A Distinctive Profile

I Alone

"Holiness"—Highway To Heaven?

Why Peter Failed

The Right Arm At Work

Knocking Still, see page 8
DURING ALL the years the church has been boasting of her progress and prosperity in increased members, facilities, institutions and worldwide mission enterprises, the Lord through the spirit of prophecy has been rebuking the members of the church for their sins and backslidings: for the loss of their first love which has resulted in lukewarmness and spiritual poverty. The reproof has not been understood or appreciated by those under the Laodicean deception, and, therefore the Testimonies have been practically set aside and by many virtually rejected. Not being able to understand the manifest contradiction between the attitude of the church and the prophetic agency of the movement through whom God speaks, many church members have the tendency to question the authority of the latter and to conclude that God's prophet was much too pessimistic.

Here is the reason for the Laodicean condition. The church has mistaken material prosperity for spiritual progress, as the evidence of the presence of God and the favor of heaven. The purpose of the Laodicean message is to correct this false impression and to show that God reckons prosperity from the viewpoint of spiritual life and growth. Material prosperity will of course follow the presence and blessing of God as in apostolic days, but it is the result and not the cause of the Divine favor. The history of many ancient and modern false religious movements proves that material prosperity of itself is meaningless. To learn this lesson is one of the greatest needs of the Advent people, for on it depends our eternal destiny.

The retreat is in regard to spiritual and not material things. "The work has been extended so that it now covers a large territory, and the number of believers has increased. Still there is a great deficiency, for a larger work might have been accomplished had the same missionary spirit been manifested as in earlier days. Without this spirit the laborer will only mar and deface the cause of God. The work is really retrograding instead of advancing as God designs it should. Our present numbers and the extent of our work are not to be compared with what they were in the beginning. We should consider what might have been done had every worker consecrated himself in soul, body, and spirit, to God as he should have done." Testimonies, vol. 6, 420 (1900)

"If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the college, that is a test of its prosperity. 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, 31, 32

Following a description of material prosperity and display in religious worship when godliness is lacking, we read: "But in all this God is not honored. He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. . . . A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without attractions of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship." Prophets and Kings, 565, 566

The following statement is a comment on Revelation 3:20 and shows that as long as Christ is kept outside the door He is not in the midst of Zion and He is excluded from His own temple: "The church is in the Laodicean state. The presence of God is not in her midst. . . . "What a terrible thing it is to exclude Christ from His own temple! What a loss to the church!

"Our Redeemer sends His messengers to bear a testimony to His people. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me.' But many refuse to receive Him, because they fear that He will be an expensive guest. The Holy Spirit waits to soften and subdue hearts, but they are not willing to open the door and let the Saviour in; for they fear that He will require something from them. And so Jesus of Nazareth passes by. He longs to bestow on them His rich blessings and gifts of grace, but they refuse to accept them." Notebook Leaflets, 99

It is with great concern, not with criticism, that these facts are pointed out. We have tried to let the inspired Testimony speak, and not man.

It is very evident that there is something vitally wrong with all of us. From leadership to laity we are forced to confess that we are still here after over one hundred years of trying to finish the work and that we are farther from reaching our goal than we have ever been.

We pray that all who read this paper will be led to a closer walk with Jesus, and that our eyes may be opened to see our Laodicean condition before we are spewed out of God's mouth.

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. If you desire notice of a decision in regard to 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.
This chapter is clearly a case study, set before us in such specific detail that we sense that it is intended to be definitive—but of what?

Two main suggestions have been offered by Christian writers through the centuries:

1. The man of Romans 7 is the unregenerate, unconverted man, whose heart is naturally in rebellion against God and His holy law. Since we have no reason to believe that Paul was ever in this rebellious condition, it is proposed that Paul was simply identifying himself with the rebellious, unregenerate man for purposes of communication, just as preachers often do now. (or)

2. The man of Romans 7 is Paul himself in his regenerate, converted experience, after he has come to know Christ. It therefore proves that victory over temptation and sin are not available to Christians in this life. If Paul could not stop sinning, even through the power of Christ, it is certain that no one else can stop sinning.

The problem that we encounter as we consider these two alternatives is that neither is easy to defend. Neither bears up very well under investigation.

If we prefer the first option, that the man of Romans 7 is the unregenerate, unconverted, rebellious sinner, we have difficulty answering questions like these:

Do unregenerate sinners confess that God's law is holy, just, and...
good (verse 12)?

Do such men acknowledge that the law is spiritual, but “I am carnal” (verse 14)?

Do unregenerate men plead that it is not by themselves that the evil is done (verse 17)?

Do unregenerate men will to do good (verse 18)?

Do unregenerate men say, “The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do” (verse 19)?

Do unregenerate men say, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (verse 22)?

It would be difficult to answer yes to any of these questions. In our human experience we do not hear unregenerate men praising God’s holy law. They are more likely to curse it. Neither do they admit that God’s law is spiritual but that they are carnal. They tend to be defensive about their condition. They do not hate the evil they do; they rather love it. They do not will to do good; they will to do evil. And they certainly do not “delight in the law of God after the inward man.” They hate the law, they feel condemned by it, and they fear it. Those of us who have lived in an unregenerate condition realize that Paul’s word picture would not correctly describe our experience.

cussion say, “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Romans 8:7)?

Why would Paul say, “I am sold under sin” (verse 14) and in the same discussion say, “being then made free from sin” (Romans 6:18)?

Why would Paul say that he found it impossible to stop doing the evil that he hated (verses 15-23) and in the same discussion write “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4)?

Why would Paul describe himself as being “in captivity to the law of sin” (verse 23) and in the same discussion write “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness” (Romans 6:22)?

Turning the abstract discussion to real life, are we to believe that Paul wanted to quit swearing, but couldn’t; that he wanted to quit stealing, but couldn’t; that he wanted to quit committing adultery, but couldn’t? Or even that he wanted to quit imagining himself doing these things, but couldn’t? How then could he write in 2 Corinthians 10:5: “Casting down imaginations . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”?

Why would Paul say, “I am sold under sin” and in the same discussion say, “being then made free from sin”?

So, finding it difficult to defend the first option, that the man of Romans 7 is the unconverted, unregenerate man who lives in rebellion against God, we turn to consider the second, that the man of Romans 7 is the converted, regenerate Christian man who finds that although he is in Christ he still cannot stop sinning.

We quickly find problems. How shall we answer queries like these?

Why would Paul say, “I am carnal” (verse 14) and in the same dis-

If we widen the context to include all of Paul’s writings, we are impressed by the absence of defeatism and the note of victory that pervades them. Space limitations preclude the listing here of all of Paul’s victory texts, but a representative sampling might include:

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Galatians 2:20

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Ephesians 3:20

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Ephesians 4:23, 24

(See also 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5; Galatians 5:16, 20–25; Ephesians 2:1–6; Ephesians 5:25, 27; Ephesians 6:10–17; Philippians 2:13.)

So we find that the second choice, that the man of Romans 7 is the converted, regenerate Christian, i.e., Paul himself, is also difficult to defend. Is there nothing else?

Fortunately, there is. We are not limited to these two choices. A third suggestion has been made: that the man of Romans 7 is neither the unregenerate rebel against God, nor yet the converted, regenerate Christian, but is the man “under law,” the Jew who wants to do God’s will but does not accept Christ; just such a man as Paul was before his experience on the Damascus road. Paul can write about this man as “I” with precise accuracy, because he is describing such an experience as he himself had before he knew Christ. Although it does not describe his present experience, he empathizes and identifies himself with this man and his predicament as indicated in 1 Corinthians 9:20:

“And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.”

We will do well to remember that in Paul’s world view all human beings were divided into three groups: those without law, those under law, and those under grace, (also described as under the law to Christ.) (Compare 1 Corinthians 9:20, 21 with Romans 6:15, Galatians 4:4, 5, and Galatians 5:18.)

Those without law were the pagan, unregenerate rebels against God; those under law were the Jews who professed to be doing God’s
will while rejecting Christ; and those under grace were those from either pagan or Jewish backgrounds who had accepted Christ.

We find this third position much less vulnerable than the other two. We have no trouble with either the characterization or the description. A man, we judge, who would try to do God’s will without a relationship with Christ would be likely to have such an experience as Paul sets forth. We do not find ourselves struggling to harmonize apparent discrepancies or contradictions in either the immediate context of Romans or the larger context of Paul’s other writings.

We do have one question, but, as was suggested earlier, it can be readily answered by an examination of Paul’s words in the original language. The question is this:

Paul’s long and graphic description of the man who wants to do God’s will but finds it impossible to succeed reaches its climax in Romans 7:24: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

In the first part of verse 25 there is a response, in answer to the question: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Then the last part of verse 25 presents a thought that calls for reflection: “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

This is an easy and natural conclusion to the entire line of thought that has been presented. But our question is about its relation to the words just preceding: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Those who believe that the man of Romans 7 is the regenerate Christian see these words as their strongest evidence. They feel the proof is here provided that Paul is writing about his own experience as a Christian, able to serve God’s law with his mind, but unable to stop sinning in his real life experience.

Those, however, who believe that the man of Romans 7 is the man who tries to do God’s will while rejecting Christ see the words “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” as parenthetical, a spontaneous outburst of praise which interrupts Paul’s line of thought, to which he returns immediately.

