precincts and to elect only 'godly' Christians to public office."19

"The campaign, now gaining momentum, is being directed by conservative lobbyists, their allies in Congress, and television preachers, with huge and ardent followings. Its aim: to exert
strong influence from city hall to the White House.20

“We want to see more and more politicians in office who believe what we believe,” says TV evangelist Jim Bakker.21

The eradication of secular humanism, gambling, abortion, pornography, and other like evils, is the supposed objective of placing “godly” men in political office by these Protestant leaders and their supporters. Yet, the pen of Inspiration says, “Any movement in favor of religious legislation is really an act of concession to the Papacy, which for so many ages has steadily warred against liberty of conscience.”22

And we must ask, What will occur when these key men are placed in positions of authority? “The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the Papacy.”23

The voice of the dragon surfaced when, in 1979, “TV Evangelist M.G. ‘Pat’ Robertson said that, counting both Catholics and Protestants, ‘We have enough votes to run the country. And when the people say ‘We’ve had enough,’ we are going to take over.”24

This voice was also heard in 1984, when the Moral Majority started “a campaign to enlist at least two million new Fundamentalist voters to the conservative cause and to convince millions of others that born-again evangelicals must ‘take dominion’ over fallen America.”25

We are forewarned: “There is a satanic force propelling the Sunday movement, but it is concealed. Even the men who are engaged in the work are themselves blinded to the results which will follow their movement.”26

God’s servants cannot unite with this movement, for its principles are contrary to true Bible standards. “The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.”27

Many have had light and rejected it. Others see its rays but neglect it until some more convenient season. And those who will not fully surrender themselves to Christ—who go after the ways of the world—have the right to be fearful. There is no rest or abiding peace for them. They therefore tenaciously grasp and support any movement or reform by which they derive some extent of security in this life, for this is the only life they will have.

“Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism.”28

May we consider the cost, and choose this day whom we will serve

Yet a little longer time lingers as Christ is finishing His work in the most holy place. Soon the door of probation will forever be closed to a diseased and fallen world. The tears and anguish of religious intolerance and persecution still future will then culminate. Impatient or unconcerned in obtaining eternal riches, many will have striven for mere temporal gain, while God’s faithful ones, with patience and confidence, have awaited their reward at the hand of Omnipotence.

May we consider the cost, and choose this day whom we will serve. Our only safety is in full surrender and obedience to the Truth; to walk in the light as we receive it; to have that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul.

[Pictured on page 16 are Pope John Paul II, “Pat” Robertson, William Rehnquist, and Jerry Falwell—Editors]

A more complete presentation of this subject is available in tract form from Milepost Tracts and Books
Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328

1. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 975
2. Article II of Constitution of National Reform Movement
3. Review and Herald, December 11, 1888
4. The Great Controversy, 587, 588
5. Christian Statesman, October 2, 1884
6. Christian Citizen, October 1, 1896
7. Review and Herald, December 24, 1889
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9. Testimonies, vol. 5, 714
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11. C.M. Snow, Religious Liberty in America, 1914
12. Testimonies, vol. 5, 449
14. Saturday Evening Post, December 1980, 38
15. Ibid.
16. Newsweek, July 9, 1984, 52
17. The Great Controversy, 588, 589
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19. Ibid.
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22. Testimonies, vol. 5, 711, 712
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27. The Desire of Ages, 509
28. The Great Controversy, 588
Do you know what the SEAL OF GOD IN THE FOREHEAD is?

Joe Maniscalco

What is the meaning of the seal of God in the forehead? When will this seal be given and who will receive it? It is vital that every true follower of Christ be able to answer these questions.

First of all, we must understand that the sealing is a progressive work. In Ephesians 1:13, 14 we read that when we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The word “earnest” in verse 14 means “a pledge.” Webster’s dictionary defines the word earnest as “First Fruits, that which is in advance, and given promise of something to come. Earnest money is a first payment, or deposit giving promise or assurance of full payment.” This thought is repeated in 2 Corinthians 1:22. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, and determine to obey God’s commandments, then we receive the seal of promise, the down payment.

“When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this effort as man’s best service and makes up the deficiency with His own divine merit. . . . Sanctification is a progressive work, and an advance from one stage of perfection to another.” (Letter 155, 1902) Here we find that we grow in the Christian walk, and that we do not suddenly become perfect as Jesus is perfect. There are stages of perfection.

“By receiving Christ and being conformed to His will, man goes on to perfection.” (Signs of the Times, Feb. 14, 1900) “We are not yet perfect, but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection.” (Acts of the Apostles, 565) “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:13, 15

By these statements we can see that the seal of God in its fullness has not taken place as yet. Something must happen before God’s people receive the seal of God in the forehead.

