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. 11  November 1987

The Testimonies Slighted
But Where’s the Evidence?
The Very Last Deception
Sanctification
The Ministerial Dilemma

The Saving Truth, see page 8
THE GREATEST need of the church today is the Holy Spirit with Pentecostal power. We are meeting many different doctrines and ideas today, speculations, suppositions, and creations of Satan to take our minds off the real message of the hour—righteousness by faith, victory over every sin by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the sealing agent. The perfecting of God's saints, the settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, will take place only when the will is yielded moment by moment to the supreme power of God's Spirit. Inspiration says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:30-32

"The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat." The Desire of Ages, 490

The church can never finish God's work on earth until they realize that no program can succeed until leaders, pastors, and laity enter into the experience of putting away sin by the Holy Spirit's power.

"The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit." Evangelism, 617

The end is very near, much nearer than any of our minds can comprehend. The fourth angel of Revelation 18 is about to come again to join the third angel's message, to swell it to a loud cry. Sunday laws are now on the horizon of our confused world. And as yet the church sleeps on in its carnal security. But in every church there are some who are seeking after this experience of righteousness by faith and victory over every cultivated and inherited weakness to sin.

These consecrated ones are studying, memorizing Scripture, praying, weeping over the sins in the church and in the world. "The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God's visitation has about come. Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily. Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, uncontrolled expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter His people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "The leaven of godliness has not entirely lost its power. At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world. "The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world. It is at this time that God has promised to avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them." Testimonies, vol. 5, 209-210.

Now is the time to pray as we have never prayed, to study as we have never done before. The hour is very, very late. Let us read again from inspiration, "Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsied soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness." Ibid., 267. "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.' " "Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37, 39, RSV

Pentecost, the second time, is about to happen. Let us remember Jesus was glorified at the time of Pentecost One. In Pentecost Two He will be glorified in His saints. "The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them." Christ's Object Lessons, 415-416

May these inspired statements now break through the hardness of our hearts and make us willing to be made willing to yield our wills to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Yes, the greatest need of God's people now is the Holy Spirit.

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

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Sanctification

AND THE very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:23

The prophet Daniel was an illustrious character. He was a bright example of what men may become when united with the God of wisdom. A brief account of the life of this holy man of God is left on record for the encouragement of those who should afterward be called to endure trial and temptation.

When the people of Israel, their king, nobles, and priests, were carried into captivity, four of their number were selected to serve in the court of the king of Babylon. One of these was Daniel, who early gave promise of the remarkable ability developed in later years. These youth were all of princely birth, and are described as “children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, ... and understanding science, and such as had ability in them.” [Daniel 1:4] Perceiving the superior talents of these youthful captives, King Nebuchadnezzar determined to prepare them to fill important positions in his kingdom. That they might be fully qualified for their life at court, according to oriental custom, they were to be taught the language of the Chaldeans, and to be subjected for three years to a thorough course of physical and intellectual discipline.

The youth in this school of training were not only to be admitted to the royal palace, but it was also provided that they should eat of the meat, and drink of the wine, which came from the king's table. In all this the king considered that he was not only bestowing great honor upon them, but also securing for them the best physical and mental development that could be attained.

Among the viands placed before the king were swine's flesh and other meats which were declared unclean by the law of Moses, and which the Hebrews had been expressly forbidden to eat. Here Daniel was brought to a severe test. Should he adhere to the teachings of his fathers concerning meats and drinks, and offend the king, probably losing not only his position but his life as well? Or should he disregard the commandment of the Lord, and retain the favor of the king, thus securing great intellectual advantages and the most flattering worldly prospects?

Daniel did not long hesitate. He decided to stand firmly for his integrity, let the result be what it might. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." [Daniel 1:8]

There are many among professed Christians today who would decide that Daniel was too particular, and would pronounce him narrow and bigoted. They consider the matter of eating and drinking of too little consequence to require such a decided stand—one involving the probable sacrifice of every earthly

Ellen G. White
advantage. But those who reason thus will find in the day of judgment that they turned from God’s express requirements, and set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They will find that what seemed to them unimportant was not so regarded of God. His requirements should be sacredly obeyed. Those who accept and obey one of His precepts because it is convenient to do so, while they reject another because its observance would require a sacrifice, lower the standard of right, and thereby they example lead others to lightly regard the holy law of God. “Thus saith the Lord” is to be our rule in all things.

