Our Firm Foundation

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

Vol. 2, No. 8
August 1987

Baptism

Judas and the Sons of Eli

Fanaticism and Side Issues

A Story of Hope

A Journey Down Under

Temptation and the Power to Overcome

The Impossible Partnership, see page 8
Editorial

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Jeremiah 31:33

When the law of God is written in the heart, every man, woman, and child with this experience will respond to each life situation as Jesus would. This response will be spontaneous because of a pure and holy life orchestrated moment by moment by the Holy Spirit.

To bring the imagination and our very thoughts into consistent subjection to the will of Christ is the spirit and life of true religion. See Christ's Object Lessons, 312

The heart within which God's law is written will be kept with all diligence, for out of the heart comes every issue of life. The life thus stayed upon God will not be self-sufficient. The very humility of Jesus will be displayed in every thought, word, and action. Such an experience is necessary for the character of Christ to be perfectly reproduced in us. See Christ's Object Lessons, 69

The great danger for God's leaders, pastors, and laity is the absence of pure religion and holiness unto the Lord. We must ever guard against a reliance upon our humanity rather than on divinity. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Without the law written continually in the heart, we are not God's peculiar, holy, remnant people. We may profess to believe precious truths as did the Jewish nation, but in their total failure to practice sacred truths, they were ignorant both of the meaning of the Scriptures and the power of God. The influence of God's law was around them, but not within their souls, to renew their lives daily in true holiness. Therefore they miserably failed to carry out the great plan God had for them and were finally rejected as a people.

We read in the Spirit of Prophecy that the church today is following in the very footsteps of the ancient church. “The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 94. “I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them. Said the angel: “Ye have done worse than they.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 129

With this strong evidence of our failure to carry out God's commission after one hundred years of trying, should we not analyze our heart's experience and confess that we have not allowed the Spirit of God to write His law on our hearts? If we refuse to humble ourselves and pray for the Holy Spirit, there is no other course that God can follow but to reject us and spew us out of His mouth. What tragedy!

“The Lord Jesus will always have a chosen people to serve Him. When the Jewish people rejected Christ, the Prince of life, He took from them the kingdom of God and gave it unto the Gentiles. God will continue to work on this principle with every branch of His work. When a church proves unfaithful to the work of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities. But, if these in turn do not purify their lives from every wrong action, if they do not establish pure and holy principles in all their borders, then the Lord will grievously afflict and humble them and, unless they repent, will remove them from their place and make them a reproach.” The Upward Look, 131

We, the Seventh-day Adventist leaders, pastors, and laity, are now facing a great crisis. Which way will we choose? Will we continue to follow a course that God has said is in insubordination? See Evangelism, 696. Or will we confess our failures, ask forgiveness, and return to follow the great blueprint, the Spirit of Prophecy, that God has given to us?

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” 1 Kings 18:21

1. See also Testimonies, vol. 3, 251-252; vol. 5, 75-76, 160; vol. 8, 41, 67-68, 250-251
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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Table of Contents
Vol. 2, No. 8 August 1987

ARTICLES

Temptation and the Power to Overcome
Practical advice on the crucial question
Clark Floyd 4

The Impossible Partnership
Separation, unity, and maintaining balance
Paul Felt 8

Fanaticism and Side Issues
The other side of earnestness and sincerity
Ellen G. White 12

Judas and the Sons of Eli
So much alike, yet so different
Kevin D. Paulson 16

A Story of Hope
A testimony of the Lord’s blessing and guidance
Beth Jennings 20

Baptism
Timely instruction on the roots of church growth
Ellen G. White 24

A Journey Down Under
A report from New Zealand and Australia
Ron Spear 29

The Vision at Vohwinkel
Church fellowship—the secret of peace
Ellen G. White 30

DEPARTMENTS

Editorial 2 Religious Liberty Update 18
Line Upon Line 6 Looking Back 19
Letters 7 Food for Thought 27
Mélange 11

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
Temptation and the Power to Overcome

"Christ's example shows us that our only hope of victory is in continual resistance of Satan's attacks. He who triumphed over the adversary of souls in the conflict with temptations understands Satan's power over the race, and has conquered him in our behalf. As an overcomer, He has given us the advantage of His victory, that in our efforts to resist the temptations of Satan, we may unite our weakness to His strength, our worthlessness to His merits. And sustained by His enduring might, under strong temptation, we may resist in His all powerful name, and overcome as He overcame." Signs of the Times, May 27, 1897

In spite of temptation, "perfection of character is attainable by every one who strives for it." Selected Messages, book 1, 212. "Oh, how often we yield to temptation because we do not keep our eye upon Jesus." Testimonies, vol. 5, 652. "Christ brought men and women power to overcome." Selected Messages, book 1, 226

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Clark Floyd

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WE ARE TOLD in Scripture that “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13. This verse at first reading might sound like bad news and good news. The bad news is that temptation exists, and we are subject to it. The good news is that God has given us a way out; the choice is ours as long as we seek His help.

However, even the fact that temptation exists may not be all bad news if we approach it with the right mental attitude. Temptation, like the tree in the Garden of Eden, can be our test of loyalty to God. By saying "no" to persistent temptation, we demonstrate that God is first in our lives, and that we do love Him supremely. See 1 John 2:15-17

Through temptations we can grow. It helps us to see the areas in our lives that need to be changed. Temptation is God's magnifying glass; it will bring out either the best or the worst in us. In Deuteronomy 8:2 the people were told, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

Temptation also helps us to recognize our weakness and the need of God's strength in our lives. "Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power." Patriarchs and Prophets, 184
The Overcomers

A select group of people will spend eternity with Jesus. In giving the vision of the seven churches to John the revelator on the island of Patmos, Christ described that select group again and again. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death. . . . To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. . . . And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. . . . 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. . . . Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. . . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21

The above promises to the seven churches not only apply to seven phases in the experience of the Christian church from John’s day to the coming of Christ, but they also apply to everyone everywhere in every age, including the present. These promises apply to you.

Throughout Scripture the requirement of the need to overcome is ever present. In Leviticus 11:44, we are told, “Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy.” We are asked in Psalm 119:9, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” The answer follows in verses 10 and 11: “With my whole heart have I sought thee. . . . Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.” And in Matthew 5:48, Jesus tells us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:1 states: “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” James says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” James 4:8. See also the comments of Peter and John in 1 Peter 4:1-2; 1 John 2:6; 3:3, 7-10; Revelation 12:17; 14:5. We, if we desire to spend eternity with Jesus, need to be overcomers.

Prerequisites to Overcoming

A close personal relationship with Jesus is of necessity the first requirement for anyone seeking to overcome the sin in his or her life. Only through Jesus can sin be overcome. But as part of that relationship, certain mental presuppositions should exist so that our chances of victory may be enhanced.

First, we must thoroughly believe that what God desires for our lives is better than anything we would choose apart from God. At this point you may be saying, “Number one is no problem; let’s go on to number two.” But it is not quite as simple as that. Satan is continually bombarding us with the thought that God is restricting us, that He won’t really let us reach our potential, that He isn’t really on our side.

We sometimes think that God will allow or bring circumstances into our lives that are not best for us—sickness, money problems, death of a loved one. We suffer from tunnel vision. We fail to operate with eternity in our hearts. We have faith only as long as our circumstances are correlating with our plans.

We need to do more than repeat Romans 8:28. We need to firmly believe with all our heart and soul that all things do “work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” We need to believe that God’s plan for our lives is best.

Second, we need to firmly accept that we are responsible for our own behavior. Since the Garden of Eden, man has sought to place responsibility for his misdeeds outside of himself.

Today’s psychiatrist says that our misdeeds are not our fault. Our parent, some thing, or some person in our past has caused us to commit our misdeeds. The prisons are full of people who are there because of “conditions outside of themselves.”

The Bible tells us that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. We must accept that responsibility in order to truly confess and be cleansed from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Finally, we must believe that overcoming is possible. Jesus is able to change our life. He has made many promises throughout the Bible assuring each of us that we can be overcomers if we allow Him the control of our lives. Beginning at the very first book of the Bible in Genesis 3:15, Jesus promised that Satan and his reign of evil will be crushed. And in Philippians 4:13, we are told, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” See also Ephesians 2:1-10; Psalm 51:1-13; Romans 12:2; Titus 3:1-6

Overcoming

Satan has many lies. Before someone falls, he tells him that one time won’t make any difference. After he falls, he tells him that since he has already done it, he may as well do it again. One fall does make a difference,
but we shouldn’t allow that to open the door to endless sin. Virginity cannot be regained, words cannot be totally erased from all minds, and physical abuse cannot be undone, but all these sins can be worsened by repetition. In Galatian 6:7 we are informed that “whate’er a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Isaiah 1:18 states: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” God will and does bury our sins in the deepest ocean if only we, by His strength, forsake them. He then puts up a sign, “No fishing.”

We cannot expect the evil to leave our lives unless we put something better in its place

Ellen White in Testimonies, vol. 1, 144, states: “We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.”

Often, however, we feel trapped in our sin. We try to give it up. We are successful for a while. We begin to feel confident. Then something depressing happens. We fall back into our sin. We seem to be in an endless cycle. Are we really using the strength Jesus has promised us in overcoming?

The Bible offers an important spiritual principle in overcoming. If we would use this principle, we would be successful overcomers. Romans 12:21 states: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” We cannot expect the evil to leave our lives unless we put something better in its place. The spiritual principle is that of substitution. We must substitute good in place of the bad. Jesus demonstrated this truth in a parable.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Luke 11:24-26

Lust, fear, pride, covetousness, and all sins can be forced from the mind through the spiritual principle of substitution. To de-fuse the power of sin in our mind, we need to have our thought patterns in these areas replaced by the Word of God. We need to memorize and substitute God’s Word in every area of our life needing to be changed.