“The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes, for it is to be the great test for the people of God by which their eternal destiny will be decided. ‘And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that
the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.' (Revelation 13:11-17) This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed.' Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 976

Notice that the image of the beast must be formed before God's people are sealed. It is evident that the seal of God in the forehead is future. "Just before we entered the time of trouble, we all received the seal of the living God." Ibid., 968

The important question that we need to consider is "What is the seal of God in the forehead?" "The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God." (The Great Controversy, 640) The sign or seal of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation." (Maranatha, 211) The Sabbath points to God as our Creator, but not only as our Creator, but also as our re-Creator. God is recreating a people today to receive His seal. The seal of God is not only revealed in the Sabbath, but also in all His commandments.

Just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come

"Many will not receive the seal of God because they do not keep His commandments or bear the fruits of righteousness." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 970

But there is more in defining the seal of God in the forehead. Notice carefully the following quotations.

"Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us, the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished.' " Review and Herald, June 10, 1902

"I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary, through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully." Early Writings, 71

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost." Testimonies, vol. 5, 214

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1161

God is waiting for His people to settle into the truth. He is waiting for His remnant to remedy the defects in their characters through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is waiting for you and me to be in earnest in our striving to reflect the image of Jesus fully, and to realize that we have a part to play in character development.

Let us analyze and simplify what the seal of God in the forehead is. The seal of God in the forehead is the character of Christ perfectly reproduced in His people, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as it is revealed in the law of God with an emphasis on the fourth commandment. This is the mystery of godliness, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27

To think that God can recreate sinners, like you and me, into reflecting His image fully is absolutely wonderful. He wants us to be willing to receive His grace, the power to overcome every sin in our lives.

The sealing is as if God is pressing a seal in our foreheads. When it is pressed in far enough, the image will be perfect, and He will release the seal. He is in the pressing process with you and me now. We are being sealed, but we do not have the seal in its completeness as yet.

"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 970

Let us think of ourselves as a vessel being filled with oil, the Holy Spirit. As yet we are not full, but when the vessel is filled, then we will receive the seal of God in the forehead in its fullness.

We know that the sealing is progressive, just as sanctification is progressive. There is a bud, a blossom, and ripened fruit in the growing process. We are in the bud and blossom stages, but when we reach the ripened fruit stage, we will be ready for the harvest.

In Revelation 7 we read that only the 144,000 receive the seal of God in their foreheads before the four winds are loosed.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the 144,000." Review and Herald, March 9, 1905

If we are to strive to be among that number, then we must understand the standard that God has given for the 144,000. That standard is the seal of God in the forehead, perfect obedience to His law. We can only reach that
standard by being willing to receive the complete impartation of the Holy Spirit that will keep us from sinning. Then we will reflect the image of Jesus fully and Jesus will say, “It is done.” He will come to claim us as His own.

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world, are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 216

Religious Liberty Update

Dragon Developing: University of Virginia’s sociologist Jeffrey Haden asserts, “Preachers have greater unrestricted access to media than any other interest group in America,” Powered by TV evangelism, the Christian right “is destined to become the major social movement in America.” Time, February 17, 1986

At Odds: The Virginia Statute for establishing Religious Freedom, drafted by Thomas Jefferson and shepherded through the Legislature by James Madison, provided much of the intellectual base for the separation of church and state found in the First Amendment to the Constitution. Attorney General Edwin Meese, Secretary of Education William Bennett, and others in and out of government are seeking to rewrite the First Amendment’s church-state separation. But these crusaders are at odds with the American tradition—and the express intent of the Founding Fathers. The Des Moines Register, January 26, 1986

Unprecedented: In an unprecedented display of unity, British church leaders, members of Parliament from all the major parties, city street retailers, unions and management, united in opposition to legislation which would have irrevocably altered the character of British Sunday life. Cardinal Basil Hume said: “It is the government’s duty to mediate between particular conflicting interests for the sake of the common good.” The united stand by Church leaders was a major factor in retaining the distinctive character of Sunday. Our Sunday Visitor, May 25, 1986

Federation? Hoped-for unity is not a strict uniformity in which the denominations are asked to give up their distinctive differences in a “lowest common denominator” approach. “We could imagine the main Christian traditions coming together in a federation under the servant leadership of the bishop of Rome, who would be spokesman for the gospel ideals that bind all together.” All the participating churches would affirm the common apostolic faith... The pope would be elected in a way that ensures that he has the support of all the partner churches. National Catholic Reporter, May 16, 1986