Daniel was subjected to the severest temptations that can assail the youth of today; yet he was true to the religious instruction received in early life. He was surrounded with influences calculated to subvert those who would vacillate between principle and inclination; yet the Word of God presents him as a faultless character. Daniel dared not trust to his own moral power. Prayer was to him a necessity. He made God his strength, and the fear of God was continually before him in all the transactions of his life.

Daniel possessed the grace of genuine meekness. He was true, firm, and noble. He sought to live in peace with all, while he was unbounding as the lofty cedar wherever principle was involved. In everything that did not come in collision with his allegiance to God, he was respectful and obedient to those who had authority over him; but he had so high a sense of the claims of God that the requirements of earthly rulers were held subordinate. He would not be induced by any selfish consideration to swerve from his duty.

The character of Daniel is presented to the world as a striking example of what God’s grace can make of men fallen by nature and corrupted by sin. The record of his noble, self-denying life is an encouragement to our common humanity. From it we may gather strength to nobly resist temptation, and firmly, and in the grace of meekness, stand for the right under the severest trial.

Daniel might have found a plausible excuse to depart from his strictly temperate habits; but the approbation of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer even than life itself. Having by his courteous conduct obtained favor with Melzar, the officer in charge of the Hebrew youth, Daniel made a request that they might not eat of the king’s meat, or drink of his wine. Melzar feared that should he comply with this request, he might incur the displeasure of the king, and thus endanger his own life. Like many at the present day, he thought that an abstemious diet would render these youth pale and sickly in appearance and deficient diet during the whole course of their training for the duties of the kingdom.

The Lord regarded with approval the firmness and self-denial of these Hebrew youth, and his blessing attended them. He “gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” [1:17] At the expiration of the three years of training, when their ability and acquirements were tested by the king, he “found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten

What if Daniel and his companions had made a compromise with those heathen officers, and had yielded to the pressure of the occasion?

in muscular strength, while the luxurious food from the king’s table would make them ruddy and beautiful, and would impart superior physical activity.

Daniel requested that the matter be decided by a ten-days’ trial—the Hebrew youth during this brief period being permitted to eat of simple food, while their companions partook of the king’s dainties. The request was finally granted, and then Daniel felt assured that he had gained his case. Although but a youth, he had seen the injurious effects of wine and luxurious living upon physical and mental health.

At the end of the ten days the result was found to be quite the opposite of Melzar’s expectations. Not only in personal appearance, but also in physical activity and mental vigor, those who had been temperate in their habits exhibited a marked superiority over their companions who had indulged appetite. As a result of this trial, Daniel and his associates were permitted to continue their simple times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” [1:19-20]

Here is a lesson for all, but especially for the young. A strict compliance with the requirements of God is beneficial to the health of body and mind. In order to reach the highest standard of moral and intellectual attainments, it is necessary to seek wisdom and strength from God, and to observe strict temperance in all the habits of life. In the experience of Daniel and his companions we have an instance of the triumph of principle over temptation to indulge the appetite. It shows us that through religious principle young men may triumph over the lusts of the flesh, and remain true to God’s requirements, even though it cost them a great sacrifice.

What if Daniel and his companions had made a compromise with these heathen officers, and had yielded to the pressure of the occasion, by eating and drinking as was customary with the Babylonians?
It is impossible for any to enjoy the blessing of sanctification while they are selfish and gluttonous. These groan under a burden of infirmities because of wrong habits of eating and drinking, which do violence to the laws of life and health. Many are enfeebling their digestive organs by indulging perverted appetite. The power of the human constitution to resist the abuses put upon it is wonderful; but persistent wrong habits in excessive eating and drinking will enfeeble every function of the body. Let these feeble ones consider what they might have been, had they lived temperately, and promoted health instead of abusing it. In the gratification of perverted appetite and passion, even professing Christians cripple nature in her work, and lessen physical, mental, and moral power. Some who are doing this claim to be sanctified to God; but such a claim is without foundation.

Paul writes to his Christian converts, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [Romans 12:1] Specific directions were given to ancient Israel that no defective or diseased animal should be presented as an offering to God. Only the most perfect were to be selected for this purpose. The Lord, through the prophet Malachi, most severely reproved His people for departing from these instructions.