Is it possible to know which of these two understandings is correct? Yes. An examination of a few words in the original language will answer our question satisfactorily. This is the passage under consideration, the last part of verse 25: “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Let us begin with the subject of the sentence, the two words I myself. These two words fall a bit short of expressing the full meaning of the words from which they are translated. The two Greek words are ego autos. The first word, ego, means simply I. But what about autos? It has considerably more meaning than the English self. Let us observe the definitions given in several Greek-English lexicons:

Romans 7:25 for an example, give as the true meaning in this context, of ego autos: “Thrown on my own resources, I can only serve the law of God as a slave, with my mind.” (Emphasis supplied)

So the words ego autos, I alone, would never be used to describe the experience that is pictured in such passages as Galatians 2:20: “Christ liveth in me;” Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;” Ephesians 4:23: “The power that worketh in us.” Romans 8:10: “His spirit that dwelleth in you.”

These experiential Pauline expressions are all the precise opposites of ego autos in that they speak of the resources of Christ which are made available to the believer, whereas ego autos means

This is emphatically not the experience of the Christian who does all things in the spiritual realm in and with and through the power of Christ

“Self: intensive, setting the word it modifies off from everything else, emphasizing and contrasting.” — Gingrich

“Self, as used to distinguish a person or thing from or contrast it with another.” — Thayer

“Of oneself, by oneself, alone.” — Lidell and Scott

“Of oneself, of one’s own motion, alone.” — Greenfield

Ego autos, then, would never be used to describe a joint effort or action, or a co-operative relationship between two persons. It means, emphatically, I alone. In the context of Romans 7 it means I without Christ. Paul is saying: “I alone, without Christ, with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

This harmonizes perfectly with the view that in the entire chapter he is describing the experience of the man who is not a rebel against God, but is trying to do God’s will while rejecting Christ. Arndt and Gingrich, in a definition that uses

thrown on my own resources, I alone. They speak of togetherness, the united life and effort of the Christian with Christ; ego autos speaks of individual, solitary life and effort.

The action is always individual, as distinct from the actions or assistance of others; so when Paul says ego autos in Romans 7:25, his meaning is: “I, on my own resources. I without Christ, I alone, with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

This is emphatically not the experience of the regenerate man, the Christian who does all things in the spiritual realm in and with and through the power of Christ.

We now turn to another expression in verse 25, and the two words so then: “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

The first two words of the sentence in Greek are ara own. Again we establish quickly the meaning of the first word, ara, which is simply
Paul identifies himself with this unfortunate man, as if it were his own predicament, as indeed it once had been

Neither of these suppositions seems likely. What then?
Returning to our lexicons, we note with interest that they give a second major usage of the word *ou*, and they agree as to its meaning. They say that *ou* is used:

"To connect a discourse after a digression." — Donnegan

"To resume an interrupted subject." — Follett

"When a speech has been interrupted by parenthetic clauses *ou* serves to take it up again." — Lidell and Scott

"To resume a subject once more after an interruption." — Arndt and Gingrich

"To resume a thought or subject interrupted by intervening matter." — Thayer

"(Ou is used) where a sentence has been interrupted by a parenthesis or intervening clauses, and is taken up again." — Robinson

"To mark the resumption of a discourse after an interruption by parentheses." — Moulton

that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law." 1 Corinthians 9:20. Paul identifies himself with this unfortunate man, as if it were his own predicament, as indeed it once had been. His description continues and builds through verses 22 and 23 of Romans 7: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

At this point the intensity of his feelings, combined with his actual personal knowledge of the frustration of the poor man, cause him to burst out in a question and answer which interrupt the line of thought: "(O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.)"

Then, realizing that his line of thought has been interrupted, he advises the reader of this fact, as well as of his intention to return to his line of thought, by using the word *ou*. *Ou* is used to return to a line of thought that has been interrupted. Having taken this precaution, he uses the words that should be unmistakably clear to indicate that he is still talking about the same person who is trying unsuccessfully to do God's will apart from Christ: the two words *ego autos*. I alone, thrown on my own resources.

A faithful translation of this last part of verse 25 would look like this: "So then (to return to my line of thought, which was interrupted), I alone with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Moffat's translation of the New Testament indicates the sense of *ego autos* like this: "Thus, left to myself, I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."

And lest the English reader fail to understand the full meaning of *ou*, this translation places the above verse before the interruption, instead of after it.¹

*Ego autos*, then, I alone, is definitely not the secret of success. That which is done through power supplied by God could not be described by the words *ego autos*. The believer who fails to recognize his need of the forgiving and enabling grace of Christ is doomed to frustration and defeat in the Christian life. This is the message of Romans 7. It is a warning message, sounding its clarion call across the centuries, telling us that we must never be found in the attitude of *ego autos*: I alone.


Taken from _The Word Was Made Flesh_, 351–364. We recommend this book as an invaluable aid to understanding the historic teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the subject of the human nature of Christ.—Editors
Knocking Still

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

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

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

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

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

Aimlessly Drifting

By our rejection of the Laodicean message we have been in a wilderness experience, just as Israel
was in the days of Moses and Joshua. Just as they wandered aimlessly about in the wilderness while they were under the divine rebuke, so modern Israel are said to be “drifting” as though they were “without chart or compass.”

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

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

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

“Like ancient Israel the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character. Her members have violated their covenant to live for God and Him only. They have joined with the selfish and world-loving. Pride, the love of pleasure, and sin have been cherished, and Christ has departed. His Spirit has been quenched in the church. Satan works side by side with professed Christians; yet they are so destitute of spiritual discernment that they do not detect him. They have not the burden of the work. The solemn truths they profess to believe are not a reality to them. They have not genuine faith.

“Men and women will act out all the faith which they in reality possess. By their fruits ye shall know them. Not their profession, but the fruit they bear, shows the character of the tree. Many have a form of godliness, their names are upon the church records; but they have a spotted record in heaven. The recording angel has faithfully written their deeds. Every selfish act, every wrong word, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling, is faithfully chronicled in the book of records kept by the recording angel.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 441, 442

“God has not changed toward His faithful servants who are keeping their garments spotless. But many are crying, ‘Peace and safety,’ while sudden destruction is coming upon them. Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing.

“Who can truthfully say: ‘Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unsotted by the world’? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: ‘Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character?’ “How is the faithful city become an harlot!” My Father’s house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.’

“Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives.” Ibid., vol. 8, 250, 251

“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 counsels. The temple courts were polluted with merchandise and robbery. Selfishness and love of mammon, envy and strife, were cherished. Everyone sought for gain from his quarter. Christ turned from them, saying: ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,’ how can I give thee up? ‘How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!’ Matthew 23:37

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The warnings come down to all that are following the people of Jerusalem
“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 Battle Creek, which has been moving in the same track as Jerusalem. The publishing house has been turned into desecrated shrines, into a place of unholy merchandise and traffic. It has become a place where injustice and fraud have been carried on, where selfishness, malice, envy, and passion have borne sway. Yet the men who have been led into this working upon wrong principles are seemingly unconscious of their wrong course of action. When warnings and entreaties come to them, they say: "Doth she not speak in parables?" Words of warning and reproof have been treated as idle tales.

“When Christ looked down from the crest of Olivet, He saw this state of things existing in every church. The warnings come down to all that are following in the tread of the people of Jerusalem, who had such great light. This people is before us as a warning. By rejecting God’s warnings in this our day, men are repeating the sin of Jerusalem. The Lord sees what the human agent does not see and will not see—the outcome of all the human devising in Battle Creek. He has done all that a God could do. He has flashed light before the eyes of the people, that their sins might not reach the boundary where repentance cannot be felt. But by a long process of departure from just and righteous principles, men have placed themselves where light and truth, justice and mercy, are not discerned. This course has become part of their very nature.” Ibid., 67, 68

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

The Laocidian message is here called “the rebuke of God,” and Laocidians are said to be “walking apart from Christ.”

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

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

Our Only Hope

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

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

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

To apply the eyesalve so that we can see our wretchedness now in this crisis hour, to accept our present blindness, and repent is our only hope. We are told “few” Seventh-day Adventists will endure to the end and be saved. What a tragedy! See Testimonies, vol. 5, 10, 50, 136; vol. 8, 41; vol. 1, 698, 699.
May God help us to bring life back to our churches soon. Yes, now.

A Cure for Laodicea

God tells us how reformation can be a reality now:

“...and shall make you a strong city: a high tower of defense, to be called the trefoil of salvation. Proverbs 25:11

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

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

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Revelation 3:5

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What a blessing Our Firm Foundation, as well as your tapes from Hope International, have been to my family! I feel as though they are methods the Lord is using to give many spiritual eyesalve.

I am a nursing instructor at the community college in Pendleton, Oregon. One month ago I was to present the concept of “holistic” medicine. I utilized materials directly from the August 1986 special edition on Spiritualism as well as from other issues in talking about how Satan has infiltrated medicine (the medical field) and the New Age Movement.

The article “Mind Cure” by Ellen White was run off at our college audio-visual department and a copy was handed out to each nursing student. Please pray that the students’ hearts will be touched by the Holy Spirit.

Patrick Smart
Milton Freewater, Oregon

Thanks so much for adhering firmly to truth in your ministry. The periodical you publish is meat from cover to cover. It’s refreshing and soul-satisfying. Continue to preach the Word and publish it.

Robert Nordman
Citrus Heights, California

Your magazine is a spiritual blessing in our home and we thank you very much. My wish is that it would be enjoyed in every Adventist home as it is in our home. My husband and I read every word and enjoy sharing what we have read.

My heart aches over the lack of interest in Ellen White, spiritual growth, importance of educating our youth, etc., that I see around me.