Pernicious Partnership: The present working partnership between the Vatican and Washington is becoming increasingly active. “In less than two decades, the Vatican has been recognized as a diplomatic center by more than 120 nations. The Vatican has become a diplomatic superpower on a par with Europe, China, the Soviet Union and the United States. Battle Cry, March/April, 1986

Repudiation: The Constitution discourages too many sacrifices of basic goods—like liberty—in the name of the most pressing emergencies. Who would have thought that the very issues our Founders decided the Constitution might be a buffer against—issues of world empire and religion and private morality, issues that they figured had ruined every body politic—would now be constitutional arguments before all three branches of our government. Los Angeles Times, May 25, 1986
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A friend at work has shared with me copies of your magazine. I was and continue to be impressed by the consistent encouragement the articles convey. I enjoy your straightforward approach and selection of Ellen White's writings. I pray that you continue to present this quality material for those who seek truth and an ever closer relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Daniel J. Garletts
Greenfield, Pennsylvania

The last issue of Our Firm Foundation has been devoured by both of us with the greatest appetite and relish! Surely God helped in a special way in the formation of this issue above any other we've read so far.

Continue to give the trumpet a certain sound—without embellishments—and I know God will bless. It is so refreshing to see no criticism or bitterness in your paper. This savors indeed of the Spirit of Jesus. He is for this reason blessing especially your sacrificial efforts, I believe.

Maurice and Virginia Butler
Sheridan, Oregon

Many people are asleep, though well intentioned. The wise and the foolish virgins are mixed in the church together. But all are asleep. I believe that God is trying to wake us up now. My prayers are with you as you attempt to give the Laodicean message to the church.

Sue E. Brewer
Hayesville, North Carolina

I've been growing in the love of Jesus so much recently. And Our Firm Foundation has been a real blessing. We had the introductory issue around here for the longest time, and I never read it. But my wife said that she had been reading it over and over again. It never got old to her, and so I figured I was missing something. I had. It was the most powerful and Spirit-filled thing I have ever read (next to the Bible). I started to use it in my devotions, and have already subscribed and received my first issue (on Spiritualism).

Brian Wagner
Waldron, Michigan

I had left the church for several years but am now trying to "re-read" my way back into the Truth.

When I first joined the church, I got so bogged down with the "Thou shall nots" that I lost sight of the love of Christ and the truth. I can tell by just one issue that this magazine will help me sort out what is important.

Name Withheld
Michigan

I would like to order 100 of the magazines you wrote about some time ago, saying they would soon be in print for non-believers. I am 95 years old. August 28 past, but not too old to work in this building where I live, or stand on a corner of Racine Avenue or Ashlynd, three blocks from my residence.

Hazel Crank
Chicago, Illinois

Your mission at Hope International and the magazine are noteworthy, but some today are suggesting that members ought to leave the church for their "group." What is your purpose? What is your goal?

Owen G. Cheney
Bruce, Florida

Brother Cheney's questions are good ones. Indeed, many are doing more than "suggesting." For the record, Hope International strongly encourages membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our purpose is briefly summed up at the top of the credits column on page three. Our goal is an active, true-hearted laity, holding firmly to the historic pillars given us of God, working unitedly to bring about the one great goal of a finished work on earth. —EDITORS

We have received several letters expressing concern that the article "Angelic Light? or Demonic Darkness?" did not recognize the reality of demon possession, or the occasional necessity of some form of exorcism. This was not the author's intent. That demons do exist, and that they can obtain the mastery over the human will through a course of continued sin is clearly taught in the Bible. The article does take exception to certain methods of exorcism currently in use within Adventist circles. For the great majority of cases, the only "exorcism" necessary is to lead the individual to cast aside his will and submit to God's will in all things. Only in cases where the human will is completely overpowered do we find precedent for formal exorcism.—EDITORS
**Constant Attainment: An Essential of Christian Life**

*Ellen G. White*

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. When we preach, warning every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Whereunto I also labored striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Colossians 1:23-29.

In this Scriptural instruction is given as to the position of those who are seeking to open the Word of God to others. This work cannot be done negligently. It cannot be undertaken in mere human strength. The work of the ministry must be carried forward altogether too much in our own human wisdom. We have seemed to think that an understanding of the theory of the truth was sufficient for the work. When we have talked to the people, we have gone over the ground to them, and explained all the lines of truth, and yet we have not brought into it the divine power of the truth to transform the life and character. When the work of God is done mechanically, it cannot be effective in converting souls. Though we have the truth, though our position be so well taken that our enemies cannot controvert it, this is not all that is necessary. There must be a power with our work, beyond the mere knowledge of the theory of the truth. We must have divine energy to accompany our human effort.