Paul wrote in Romans 12:2, “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.” Your mind will be renewed as Scripture is substituted for the sins of the flesh.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7

Scripture for Substitution

Lack of Discipline—Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Philippians 4:12-13; Hebrews 6:12
Pride—Galatians 6:3, 14; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6
Lust—Romans 6:11-12; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 4:8; 1 Peter 2:11
Anger—Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 14:29; 16:32; Ephesians 4:26, 31; Colossians 3:8; James 1:19-20
Covetousness—Psalm 119:36; Luke 12:15; Colossians 3:1-2, 5-6; Philippians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:9; Hebrews 13:5
Worry—Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7
Bitterness—Ephesians 4:31-32; Hebrews 12:15
Gluttony—Judges 3:14-22; Proverbs 23:20-21; 1 Corinthians 6:10; 10:31-33; Philippians 4:12
My friend has been receiving your magazine. It is a very intense magazine, so intense I thought at first it might be fanatical. But I believe in the prophet Ellen White and had to listen. Especially to the articles on music. I have been listening to Christian rock for years and sometimes questioned if it was right in the eyes of God.

I must say that Dr. Leno put up a good argument, but the final word came when you quoted Ellen White at the end of the article—her response to the music band of the 1900 camp meeting in Muncie, Indiana. Her response to dance music with sacred words was “This problem would recur before probation closed.”

I was defensive at first. I couldn't believe it, but I had to. The words are still echoing in my mind and the truth of it is being seen. Her words from the Lord are a commandment to me and I must keep remembering them to abide in them.

Peter Copodiferro
Waterbury, CT

Although I enjoy your magazine very much, I would like you to use this money for someone else who cannot afford, but would like, a subscription. There are people around here that I can borrow Our Firm Foundation from to read.

Press forward, brethren, the Lord cometh.

Curt Shearer
Moses Lake, WA

Please remember that we do have a subscription assistance fund. Any who cannot afford the suggested donation need not miss out on the magazine, and any who wish to support this effort are more than welcome to do so.—EDITORS

I am forever grateful to an unknown friend who left a copy of Truth For Today in my door.

I was raised and taught the Christian way of life from an early age. My parents were Methodist but I prefer nondenominational teaching. The others all are too narrow. We must be diligent and faithful to all the evidence from the times and from Scripture.

Lorena Hillums
Murphys, CA

I do not know how to thank you enough for these wonderful truth-filled articles. We love the Advent message with all our hearts and souls and we are looking forward to His coming with gladness and hope.

My husband is 84 and I am 82, and we just wish we could subscribe to Our Firm Foundation, but how can we send money from this part of the world? Our money is of almost no value in comparison with the dollar.

We are still of the old Adventists, and we still hold fast to the old paths. One of our dear brothers preached from one of the articles of Our Firm Foundation, and many hearts were touched and people started thinking seriously about coming events.

M.A.J. Bredenkamp
Dunnotar, South Africa

I was converted in a village where I was teaching in a Methodist school. This conversion from Catholicism cost me a great deal. I was rejected by the Methodists and had to be transferred immediately. I lost much in the village.

By the grace of God we have been able to get some people in this new station of mine, and we are working strenuously to get people to hear the Adventist doctrine. My problem now is lack of materials. I need books and pamphlets to broaden my scope of knowledge and also to supply some of the people who have opted to study with me.

I would be grateful if you would give this information to other people who can help me. Souls are perishing, so we must work around the clock even if it comes to the losing of life to save them from paying homage to the pope instead of to Christ.

Stephen Baffour Ahwere
SDA Primary School
Box 9 Kyeremasu D/Ahenkro B/A
Ghana, West Africa

I first came into this faith twelve years ago after reading The Great Controversy. Recently a friend lent me two of your magazines. I found them so enlightening that I ran off copies of the articles and gave them out to others. The Bible study group I'm a part of are studying the sanctity and righteousness by faith, so the articles have been helpful.

Lorraine Thompson
Bellevue, WA

I can't tell you how much we appreciate Our Firm Foundation and the tapes we have received from you.

We are sharing our tapes with several families in the church. At least two of us have given up our TV, and others are more selective.

I was excited about the book Will the Real Seventh-day Adventist Please Stand Up, and plan to send some to our family. Every Seventh-day Adventist should read that book.

Carl and Tora Lahde
Cottonwood, CA
The Impossible Partnership

MANY FASCINATING paradoxes abound in the teachings of Jesus. Of these, one of the most important for us to understand is that unity among true believers is possible only through division. Without separation from error and wrongdoing, all supposed harmony is out of harmony with God.

How important Jesus considered unity to be is beautifully expressed in the touching words of His prayer following the Last Supper. He was pleading with His Father, not only for His eleven remaining disciples, but also specifically for us who have received the gospel through their ministry. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:20-21. Repeating the thought, Jesus showed the urgency of the need in the words, "that the world may know." Verse 23

He had just been instructing the disciples as to the most essential secret for achieving such unity. As their hearts were humbled by His washing their feet, He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Wrestling with the problems arising in the newly raised-up churches, however, the apostle Paul discovered that emotional love, no matter how tender, would not be enough. Heart and mind must be joined together under the influence of the Holy Spirit. "I beseech you, brethren," he wrote to the Corinthian church, "by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Corinthians 1:10. Impossible? Yes—just like any miracle.

If unity is so absolutely essential, why did Jesus seem to care so little about it in practice? "Think not," He declared, "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34. Luke's version makes clear just what kind of "sword" He had in mind. "I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." Luke 2:51-52

The unity for which Christ prayed and Paul pleaded can never be accomplished by mere human affection and sympathy. It is produced by the self-sacrificing, unselfish love revealed in the life of Jesus and brought into our hearts only through His Holy Spirit. It brings together our fallible human minds on the solid platform of revealed Bible truth, as we are willing to be taught together by that same Holy Spirit. It is a miracle that can never be wrought without our humble, wholehearted co-operation. When this miracle takes place, then, and then only, can the gospel be preached with convincing power to
every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And then, and then only, can Jesus come again.

Such unity, in a world still ruled by the prince of darkness, will never come except through the most intense conflict. It will be conflict with all that is false, that is based on mere human tradition or satanic delusion. And it will be conflict with every competing loyalty, whether in the home, on the job, in social intercourse, or national allegiance.

It was to make possible this unity that Jesus, “when he ascended up on high, ... gave gifts unto men,” the gifts of the Spirit. He gave them “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:8, 12-13. “Speaking the truth in love,” those taking advantage of these gifts will “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Through these gifts and their exercise, “the whole body” of believers will be “fitted joined together.” Verses 15-16. Then, and only then, will the final message to the world go like fire in the stubble, and the billions of earth be brought to conviction and decision. “And then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14, emphasis supplied.

Of all these gifts, none is more to be desired, none more indispensable, than the gift of prophecy. That is, unless it be “charity,” the agape love of 1 Corinthians 13. This love is the glue that unites all the gifts in harmonious, fruitful operation. It is the best of the “best gifts” we are urged to “covet earnestly.” 1 Corinthians 12:31. But after proclaiming the virtues of such love, Paul says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” Then, concluding his discussion of the troublesome and spectacular gift of tongues, he says, “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.” 1 Corinthians 14:1, 39

Prophecy may be understood to be preaching, under the guidance and by the power of the Spirit of God. There may well be a general application to all Spirit-filled preaching of the gospel, but the usual, specific designation in Scripture seems to be to the receiving and declaring of special revelations, messages direct from the throne of the universe. It is this gift which is called in the Revelation “the testimony of Jesus,” and specifically promised to the church of the final generation, the one whose witness completes the fulfillment of the gospel commission. Revelation 12:17

How grateful we should be that this promise has been kept! How solemn and wonderful is the responsibility of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, upon which the gift has been bestowed in the person and ministry of Ellen G. White! And how inevitable that as the final crisis draws near, the adversary should be working with such skill and apparent success to destroy confidence in that gift and neutralize its influence! We need to see clearly that if indeed the gift is genuine, then faith in its message and obedience to its counsel is not an option to any candidate for translation. We have taken our stand before God and man with the “remnant ... which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17. No others can truly proclaim “this gospel of the kingdom” in the context and power of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14. Scripture itself makes clear the need for and the purpose of the gift. It operates in complete harmony with the sharp two-edged “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17. The one through whom the gift has come to us dared to claim, “There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 148

Wrapped up in this breathtaking truth is a great mystery. We may not be able to fully understand it, but we must accept the fact and be willing to face the consequences. The tares and the wheat are not to live together in perfect harmony until the final gathering of the gospel harvest. Paradoxical as it seems, those who are counted as wheat for the heavenly garner will have had their own part in the work of harvesting.
other for the corrupting of the people of God.” Testimonies to Ministers, 46

“Speaking the truth in love.” In this way Jesus is working today through human instruments for the purification of His church. “The Holy Spirit will apply the word spoken in love for the soul. The truth will have quickening power when spoken under the influence of the grace of Christ.

“God’s plan is first to get at the heart. Speak the truth, and let Him carry forward the reformatory power and principle. Make no reference to what opponents say, but let the truth alone be advanced. The truth can cut to the quick. Plainly unfold the word in all its impressiveness.

“As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. . . . Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. . . . But, on the other hand, when the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd’s voice. . . . The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. . . .

“Thus will the truth be brought into practical life, and thus will be answered the prayer of Christ, uttered just before His humiliation and death: ‘That they all may be one. . . .’ The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 400-401

We see, therefore, that Christ is waiting, not only for His message of salvation to reach the ears and the thinking of this world’s population, but He is waiting even more for a demonstration of that message in the lives of believers. United in love, and in the teaching and the practice of His word, they will lift up the risen Saviour. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” John 12:32. Only thus can the gospel have the power and the appeal to leave the last generation of earth without excuse in rejecting Christ. Outward circumstances will complete the process of purifying the church, through the "storm of persecution" against those who would rather die than disobey God. But the process must first get well under way through a loving and determined witness within the fellowship of professed believers. Inspiration has designated this as “the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans.” Early Writings, 270

The Straight Testimony

Down through all human history, the prophets God has sent have prepared for the Lord” at His second advent. This work, before it can reach an entire world, must first begin at home and in the church. See Luke 1:17

This work was clearly shown to Ellen White in one of her earlier visions. “I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. [See Revelation 3:14-21]. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.