Marlin and Mary Ellen Walter
Quakertown, Pennsylvania

Your “Power of Music” articles have been very much appreciated and especially by the younger folk here. I used to be a drummer in a rock band and is sharing the message of the evils of such music by letter, tape and of course your magazine with, we hope, good results.

Yes, we believe in a “Call to Arms,” and we’d best prepare now. I hope that we will be faithful soldiers but we need to start now.

Val Nelson
Victoria, Australia

I’m enjoying the magazine Our Firm Foundation and the books and tapes you have sent me. My faith is stronger in the Lord. I used to believe we couldn’t be like Christ, but now I believe we can have perfect characters through Christ and His Spirit. May God richly bless you in the coming year.

Tom Baker
Loma Linda, California

I thank God I tuned in to your teaching and panel discussion on the subject of “To Be Born Again,” I am a Christian and was baptized at the age of fifteen.

I am happy to know that your TV program comes on once a week. I watched today, June 9. I must say the members present at that particular discussion were men of great faith. I need to know their names and background so that I may get some books written by these men, if I may. Send me the magazine Truth For Today as soon as possible.

George and Jeanne Than-Win
Cincinnati, Ohio

July 1987 Our Firm Foundation 11
“Holiness” Highway To Heaven?

Dave Fiedler

It SHOULD be remembered that not all that is known as "holiness" is to be desired. This is especially true in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. While there is no danger of confusion when taken in context, this fact may be surprising to some. An example will help.

"By the letters enclosed you will learn that Brethren [C.F.] Hawkins and [S.] McCullagh, who were laboring in Adelaide, have given up their position on the truth and are going in for holiness altogether. They have come out against the testimonies of the Spirit of the Lord."¹

No one reading such a statement would believe that Ellen White was referring to the genuine article when she spoke of "holiness." Sometimes she makes the point more obvious by the use of an adjective, such as "spurious" in this example:

"My soul is made very sad to see how quickly those who have had light and truth will accept the deceptions of Satan, and be charmed with a spurious holiness, like Fannie Bolton, who in the midst of her deceiving, claimed that she was inspired of God."²

That there is a false as well as a true holiness is clear. The difficulty seems to be in telling them apart. Yet no such perplexity should exist, for the distinctions are plainly revealed in precept and example all through the pages of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The problem is attributable to the power of the human heart to deceive and confuse itself. As Jeremiah warned long ago, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

This being the case, we may expect to face this question until the last traces of sin are forever banished from the universe.

The early years of Ellen White's work were largely absorbed with the task of correcting erroneous views of sanctification and holiness. These included the well-known extremes of crawling about-on hands and knees (to demonstrate that the believers had "become as little children") and doing away with all physical labor (in honor of the sabbath rest of the "millennium").

We look back now from our position of relative sophistication, and marvel that anything so absurd could deceive anyone. And the devil has taken note: his tactics have matured with the years. No longer are such childish snares laid before his prey. The question to be pondered now is, Have his prey taken note?

Today on every side we hear those who deny that holiness is attainable. Their position is made stronger and more plausible by every false form of fictitious faith exhibited by those who err on the opposite end of the issue. The wavering and undecided are disgusted by the extremes to which some have gone, and easily conclude that the more normal "evangelical" view is preferable to that of the "conservative extremists."

We need to remember that—no matter what a person's viewpoint of the issue may be—we owe them the courtesy of believing in their sincerity until they prove themselves deceitful. Note Ellen White's comment on one such experience:

"Men and women, supposed to be guided by the Holy Spirit, held meetings in a state of nudity. They talked about holy flesh. They said they were beyond the power of temptation, and they sang, and shouted, and made all manner of noisy demonstrations. These men and women were not bad, but they were deceived and deluded. . . . Satan was moulding the work, and sensuality was the result."³

These men and women were not bad, but they were deceived

Again, we might draw back in surprise and marvel that anyone could be led to such obvious lengths of blasphemy and sin. But in all probability these people were very much like you and me. The difference was the deception. The lesson should be clear, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12
Clearly we have every good reason to be cautious about what teachings of “holiness” we espouse. Fortunately the Lord has given sufficient guidelines that none need be confused.

"Under the discipline of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, Christians must move onward and upward toward perfection. This is God’s command, and no one should say, I cannot do it. He should say instead, God requires me to be perfect, and He will give me strength to overcome all that stands in the way of perfection. He is the source of all wisdom, all power.

"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; . . . as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." I Peter 1:13, 15, 16.

"These words are to be believed and practiced. Christians are to be superior in wisdom, in knowledge, in skill, because they believe in God and His power. The Lord desires them to reach the highest round of the ladder, that they may glorify Him.

"Overcoming means much more than we realize. It means resisting the enemy and drawing nigh to God. It means taking up the cross and following Christ, doing cheerfully those things that are contrary to natural inclination. Christ came from heaven to show us how to live a life of self-sacrifice. In His strength we are to gain perfection. He has made it possible for us to do this, and when He comes the second time, He will ask us why we have not fulfilled His purpose for us.

"No compromise with sin can ever be accepted by a pure and holy God. No conversion is genuine that does not radically change the heart, the character, every line of conduct. ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,’ 2 Corinthians 5:17. Not a moment should be wasted on a patchwork religion." 4

Multitudes fall short of salvation by an unwillingness to accept the strength of God for obedience. More yet deny that He requires us to overcome. Both positions are a tragic mistake. But this is only one side of the devil’s sophistry. It is beneath his intelligence and ambition to be content with only one pitfall for unwary souls. When the first lie is recognized as such, would we suppose he has nothing ready to take its place? What of those who long for Christlikeness? Who recognize the binding authority of God’s law? Has he no deception prepared for them?

The devil learned the art of salesmanship long ago. He invented and still practices its number one tenet: tell the people what they want to hear.

To the earnest seeker after holiness no message is more to be desired than the commendation of their Lord. When Satan gains access to the mind, turns aside the testimony of Scripture, and whispers undue words of approval to one longing for just such a message, the destruction of the soul is all too often ensured.

Such messages will come in varied forms. A.T. Jones once received a letter from Ellen White which gives a glimpse of Satan’s adaptive strategy: "Do you remember the counsel which I gave you in my letter of April 1894? This was in answer to your letter expressing deep regret over the part you had taken in an unwise movement [his public endorsement of the union]."

Not a moment should be wasted on a patchwork religion

... and you appealed to me for instruction, that you might ever avoid such mistakes. Here is a portion of what I wrote you then:"

"Your letter is received, and I would be glad to satisfy your mind on every point, but that is not in my power. While I can speak to you in words of warning, you may ask many questions that it is not my duty or in my power to answer. I can tell you, and all our teachers of faith and doctrine, Stick to the Word. ‘Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.’ But never, never make a place for A.T. Jones. Guard this point jealously.

Their testimony will cause the sweet Spirit of Christ to withdraw

"My brother, I do not cease to remember you in my prayers. You were never in greater peril than at the present time. You are giving the last message of warning to our world, and Satan will weave his nets to entangle your feet if you are not praying, and watching, and relying every moment upon God to keep you and strengthen you to resist temptation. Your soul is in peril. Should I specify the particular temptations, Satan would shift his operations and prepare some temptation you are not expecting.” 5

Satan is too ingenious to use an easily recognized tactic. When tempting a good, law-abiding, Seventh-day Adventist conservative, he would never directly attack the law of God. But if he could plant seeds of pride in the midst of a system that professed to honor the law, his purpose would be well served.

"There are those claiming sanctification who make a profession of the truth, like their brethren, and it may be difficult to make a distinction between them; but the difference exists, nevertheless. The testimony of those claiming such an exalted experience will cause the sweet Spirit of Christ to withdraw from a meeting, and will leave a chilling influence upon those present, while if they were truly living
We may always be startled and indignant when we hear, "I am holy"

view of His greatness and majesty, has ever uttered one word like this. . . . How can anyone who is brought before the holy standard of God's law, which makes apparent the evil motives, the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips, and that lays bare the life—make any boast of holiness?"17

True to form, the devil has altered his bait. Unchanged in content and effect, it wears a fresh new exterior that appeals to some poor souls. We hear today, not "I am holy," but rather, "God has broken forever the power of sin in my life." In this it is assumed that all praise and honor is given to the Lord; after all, they do not claim that they have of themselves broken the power of sin. Nor, we are assured, the work is of God, but it is our duty to confess it before men.

"No one who claims holiness is really holy. Those who are registered as holy in the books of heaven are not aware of the fact, and are the last ones to boast of their own goodness. None of the prophets and apostles ever professed holiness, not even Daniel, Paul, or John. The righteous never make such a claim."18

In reality such a claim gives no honor to God. It is either a claim of omniscience on the sinner's part or a claim that the Lord's chosen method of salvation has failed and is now altered. In asserting that the power of sin is "forever broken," it appears that the human agent states that he knows the future, that he of himself can guarantee that his choice to accept the power of God to provide victory in the life will never be reversed, that his hold on the hand of Christ will never slacken. If not, it can only mean that salvation is no longer dependent upon human choice, that after nearly 6000 years of earnest warfare to preserve the power of choice for His earthly subjects, the Lord has abandoned His stated objectives. Salvation is now awarded on some other ground; what this may be we are left to speculate for ourselves.

Such sentiments, little contemplated amid the emotional climate of a stirring message of "victory," have been voiced by many who are every bit as sincere as the deluded ones of former ages. But we shudder for the fruit of this teaching.