And speak of the riches of the glory of the mystery that is to be made known to the Gentiles. There are many mysteries in the Word of God that we do not comprehend, and many of us are content to stop our investigation when we have just begun to receive a little knowledge concerning Christ. When there begins to be a little unfolding of the divine purposes to the mind, and we begin to obtain a slight knowledge of the character of God, we become satisfied, and think that we have received about all the light that there is for us in the Word of God. But the truth of God is infinite. With painstaking effort, we should work in the mines of truth, discovering the precious jewels that have been hidden. It is the minister's privilege to have a constant supply of fresh truth for the people. He should take such a position that he may draw from the treasure house of God, not the same thing over and over, but new beauty and new truth.

The Spirit of God will rest upon the diligent searcher for truth. He who desires the truth in his heart, who longs for the working of its power upon the life and character, will be sure to have it. Says the Saviour, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." [Matthew 5:6]. When ministers themselves taste and see that the Lord is good, when their minds are filled with thoughts of heaven, then the eternal realities of the unseen world will open to their understanding, and they will be able to present the truth of God, and it will make an impression upon human minds.

Those who seek for more of the Spirit of God will not be disappointed. They will hold daily communion with God, and divine power will surely attend their efforts, as they present the truth. As certainly as the truth is presented in the Spirit of Christ, it will reach the hearts of the people. Brethren, we should not go into the desks unless we have previously devoted some time to wrestling with God in prayer. We should not be satisfied to use the same discourse that we have preached over and over. For the last ten, fifteen, or twenty years. We should draw fresh, new mate-

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ter form the storehouse of God's Word. We are desirous that the angels of God may stand by our side when we are in the sacred desk, that God may impress the mind; that there may be glorious unfoldings of the truth; that it may be presented in the demonstration of the Spirit; that it may be meat in due season to the flock of God. It is the special grace of God that makes the sermon effectual. The minister's words will have very little influence upon the people, unless divine enlightenment accompanies them to the hearts of the hearers. We need much more of the Spirit of God than we have had in the past. Brethren, how long are you going to continue to labor without receiving the holy unction from on high?

If you search the Scriptures with a meek and teachable spirit, your efforts will be richly rewarded. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." [I Corinthians 2:14] The Bible should be studied with prayer. We should pray as did David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." [Psalm 119:18] No man can have insight into the Word of God without the illumination of the Holy Spirit. If we will but come into the right position before God, His light will shine upon us in rich, clear rays. This was the experience of the early disciples. The Scriptures declare that "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." [Acts 2:1-4] God is willing to give us a similar blessing, when we seek for it as earnestly.

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We, also, may receive of the fulness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. If we do not have His power, it is because of our spiritual lethargy, our indifference, our indolence. Let us come out of this formality and deadness.

There is a great work to be done for this time, and we do not half realize what the Lord is willing to do for His people. We talk about the first angel's message, and the second angel's message, and we think we have some understanding of the third angel's message; but we should not be satisfied with our present knowledge. Our petitions, mingled with faith and contrition, should go up to God, for an understanding of the mysteries that God would make known to His saints. We should have a realization that unless taught by the Holy Spirit, we shall not rightly comprehend the Bible; for it is a sealed book even to the learned, who are wise in their own conceit. Jesus meant just what He said when He directed His disciples to "search the Scriptures." Searching means to compare Scripture with Scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. We should not be satisfied with a superficial knowledge. We should search for the hidden treasure concealed beneath the surface, as the merchantman seeks for goodly pearls. Light, great light, will reward the diligent searcher for truth.

There are many who have not taxed their mental powers, and who have no experience in putting to the stretch their utmost ability to find out what is truth. It is not possible that the Holy Spirit shall fall upon you unless you feel your need, and are more desirous for its descent than you now are. You should realize that you are living upon the very borders of the eternal world, that Christ is coming very soon, and that all heaven is interested in the work that is in progress in fitting up a people for His coming. If ever there was a people that needed to heed the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodicean church to be zealous and to repent before God, it is the people who have had opened up before them the stupendous truths for this time, and who have not lived up to their high privileges and responsibilities. We have lost much in not living up to the light of the solemn truths which we profess to believe.

Isaiah had a wonderful view of God's glory. He saw the manifestation of God's power, and after beholding His majesty, a message came to him to go and do a certain work. He felt wholly unworthy for the work. What made him esteem himself unworthy? Did he think himself unworthy before he had a view of God's glory? No; he imagined himself in a righteous state before God; but when the glory of the Lord of hosts was revealed to him, when he beheld the inexpressible majesty of God, he said, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of un-

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clean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hands, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” [Isaiah 6:5-9] This is the work that as individuals we need to have done for us. We want the living coal from off the altar placed upon our lips. We want to hear the word spoken, “Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged.”