“I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half

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Every Seventh-day Adventist minister, like Timothy, is called at ordination to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine”

borne their testimony, not to the unbelieving heathen, but to God’s own professed people. As the apostle Paul himself declared, “prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.” 1 Corinthians 14:22

Elijah was sent to an apostate nation that should have served as a shining light to the world around them. Instead, they “were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.” Psalm 106:35-36

John the Baptist, “in the spirit and power of Elijah,” was called by God to prepare the nation of Israel for the first coming of Christ. In that same spirit and power, every true believer today is called to have his part, “to make ready a people heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” Early Writings, 27, emphasis supplied

A “solemn testimony” capable of working “deep repentance” is bound to be the responsibility first of all of those called to be undershepherds of God’s flock. Every Seventh-day Adventist minister, like Timothy, is called at ordination to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” 2 Timothy 4:2. Like Ezekiel, he is called to be a “watchman unto the house of Israel.” Ezekiel 3:17. When he sees wrongdoing in the flock assigned to him, he is to give
We need to have a close communion with God, lest self rise up, as it did in Jehu, and we pour forth a torrent of words that are unbefitting righteousness.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 254. “So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet of Israel, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying: ‘Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.’” The Great Controversy, 459

“Speaking the truth in love” will, if it is true love and not mere sentimentality, not always sound like love to the hearer. “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him” (Leviticus 19:17) is rooted in “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Verse 18. “The forerunner of Christ’s first advent was a very plain-spoken man. He rebuked sin, and called things by their right names. He laid the ax at the root of the tree.” And notice again on whom this duty is most directly laid: “In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God’s faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 321. I sadly confess that as a minister of the gospel, during all the years of my service to the church, I have fallen far short of my responsibility in this respect. The problem has been not only a matter of faith and courage, but also a lack of that deeper love that took my Saviour to His cross. And I fear that all too few of my fellow ministers have done much better.

One thing is certain. No one with a fault-finding, censorious spirit, who finds it easy to criticize and condemn, has any part in this work. “The truth should be presented with divine tact, gentleness, and tenderness. It should come from a heart that has been softened and made sympathetic. We need to have close communion with God, lest self rise up, as it did in Jehu, and we pour forth a torrent of words that are unbefitting, that are not as dews or as the still showers that revive the withering plants. Let our words be gentle as we seek to win souls.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 400. Only the Spirit of God, therefore, can produce a true “straight testimony.”

To be continued
Fanaticism and Side Issues

Ellen G. White

The Lord is soon to work among us in greater power, but there is danger of allowing our impulses to carry us where He does not want us to go. We must not take one step that we shall have to retrace. We must move solemnly, prudently, and not make use of extravagant expressions, or allow our feelings to become overwrought. We must think calmly, and work without excitement; for there will be those who become easily wrought up who will catch up unguarded expressions and make use of extreme utterances to create excitement, and thus counterfeit the very work that God desires us to do.

There is a class of people who are always ready to go off on some tangent, who want to catch up something strange and wonderful and new; but God desires us all to move calmly, considerately, choosing our words in harmony with the solid truth for this time. The truth should be presented to the mind as free as possible from that which is emotional, while still bearing the intensity and solemnity befitting its character. We must guard against encouraging extremists, those who would be either in the fire or in the water.

I beseech you to weed out of your teachings every extravagant expression, everything that unbalanced minds, and those who are inexperienced, will catch up, and which will lead them to make wild, immature movements. It is necessary for you to cultivate caution in every statement, lest you start some on a wrong track, and make confusion that will require much sorrowful labor to set in order, thus diverting the strength of the laborers into lines which God does not design shall be entered. One manifestation of fanaticism among us will close many doors against the soundest principles of truth.

Oh, how careful should every worker be not to rush on before the Master, but to follow where He leads the way! How it would rejoice the enemies of our faith to get hold of some statement made by our people which would have to be retracted! We must move discreetly, sensibly, for this is our strength; then God will work with us, and by us, and for us.

Oh, how Satan would rejoice to get in among this people, and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential, and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of God. We want to hold the lines evenly, that there may be no breaking down of the system of regulation and order. In this way license will not be given to disorderly elements to control the work.

We are living in a time when order, system, and unity of action are most essential. And the truth must bind us together like strong cords in order that no distracted efforts may be witnessed among the workers. If disorderly manifestations appear, we must have clear discernment to distinguish the spurious from the genuine. Let no messages be proclaimed until they have borne a careful scrutiny in every jot and tittle.

My soul is much burdened, for I know what is before us. Every conceivable deception will be brought to bear upon those who have not a daily, living connection with God. Satan's angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light, and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions, and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now. Many apparently good things will need to be carefully considered with much prayer; for they are specious devices of the enemy to lead souls in a path which lies so close to the path of truth.
that it will be scarcely distinguishable from it. But the eye of faith may discern that it is diverging, though almost imperceptibly, from the right path. At first it may be thought positively right, but after a while it is seen to be widely divergent from the way which leads to holiness and heaven. My brethren, I warn you to make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way.

In the work of ministers and laymen who have not a daily connection with God there is not that which will stand the test of storm and tempest. A new order of things has come into the ministry. There is a desire to pattern after other churches, and simplicity and humility are almost unknown. The young ministers seek to be original, and to introduce new ideas and new plans for labor. Some open revival meetings, and by this means call large numbers into the church. But when the excitement is over, where are the converted ones? Repentance and confession of sin are not seen. The sinner is entreated to believe in Christ and accept Him, without regard to his past life of sin and rebellion. The heart is not broken. There is no contrition of soul. The supposed converted ones have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus.

The Old and New Testament Scriptures show us the only way in which this work should be done. Repent, repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ's message to the people was "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent.

The Lord desires His servants to preach today the old gospel doctrine, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers and mothers in Israel. The sinner must be labored for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God's law, and shall exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. When the sinner

The enemy will present peculiar ideas which will create a sensation

is conscious of his helpless condition, and feels his need of a Saviour, he may come with hope and faith to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Christ will accept the soul that comes to Him in true repentance. A broken and contrite heart He will not despise.

Brethren should not feel that it is a virtue to stand apart because they do not see all minor points in exactly the same light. If they agree on fundamental truths, they should not differ and dispute about matters of little real importance. To dwell on perplexing questions, that after all are of no vital consequence, tends to call the mind away from truths vital to the saving of the soul. Brethren should be very modest in urging these side issues which often they do not themselves understand, points that they do not know to be true and that are not essential to salvation. When there is difference of opinion on such points, the less prominence you give to them the better it will be for your own spirituality and for the peace and unity of the church.

Unbelievers are critical, and they seek to frame some excuse for not receiving the truth as it is in Jesus. Where these differences exist among us, those who stand outside will say, "It will be time enough for us to believe as you do when you can agree among yourselves as to what constitutes truth." Thus the ungodly take advantage of the divisions and controversies among Christians.

We are to pray for divine enlightenment, and at the same time we should be careful about receiving everything termed new light. We must beware, lest, under cover of searching for new truth, we allow Satan to divert our minds from Christ and the special truths for this time. I have been shown that it is the device of the enemy to divert men's minds to some obscure or unimportant point, something that is not fully revealed or is not essential to salvation. This is made the absorbing theme, the "present truth," when all the investigations and suppositions only serve to make matters more obscure and to confuse the minds of some who ought to be seeking for oneness through sanctification of the truth.

All must be careful what they present to the people as truth. Do not present your own imaginations. The enemy tries to warp and twist human minds. To the one who will listen to him, he will present ideas which are odd and peculiar, which will create a sensation. These he leads him to present to others, with a test which he has imagined. Thus Satan sets minds running in wrong channels, diverting them from the genuine tests which God has presented in His Word.

There is no need of entering into controversy with the poor souls who think they are doing God's service when they are believing fables. When our young ministers hurt themselves and bring reproach upon God's cause by placing solemn, sacred truth on a level with fables, let them be advised to become converted by closely studying the Word with men of experience, who for years have understood the truth. Let them turn from romance, from the fanciful interpretations which have no foundation in God's Word. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" Jeremiah 23:28.

In this age of error, of daydreaming and reverie, we need to learn the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Let us strive to be able to say with the apostle, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:16. The Lord calls upon us to follow high and noble principles. We must let the principles of the third angel’s message stand out clear and distinct. The great pillars of our faith will hold all the weight that can be placed upon them.

Young men must be educated to keep within the bounds of “It is written,” Paul writes, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” That time has come. I present the word of warning; “Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:1-5

No one is to put truth to the torture by placing a forced, mystical construction upon the Word. Thus some are in danger of turning the truth of God into a lie. There are those who need in their hearts the touch of the divine Spirit. Then the message for this time will be their burden. They will not search for human tests, for something new and strange. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the test for this time, and all connected with this great memorial is to be kept before the people.

I have words to speak to the young men who have been teaching the truth. Preach the Word. You may have inventive minds. You may be expert, as were the Jewish teachers, in getting up new theories; but Christ said of them, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:9. They presented to the people traditions, suppositions, and fables of all kinds. The forms and ceremonies they enjoined made it simply impossible for the people to know whether they were keeping the Word of God or following the traditions of men.

Satan is well pleased when he can thus confuse the mind. Let not ministers preach their own suppositions. Let them search the Scriptures earnestly, with a solemn realization that if they teach for doctrine the things that are not contained in God’s Word, they will be as those represented in the last chapter of Revelation.

Let those who are tempted to indulge in fanciful, imaginary doctrines sink the shaft deep into the mines of heavenly truth, and secure the riches which mean life eternal to the receiver. Precious treasure will be secured by those who study God’s Word with earnestness; for heavenly angels will direct the search.

Young men must be educated to keep within the bounds of “It is written”

Our ministers must cease to dwell upon their peculiar ideas, with the feeling, “You must see the point as I do, or you cannot be saved.” Away with this egotism! The great work to be done in every case is to win souls to Christ. Men must see Jesus on the cross; they must look and live. It is not your ideas they must feed upon, but it is the flesh and blood of the Son of God. He says, “My flesh is meat indeed.” “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:55, 63. The soul that accepts Jesus places himself under the care of the Great Physician, and let men be careful how they come between the patient and the Physician who discerns all the needs of the soul.

Christ, the Physician of the soul, understands its defects and its maladies, and knows how to deal with the purchase of His own blood. What the soul lacks, He can best supply. But men are so officious, they want to do so much, that they overdo the matter, leaving Christ no room to work. Whatever moulding and fashioning needs to be wrought in the soul, Christ can best do. The conviction may not be deep, but if the sinner comes to Christ, viewing Him upon the cross, the just dying for the unjust, the sight will break every barrier down.