"There is another matter upon my mind about which I must speak to you. I have often been warned against over-stretched ideas of sanctification. They lead to an objectionable feature of experience that will swamp us unless we are wide awake.

"Extreme views of sanctification which lead men to suppose they are appointed to criticize and condemn their brethren are to be feared and shunned.

"During the General Conference of 1901, the Lord warned me against sentiments that were being gathered and then held by Brethren Prescott and [E.J.] Waggoner. Instruction was given me that these sentiments received have been as leaven put into meal. Many minds have received them. The ideas of some regarding a great experience, called and supposed to be sanctification, have been the alpha of a train of deception which will deceive and ruin the souls of those who receive them. Because of some overdrawn expressions frequently used by Brother E.J. Waggoner at the conference, I was led to speak words intended to counteract their influence. . . . Satan is surely presenting some false theories which you must not receive. Elders Waggoner and Prescott are out of the way."19

"May the Lord impart to us His own light. The doctrine of a wonderful experience of holiness and sanctification that has been taught in Battle Creek and other places has been as leaven put into meal. I fear greatly for the results of this fanaticism. The experiences we passed through in the early days of the message have always led me to feel, when I see men professing to occupy a high platform of righteousness, that something will follow of which we should be ashamed, something that will work harm."20

The Lord knows we are in need of holiness among us as a people. Let us work and pray that holiness may abound. But let us leave the accounting to God. He knows far better than we.

"When you come to Christ you will not boast, 'I am holy.' Let God, alone, say that of you, for you know not your own heart. This boast is sure evidence that you know not the Scriptures nor the power of God. Let God write in His books, if He will, that you are an obedient child, keeping His statutes with a cheerful heart, and the records will reveal it before angels and men at the day of reward.

"I have never dared to say, 'I am holy, I am sinless,' but whatever I have thought was the will of God. I have tried to do with all my heart, and I have the sweet peace of God in my soul."21

"The attitude of Paul is the attitude to be taken by every one of the followers of Christ; for we are ever to be urging our way, striving lawfully for the crown of immortality. Not one may claim to be perfect. Let the recording angels write
Food for Thought

EXPERIENCE is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to book knowledge. But habits and customs gird men and women as with iron bands, and they are generally justified by experience, according to the common understanding of experience. Very many have abused precious experience. They have clung to their injurious habits, which are decidedly enfeebling to physical, mental, and moral health, and when you seek to instruct them, they sanction their course by referring to their experience. But true experience is in harmony with natural law and science.

Here is where we have met with the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths brought before the mind, sustained by the Word of God; but the ear and heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is "my experience." Some will say, The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error. "My experience" is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected for what they are pleased to style experience. Many of the grossest habits are cherished, with the plea of experience. Many fail to reach that physical, intellectual, and moral improvement it is their privilege and duty to attain, because they will contend for the reliability and safety of their experience, although that misjudged experience is opposed to the plainest revealed facts. Men and women, with constitution and health gone because of their wrong habits and customs, will be found recommending their experience, which has robbed them of vitality and health, as safe for others to follow. Very many examples might be given to show how men and women have been deceived in relying upon their experience.

Men and women, in the face of the most positive commands of God, will follow their own inclination, and then dare to pray over the matter, to prevail upon God to consent to allow them to go contrary to His expressed will. God is not pleased with such prayers. Satan comes to this side, as he did to Eve in Eden, and impresses them, and they have an exercise of mind, and this they relate as a most wonderful experience which the Lord has given them. A true experience will be in perfect harmony with natural and divine law. False experience will array itself against science and the principles of Jehovah. The religious world is covered with a pall of moral darkness. Superstition and bigotry control the minds of men and women, and blind their judgment, so that they do not discern their duty to their fellowmen, and their duty to yield unquestioned obedience to the will of God.

Balaam inquired of God if he might curse Israel, because in so doing he had the promise of great reward. God said, Ye shall not go; but he was urged by the messengers, and greater inducements were presented. Balaam had been shown the will of the Lord in this matter, but he was so eager for the reward that he ventured to ask God the second time. The Lord permitted Balaam to go. Then he had a wonderful experience; but who would wish to be guided by such an experience as that of Balaam? There are those who would understand their duty clearly if their duty was in harmony with their natural inclinations. Circumstances and reason may indicate clearly their duty, but when against their natural inclination, these evidences are frequently set aside. Then these persons will presume to go to God to learn their duty. But God will not be trifled with. He will permit such persons to follow the desires of their own hearts. Psalm 81:11,12: "But my people would not harken to my voice; . . . so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."

Those who are desirous to follow a course which pleases their fancy, are in danger of being left to follow their own inclinations, supposing them to be the leadings of God's Spirit. Some have their duty indicated by circumstances and facts sufficiently clear, but have, through the solicitations of friends, in harmony with their own inclinations, been swerved from the path of duty, and passed over the clear evidences in the case; and, with apparent conscientiousness, they have prayed long and earnestly for light. They have had earnest feeling in the matter, and they interpret this to be the Spirit of God. But they have been deceived. This course has grieved the Spirit of God. They had light, and in the very reason of things, should have understood their duty; but a few pleasing inducements balance their minds in the wrong direction, and they urge these before the Lord, and press their case, and the Lord allows them to have their own way. They have so strong an inclination to follow their own course that God permits them to do so, and to suffer the results. These imagine they have a wonderful experience.

Review and Herald, July 27, 1886
Why Peter Failed

The conference president's voice trembled with emotion as he bared his heart to the approximately one hundred ministers, Bible instructors, and office employees in his conference. A retired minister had come to visit his young preacher son who was serving in his first pastorate. The annual workers' meeting had convened, and the conference president had kindly invited the visiting minister to attend it.

On the last morning the president gave the devotional study. He registered deep concern as he discussed with his staff the problems of the ensuing year. "We can never finish the spread of the gospel in this large state with our handful of ministers and Bible instructors," he told them. "There must be a great program of lay evangelism that will harness the full potential of all our church members. The task of inspiring and promoting that movement falls upon us.

"This year we shall have to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to support our own conference, our local and union conference institutions, and our worldwide missions. That, too, will be the responsibility of every one of us here.

"Then there is another matter that I would rather not have to mention at all. You may go into any church in this conference, and if you stay long enough and dig deep enough, you will find rivalries, jealousies, and friction. The Lord will never come to take us home with Him until we have banished all such hatred by His spirit of selflessness and love.

"All this, my dear fellow workers, we must do this year besides our regular duties of revival and evangelism."

The meeting adjourned at noon, and the father and son went home.

The Lord does not now work to bring many into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted

While the daughter-in-law prepared their noon meal, they retired to the young preacher's study. "Did you notice your president's four bases of concern in the devotional study this morning?" the father asked.

Felix Lorenz
"Take down your Volume 9 of the Testimonies from the shelf there.
You remember his first burden was for a revival of evangelism on the part of the entire church membership. Now please notice the next to the last sentence on page 30:"

"He who is truly converted will be so filled with the love of God that he will long to impart to others the joy that he himself possesses," his son read.

"What does the church need, Son, to produce such a missionary spirit?"

"It seems it is true conversion," the younger man replied.

His father remembered the years he had spent in several conferences as lay activities secretary, trying almost vainly to stimulate just such a lay program. "His second concern was financial," he continued. "Now please look at the first two sentences of the middle paragraph on page 59:"

"Those who are truly converted will regard themselves as God's almoners and will dispense, for the advancement of the work, the means He has placed in their hands. If Christ's words were obeyed, there would be sufficient means in His treasury for the needs of His cause."

"Dad," the young preacher said, "wouldn't that be wonderful—always enough funds for all needs? No more pressuring and pleading from the pulpit—if we were truly converted."

"Those who are truly converted will press together in Christian unity."

"Your president's last emphasis involved the regular evangelistic activities of the ministry. Here, too, you will find that the same problem calls for the same answer. Turn to Volume 6 and read the sentence beginning on line five on page 371:"

"The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden."

By now the young minister had become persuaded that the need of the church was true or full conversion. And it was necessary not only in his conference, but also in the church generally. Hopefully his discovery did not leave him too distressed or discouraged. In fact, a careful study of the experience of Christ's disciples should reassure His people today.

Jesus called His disciples to be His followers and finally His heralds because they were good men. But we will see that being good men is not enough. Even good men must become converted men, transformed by and into the life of their Saviour. Here is the formula for salvation.

They spent three years in intimate communion with Him—thirty-six months. That is four times nine months—a full college course—with the greatest teacher the world has ever known. If they did not graduate with honors, it certainly wasn't their Instructor's fault.

During their senior year, a little more than six months before graduation time, He introduced them to a new and important subject—new to the disciples, but not to Jesus. Nearly three years before, He had tried to tell Nicodemus all about it.

They neared the end of His six-month ministry in and around Galilee, usually spoken of as "the special training of the twelve." Six months later He would die on the cross. In response to Jesus' searching question, "Whom do men say that I am?" Peter made his memorable response, "Thou art the Christ." It was then that Jesus initiated a fuller revelation of Himself and His mission. "And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Mark 8:31 (Emphasis supplied)

With conclusive finality He stated that His enemies would kill Him, and after three days He would rise from the dead. Weren't they listening? At least Peter heard Him say it, for he began to rebuke Him, "This shall not be unto thee." Matthew 16:22. Jesus recognized Peter's unwillingness to follow in His steps of sacrifice. He perceived the source of his spirit and identified it. "Get thee behind me, Satan," He commanded, and then proceeded to reveal to the disciples and the rest of the multitude the unequivocal terms of discipleship. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Verse 24. Surely if they had listened at all, they could hardly forget so startling a statement.