If you are content to think and to preach in one narrow channel, you will not advance in usefulness, nor know the depth and grandeur of the truth. If you desire to understand the mysteries of God, you must search the Scriptures. There is nothing that will develop the intellect like wrestling with the great problems of truth revealed in God’s Word. You may keep your mind in constant meditation and prayer, even when your hands are busy. The truth of God is a treasure that is of more value than everything else in the world. Its priceless value is illustrated by the parable of Christ, concerning the man who found a treasure in a field, and he went and bought that field, that he might plow every part of it, and search out all the treasure that it contained. The blessed Bible, the field that contains the treasure, the garden of God, is open to you. Search the Scriptures; dig in the mines of truth until the precious jewels that have been hidden there for ages shall be brought out, and you can present them to the people.

In the time of the Saviour, the Jews had so covered over the precious jewels of truth with the rubbish of tradition and fable, that it was impossible to distinguish the true from the false. The Saviour came to clear away the rubbish of superstition and long-cherished errors, and to set the jewels of God’s Word in the framework of truth. What would the Saviour do if He should come to us now as He did to the Jews? He would have to do a similar work in clearing away the rubbish of tradition and ceremony. The Jews were greatly disturbed when He did this work. They had lost sight of the original truth of God, but Christ brought it again to view. It is our work to free the precious truths of God from superstition and error. What a work is committed to us in the gospel! An angel’s pen could not portray all the glory of the revealed plan of redemption. The Bible tells how Christ bore our sins, and carried our sorrows. Here is revealed how mercy and truth have met together at the cross of Calvary, how righteousness and peace have kissed each other, how the righteousness of Christ may be imparted to fallen man. There infinite wisdom, infinite justice, infinite mercy, and infinite love were displayed. Depths, heights, lengths, and breadths of love and wisdom, all passing knowledge, are made known in the plan of salvation.

They circulated false reports that Christ was destroying the work of God

When the scribes and Pharisees saw that Christ did not reverence their forms and traditions, they accused Him of contempt for the law and the prophets. But Christ did not show the least contempt for the old truths. Because He did not work in the same narrow forms that they did, they said, “He is come to destroy the law.” But there fell upon their astonished ears the words of Christ, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” [Matthew 5:17, 18] Christ was the originator of the law; and the blindness of the Pharisees is an illustration of how people who claim great light and knowledge can misunderstand and misrepresented the work of God. Glorious truths have been buried out of sight, and have been made lusterless and unattractive by error and superstition. Jesus reveals the light of God, and brings forth the beautiful radiance of the truth in all its divine glory. The minds of the honest are filled with admiration. Their hearts are attracted in holy affections toward Him who brought forth the jewels of truth and displayed them to their understanding.

The Jews understood some portion of the truth, and taught some part of the Word of God; but they did not comprehend the far-reaching nature of the law of God. Christ swept away the rubbish of tradition, and displayed the real kernel and heart of the purposes of God. When He did this, they became exasperated beyond control. They circulated false reports from one town to another that Christ was destroying the work of God. But while Jesus did away with the old forms, he reinstated the old truths, placing them in the framework of truth. He matched and joined them together, making a complete and symmetrical system of truth. This was the work our Saviour did; and now what shall we do? Shall we not work in harmony with Christ? Shall we be ruled by hearsay? Shall we let our own imaginings hide from us the light of God? We are to read attentively, to hear understandingly, and to teach others also the things we have learned. We must be constantly hungering for the bread of life, constantly seeking for the living water and the snow of Lebanon, that we may be able to lead the people to the living, cooling waters of the Fountain of truth.

Review and Herald, June 4, 1889
Faith, from 15

14:15, Jesus said that if we truly love Him, we will keep His commandments. Our actions become the yardstick by which God, angels, and people can determine how deeply and seriously we are committed to Him.

3. Our works reveal whether we love Jesus or the world the most. It is hard for the world, and no doubt hard for Jesus too,

**A proper balance provides a powerful witness**

to take our profession of Christianity seriously if all we talk about is the latest fashions, popular entertainers, or movies.

4. Our works reveal how seriously we love other Christians. In the early church believers sold their goods and possessions and they gave to others who had needs. (See Acts 2:44, 45; 4:34, 35) While this may not be the exact pattern for today, we can be on the lookout for those among us who need help, whether this help be emotional, material, or spiritual.