Christ has undertaken the work of saving all who trust in Him for salvation. He sees the wrongs that need to be righted, the evils that need to be repressed. He came to seek and save that which was lost. “Him that cometh to me,” He says, “I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. Through the goodness and mercy of Christ the sinner is to be restored to the divine favor. God in Christ is daily beseeching men to be reconciled to God. With outstretched arms He is ready to receive and welcome, not only the sinner but also the prodigal. His love, manifested on Calvary, is the sinner’s assurance of acceptance, peace, and love. Teach these things in the simplest form, that the sin-darkened soul may see the light shining from the cross of Calvary.

Satan is working in many ways, that the very men who ought to preach the message may be occupied with fine-drawn theories which will cause to appear of such magnitude and importance as to fill the whole mind; and while they think they are making wonderful strides in experience, they are idolizing a few ideas, and their influence is injured, and tells but

Mysteries which you cannot explain might better be left alone

little on the Lord’s side. Let every minister make earnest efforts to ascertain what is the mind of Christ.

There are those who pick out from the Word of God, and also from the Testimonies, detached paragraphs or sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these, and build themselves up in their own posi-
Let the plain, simple statements of the Word of God be food for the mind

Lessons of Christ subjects in abundance that you can speak upon; and mysteries which neither you nor your hearers can understand or explain might better be left alone. Give the Lord Jesus Christ Himself room to teach; let Him by the influence of His Spirit open to the understanding the wonderful plan of salvation.

There is a time of trouble coming to the people of God, but we are not to keep that constantly before the people, and rein them up to have a time of trouble beforehand. There is to be a shaking among God's people; but this is not the present truth to carry to the churches; it will be the result of refusing the truth presented.

The ministers should not feel that they have some wonderful advanced ideas, and unless all receive these, they will be shaken out, and a people will arise to go forward and upward to the victory. Satan's object is accomplished just as surely when men run ahead of Christ and do the work He has never entrusted to their hands, as when they remain in the Laodicean state, lukewarm, feeling rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing. The two classes are equally stumbling blocks.

Some zealous ones who are aiming and straining every energy for originality have made a grave mistake in trying to get something startling, wonderful, entrancing, before the people, something that they think others do not comprehend; but often they do not themselves know what they are talking about. They speculate upon God's Word, advancing ideas that are not a whit of help to themselves or to the churches. For the time being they may excite the imagination; but there is a reaction, and these very ideas become a hindrance. Faith is confounded with fancy, and their views may bias the mind in the wrong direction. Let the plain, simple statements of the Word of God be food for the mind; this speculating upon ideas that are not clearly presented there, is dangerous business.

Some are naturally combative. They do not care whether they harmonize with their brethren or not. They would like to enter into controversy, would like to fight for their particular ideas; but they should lay this aside, for it is not developing the Christian graces. Work with all your power to answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one, as He is one with the Father. Not a soul of us is safe unless we learn of Christ daily His meekness and lowliness.

In your labor do not be dictatorial, do not be severe, do not be antagonistic. Preach the love of Christ, and this will melt and subdue hearts. Seek to be of one mind and one judgment with your brethren, and to speak the same things. This talking about divisions because all do not have the same ideas as present themselves to your mind, is not the work of God but of the enemy. Talk the simple truths wherein you can agree. Talk of unity; do not become narrow and conceited; let your mind broaden.

Christ does not weigh character in the scales of human judgment. He says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Every soul who responds to this drawing will turn from iniquity. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He who comes to Jesus is setting his feet upon a ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. Teach it by pen, by voice, that God is above the ladder; the bright rays of His glory are shining upon every round. He is looking graciously upon all who are climbing painfully upward, that He may send them help, divine help, when the hand seems to be relaxing and the foot trembling. Yes, tell it, tell it in words that will melt the heart, that not one who will perseveringly climb the ladder will fail of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; those who believe in Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

Tell the people in clear, hopeful language how they may escape the heritage of shame which is our deserved portion. But for Christ's sake do not present before them ideas that will discourage them, that will make the way to heaven seem very difficult. While we must often impress the mind with the fact that the Christian life is a life of warfare, that we must watch and pray and toil, that there is peril to the soul in relaxing spiritual vigilance for one moment, the completeness of the salvation proffered by Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself that we should not perish but have everlasting life, is to be our theme.

Day by day we must talk with God, day by day following on to know the Lord, entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, laying hold on the hope set before us. If we reach heaven it must be by binding our souls to the Mediator, becoming partakers of the divine nature. Leaning on Christ, your life being hid with Christ in God, is your trust. And led by His Spirit, you have the genuine faith. Believing fully in the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, we shall be laborers together with God. Trusting in His merits we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Always keeping hold of Christ, we are coming nearer and nearer to God. Jesus desires us to keep this always prominent. Do not arouse your combative spirit; the wisdom that is from above is first pure; then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

Undated Manuscript 111
Judas and the Sons of Eli

THE QUESTION OF how to deal with religious offenders, whether doctrinal or moral, is one deeply troubling to many laypersons and leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. How are we to properly address challenges to the integrity and practice of our faith? How are justice and mercy to be balanced in such decisions? At what point does responsible firmness give way to brash cruelty, Christian tolerance give way to secular license?

Many in the current scene employ the example of Christ's dealing with Judas as the model for handling apostasy and carelessness in the church. They cite the protracted patience and gentle reproofs of Jesus in this case as the norm for dealing with persons disseminating heresy or breaching inspired counsel in their daily lives. Those who call for decisive action—for the dismissal of such persons from church employment or membership—are often criticized as unloving, warlike, and guilty of needlessly dividing the community of faith.

This article wishes to examine carefully the case of Christ and Judas, and to compare it with another biblical example of patience with offenders—the story of Eli and his sons. The reader is encouraged to study the chapter “Judas” in The Desire of Ages as well as “Eli and His Sons” in Patriarchs and Prophets, as recommended reading along with this article.

Christ and Judas

Included among the disciples, at the urging of the other eleven, Judas quickly acquired prestige and respect in Christ's inner circle of followers. His personal talents, exceeding by far those of his peers, were viewed as indispensable to the later success of the church. Doubtless many others were convinced, as was Judas himself, that none of the other disciples could match his administrative or financial skills. No wonder Ellen White declares, "Had Judas died before his last journey to Jerusalem he would have been regarded as a man worthy of a place among the twelve, and one who would be greatly missed." (The Desire of Ages, 716)

Quite obviously, Judas had many people fooled. His proud, avaricious spirit he had kept well concealed during his years with Christ. His subtle insinuations of doubt, his devil's-advocate role playing, were largely, if not exclusively, a private matter involving Jesus and the other disciples. His occasional stealing of funds from the treasury was probably unknown to anyone save Jesus and Judas himself. In short, the errors in the beliefs and life of Judas were largely veiled from

Kevin D. Paulson
public scrutiny, even though they were shared to some extent by Christ’s other followers, both within and outside the Twelve.

In Ellen White’s words, “Judas made no open opposition, nor seemed to question the Saviour’s lessons. He made no outward murmur until the time of the feast in Simon’s house.” Ibid., 720. This statement is highly significant. No observable, humanly perceivable

The problem of Judas exhibited itself on secret and subtle occasions

damage had been inflicted by Judas on the cause of Christ until now. Hitherto, almost completely, the problem of Judas had been a problem of the heart, exhibiting itself on secret and subtle occasions in secret and subtle conduct. As such, it could only be addressed by Christ in secret and subtle ways. Even when He rebuked Judas at Simon’s feast He did not disclose the real purpose of Judas in wanting Mary’s ointment sold. Ellen White states, “Secret sins are to be confessed in secret to God.” Ibid., 811. It is probably fair to say that so far as possible they should be rebuked in secret as well. While the public disclosure of secret sins is at times necessary, as shown in the experiences of Ellen White and certain biblical prophets, it might be best to conclude that only an inspired person— with supernatural insight into the inner reactions and receptivity of individuals—is qualified for such work.

Eli and His Sons

Here we find another instance of gentleness and patience in dealing with religious offenders. But in this case the inspired pen records serious divine displeasure at this approach to the problem.

Why the difference?

Like Judas, the sons of Eli were avaricious and self-seeking. But unlike the acts of Judas, those of Hopnhi and Phinehas were done publicly, defrauding the worshipers at the sanctuary in open defiance of the Levitical law. 1 Samuel 2:13-16. Vile and degrading practices were freely mingled with their ministry. Thus was the Lord’s work publicly dishonored and profaned. In Ellen White’s words, “The service which God had ordained was despised and neglected because associated with the sins of wicked men, while those whose hearts were inclined to evil were emboldened in sin. Ungodliness, profli-gacy, and even idolatry prevailed to a fearful extent.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 577

During the time Judas walked with Christ, those persons exposed to the subtle errors of Judas were undoubtedly so blinded by their own errors that they failed to see what was wrong. Inspiration records nothing of any protest movement among Christ’s followers demanding that the offender be brought to justice. But in the case of Eli’s sons, we read a different story. “The people complained of their violent deeds, and the high priest was grieved and distressed. He dared remain silent no longer. But his sons had been brought up to think of no one but themselves, and now they cared for no one else. They saw the grief of their father, but their hard hearts were not touched. They heard his mild admonitions, but they were not impressed, nor would they change their evil course though warned of the consequences of their sin. Had Eli dealt justly with his wicked sons, they would have been rejected from the priestly office and punished with death. Dreading thus to bring public disgrace and condemnation upon them, he sustained them in the most sacred positions of trust. He still permitted them to mingle their corruption with the holy service of God and to inflict upon the cause of truth an injury which years could not efface.” Ibid.

In this context we find one of the truly great passages in the Spirit of Prophecy on the subject of church discipline:

“Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through idleness or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own.” Ibid., 578

God’s Church Today

No one will deny that cases similar to that of Judas abound in the Adventist Church today. Ellen White indicates that some in the church who, like Judas, have experienced gentle reproof from godly souls will follow in the steps of Judas by betraying their reprovers. The Great Controversy, 43-44. But are there also sons of Eli among us?

In recent years a tidal wave of open apostasy and sin has swept through our ranks. Attacks on the church and its beliefs have resounded through sermons, classroom lectures, and the printed page. Unscriptural divorce, Sabbathbreaking, and the misuse of funds have

We are dealing with the problem of Eli’s sons

occurred. Institutions are operated in a manner totally out of step with inspired counsel. As in the days of Eli, many have suffered alienation from the organized church as a result. Thousands of truehearted believers have raised their voices in protest to the leaders of God’s work.