But they did. Even Peter forgot after one short week. As they came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus enjoined Peter and the sons of Zebedee not to mention the night's events "till the Son of man ... [was] risen from the dead." They looked at each other in blank amazement, "questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." Mark 9:9, 10. Christ's words made no sense to them.

Another week or two passed, and Jesus and His disciples returned from the area of Caesarea Philippi, north of Galilee, to their home at Capernaum. Again Jesus broached
Surely one of them should have remembered and reminded the other ten that they should expect a risen Master in three days
which I have provided with My own life—I am willing to stake it all
on the work of the poor, fallible
man, plus the direction of the Holy
Spirit. I know that man can do
nothing alone. You men have dem-
strated that, and don’t ever forget
it. But I also know that you same
frail and faulty men, when con-
trolled by the Holy Spirit, will be
adequate for all tasks and
problems.”

Three full years had not enabled
the disciples, even under the Mas-
ter’s teaching, to understand the
most elemental concepts. But ten
days of repentance and confession
and full conversion, under the
power of the Holy Spirit, made
them fit revelations to the world of
the divine Lord and His truth. The
experience explained to them what
Jesus had meant when He said that
it would be much better for them
himself. But Jesus told him that
after his conversion he should
strengthen, not himself, but his fel-
low believers. And he did just that.
After his full conversion he became
a new man. Not a vestige of the old
self-seeking, proud Simon re-
mained. Conversion will do the
same for the church today.

Just what is conversion? Jesus
described it to Nicodemus as a
spiritual rebirth. Paul called it a
dying to the natural or fallen self, a
becoming a new creature (Romans
6:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17). It is the
inexplicable result of the Spirit.
Man’s sole part is the decision, the
surrender of his stubborn, selfish
will. God does all the rest. Perhaps
one of the most important facts
about conversion is that it is a daily
experience. The disciples of Jesus
became truly or fully converted in
the upper room before Pentecost.

May the Lord convert the hearts of His
workmen! When there is a converted
ministry, then look for results

that He should go away so that the
Spirit of truth could come to them.
When the day of Pentecost fully
arrived, the Holy Spirit passed by
the guileless Nathaniel, the beloved
John and his brother James, and
laid His hand on the shoulder of
Simon Peter, the greatest sinner of
the lot, to preach the great dedica-
tion sermon of the gospel move-
ment and the Christian church. And
He did it to show to men and
women of all times what God can
do with a man who, in true repent-
ance, permits God to empty him of
self and fill him with the life and
love of Jesus.

Peter had thought that he was
ready for his assignment in the
Lord’s service. He wasn’t. Instead
he was all wrapped up with the in-
terests of Simon Peter. Every effort
and opportunity went to further

Then the power came. That will
also be the experience of the La-
diceans. It will bring another Pen-
tecost, power in witnessing, and
personal victory. See Testimonies to
Ministers, 50

“We must see our need of a
physician. We are sick, and do not
know it. May the Lord convert
the hearts of His workmen! When there
is a converted ministry, then look
for results.” Pacific Union Re-
coder, August 14, 1902

“When the character of Christ
shall be perfectly reproduced in His
people, then He will come to claim
them as His own.” Christ’s Object
Lessons, 69

Taken from The Only Hope, 16-23
The Right Arm At Work

Phil Brewer

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that our world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.” Education, 179

“Perilous times are before us. The whole world will be involved in perplexity and distress, disease of every kind will be upon the human family, and such ignorance as now prevails concerning the laws of health would result in great suffering and the loss of many lives that might be saved... As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake, they should, while they have opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. And those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth.” Counsels on Health, 504, 506

Are these events far in the future to be fulfilled generations down the way? I think if we take stock of our immediate situation and the times in which we are living we would agree that now is the time to become intelligent in regard to “disease, its causes, prevention, and cure” not only for ourselves but also for those suffering in our families and neighborhoods. In fact, we have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work. The world is a lazar house filled with victims of both physical and spiritual disease. Everywhere people are perishing for lack of knowledge of the truths that have been committed to us. Can we allow these victims of physical and spiritual disease to go on suffering because we cannot understand the meaning of the term “medical missionary work”? Often the thought is lodged in our minds that medical missionary work is for the professional doctors and nurses, but, if that thought is true, how can every church member become involved? Is everyone going to go back to medical school to become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure?

“All who engage in ministry are God’s helping hand. They are co-workers with the angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission. Angels speak through their voices, and work by their hands. And the human workers, co-operating with heavenly agencies, have the benefit of their education and experience. As a means of education, what ‘university course’ can equal this?” Education, 271

This thought is not to be misapplied. It does not mean that there is no place for university-educated medical people, but that there is no excuse for waiting for them to build the ark and be the only sur-
vivors. Angels are looking for human agencies to work through, men and women who will give themselves in loving ministry. Can you see the vision? Can you hear them pleading for the willing cooperation of human beings who know the weaknesses of humanity, who can feel with the sick and who can supply the loving ministry?

Every newspaper and periodical, daily, weekly, and monthly, is crammed with new remedies for disease—everything from vitamins and amino acids to self-hypnosis. With so many voices from different directions it’s hard to know which way to go. People pick out new remedies as they would pick out a new skirt or tie, try them for a while and become discouraged with the side effects. They end up throwing them out and begin chasing a new improved formula. Finally after getting little success they settle down and accept the fact that disease is a way of life. "Everyone has some illness and maybe it’s better to accept it; after all, you have to die some way anyway." Many of these sufferers become depressed, which adds its own torture to the already painful situation. Finally their families sense their hopelessness, and question, "Is there no hope for the hopeless?"

In 2 Kings 5 there is a story of a family that suffered from one of these hopeless diseases. Naaman, the captain of the host of the king of Syria, a mighty man of valor, is laid low. All his wealth and position mean nothing because illness shadows his life. His wife, although not sick, becomes so upset over the situation that even her captive servant girl is affected. The words of the little maid bring home such a beautiful message. "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Verse 3. From the lips of a captive child who had been taught that Elisha was a prophet in the midst of God’s people came hope of a remedy without serious side effects.

"Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." Verses 9-11

Naaman was expecting a modern-day faith-healing miracle. He thought the prophet would clap his hands and drive out the illness without his having to bathe in the river or be involved in the healing. Naaman decided it was time to go home and stop wasting his time. "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Verse 13. Thank the Lord for servants with sense enough to see the benefit of little things, especially when they come from the mouth of a prophet.

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Verse 14

"In our daily ministrations we see many careworn, sorrowful faces. What does the sorrow on these faces show? The need of the soul for the peace of Christ. Poor, sad human beings go to broken cisterns, which can hold no water, thinking to quench their thirst. Let them hear a voice saying, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' 'Come to me, that ye might have life.' Isaiah 55:1; John 5:40.

"It is that thirsting souls may be led to the living water that we plead for sanitariums—not expensive, mammoth sanitariums, but homelike institutions in pleasant places." Counsels on Health, 211

Silver Hills Institute Guest House, nestled in the mountains of British Columbia overlooking the Shuswap River, is established for the sick to find their way to the beautiful surroundings of nature—these are His means for restoring the sick to health in natural ways.

"By the influence of the quickening, reviving, life-giving properties of nature's great medicinal resources, the functions of the body are strengthened, ... the spirits enlivened, and the mind prepared to appreciate the beauty of God's Word.

"Under these influences, combined with the influences of careful treatment and wholesome food, the sick find health. The feeble step recovers its elasticity. The eye regains its brightness. The hopeless become hopeful. The once despondent countenance wears an expression of cheerfulness. The complaining tones of the voice give place to tones of content. The words express the belief, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' Psalm 46:1. The clouded hope of the Christian is brightened. Faith returns." Counsels on Health, 166, 167
When James White wrote his autobiography, Life Incidents, he naturally included a lengthy depiction of William Miller, a simple man of God who had exerted a powerful influence on James' early life. In a time of renewed interest in Bible study—and especially the study of prophecy—it is of value to note the principles of interpretation which Miller employed as the Lord opened to him the great message of the first angel.

As I have introduced to the reader the man whom God raised up to lead off in the great Advent movement, it may be expected that something of his life experience and labors should here be given. I have room for only a very few sketches from his memoir. . . His biographer says:

Soon after his renunciation of deism, in conversing with a friend respecting the hope of a glorious eternity through the merits and intercessions of Christ, he was asked how he knew there was such a Saviour. He replied, 'It is revealed in the Bible.' 'How do you know the Bible is true?' was the response, with a repetition of his former arguments on the contradictions and mysticisms in which he had claimed it was shrouded.

Mr. Miller felt such taunts in their full force. He was at first perplexed; but, on reflection, he considered that if the Bible is a revelation of God, it must be consistent with itself; all its parts must harmonize, must have been given for man's instruction, and, consequently, must be adapted to his understanding. He therefore said, 'Give me time, and I will harmonize all those apparent contradictions to my own satisfaction, or I will be a deist still.'