5. Our works show how seriously we take our church membership. People aren't likely to take the claims of the Seventh-day Adventist church seriously if Adventists themselves do not live in accordance with the church's principles. Those Adventists who profess to be looking for Jesus while conforming to the world in matters of dress, diet, or entertainment are providing the world with an excuse to dismiss and ridicule the Adventist religion.

Faith and works—Jesus was not confused about their importance in the Christian walk. Neither was Paul, John, or James. Nor should we be. A proper balance of the two in the Christian life provides a powerful witness to a world in darkness.

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**Food for Thought**

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he would deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. Human effort must combine with divine power, that we may be able to accomplish the closing work for this time.

Christ uses the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God: “As the wind bloweth whithersoever it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so it is with the Spirit of God. We do not know through whom it will be manifested.”

But I speak not my own words when I say that God’s Spirit will pass by those who have had their day of test and opportunity, but who have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movements of His Spirit. Then thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.” Amos 9:13

These conversions to truth will be made with a rapidity that will surprise the church, and God’s name alone will be glorified.—Ellen G. White, Letter 43, 1890

Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. Deception will come, and of such a character that if it were possible it would mislead the very elect. If marked inconsistencies and untruthful utterances were apparent in these manifestations, the words from the lips of the Great Teacher would not be needed. It is because of the many and varied dangers that would arise, that this warning is given.

The reason I hang out the danger signal is that through the enlightenment of the Spirit of God I can see that which my brethren do not discern. It may not be a positive necessity for me to point out all these peculiar phases of deception that they will need to guard against. It is enough for me to tell you, Be on your guard; and as faithful sentinels keep the flock of God from accepting indiscriminately all that professes to be communicated to them from the Lord. If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage. Calmly and clearly “Preach the word.” We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement. The Holy Spirit of God alone can create a healthy enthusiasm. Let God work, and let the human agent walk softly before Him, watching, waiting, praying, looking unto Jesus every moment, led and controlled by the precious Spirit which is light and life.

—Ellen G. White, Letter 68, 1894

November 1986 Our Firm Foundation 27
The following account first appeared in the Pacific Union Recorder as a two-part article in the issues of June 6 and 13, 1912. Written by Elder John Loughborough, the piece is self-explanatory.

During the winter of 1861-62 I was laboring in the state of Michigan, in several new places; also organized some of the churches in the State. In council of the conference committee, in the spring of 1862, it was recommended that Moses Hull and I labor with the Michigan tent. This we did, using our tent in three places [from June 7 through September 7]. Brother J.D. Van Horn was our tent master, it being his first experience with the tent. In each of these places some souls were won to the truth.

Moses Hull had a debate with a Methodist minister in the tent at Charlotte, on the immortality question, which aided in settling many minds on that question. At both Ionia and Lowell he had debates with Spiritualists. The doctor with whom he debated at Ionia expected to meet someone who believed in the immortality of the soul. He was not prepared to meet the doctrine of the unconscious state of the dead. He stated publicly at the close of the debate that he was defeated, but said it was because the spirits left him, and helped Hull. The debate at Lowell was with S.P. Leland, a Spiritualist lecturer. This was a complete triumph for the truth, and resulted, shortly after, in Leland's renouncing Spiritualism and becoming a Christian.

The Lord surely helped Hull in the debate. But afterward it seemed to "turn his head," and he thought he would be a match for the Spiritualists anywhere. He engaged to debate with one Jaimeson, at Paw Paw, Michigan, a strong Spiritualist center, where there was no interest in the truth, and not one of our people to stand by him. On the other hand, the Spiritualists got some of their strongest mediums and sat in a circle around the speakers. Hull admitted to me afterward, how he went into that debate. He said: "I thought: Let them bring on their devils. I am enough for the whole of them. But when I arose to make my second speech, my tongue was seemingly as thick as my hand, and what I had often used before as argument, seemed to me like nonsense. I was defeated."

Jaimeson, who has since renounced Spiritualism and resides in Colorado, said of that debate to Brother States: "Hull was mesmerized, and I told him so there; for before the first day of the debate was over he came to me and said, 'I am all ready to go out and advocate Spiritualism.' I said to him: You are mesmerized. You do not know what you are about. You had better go home and think a while."

For two weeks after the Hull and Jaimeson debate at Paw Paw, Michigan, Hull, in Battle Creek, seemed like a man half "off his base." Finally he seemed to arouse to some sense of his condition. He got Brother and Sister White and Elder Cornell to come with him to my house in Battle Creek tent to talk and a praying season for him. This was on November 5, 1862. In the praying season Sister White was given a vision on his case, remaining on her knees during the entire vision. It was there decided for Hull to go with Brother and Sister White in meetings with our churches in Michigan. This he did, and measurably recovered himself from his sad condition.