But too many leaders, like Eli, have responded with mild admonitions, accommodating policies, and appeasement posing as redemptive love. Persons are granted leadership
positions whose public statements and lifestyle patterns are completely out of step with the truth. In such cases the analogy of Christ's treatment of Judas is utterly inappropriate. We are dealing with the problem of Eli's sons.

The tension between tolerance and license here depicted is similar to the tension between judging (Matthew 7:1-2) and fruit-inspecting (7:16-20) in the teachings of Christ. The former involves the motives and the heart, which God alone can read. The latter involves outward conduct and ideas, which believers have a duty to compare with the standards of God's Word. Isaiah 8:20. Ellen White clearly distinguishes the two in discussing the parable of the wheat and the tares. She writes, "Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive." Christ's Object Lessons, 71. Again we find the difference between open and secret sin.

Elsewhere we read: "I saw that decided efforts should be made to show those who are unchristian in life their wrongs, and if they do not reform, they should be separated from the precious and holy, that God may have a clean and pure people that He can delight in." Testimonies, vol. 1, 17

I believe with all my heart that God's church will one day be purified. But leaders must be men and women of courage, unafraid of hard choices and the possible removal of personnel. As in the rearing of children, love must at times be firm and even severe. Perhaps Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it best: "Nothing can be more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 107

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**Religious Liberty Update**

**Reassertion:** Twenty years ago, Father Joseph A. Ratzinger said the "methods and behavior" of the Holy Office—which descended from the medieval Inquisition—were "outdated (and) . . . a source of scandal to the world." Pope Paul VI renamed it the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Today Cardinal Ratzinger heads the organization and has shaped the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith into a powerful weapon against dissent. The church and society once saw eye to eye, Ratzinger said, but society has pulled away from that consensus and the church must reassert its teachings. Los Angeles Times, November 7, 1986

**Accurate Assessment:** Christian author Os Guiness said, "America is utterly exceptional in the community of nations because of its deep religious roots and opportunity for public expression of faith. But in all my studies I have yet to see a Western society where the church pews are so full and the sermons are so empty." As regards the future of American Christianity, Mr. Guiness said one possibility is "it will stabilize and be exploited by the political Right for its own purposes." Chalcedon, October 1986

**Common Goals:** Quoting the pope and citing shared "fundamental values," Ronald Reagan has urged the Knights of Columbus to work for the administration's political goals. The President, whose father was a Knight, told the group they would face charges of mixing religion and politics, but he said he has faced the same charge himself. "I'm pleased to be able to tell you," said Reagan, "that I've already appointed 284 federal judges—men and women who share the fundamental values that you and I so cherish." The Pope expressed his fervent hope "that the entire structure of American life will rest ever more securely on the strong foundation of moral and spiritual values." "Well, let us pray," said Reagan, "that this should come to pass. . . . Let us work to make it so." Church & State, September 1986

**Sacrilege:** Prominent journalist Richard N. Goodwin fears that the Pope and Cardinal Ratzinger have joined forces with more of his bogeysmen, "the Protestant religious right," in an attempt to dictate to their coreligionists in our pluralistic democracy. He concludes, "To enlist God in support of moral policy is to supplant reasoned discourse with unanswerable dogma. And it verges on sacrilege against the divine Providence that has long guarded our great experiment in democracy." The Wanderer, October 23, 1986

**Monster In Making:** Federal Judge Thomas A. Wiseman of Nashville, Tennessee, said, "Chief Justice William Rehnquist . . . our President, our Secretary of Education, and prominent members of Congress urge return of prayer to public schools, public support for sectarian schools, and various forms of 'accommodation' which seem to many of us to amount to establishment. . . . When church and state get in bed together, the odds are great their progeny will be a monster." Americans United Press Release, October 1, 1986

**Balancing Freedoms:** Few cases are open and shut. Judges balance competing interests like the fundamental tension between freedom and order, both of which our society cherishes. Some judges, including the new Chief Justice of the United States, invariably balance on the side of society, finding in almost all cases that the broad social interest outweighs individual rights. Los Angeles Times, September 25, 1986
Elder G.B. Starr (1854-1944) served the church for many years as evangelist, minister, teacher, and administrator. In 1875 he worked in Chicago with D.L. Moody, but a year later joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and was ordained in 1879. In 1891 he accompanied Ellen White to Australia, and served there for the next 18 years. On the occasion of Sister White's departure for the return trip to America, he and a group of friends chatted pleasantly with her about little items of common interest. We'll let him tell the story:

We next inquired if she had received any word from a certain minister who had opposed the presentation of righteousness by faith at the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888.

She replied, "Yes, we received a letter from him only a few months ago, and he has been converted upon that subject and we now have a new man of God in him."

I then asked if I had ever related to her an incident which occurred in a tent meeting in Oskaloosa, Iowa, at which a stranger severely rebuked this same minister for his controversial, debating spirit. She replied that I had not, and I related the following incident.

One morning as four of us were in the tent at Oskaloosa, Iowa—two of us engaged in conversation, Elder E. W. Farnsworth seated at a table writing, and this other minister walking about the tent—a stranger entered the tent door. He appeared to me as one of the finest looking men I had ever seen. He was over six feet tall, well proportioned, and had such a kindly expression on his face. My interest in him was immediately awakened as I hoped he might be one who would embrace the truth and bring a good influence to the work there. As the minister, who was walking toward the tent door, approached him, the stranger inquired the meaning of this tent and the paraphernalia connected with it. The minister answered, "This is a religious meeting. We are Seventh-day Adventists. We believe the Lord Jesus is soon coming and we are working to prepare the people."

The stranger responded, "I am much interested in that, and would like to talk with you about it." So the minister invited him to be seated and we two young men listened with interest to the conversation. The stranger inquired how we thought Jesus would come. The minister explained our views of the personal, visible coming; and then followed the usual questions as to what would happen to the living, the righteous and the wicked, the resurrection of the righteous and other questions.

At first the minister replied to the questions in a kindly spirit, but soon assumed a debating, controversial attitude. We saw no reason for this reaction, as the stranger manifested such a good, sweet spirit of interested inquiry, and offered no objections. Usually he would reply, "Well, that is right. Now what about this?" as the point would naturally lead to further inquiry. But this minister instead of continuing to patiently explain further, assumed an attitude of defense. I became anxious, as I feared his manner would offend the stranger, and we would lose one who seemed such a desirable acquisition. I could think only of that picture of Satan playing the game of life with man for his soul.

After about an hour's such conversation, the stranger arose in all his dignity, and addressing the minister, said, "You are no minister of Jesus Christ; you are a controversialist, sir." Instead of the minister's realizing that he had been properly rebuked, he instead chuckled and laughed, and said, "Oh, you can't meet the argument." The stranger made no reference to this response, but repeated again, word for word, "You are no minister of Jesus Christ; you are a controversialist. There is your minister," he said, as he pointed to Elder E. W. Farnsworth at the other side of the tent, who was still writing. Again the minister laughed, and the third time the stranger repeated, "You are no minister of Jesus Christ. You are a controversialist, sir. I bid you good day." And out of the tent door he walked.

Turning to us young men, the minister said, "He couldn't meet the argument." But, oh, our hearts were sad indeed. It seemed that such a wonderful opportunity had been lost, and a most promising inquirer driven from us.

"Why, Brother Starr, that was an angel of God," Sister White said.

"Was it?" I inquired. "How did you know?"

"How did I know?" replied Sister White, "Why, I gave that message to that brother at the Minneapolis Conference, and told him that the Lord had sent an angel to rebuke him for his controversial manner of labor."

Starr Manuscript, 150-152, Ellen G. White Publications Document File No. 496
A Story Of Hope
Being a Short Treatise on the History and Happenings of Hope International
Beth Jennings

Many have been asking questions about Hope International. How and when did it begin? What exactly is Hope? What are your objectives? and what relationship do you have to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What all does Hope do? A book could be written about Hope International, but I will answer as briefly as possible these questions.

Hope was organized and incorporated in the State of Washington in July 1964 with Dr. Lloyd H. Silver as chairman and founder. The board consisted of four men (a medical doctor, two engineers and a building contractor) and their wives. Among these were my husband, Vernon Jennings, and I. All were lay leaders in local Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Seattle area.

What had brought these people together? It was their common interest in finishing God's work in the world and following as closely as possible the Spirit of Prophecy counsels on true medical missionary work, true educational work, and in other areas as well. We encountered difficulty in carrying out these instructions in the local churches because of lack of interest and knowledge on the part of most members and pastors. Of particular concern to the charter members of Hope were the doctrinal aberrations brought into the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a result of the Martin-Barnhouse doctrinal discussions with some of the officers of the General Conference and the printing of the book, Questions on Doctrine, in 1957.

A beautiful 165-acre ranch on the south end of Ohop Lake near Eatonville, Washington, was purchased to be the home base of operations. Next, a comprehensive charter and bylaws were drawn up and registered with the state government and the Internal Revenue Service. This document gave Hope a wide range of possible activities. The following is quoted from Article II of the constitution and bylaws of Hope International:

"The purposes for which this Corporation is formed are as follows:
1. To establish a religious, educational association to further a knowledge, acceptance, and practice of divinely inspired doctrinal writings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, viz., the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White.
2. To give special religious, health and healing instructions.
3. To teach and practice the laws of health and the laws of God.
4. To carry on a program of benevolent charity to those in need.
5. To accumulate, compile,
publish, and distribute information, statistics and other data of helpful interest to public and individual health.

6. To establish, own, maintain, conduct and operate such institutions, schools, lecture halls, sanitaria, clinics, industries, facilities, publications and other media of education such as magazines, newspapers, radio and television as may be lawful, necessary or convenient for the accumulation and dissemination of information relating to physical, mental and spiritual health.

7. To conduct research and develop projects in the areas of interest of the Corporation."

In summary, our purpose is to support the divinely ordained mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to bring the gospel to all the world. Our mission is not to tear down or destroy the work of the church, but to uphold it and help build it up along the lines that God has directed. Mercifully, God hid the future from us, or we would have been considerably more afraid than we were to proceed with our mission.