He then devoted himself to a prayerful reading of the Word. He laid aside all commentaries, and used the marginal references and his concordance as his only helps. He saw that he must distinguish between the Bible and all the peculiar partisan interpretations of it. The Bible was older than them all, must be above them all; and he placed it there. He saw that it must correct all interpretations; and in correcting them, its own pure light would shine without the mists which traditional belief had involved it in. He resolved to lay aside all preconceived opinions, and to receive with childlike simplicity, the natural and obvious meaning of the Scripture. He pursued the study of the Bible with the most intense interest—whole nights as well as days being devoted to that object. At times delighted with truth, which shone forth from the sacred volume, making clear to his understanding the great plan of God for the redemption of fallen man; and at times puzzled and almost distracted by seemingly inexplicable or contradictory passages, he persevered until the application of his great principle of interpretation was triumphant. He became puzzled only to be delighted, and delighted only to persevere the more in penetrating its beauties and mysteries.

His manner of studying the Bible is thus described by himself: 'I determined to lay aside all my prepossessions, to thoroughly compare scripture with scripture, and to pursue its study in a regular, methodical manner. I commenced with Genesis, and read verse by verse, proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded as to leave me free from embarrassment respecting any mysticism or contradictions. Whenever I found anything obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages; and, by the help of Cruden, I examined all the texts of Scripture in which were found any of the prominent words contained in any obscure portion. Then, by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty. In this way I pursued the study of the Bible, in my first perusal of it, for about two years, and was fully satisfied that it is its own interpreter. I found that by a comparison of Scripture with history, all the prophecies, as far as they have been fulfilled, have been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., of the Bible, were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other portions of the Word; and when thus explained, are to be literally understood in accordance with such explanation. I was thus satisfied that the Bible is a system of revealed truths so clearly and simply given, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.' In pursuing his study of the Holy Scriptures, Mr. Miller adopted the following rules of interpretation:

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Proof, Matthew 5:18
"2. All Scripture is necessary and may be understood by a diligent application and study. Proof, 2 Timothy 3:15-17
"3. Nothing revealed in the Scriptures can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Proof, Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 45:11; Matthew 10:26, 27; 21:22; John 14:13, 14, 15:17; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Philippians 3:15; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 5:13–15
"4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your

5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom, is my rule, and not the Bible. Proof, Psalm 19:7-11; 119:97-105; Ezekiel 34:18; 19; Matthew 2:7, 8; 23:8-10; Luke 11:52; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.

6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables; and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Proof, Genesis 41:1-32; Psalm 78:2; 89:19; Daniel 2, 7, 8; Hosea 12:10; Habakkuk 2:2; Matthew 13:13, 34; Acts 2:17; 10:9-16; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Hebrews 9:9, 24.

7. Visions are always mentioned as such. 2 Corinthians 12:1.

8. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times and events—such as mountains, meaning governments, Daniel 2:35, 44; beasts, meaning kingdoms, Daniel 7:8, 17; waters, meaning people, Revelation 17:11, 15; day, meaning year, etc., Ezekiel 4:6.

9. Parables are used as comparisons, to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures, by the subject and Bible. Mark 4:13.

10. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as by a figure in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time. For example: first, indefinite, Ecclesiastes 7:14; second, definite, a day for a year, Ezekiel 4:6; and third, a day for a thousand years, 2 Peter 3:8.

The right construction will harmonize with the Bible, and make sense; other constructions will not.

11. If a word makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, it is to be understood literally; if not, figuratively. Revelation 12:1; 2; 17:3-7.

12. To learn the meaning of a figure, trace the word through your Bible, and when you find it explained, substitute the explanation for the word used; and if it makes good sense, you need not look further; if not, look again.

13. To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of prophecy: If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event; but if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development; for God takes care that history and prophecy shall agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed. Psalm 22:5; Isaiah 45:17-19; Acts 3:18; 1 Peter 2:6; Revelation 17:17.

14. The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires—character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's Word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit His Word; and we can have confidence that He who takes notice of the sparrow's fall, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of His own Word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in His Word, from erring far from the truth.

"Holiness," from 14

the history of the holy struggles and conflicts of the people of God, let them record their prayers and tears, but let not God be disdained by the proclamation from human lips, declaring, 'I am sinless. I am holy.' Sanctified lips will never give utterance to such presumptuous words. Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, and had seen and heard things that could not be uttered, and yet his modest statement is, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after.' Let the angels of Heaven write of Paul's victories in fighting the good fight of faith. Let Heaven rejoice in his steadfast tread heavenward, keeping the prize in view for which he counts every other consideration as dross. Let the angels of heaven rejoice to tell his triumphs, but let Paul utter no vain praise of himself in making a boast of his attainments.

"Let those who feel inclined to make a high profession of holiness, look into the mirror of God's law, which discovers to us the defects of our character. Those who see the far-reaching claims of the law of God, those who realize that it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, will not presume to make the boast of sinlessness, and venture to declare, 'I am perfect, I am holy.' If we, John says, not separating himself from his brethren, 'say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:8, 10, 9."
As the coming of Jesus nears, world events will assume a distinctive pattern foretold by prophecy. Like the profile of a graph, history will reveal recognizable peaks and valleys. Valleys of danger: economic constraint, military threat, religious confusion, the desperation of a Sunday law. Peaks of opportunity: revival and reformation, the latter rain, the gospel to the world.

In recent years something fascinating has been happening. Little by little, that distinctive profile has begun to appear—sometimes openly, sometimes cleverly disguised. The military danger, so graphically described by apostles and prophets, has clearly arrived; it has muscled its way into our lives, unwanted but irresistible, giving mankind the globe-threatening power described in Revelation 11. With it, just as Ellen White predicted, has come a major effort at revolution, “tending to involve the whole world.” Today we live each hour under the shadow of those combined threats.

But while the military danger was forcing its way into history, another problem has stolen in almost unnoticed, as quietly and imperceptibly as predawn fog. It is an economic threat, and its stealthy arrival is deceptive, for within it are the seeds of world turmoil worse than anything short of global war.

It is the crisis spoken of in Revelation 13.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark... 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 13:16, 17

For generations Adventists have believed that something like this is coming—that late in human history mankind will try a catastrophic experiment in global control, in which some centralized power will attempt to regulate the lives of everyone on earth. Even the wealthy will be required to obey—a broad indication that this development involves a crisis so severe that wealth seems irrelevant. And the leverage for enforcement will be the world economy.

We have waited for that event decade after decade, in a state of high expectation, welcoming each world crisis as a sure sign of the end. And as we did so, a subtle emotional mechanism has operated within Adventism: we have found that it is impossible to preserve a crisis mentality indefinitely. For a time the stimulation of challenge may goad us to high acts, but when the challenge is delayed and the stimulation dies, we find ourselves to be very ordinary human beings. We speak wistfully of the end of time, but more and more we drift into a dependence on the very world we profess to be leaving.

In other words, what we need is not a relationship with crisis, but a relationship with Christ.

Not surprisingly, as the decades have passed and He has not returned, some in Adventism have begun to question whether our understanding of Revelation 13 is really correct. And therein lies a double irony. While we waited—and wondered—the real thing has stolen into our lives so cleverly that most people did not see it come. To put it bluntly, everything necessary to bring about a classic Revelation 13 scenario is already here—waiting, like a fully assembled machine, for some event to turn it on.

And it has all happened in the past ten years.
I am going to go into some detail about how it happened, not necessarily because we are on the verge of a Revelation 13 crisis, but to show you how a whole series of events, seemingly disconnected from each other, can combine to create a situation in which prophecy could be fulfilled with great speed.

Go back a few years. It is the summer of 1973. U.S. troops have left Vietnam. With the exception of Watergate, American life is returning to normal. And at the gasoline pump one can purchase auto fuel for only 34.9 cents a gallon. People do not realize it at the time, but the cost of fuel is one of the most important factors in their lives. If the energy-price structure cracks, the way will be open for a whole series of economic troubles. Interest rates will soar; so will inflation. Americans will learn strange terms such as stagflation. Recession will rob large groups of their hard-won economic benefits. Things will never be quite the same again.

But in the summer of 1973, doomsayers are not particularly believable, for one can fill a gasoline tank for five dollars, and the posted speed limit on many highways is seventy miles per hour. It is something heretofore seen mostly in State Department nightmares—they turned off the oil supply to the West. In America, cars lined up for blocks to buy scarce and increasingly expensive fuel. Unrecognized as such, an event had arrived capable of setting the stage for a fulfillment of Revelation 13.

As the price of oil soared far beyond its cost of production, a relatively few nations found themselves awash in money—so much money that it is difficult to comprehend. In a single week, the nations in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) took in enough funds to buy every newspaper and broadcast station in America. In just thirty weeks, these nations earned a sum equal to the value of every stock listed on the London Stock Exchange. And almost immediately they began to face a problem: Just what does one do with such a huge volume of cash?

The answer they decided upon was logical enough: Deposit their surplus in the world's largest banks, multinational giants able to arrange huge loans, thus generating interest income on their funds. The plan would have a side benefit. Industry, reeling from energy price increases, would have plenty of money to borrow while adapting to the new cost of fuel.

All in all, not a bad plan. It might have worked, except....

Except that the economy, wrecked by the skyrocketing cost of energy, was plunging into the deepest recession since the 1930s. As a result, there simply weren't enough borrowers to use all the money OPEC was depositing. Instead, thousands of workers were laid off with decreased buying power, deepening the recession. Thus the world passed into a time of strange economic trouble: a stubborn recession, the humbling of once-mighty trade unions, a federal deficit approaching two-hundred billion dollars a year, and people wondering about the security of their pensions and savings.

The burden of wealth had passed from the oil producers to the banks.

The burden of wealth passed from the oil producers to the banks

A summertime, and the living is easy.