In the spring it was decided by the General Conference Committee that Hull and I labor during the summer with the tent in [the] New England States. This would take him away from those who knew of his trials. It would also place him among those who knew not of his past experience, and give him a chance to recover himself if he would. On June 6, 1863, in the Otsego vision, his case was again shown to Sister White. What she saw in these two visions is found in volume one of the Testimonies, pages 426-483.

Hull and I left Battle Creek on June 2, 1863. As Hull spoke in these meetings on Bible truths he seemed like himself again. From July 10 to August 16 we held a tent meeting at North Newport, New Hampshire. Here more than a score accepted the truth, and were baptized. All seemed to go well until near the close of the meetings. Then Hull came to me with his "old doubts." We went off together into the woods for a praying season. He was relieved, and said he would take hold again in earnest.

We pitched the tent for a second series of meetings [but] toward the last, Hull's objections came upon him again in great force. In the evening of September 20 he gave his last discourse among Seventh-day Adventists. His text was Revelation 7:14, "Great Tribulation." He exhorted all to hold fast to the truth, and said: "If I should give up the whole truth, that would make no difference with you. Hold fast to the truth."

After meeting, he said to me, "I am going home to Logansville, Indiana, in the morning." On the morning of the twenty-first of September I went with him to the station. Just before taking the cars he said to me, "I am not going to preach any more." In six weeks from that time he was associating with the Spiritualists, and remained in their ranks to his death, which occurred in San Jose, California, in the spring of 1907.
Heart Worship,

Hero Worship

Dave Fiedler

CONSIDER FOR a moment: what is worship? As Christians, we are familiar with the injunction “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,” (Matthew 4:10) but what does it mean? Are “worship” and “serve” the same? Are they the same in your life? Should they be?

I fear that we sometimes live as though they were. Desiring to faithfully follow all the light we have, our eyes become focused on “service,” and “worship” seems to suffer. For, you see, there is a difference. While worship certainly includes service, true worship comes before true service—indeed, without it there is no true service.

The difficulty, of course, is testing the quality of our worship without falling into the trap of trying to generate true service in order to demonstrate that our worship is true. The similarity with the well-known relationship of faith and works is obvious, but please read on; we’ll be looking at it in a different, more practical light.

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that some aspects of “true service” just aren’t very appealing. This fact should be no surprise; even Christ prayed “Not my will, but thine be done.” The question of importance is not whether it is initially appealing, but whether or not we can learn to appreciate the appeal which is always a part of true service.

Here we walk a fine line. There are those who teach that we should never seek to obey if obedience does not spring forth spontaneously, effortlessly from within. Such teaching is obviously wrong—consider again the prayer of Christ.

On the other hand, there are those who practice (and even some who advocate) a continual

When truth is working only upon the conscience, it creates much uneasiness

When truth is working only upon the conscience, it creates much uneasiness; but when truth is invited into the heart, the whole being is brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Even the thoughts are captured, for the mind of Christ works where the will is submitted to the will of God.” Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. I, 324

“'When the truth is held as truth only by the conscience, when the heart is not stimulated and made receptive, the truth only agitates the mind. But when the truth is received by the heart, it has passed through the conscience and captivated the soul by its pure principles.” Ibid., 325

The problem so many of us face is that certain points of truth and duty have never found their way to our hearts. Our consciences trouble us, we suffer from uneasiness and our minds are agitated, but our hearts too often remain unaffected.

Even those whose lives are completely surrendered to their Lord in the morning may find by evening that He requires something new of them. A duty never before presented, or a test of character pressed closer home perhaps. In this they may find no appeal, but they need not fail. Their love for Christ, though not yet extended to a love for this requirement, can carry them through. They can choose, as did Christ before them, “Thy will, not mine, be done.”

But the good news is that they needn’t pass on forever placing such a continual strain upon their relationship with Christ. They too, as Christ before them, may truthfully say “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8

“Within my heart.” Isn’t it amazing how inspired sources agree? Ah, but the question remains, how does it come about that the love of an unappealing, self-denying duty should find its way into an individual’s heart? The Lord promises to put His law “in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” (Jeremiah 31:33) but again we must ask,
what does this mean? How, and when, does He do this? Is it done all at once? What part does the individual play in the process? Does it happen without his knowledge? with his knowledge, but without his cooperation? or with both knowledge and cooperation?