God has in the past years miraculously preserved Hope through difficult times. We will mention only a very few. During the severe economic recession of the early 1970s, Hope had great difficulty trying to survive. Donations were down while the mortgage payments increased sharply, due to greatly increased real estate taxes and insurance, both of which were included in the monthly mortgage payments. Even though we were contributing thousands of dollars of our own money to Hope, many times mortgage payments were missed owing to a lack of available funds. The laws of the State of Washington allowed foreclosure proceedings to begin after three months of default in payments. However, each time that it looked as if foreclosure would begin, suddenly funds came in to save the place. Such experience occurred when a man sent us $10,000.

This was the exact amount needed at the time. No one had asked him for the money.

Another time, I, as the Hope accountant, saw that the three-month grace period had almost run out without a payment made. The mortgage holder was ready to file foreclosure. Alone and in tears I knelt down and prayed, "O Lord, this place was dedicated to You and You poor people. Now the rich bankers are about ready to take it over. O God, don't let them take this ranch away from us. It seems like every time in the past when we were in trouble we have seen Your invisible hand saving this place. Was it You, God—You all along saving the property from foreclosure? I believe it was, Lord. Please, help us now! Please impress some rich man—like my brother in California—to send us money. I know he has warned some of my relatives not to give anything to Hope so I can't ask him for help. But You ask him, Lord. You ask him. I'm leaving this problem completely in Your hands, Lord. May Your will be done. Amen."

No one was told about this private prayer—not even my husband. Only God and the angels witnessed and heard it. However, in about two or three days when I went to the mail box I found a letter from my brother. It was brief and to the point: "Dear Sis, I have been impressed by the Holy Spirit that you need money. I am sending $1,000.00 now, and I will be sending more money in the future. Love, Bob!"

I explained to Vernon how I had prayed to God for help. We were both thrilled and astonished at such a wonderful response. We thanked God and rejoiced together for this marvelous answer to my prayer.

On Friday evening of that same week, I received a phone call from my brother. He was very excited and told me that he had had the most wonderful experience of his entire life. He said, "It was marvelous! The Holy Spirit came to me in a strong way and impressed me that you needed money. I sent $1,000.00 and I will be sending more later. Maybe some day you can have an experience like this. Oh, it was wonderful—wonderful!" My brother continued to send money until the entire mortgage was paid off.

As I received the money and recorded it in the deposit book I thought many times how God had initiated this source of funds like someone turning on a water faucet. No human hand or voice did the job. Praise the Lord! This experience did a great deal for us all—but especially for my brother. He had a tremendous spiritual revival in his own life. God is great. He knows just what we need. Heaven has a wonderful communication system.

From this point on we knew that God was saving Hope for a particular purpose. Different programs came and went over the years, but nothing seemed to be a great success, though we continued activities such as helping the poor, distributing literature, conducting Five-day Stop Smoking Clinics, conducting church school, and treating the sick. Nothing took deep root at Hope. Surely God had something more in mind, or why would He miraculously preserve the ranch? With great personal sacrifice, tears, prayers, and by the grace of God, we and our associates hung on.

During this time the Hope board of directors decided to put the property up for sale. It was listed
from the market. The next morning cash buyers appeared at our gate. We were offered $330,000 cash with hints of more money if necessary. Pastor Rolf Lindfors told them, “No, it is not for sale at any price. You’re one day too late.” When I later told a local real estate agent about this fantastic offer he was totally shocked. He couldn’t believe that we would turn down such a good offer. It was clear to us that God had held off the buyers until a vote was taken to withdraw the ranch from the market. Only then were buyers permitted by God to come forward. Truly, the Hope Ranch dedication was accepted by God. It belongs to God for His final work in this world.

Time passed. In the spring of 1984, I received a call from a friend living to the south of us. She asked if Elder Ron Spear could hold a series of revival meetings at Hope. “Oh,” I responded, “Ron Spear? I remember him years ago at camp meeting when the conference was sending him to Africa as a missionary. Are you sure you can’t find anywhere else for him?” She assured me that she couldn’t. She also assured me that he was straight on his theology. Then she offered to come and help clean up the barn hayloft for the meeting. That task involved, among other things, sweeping, mopping and setting up chairs. Surely, she was determined.

He held his meetings in the hayloft of the barn; we couldn’t help but be reminded of the pioneers of the early Advent movement—how they met in barns. And, too, the message we heard that day rang true as a bell. We were thrilled! Many in the audience felt the strong presence of the Holy Spirit in that humble place. Elder Spear’s theology was as straight as an arrow. He preached present truth with a sense of urgency. However, only three of the Hope board members were present to hear him preach. As I sat there and listened, God strongly impressed me that this was the man we had been waiting for all of these years.

On Elder Spear’s next swing around the Pacific Northwest, I urged him to come again to Hope with his message so that the other board members could hear him. He did, and they also were thrilled with his outstanding, urgent message. As I listened to this “modern-day John the Baptist” with his riveting “prepare ye the way of the Lord message” I knew in my heart why God had saved Hope through all those years. Elder Spear had memorized vast numbers of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements and was well qualified to carry out the number-one purpose of our charter.

Elder Rolf Lindfors, a key part of Hope from 1979–1986, and chairman of the board at the time, took Elder Spear on a tour of the property, showing him the land and the buildings. Now and then, comment was made that Hope might serve well as headquarters for his work. As Elder Spear toured the property making suggestions, gradually his use of pronouns changed from “you” to “we” when describing what could be done with the property.

Ron Spear found at Hope the property, the facilities, the atmosphere, the support group, and the tax-exempt corporation that he needed to do the work God had sent him to do. At Hope he could fulfill his God-given commission. Somehow the name “Hope International” seems very appropriate for the work. What is our mission? To start a grass-roots revival in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To train people to give the loud-cry message. To follow God’s blueprint exactly in all we do. To spread hope around this entire troubled world.

The stressful years of struggle during the past fade into insignificance as we today see what God is doing with this corporation. In the fall of 1985, the Lord led Hope to begin the publishing of a monthly magazine, Our Firm Foundation, designed to be a spiritual blessing to Seventh-day Adventist laity, pastors and leaders. Since its inception hundreds of thousands of copies of this periodical have been published. The heartfelt letters of gratitude received daily from church members of all levels of church organization who have been spiritually revived are most gratifying. Many who have strayed from the fold are returning to the church because their hope and confidence in its mission have been restored. Hope International is providing a wide variety of seminars, books, magazines, cassette tapes, video tapes, tracts, memory verse cards, television programs, and more that God
is using to raise up an army of dedicated men and women to finish His work in this perishing world.

Today our hearts are thrilled as we see a strong outreach ministry developing from Hope International. To date we have printed 80,000 copies of our new magazine for non-Adventists, *Truth For Today*, which are being circulated all over North America. We have begun the work of translation into Spanish for the benefit of the Hispanic people. Also, Hope is printing thousands of beautiful outreach tracts and booklets to reach the people of the world.

We have been thrilled as the Lord opened the way for Hope to sponsor a television program now airing one hour per week on satellite and cable across the United States and Canada. In connection with this program is the *Truth For Today* Bible Correspondence School. All of these activities are directed toward reaching the unsaved of this world.

Soon our new quarterly magazine, *Focus On Lay Ministries*, will be published. The goal of this periodical is to inspire and instruct the laymen of the church to do the outreach work God has commissioned them to do in these last days.

In addition, Hope is soon to begin construction of a new medical missionary colporteur training center and health retreat. Here we plan to train hundreds of people to go out and sell low-cost, paperback missionary outreach books such as *The Great Controversy*, the book of the hour. Hope has sponsored the printing of thousands of these books, which must soon go into the hands of those who sit in darkness. As we contemplate all that has been done and is being done, we give God the glory for it all. It is only because of His great love that this work has been made possible. Praise the Lord!

We thank all those who in the past have had any part in establishing and preserving Hope for this great hour. Thanks also to those who currently are supporting this ministry. Many of you write and tell us that the Holy Spirit impressed you to make donations to Hope. Thank you for listening to that beautiful voice. Hope does not have an excess of funds. Each month we pray God will give us enough to pay our bills. Each month He provides.

Our banker cannot understand the way we do business. It is contrary to the ways of commerce. Our most heartfelt thanks and love we give to God who made it all possible. Without Him we could do nothing.

The divine forecast as prophesied in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy of a great revival and reformation movement led by the laymen of the church for the finishing of the work in the world is now beginning to take place. (Read Joel 2:12). From the pen of Ellen White we read the following:

"The Lord will use in the accomplishment of His work means that we do not see. He will raise up from among the common people men and women to do His work, even as of old He called fishermen to be His disciples. There will soon be an awakening that will surprise many. Those who do not realize the necessity of what is to be done, will be passed by, and the heavenly messengers will work with those who are called the common people, fitting them to carry the truth to many places. Now is the time for us to awake and do what we can." *Loma Linda Messages*, 83

"In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformation movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 126

God is using Hope International and other semi-independent ministries to help bring about the final glorious effort to save the lost. We have been promised that the work will end in a blaze of glory. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." Zechariah 46. It is only by the mighty power of God that this great reformation movement will be successful and end in the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven.

It is my prayer that each one who reads this article will have a part in giving the loud-cry message, that final glorious effort in which human beings, angels, and the Holy Spirit combine their efforts in the greatest display of love and power that the world has ever experienced. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen.
Preparation for Baptism

There is a need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, “I believe,” but also to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the stirrings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts.

Faithful Christian men and women should have an intense interest to bring the convicted soul to a correct knowledge of righteousness in Christ Jesus. If any have allowed the desire for selfish indulgence to become supreme in their life, the faithful believers should watch for these souls as they that must give an account. They must not neglect the faithful, tender, loving instruction so essential to the young converts that there may be no halfhearted work. The very first experience should be right.

Satan does not want any one to see the necessity of an entire surrender to God. When the soul fails to make this surrender, sin is not

The principles of the Christian life should be made plain

Satan, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate,... and touch not the unclean thing.” And to them is fulfilled the promise, “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18

Ellen G. White
forsaken; the appetites and passions are striving for the mastery; temptations confuse the conscience, so that true conversion does not take place. If all had a sense of the conflict which each soul must wage with satanic agencies that are seeking to ensnare, entice, and deceive, there would be much more diligent labor for those who are young in the faith.