Then autumn came. On the eve of Yom Kippur, 1973, crack Egyptian units climbed aboard personnel carriers and headed east toward the Israeli defense lines beyond the Suez Canal. The Middle East was at war, and the effects of that war reached into the very heart of American life. Angered at Western support of Israel, Arab nations did

Arabia, it had drawn problems the way a magnet draws tacks. Threats to the Muslim social system. Threats from itinerate workers, who toiled in the 120°F heat and wondered why the fabulous wealth of the Ghawar oil field should be controlled by a royal family. Threats from Ethiopia and South Yemen, where dark and mysterious forces of revolution moved in the shadows, accompanied by bearded advisers who spoke with Cuban accents. Threats from the West, where military planners briefly laid out their maps and wondered what it would be like to turn the oil fields over to the Marines. And threats from the Soviet Union, whose interest in the area was finally revealed in an invasion that did past the paper stage—a thrust into nearby Afghanistan.

All that for the sake of an oil price rise. Oil had turned to gold, and the gold was beginning to give off corrosive fumes, as if it were brewing up something filled with menace. Now wealth's troublesome responsibility passed to the multinational bankers, who were about to learn for themselves just how disagreeable so much money could be.

The bankers' problem was serious. They had large sums of Arab money, upon which they had to pay interest, but there were too few borrowers generating income for the banks. A solution suggested itself: If private business would not use all the available loan funds, what about governments—whole countries? Sovereign nations? What about Poland, and Brazil, and Argentina, and Mexico? Nothing could be safer than a loan to a sovereign country—could it?
Before anyone really knew what was happening, three Western Hemisphere nations alone owed more money than was owned by the stockholders of America's nine largest banks. And then the bottom fell out. World recession struck again. Interest rates soared. Whole nations, mortgaged up to their

capitals, couldn't even meet their interest payments.

This problem was no longer a distant one read about in detached comfort, while one drank dollar-a-cup coffee on the forty-fifth floor. It could touch America. Several hundred billion dollars had disappeared, like a flight of birds, into the steamy jungles and dusty towns of countries that were as good as bankrupt. It could take more than a miracle to bring those dollars home again. And if they didn't return, some of the largest banks in the world might face losses they couldn't cover.

All of which pushed the banking community to a grim game of "what if?" What if a major debtor nation did collapse? Worse yet, what if the world's poorer nations united, repudiating their debts all at once? Thus far, bankers had played a delicate game, pretending that the loans were still collectible. On occasion, when interest payments were due, they would even make further loans, thus enabling their insolvent borrowers to "pay" the interest with more borrowed money. But if some country finally blew the whistle, repudiating its indebtedness altogether, the game would be over. In the computerized, disk-driven journals of the lending banks, a repudiated debt shifts from "nonperforming" to "uncollectible." It has become an actual loss, and the loss has to be recognized.

Except that it is not a forty-seven-thousand-dollar loan with a first mortgage on someone's house. It is a ten-digit figure, and there may not be money enough in the bank to cover it. If the idea spreads to other debtor countries, if dominoes tumble, there may not be funds enough in the whole banking system to cover the loss.

That is international economic doomsday. It is panic in the world stock exchanges, and bank lines two blocks long. It is printing presses running three shifts at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, and the Dow Jones falling like a grand piano, and world trade catastrophically interrupted. It is Revelation 13, jarred into action, leading the United States straight into global economic dominance. Let me explain.

Recently I was en route to Moscow on business. In Amsterdam I picked up a newspaper that instantly cured my jet lag. On the front page was a report of a recent meeting by the major debtor nations in the Western Hemisphere, in which they planned how best to meet the international debt crisis. As I read the article, one predominant fact emerged: They intended to stand together, bargaining as a unit.

In southern Russia I attended a meeting with a man who is the Moscow bureau chief for a major American financial magazine, and I asked his reaction to the news. "This," he said, "is the event we have been dreading. If they do unify, it could be OPEC in reverse—a debtor's cartel, where the debtors dictate policy to the lenders. If the worst happens, if they all go at once, we are in for the deepest shakeup since the 1930s."

When we consider this possibility in the light of Revelation 13, we can see how that prophecy could be fulfilled. Oddly enough, an international banking crisis could catapult the United States to unprecedented economic dominance—and for a very simple reason: only the United States can print dollars.

If the worst should occur, and major lenders should face losses they could not cover, the world economy would probably react much like a living organism after a massive hemorrhage. The dollar serves as a primary vehicle for world trade, and hundreds of millions of dollars would have vanished—into failed crops and private jets and half-built nuclear reactors in the Third World. Only an immediate transfusion of dollars could revive the organism of global commerce, and only one entity in the world—the United States Federal Reserve System board of directors—could authorize creation of the money.

So financial strategists have discussed a plan. In a worst-case scenario, America would create enough new money to meet the losses; it would then lend it to the world's failed banks so that they could resume business. To put it another way: America would become lender of last resort to the world. It would hold the mortgage on global commerce. It could dictate policy to a degree rarely seen in history.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, . . . to receive a mark. . . . And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark. . . or the number."

Final events will probably be much more complex than we now imagine

Revelation 13:16, 17. John's prophecy no longer has to be relegated to the distant future. The machinery is in place. To an astonishing degree, we have lost control of our global economy. Some otherwise insignificant event in the Third World could precipitate the scene foretold by John.

Now for a caution, and I am going to italicize it for emphasis. None of this means that history will
follow the script you have just read. Indeed, final events will probably be much more complex than anything we now imagine. Those who attempt to say exactly how prophecy will be fulfilled are engaging in risky speculation, for at least two reasons. First, we have no idea of the extent to which Heaven will intervene to prevent crises that to us seem rather certain. God often alters events to allow people the gift of time.

The second factor is the response (or lack thereof) by God’s people. At least twice before in the history of Adventism a clearly recognizable end-time pattern has begun to develop. In the 1850s, and again near the turn of the century, events occurred that made it pretty clear that Jesus was trying to return. In the 1890s Ellen White declared that the latter rain had begun; Sunday legislation was widely proposed in America, and the Adventist health message drew widespread attention—even from such famed persons as Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. But a tragic apostasy called the “alpha” swept through the church, destroying a clear opportunity to finish the work. The moment was lost, and the nightmare of the twentieth century dawned, and we are still in this world.

The current debt crisis may mean everything—and it may mean nothing

So the current debt crisis may mean everything—and it may mean nothing. What you have just read is not an attempt to predict the future. It is just one illustration (out of many possible examples) showing how a thousand different nightly news stories, apparently unconnected with each other, can combine to create a situation ripe for classic Adventist eschatology. Unless you have your heart and mind deep in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, you might never recognize these events until they are all around you. If you are really interested in studying last-day events in the Spirit of Prophecy, the book Maranatha! is one of the finest volumes you can buy. It ought to be read and reread until it is worn out. And then a new copy ought to be bought and read some more.

The future will be filled with surprises, but we can say one thing with certainty: Warning signals are clear. If we cannot see them, our banker friends can.

This article is drawn from pages 33-40 of Lewis Walton’s newest book, Advent! Available at your closest ABC.

Homeschool Workshop

The homeschool workshop previously announced for August third has been extended to cover a three—day span from the third through the fifth. Anyone interested in homeschooling is invited; whether you’ve had years of experience or are just thinking things over, join Gwen Hawkins and her helpers from Country Gardens School for a profitable and practical session.

But please let us know you are coming. In order to make proper arrangements for campers’ needs, we must know how many to expect. Please make your reservation by calling either Hope International at (206) 832-6602 or Country Gardens at (509) 525-8143.

Can’t attend? Too far away? Here’s your next best option. Send $5 (refundable with your first order) for the Country Gardens Home Schooling catalog. You’ll receive a complete K—12 curriculum listing, and have the assurance that the suggested materials have been individually selected for a Bible—and Spirit of Prophecy—based program. Nature study—with a special interest in creation rather than evolution—helps ensure that your child will develop an orientation towards eternal life that is lacking when the works of man preoccupy the mind. This is a practical “how—to” program, and you’ll receive help with such troublesome areas as teaching reading, and dealing with learning disabilities. Order yours today from

Country Gardens School
Rt. 5 Box 184
Walla Walla, WA 99362
Radio Slova Bozhya
(The Radio of God’s Word)

The Radio of God’s Word is an outreach program designed to benefit Christians within the Soviet Union. Planned as a low-expense method of reaching millions of Soviet citizens, this project is rapidly taking shape and the necessary equipment being assembled. An inexpensive high frequency (HF) transmitter, will broadcast sound Adventist programming from the Kenai peninsula of Alaska. These broadcasts will fall within the commercial short-wave band commonly used by radio receivers in Asia. For those who understand Russian, the broadcasts should be readily heard in Alaska and western Canada.

A good portion of the equipment has been obtained, either by donation or at a very reasonable price, but certain items are still to be located. Chief among these are a 1- to 2-kilowatt HF transmitter, and a backup 3400-watt generator. We solicit your prayers and support of this project on behalf of those who do not enjoy the religious freedoms we so often take for granted. Please clearly mark your donations for the Radio of God’s Word.

Campmeeting Reservations and Accommodations

If you plan to attend the 1987 Hope International Campmeeting, July 29—August 2, and wish to stay on our grounds, we ask that you write or call to make a reservation. We do not expect to be short of room, but we need this information in order to make the best use of our facilities. Water and restrooms will be available at several locations around the grounds. We plan to provide limited shower facilities, but hookups for water, sewer, and electricity are not available on our grounds. The nearest sewer dump station is one mile away in Eatonville. Please plan on a real campmeeting.