Great scholarly debate on this point has filled many more pages than available here. Some people honestly seem to be confused on the matter. Two key texts, and three simple quotations should be enough to resolve the question:

"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:12, 13

"As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law." Review and Herald, October 13, 1904

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The and that is to reveal God in character, and submit the whole heart to the sanctification of the truth." Review and Herald, October 8, 1895

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Corinthians 3:18

The Case Thus Far

1. The writing of God's law upon our hearts is not done without our knowledge: the individual has sought Him, and He has opened his eyes to see the law.

2. Further, the individual must "consent" and "submit" to this work. While these terms both suggest a secondary rather than a primary role, they do require intelligent cooperation.

3. Obedience can indeed become "pleasant," even producing the "highest delight."

4. The whole process is tied to "finding," "seeing," "beholding" and "knowing" Christ.

The Real Problem

Now we are ready to deal with the real problem which so many Adventists, and especially young Adventists, face: Christ Himself is not appealing to us.

Not That's not true! we may tell ourselves, but inspiration says so, and in our hearts we know it is true. We feel somewhat more comfortable acknowledging that certain duties are not to our liking. But to admit that we really don't like Jesus Himself—why, that would almost make us non-Christian, or worse yet, apostates.

Still the fact remains that inspiration ties the two so closely that they can never be separated. Christ is the embodiment of Christian duty, and if we knew Him "as it is our privilege," we would find our highest delight in obedience.

Do you, in your inmost heart, know this to be true? Do you see the impossibility of truly knowing Christ while He "stands at the door and knocks"? Do you find Jesus disturbingly unattractive? Take heart, there is a balm for your agitated mind, a cure for the uneasy soul.

Of course, the answer is Christ. Not a Christ of the mind and the conscience alone, but a Christ of the heart. Which leads us back to a consideration of "true worship."

Our worship services, be they in church or at home, as a group or as individuals, too often are

He needs to find a source of inspiration, a pattern to follow—he needs a Hero

adapted only to appeal to the mind. Sensing this problem, we sometimes turn to emotionalism to fill the void, but emotionalism is not what we need. Rather, we need to appeal to what the heart finds attractive.

Traditional Christian virtues are not necessarily appealing to all. Some, their minds and hearts influenced by the prevailing drift of worldly society—through television, for example—may find little to admire in the character of Christ. But just that little is all that is needed to begin.

Imagine, for example, a hardened man. Long years of coarseness and crudity have driven from him all appreciation of refinement and tenderness. These virtues, so much a part of the life of Jesus, awaken no response in his heart. But there is yet hope. Agitated and uneasy, mind and conscience drive him to the Lord.

What he needs to find is a source of inspiration, a pattern to follow. What he needs is—dare I say it—a hero. And this he may easily find by looking first at Christ's exemplification of a virtue which he can easily admire. He turns to the gospels and reads of a Man who was always one step
ahead of His mortal foes. A Man whose self-possession and personal demeanor were enough to silence His enemies. He sees One wilder than "learned doctors" of the day. One always able to detect and defuse their subtle plots. He reads of attempt after attempt to entrap and humiliate this Man called Christ, but not once could His enemies get the best of Him.

These qualities he can admire, they strike a chord of appreciation in his darkened heart. He hears notes of strength, an uninterrupted melody of perfect control amid the surging discord of conflict. But the effect does not cease there.

It is impossible to separate the melody of strength from the beautiful harmony of tenderness. He finds that this Man of power was also a Man of incredible kindness. Before long he realizes that the Christ of strength could never have existed apart from the Christ of love. And a heart in which the gentler virtues found no place is slowly, almost imperceptibly opened for the first time to their influence.

This hardened man—or, perhaps, this hardened teen-ager—has found his Lord and Master. He has found his Hero. As surely as the teen-ager with green and orange hair naturally conforms to the pattern of evil held constantly before his admiring eyes, so will this man come to reflect the image of Christ.

The perfect life of Christ is source enough for admiration from any heart. And the perfect blend of all good exemplified there is sufficient to soften the rough and hardened, to give firmness and strength to the naturally weak and vacillating, to work the perfect restoration of every soul who will allow his admiration for some good to lead him to a love for all good.

We have had enough of uneasiness and agitation, and far too little of true heart worship. We have distanced ourselves too far from the reality of Jesus Christ, and have seen Him only as Teacher, Master, Lord. It is time now that we learn to hold Him close to both mind and heart as our Hero of Holiness.

Do not seek to generate a heart love for One barely known to you. Instead learn of Him as the highest exemplification of the qualities appealing to your heart. If you do not find your ideals portrayed in His life, allow mind and conscience to teach you your error. But neglect not your heart. Search again the pages of the gospel—you will find there the full display of whatever true virtue you admire. Let His example fill your mind. Choose Him as your Hero and be done with agitation and uneasiness.

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