These souls, left to themselves, are often tempted, and do not discern the evil of the temptation. Let them feel that it is their privilege to solicit counsel. Let them seek the society of those who can help them.

Teach them day by day what it means to be the children of God

Through association with those who love and fear God they will receive strength.

Our conversation with these souls should be of a spiritual, encouraging character. The Lord marks the conflicts of every weak, doubting, struggling one, and He will help all who call upon Him. They will see heaven open before them, and angels of God descending and ascending the ladder of shining brightness which they are trying to climb.

The Parents' Work

Parents whose children desire to be baptized have a work to do, both in self-examination and in giving faithful instruction to their children. Baptism is a most sacred and important ordinance, and there should be a thorough understanding as to its meaning. It means repentance for sin, and the entrance upon a new life in Christ Jesus. There should be no undue haste to receive the ordinance. Let both parents and children count the cost. In consenting to the baptism of their children, parents sacredly pledge themselves to be faithful stewards over these children, to guide them in their character-building. They pledge themselves to guard with special interest these lambs of the flock, that they may not dishonor the faith they profess.

Religious instruction should be given to children from their earliest years. It should be given, not in a condemning spirit, but in a cheerful, happy spirit. Mothers need to be on the watch constantly, lest temptation shall come to the children in such a form as not to be recognized by them. The parents are to guard their children with wise, pleasant instruction. As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do right are younger members of the Lord's family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King's highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions.

When the happiest period of their life has come, and they in begin. It is the first lessons that mean so much. In simplicity teach them how to do their first service for God. Make the work as easy to be understood as possible. Explain what it means to give up self to the Lord, to do just as His word directs, under the counsel of Christian parents.

After faithful labor, if you are satisfied that your children understand the meaning of conversion and baptism, and are truly converted, let them be baptized. But, I repeat, first of all prepare yourselves to act as faithful shepherds in guiding their inexperienced feet in the narrow way of obedience. God must work in the parents that they may give to their children a right example, in love, courtesy, and Christian humility, and in an entire giving up of self to Christ. If you consent to the baptism of your children and then leave them to do as they choose, feeling no special duty to keep their feet in the straight path, you yourselves are responsible if they lose faith and courage and interest in the truth.

The Pastor's Work

Candidates who have grown to manhood and womanhood should understand their duty better than do the younger ones; but the pastor of the church has a duty to do for these souls. Have they wrong habits and practices? It is the duty of the pastor to have special meetings with them. Give them Bible readings, converse and pray with them, and plainly show the claims of the Lord upon them. Read to them the teaching of the Bible in regard to conversion. Show what is the fruit of conversion, the evidence that they love God. Show that true conversion is a change of heart, of thoughts and purposes. Evil habits are to be given up. The sins of evil-speaking, of jealousy, of disobedience, are to be put away. A warfare must be waged against every evil trait of character. Then the believing one can understandly take to himself the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Matthew 7:7

The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present
themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism, there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism.

One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress.

There should be no carelessness in dress. For Christ's sake, whose witnesses we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. But the Word of God gives no sanction to the making of changes in apparel merely for the sake of fashion—that we may appear like the world. Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments.

The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel.

All who study the life of Christ and practice His teachings will become like Christ. Their influence will be like His. They will reveal soundness of character. As they walk in the humble path of obedience, doing the will of God, they exert an influence that tells for the advancement of the cause of God and the healthful purity of His work. In these thoroughly converted souls the world is to have a witness to the sanctifying power of truth upon the human character.

The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, expressed in character, is an exaltation above everything that is esteemed in earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God's purpose that all who put on Christ by baptism shall possess. And it is the duty of God's servants to set before these souls the privilege of their high calling in Christ Jesus.

Whenever possible, let baptism be administered in a clear lake or running stream. And give to the occasion all the importance and solemnity that can be brought into it. At such a service angels of God are always present.

The one who administers the ordinance of baptism should seek to make it an occasion of solemn, sacred influence upon all spectators. Every ordinance of the church should be so conducted as to be uplifting in its influence. Nothing is to be made common or cheap, or placed on a level with common things. Our churches need to be educated to greater respect and reverence for the sacred service of God. As ministers conduct the services connected with God's worship, so they are educating and training the people. Little acts that educate and train and discipline the soul for eternity are of vast consequence in the uplifting and sanctifying of the church...

After Baptism

The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are buried in the likeness of Christ's death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ. Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation. Publicly he has declared that he will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. He is no longer to live a careless, indifferent life. He has made a covenant with God. He has died to the world. He is to live to the Lord, to use for Him all his entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that he bears God's signature, that he is a subject of Christ's kingdom, a partaker of the divine nature. He is to surrender to God all that he is and all that he has, employing all his gifts to His name's glory.

The obligations in the spiritual agreement entered into at baptism are mutual. As human beings act their part with wholehearted obedience, they have a right to pray,
"Let it be known, Lord, that Thou art God in Israel." The fact that you have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is an assurance that if you will claim their help, these powers will help you in every emergency. The Lord will hear and answer the prayers of His sincere followers who wear Christ's yoke and learn in His school His meekness and lowliness.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:1-3

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. . . . And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:12-17

Testimonies, vol. 6, 91-99

The obligations entered into at baptism are mutual

Any years ago I observed several parts of Christian practice among the people called Quakers. Two things I particularly remarked among them, plainness of speech and plainness of dress. I willingly adopted both, with some restrictions, and particularly plainness of dress; the same I recommended to you when God first called you out of the world; and for the addition of more than twenty years' experience I recommend it to you still.

But, before I go any farther, I must entreat you, in the name of God, be open to conviction. Whatever prejudices you have contracted from education, custom, or example, divest yourselves of them as far as possible. Be willing to receive light either from God or man: do not shut your eyes against it. Rather be glad to see more than you did before, to have the eyes of your understanding opened. Receive the truth in the love thereof, and you will have reason to bless God forever.

Not that I would advise you to imitate the people called Quakers in those little peculiarities of dress which can answer no possible end but to distinguish them from other people. To be singular, merely for singularity's sake, is not the part of a Christian. I do not, therefore advise you to wear a hat of such dimensions, or a coat of a particular form. Rather, in things that are absolutely indifferent, that are of no consequence at all, humility and courtesy require you to conform to the customs of your country.

But I advise you to imitate them, first, in the neatness of their apparel. This is highly to be commended, and quite suitable to your Christian calling. Let all your apparel, therefore, be as clean as your situation in life will allow.

I advise you to imitate them, secondly, in the plainness of their apparel . . .

Shall I be more particular still? Then I exhort you to wear no gold, no pearls, or precious stones: no costly apparel, how grave soever. I advise those who are able to receive this saying, Buy no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring color, or which is in any kind gay, glistering, or showy: nothing apt to attract the eyes of bystanders. I do not advise women to wear rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, (of whatever kind or color), or ruffles, which, by little and little, may easily shoot out from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons. It is true these are little, very little things: therefore they are not worth defending; therefore give them up, let them drop, throw them away, without another word; else a little needle may cause much pain in the flesh, a little self-indulgence much hurt to your soul.

For the preceding exhortation I have the authority of God in clear and express terms: "I will that women [and, by parity of reason, men too] adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, [one kind of precious stones, which was then most in use, put for all], or costly apparel; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." 1 Timothy 2:9, 10. Again, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be . . . the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:3-4

Nothing can be more express: the wearing of gold, of precious stones, and of costly apparel is here forbidden by name; nor is there any restriction made, either here or in any other scripture. Whoever,
God's right hand for evermore. By
the former I obtain the applause of
men; by the latter the praise of
God. In this way I meet with the
admiration of fools; in that I hear
from the Judge of all, "Well done,
good and faithful servant; enter
thou into the joy of thy lord." [Mat
[25:23]

Brethren, whatever ye are
accounted by men, I would not have
you fools in God's account. Walk ye
circumspectly, not as fools, but as
wise; not in those ways which God
may possibly forgive, (to put things
in the most favorable light), but in
those which he will certainly re-
ward. In wickedness be ye children
still; but in understanding be ye
men. . ..

You who have passed the morn-
ing, perhaps the noon of life, who
find the shadows of the evening
approach, set a better example to
those that are to come—to the now
rising generation. With you the day
of life is far spent; the night of
death is at hand. You have no time
to lose; see that you redeem every
moment that remains. Remove
everything out of the way, be it
ever so small, (though indeed gay
or costly apparel is not so), that
might any way obstruct your lowli-
ness and meekness, your seriousness
of spirit, your single intention to
 glorify God in all your thoughts,
and words, and actions. Let no
needless expense hinder your being,
in the highest degree you possibly
can, rich in good works; ready to
distribute, willing to communicate,
till you are clothed with glory and
immortality.

Our carcasses will soon fall into
the dust: then let the survivors
adorn them with flowers. Meantime
let us regard those ornaments only
that will accompany us into etern-
ity.

You that are in the morning
of your days, either your form is
agreeable, or it is not. If it is not,
do not make your person remark-
able; rather let it be hid in common
 apparel. On every account it is your
wisdom to recommend yourself to
the eye of the mind, but especially
to the eye of God, who reads the
secrets of your heart, and in whose
sight the incorruptible ornaments
alone are of great price. But if you
would recommend yourself by
dress, is any thing comparable to
plain neatness? What kind of per-
sons are those to whom you could
be recommended by gay or costly
 apparel? None that are any way
likely to make you happy: this
pleases only the silliest and worst
of men. At most, it gratifies only the
silliest and worst principle in those
who are of a nobler character.

To you whom God has intrusted
with a more pleasing form, those
ornaments are quite needless.

"The adorning thee with so much
art
Is but a barbarous skill;
'Tis like the poisoning of a dart,
Too apt before to kill."

That is, to express ourselves in
plain English, without any figure of
poetry, it only tends to drag them
faster into death everlasting, who
were going fast enough before, by
additional provocation to lust, or, at
least, inordinate affection. Did you
actually design to raise either of
these in those who looked upon
you? What! while you and they
were in the more immediate pre-
 sence of God! What profaneness
and inhumanity mixed together! But if
you designed it not, did you not
foresee it? You might have done so
without any extraordinary sagacity.