We ask that you do all that you possibly can to provide your own shelter and bedding. But if absolutely nothing works out, please call us a week or two before campmeeting rather than give up the idea of coming. We can’t promise that we will be able to meet your needs, but we’ll be happy to try.

We are not able to provide a cafeteria service, nor will there be a camp store to supply food items and the like. There are, however, two well-stocked grocery stores in town, though they do not have any distinctly “health food” items.

If you do not plan to stay on our grounds, you need not make a reservation with us. You should, however, make reservations ahead of time at the hotel or motel of your choice. Unfortunately, one “disadvantage” of a rural location is that hotels and the like are some distance away. The following information may be of some assistance:

La Grande Hotel and RV Park—10 miles south of Hope International. Call (206) 832-6643.
Camp Benbow—10 miles north of Hope International. Call (206) 879-5426.
Eagle’s Nest Motel—10 miles south of Hope International. Call (206) 569-2533.

Children’s Meetings

We plan to provide limited weekday meetings for children from 4–12 years of age, in addition to a regular Sabbath School. Any assistance with this work which you may offer would be very much appreciated. If you could help, please call and let us know, even if you can only tell a story or supervise a hike. We especially need help with the primary/junior division. When children are not in meeting, we must ask that parents provide for adult supervision.

Directions to Hope International

From the South: Take I-5 north to exit 88; go east through Tenino to Yelm. Turn right at stoplight, go through and out of town. About one mile from the stoplight, turn right onto Hwy. 702 (look for signs to Mt. Ranier and Northwest Trek). Follow 702 for about 15 miles, crossing Hwy. 7, to a “T” intersection with Hwy. 161. Turn right (south) and go 2 miles to Ski Park Road. Turn left and go about 1/4 mile; cross a creek and Hope International will be on your left.

From the East on Hwy. 12, White Pass: Take Hwy. 12 to the town of Morton; turn right on Hwy. 7. Continue on Hwy. 7 for 5 miles past Elbe, then turn right on the Eatonville Cutoff Rd. In Eatonville, turn right at the stoplight, go 3/4 mile to Ski Park Road. Turn right and go about 1/4 mile; cross a creek and Hope International will be on your left.

From the North: Take I-5 south to exit 154; then go east on Hwy. 405 for 2 miles, then south on Hwy. 167 for about 20 miles. Take the Puyallup-Olympia exit onto Hwy. 512 for 2 miles; then take the Eatonville-Mt. Ranier exit onto Hwy. 161 for about 23 miles to Ski Park Road. Turn left and go about 1/4 mile; cross a creek and Hope International will be on your left.
A Cross
In Accepting
The Truth
Ellen G. White

The Truth of God has never been popular with the world. The natural heart is ever averse to the divine teachings. Those who obey God will never be loved and honored by the world. From the lips of the Great Teacher, as He walked in humility among the children of men, were heard the words, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Yes, we must follow our Exemplar. Did He seek for praise and honor of men? Oh, no! The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, left His riches and splendor, His honor and glory, and, in order to save sinful man, condescended to a life of humiliation, poverty, and reproach. “For the joy that was set before him,” He “endured the cross, despising the shame.” [Hebrews 12:2]

Shall we, then, seek for the glory and honor of the world? I thank God that we must renounce the love of the world, and pride of heart, and everything which tends to idolatry, in order to be followers of the Man of Calvary. I present before you, my brethren and sisters, His self-denying life. Why are we so sensitive to trial and reproach, to shame and suffering, when our Lord has given us such an example? Who would wish to enter into the joy of their Lord while they were unwilling to partake of His sufferings? What! the servant unwilling to bear the suffering and shame which the Master unselfishly bore for him! Shall the servant shrink from a life of sacrifice by which he may secure eternal happiness in the Paradise of God? The language of my heart is, “Let me be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings, that I may finally share with Him in His glory.”

While accepting the truth, many seek to retain the spirit of the world

Those who have no love for God will not love the children of God. Listen to the words of Christ: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!” [Luke 6:26] “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven. . . . But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.” [6:22-24] In the Gospel of John we read: “These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” [John 15:17-20] In His prayer for His disciples just before
His crucifixion, Jesus said: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." [John 17:14-16]

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul beseeches his brethren, by the mercies of God, that they present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, assuring them that this is their reasonable service, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." [Romans 12:2] James asks, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" And he declares, "Whosoever therefore shall be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." [James 4:4]

Many are in danger of making shipwreck of faith. They feel that it is a condescension in them to receive unpopular truth; and, while accepting the truth, they seek, to quite a degree, to retain the spirit of the world. This they cannot do; for the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Says Paul, "Do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." [Galatians 1:10] Our Saviour will accept nothing short of the whole heart, the entire affections. Those who desire to so live as to shun reproach, are seeking a position above that occupied by their suffering Lord while He was upon earth; and while engaged in this pursuit, they are separating from their Father in heaven, exchanging His love for that which is not worth obtaining.

Some feel that they have made sacrifices to obey the truth, when they have not received and practiced the truth in its simplicity; they have not yielded their pride, their love of the approbation of an unbelieving world. They have not realized the importance of obeying the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." [2 Corinthians 6:17] I fear such persons; I fear that their feet will slide, that they will refuse to walk in the humble, straight, and narrow way which leads to eternal life in the kingdom of glory. They see charms in this life. But Jesus seeks to win them from the world by presenting the attractions of heaven. He says, "You cannot have Me and the world. Which will you choose? Will you sacrifice Him who died for you for the pride of life, for the treasures of this world? Choose between Me and the world; for the world has no part in Me."

Vanity is one of the strongest principles of our fallen nature; and Satan is constantly appealing to it with success. Persons are not wanting who are ready to aid the great adversary in his work of destroying souls by flattering them as to their ability and the influence they could have in society, and to urge that it is a great pity for them to unite their interests with those of a people of humble faith. It is true that the masses who possess influence do not choose to sacrifice their worldly ambition, to separate their affections from the world, and to turn their footsteps into the narrow, humble path traveled by the world's Redeemer. They consider their talents and influence too precious to be devoted to the cause of God—too precious to be used to glorify the Giver. For the temporal advantages they hope to gain, they reach by His life of unexampled suffering and His ignominious death! Says Paul: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. . . . For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many

Can you not have implicit trust in these precious promises?

Vanity is one of the strongest principles of our fallen nature

sacrifice enduring riches. For the flattery of men they turn from the approval of the Lord, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and forfeit all right to the honor that comes from above.

How few appreciate the blessings Jesus has brought within their
realize the obligation resting upon them to walk as children of the light and not as children of darkness. To all such I would say, Turn from the opinions of men to the law and to the testimony. Shut out every worldly consideration. Make your decision for eternity. Weigh evidence in this important time.

We need not expect to escape trial and anguish in following our Saviour; for He has plainly told us that we shall suffer persecution. But earthly interests must be subse-
vient to the eternal; for they can bear no comparison to the "durable riches of Christ." “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” [Matthew 16:26]

Dear brethren and sisters, do not flatter yourselves that all obstacles to your worldly prosperity would be removed, were you to yield un-
popular truth. Satan tells you this; it is his sophistry. But if the blessing of God rests upon you, you will prosper; if you turn from Him, He will turn from you. Jesus knows all your wants, and He has left exceeding broad and precious promises. He says: “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” [Mark 10:29, 30] “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his right-
eousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” [Matthew 6:33] “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” [1 Timothy 4:8]

These are precious promises. Can you not rely upon them? Can you not have implicit trust, knowing that He is faithful who has promised? Let your trembling faith grasp the promises of God. Bear your whole weight upon them with un-
wavering faith; for they will not, they cannot fail.

Review and Herald, May 26, 1885

OUTREACH

Truth For Today—you’ve seen it in the magazine; now your friends can see it in the medium they probably relate to best. Truth For Today is on the air, and now all those millions of satellite dishes can be put to good use reaching the hearts of their owners. Pastor Ron Spear, Dr. Colin Standish, Dr. Ralph Larson, and their moderator, Pastor John Osborne, may be seen nationwide each Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (12:00 noon, Central; 11:00, Mountain; 10:00, Pacific). The program is carried on the Tempo Satellite/Cable Network. Anyone with a satellite dish can find it on Satcom 3, Transponder 6. Others can view it on their local cable station.

Please do what you can to assist in this work. Find some way to turn the satellite dishes in your neighborhood into an influence for good. Truth is free, but since there are millions dying without it, reach out and help.

For those who wish to view these programs at their convenience, we have the series of 20 1-hour presentations on video tape. They build one on the other, beginning with the inspiration of Scripture and progressing through the essentials of salvation, the great prophecies, the judgment, the sanctuary, the mark of the beast, the state of the dead, spiritism, the second coming of Christ, and the gift of prophecy. The set of five tapes is available for a suggested donation of $100.
Hope International Campmeeting

July 29-August 2

Plan now, it's coming fast

We invite you to join us this summer for a time of study, prayer, and fellowship. Our speakers will include

Phil Brewer, founder and manager of a successful medical missionary "guest home"

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

Dr. Vernon Sparks, director of health education at Hope International

Dr. Colin Standish, president of Hartland College and co-author of Adventism Challenged, Adventism Vindicated, and other books

Lewis Walton, well-known Adventist attorney, author, and speaker

Pastor Ron Spear, executive director of Hope International

For additional information, see page 28

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