"Nay, I did not care or think about
it." And do you say this by way of
excuse? You scatter abroad arrows,
firebrands, and death; and do not
care or think about it.

Oh, let us walk more charitably
and more wisely for the time to
come! Let us all cast aside from this
very hour whatever does not be-
come men and women professing
goldiness; whatever does not spring
from the love and fear of God, and
minister thereto. Let our seriousness
shine before men, not our dress: let
all who see us know that we are not
of this world. Let our adorning be
that which fadeth not away, even
righteousness and true holiness.

John Wesley, "On Dress," from his
"Advice to the People Called
Methodists": quoted in Review and
Herald, July 10, 1855
A Journey Down Under

Ron Spear

The captain's voice cracked over the intercom of the 747, "We are in the final approach to Auckland. Will the flight attendants please take their seats in preparation for landing."

It had been a long night flying over the Pacific to meet our speaking appointments in New Zealand. Betty and I were groggy with jet lag as we made our way down the ramp through security, immigration, and customs to be greeted by Noeline Patterson and George Vaega.

This was the beginning of a very busy itinerary through this lovely country of three million people and sixty-three million sheep, from beautiful ocean beaches to the snow-capped Alps of South Island. We met hundreds of souls starving for spiritual food. Every night we preached the everlasting gospel to honest souls who were searching for truth, and drove five to seven hours each day to make the next evening's appointment. But it was most rewarding. The souls of many were watered from the river of life that never runs dry. We had three big weekends in Auckland, Plymouth, and Christchurch in which attendance was good.

We established an organization and a board of directors in New Zealand to take charge of our magazines, books, tapes, and videos. Noeline Patterson is directing the work on these beautiful islands. A strong group there are pursuing the purchase of 1100 acres of land and a 10,000 square-foot mansion which they want to develop into a Hartland-type training school and health center. [Any one whom the Holy Spirit impresses to help with such a project may get in touch with Elder Spear at Hope International].

Our final meeting was at Christchurch on South Island. After three weeks of hard travel and preaching, Betty and I caught the plane to Sydney to begin our busy itinerary in Australia. We were tired, but well repaid for our efforts. The Holy Spirit had been with us and we praise God for the opportunity of witnessing for Christ on these beautiful islands.

It was a warm sunny day for winter when our plane touched down in Sydney. Colin Martin, who sponsored us in Australia, was there to meet us. The next day we began our itinerary.

Dr. Russell Standish, on furlough from Penang Adventist Hospital, joined us for the tour. We each spoke every night and then drove several hours the following day to make our next appointment. We had three big weekends in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney, and our evening meetings through the week kept us hurrying from place to place.

We were able to help establish an organization in Australia, as well as the one in New Zealand, that will be carrying our books, tapes, and magazines.

The response from God's faithful and loyal Adventists in both countries greatly encouraged us, and even though the travel and preaching left us very tired and weary at times, we praise God for His Holy Spirit that accompanied us and for His beautiful angels that protected.

There were many thrilling experiences we could relate, but the one which stays in my mind indeliably is that of a young man who had attended one of our evening meetings in Newcastle. He was seeking and searching for truth. Like many, he was confused by the wrong theology that is running rampant in our midst. He approached me after the evening meeting, in great anxiety; the message I had given that evening on righteousness by faith, victory over sin by the power of the Holy Spirit had stirred his searching soul to its very depths. He wanted more of the same spiritual food to fortify the truth he had just heard, and he took home with him a set of our books and tapes.

Our last meeting was the weekend in Sydney. This same young man was there; he sat through the entire weekend and came to me afterwards relating that his whole life had been changed by truth and the power of God. This one experience made the whole trip worthwhile. The weary miles of travel, the short nights and the long days sank into insignificance in the light of this one rewarding experience of a soul with his feet firmly planted on the road to life eternal.

We plan to ship the Our Firm Foundation and Truth for Today magazines by boat each month to both of these countries. Each organization will then care for their distribution locally.

We want to thank Colin and Cheryl Martin for their time and efforts in arranging our meetings in Australia. Betty and I felt we were greatly blessed by our six weeks of sharing God's last warning message with His people in both these beautiful countries.
The Vision at Vohwinkel

Ellen G. White

Ellen White's first stop in Germany was at the town of Vohwinkel. The following instruction was given her for the church, and—perhaps—for us as well.

May 28, 1887 [Sabbath]. Last night [May 27] I dreamed that a small company were assembled together to have a religious meeting. There was one who came in and seated himself in a dark corner where he would attract little observation. There was not a spirit of freedom. The Spirit of the Lord was bound. Some remarks were made by the elder of the church, and he seemed to be trying to hurt someone. I saw a sadness upon the countenance of the stranger. It became apparent that there was not the love of Jesus in the hearts of those who claimed to believe the truth and there was, as the sure result, an absence of the Spirit of Christ and a great want both in thoughts and feelings of love for God and for one another. The assembling together had not been refreshing to any one.

As the meeting was about to close, the stranger arose and with a voice that was full of sorrow and of tears, he told them that they had a great want in their own souls, and in their own experience, of the love of Jesus which was present in large measure in every heart where Christ took up His abode. Every heart renewed by the Spirit of God would not only love God but also love his brother, and if that brother made mistakes, if he erred, he must be dealt with after the gospel plan. Every step must be followed according to the directions given in the Word of God. "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," [Galatians 6:1] he said. "Rememberest thou not the prayer of Christ just before He left His disciples for His long, agonizing struggle in the garden of Gethsemane, before His betrayal, His trial, and His crucifixion? [John 17:15-23]

"Are you not forgetful of the sufferings of your Lord? Are you not forgetful of the estimate He has placed upon man whom He has purchased with His own blood? You seem willing to wound and bruise the hearts of one another. Is this the pattern Jesus has given you? Where is His manner of dealing? Do you find yourselves sustained in having so little love and forbearance, so little patience for your brethren? Have you forgotten the words of Christ, 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another'? [John 13:34-35] 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.' [14:21]

"You are not cultivating love to God or love to your brethren. Be careful how you treat the purchase of the blood of Christ. There will be need of plain and faithful reproving of evil works, but let the one who takes this work upon him know that he is not separated from Christ by evil works himself. He must be spiritual and restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. Unless he has this spirit, he has no duty to reprove or to correct his brothers, for he would create two evils in the place of curing one.

"One condescended to clothe His divinity with humanity and came to our world in the likeness of men. He is the living fountain of life, the living manifestation of pure religion in our world. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is but one Way, one Truth, one Life, and they that believe in Him receive power to become sons of God, and these are no more in the world but are chosen out of the world. The world knoweth them not because it knew Him not.

"The spirit and character of Christ are manifested in the chosen of God, by their heavenly conversation, their meekness, their blameless conduct. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are
If you know the character and works of Christ...

words of eternal life are their wisdom and their strength. And they are led into all truth because they are willing and obedient.

"That which distinguishes the character and conduct of Christians from all others is the principle of holy, Christlike love, which works in the heart with its purifying influence. The true Christian will work the works of Christ in giving expression in deeds of love one to another. With this living, abiding, working principle in life and in character no one can resemble the world. If you know the character and works of Christ you will know the disposition and conduct of Christians. Christ hated evil so much that sin and evil met a strong rebuke from His lips and from His example. While He hated sin, He loved the sinner.

"Our Lord and Saviour loved every creature. He laid aside His dominion, riches, and glory and sought after us, sinful, erring, unhappy, that He might make us like Himself. He humbled Himself and took upon Himself your nature that He might be able to teach you to be pure, correct in character, and free from all impurity of sin, that you might follow Him to heaven. He suffered more than any of you will be called to suffer. He gave all for you. What have you given to Jesus for this great love? Have you practiced the same toward your brethren? have you copied His example in patience, in self-denial? You cannot equal the Pattern, but you can resemble it.

"There has been committed to you the sacred knowledge of the truth, not for you to quarrel over and to become estranged from one another, but that you may be the light-bearers to the world. According to your individual ability will the Master reckon with you when He comes. What have you done to persuade men to accept the precious truth? All around you are those for whom Christ has died that they might be made pure, holy, and sinless. Have your works as Christians been fruitful and productive of much good? Have you in meekness and in faith tried to sow in the hearts of others the seeds of truth that may bring forth fruits unto righteousness? How much greater strength you might have had as sons and daughters of God if you had loved God supremely and your neighbor as you love yourself! How much higher ground you might stand upon if you had been following on to know more and more of the truth and gathering more and more divine light to shine forth in good works to all around you!

"Your works are not pleasing to God but pleasing to the enemy. You have lessons to learn in the school of Christ before you will be fitted for heaven. Your self, your ways, your sharp traits of character make you unskilful in dealing with minds and hearts. You are oppressive where you should be kind. Your words and your works are the channels through which the pure principles of truth and holiness are conveyed to the world. Then if you are not cultivating personal piety you cannot be the light of the world. If you allow yourselves to be dictatorial, accusing and judging your brethren, and with uncorrected hearts and unholy tempers seeking to mend their wrongs, you do unskilful work and drive souls away from the service of Christ. The believers will be a source of weakness to one another in place of a source of strength and courage, unless they are truly abiding in Jesus. There can be no healthful building up, binding together principles, unless the transforming grace of Christ shall be felt upon your hearts and characters.

"Everyone who has a knowledge of Jesus Christ—especially the elders of the church—must not carelessly allow the members to be irregular in conduct and thus let evil and sin strengthen in the church, thinking this is the way to show love for one another. God requires faithfulness in watchcare. You must take hold of God with one hand while with the other hand, in love, you lay hold upon the erring and the sinner and draw them to Jesus. Pray with them, weep with them, feel for their souls, love them, and never let go of them. This is the love Jesus has expressed for you. You must strive for unity and forbearance and love. Never draw apart, but press together, binding heart to heart and making supplications in the Spirit. Then the power of God will work in your midst and many souls will be brought to the truth through your influence."

He was again seated and the sun, which had been hidden, beamed forth and shone full upon his person. What a revelation! All knew in a moment who had been speaking to them. They said one to another: "It is Jesus; it is Jesus!" and then such confessions of sins as were made and confessions to one another. There was weeping, for the hearts seemed to be broken, and then there was rejoicing and the room was filled with the mellow light of heaven. The musical voice of Jesus said, "Peace be with you," And His peace was...

Manuscript 32, 1887
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