"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. . . . Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord." [Malachi I:6-8, 13]

Let us give careful heed to these warnings and reproofs—though addressed to ancient Israel, they are no less applicable to the people of God today. And we should consider the words of the apostle in which he appeals to his brethren, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." This is true sanctification. It is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing, be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies—not an offering corrupted by wrong habits, but—"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin, and will not affect their spirituality. A close sympathy exists between the physical and the moral nature. The
standard of virtue is elevated or degraded by the physical habits. Excessive eating of the best of food will produce a morbid condition of the moral feelings. And if the food is not the most healthful, the effects will be still more injurious. Any habit which does not promote healthful action in the human system degrades the higher and nobler faculties. Wrong habits of eating and drinking lead to errors in thought and action. Indulgence of appetite strengthens the animal propensities, giving them the ascendancy over the mental and spiritual powers.

"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," [1 Peter 2:11] is the language of the apostle Peter. Many regard this warning as applicable only to the licentious; but it has a broader meaning. It guards against every injurious gratification of appetite or passion. It is a most forcible warning against the use of such stimulants and narcotics as tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and morphine. These indulgences may well be classed among the lusts that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality.

Bible teaching will make but a feeble impression upon those whose faculties are benumbed by indulgence of appetite. Thousands will sacrifice not only health and life, but also their hope of heaven, before they will wage war against their own perverted appetites. One woman who for many years claimed to be sanctified, made the statement that if she must give up her pipe or heaven she would say, "Farewell, heaven, I cannot overcome my love for my pipe." This idol had been enshrined in the soul, leaving to Jesus a subordinate place. Yet this woman claimed to be wholly the Lord's!

Wherever they may be, those who are truly sanctified will elevate the moral standard by preserving correct physical habits, and, like Daniel, presenting to others an example of temperance and self-denial. Every depraved appetite becomes a warning lust. Everything that conflicts with natural law creates a diseased condition of the soul. The indulgence of appetite produces a dyspeptic stomach, a torpid liver, a clouded brain, and thus perverts the temper and spirit of the man. And these enfeebled powers are offered to God, who drinking and dressing, they lessen physical, mental, and moral power, so that their bodies are an offering which the Lord cannot accept. They have so limited their abilities in every sense that they cannot properly discharge their duties to their fellowmen, and they utterly fail to answer the claims of God.

When Lord Palmerston, premier of England, was petitioned by the Scotch clergy to appoint a day of fasting and prayer to avert the cholera, he replied, in effect, "Cleanse and disinfect your streets and houses, promote cleanliness and health among the poor, and see that they are plentifully supplied with good food and raiment, and employ right sanitary measures generally, and you will have no occasion to fast and pray. Nor will the Lord hear your prayers, while these, His preventives, remain unheeded."

Paul's inspired warnings against self-indulgence are sounding along the line down to our time. He calls upon us to practice temperance in all things; for unless we do this we endanger the salvation of the soul: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." He exhorts, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." [Romans 6:12; 2 Corinthians 7:1]

He presents for our encouragement the freedom enjoyed by the truly sanctified: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [Romans 8:1] He charges the Galatians to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." [Galatians 5:16-17] He names some of the forms of fleshly lust—"idolatry, drunkenness, and such like." And after mentioning the fruits of the Spirit, among which is temperance, he adds, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." [5:24]

Review and Herald January 25, 1881
The Saving Truth

The first glimmer of the new day begins to peek through the windows of Pilate's judgment hall. A weary man with bleeding back, blood upon his sun-kissed brow, trickling from bruised lips, dripping from his beard to the cursed pavement, stands before the Roman authority.

Yes. It was the King of the Jews whom Pilate condemned to death. It was Jesus' blood the mob cried for. And now, His humanity stretched beyond His ability to bear the load of the old rugged cross, He stumbles and falls on the road to Golgotha's crucifixion.

Another young man, also bearing his cross, ascends that hill of death. The sun has risen upon another day; the city and villages have come to life, but this young man has seen his last sunrise. He will die alongside the Saviour of the world. Who is he? A Jew, yes, but a thief, a condemned criminal. Now Isaiah 53:8-9 is about to be fulfilled.

But the Holy Spirit is there, and this thief is being wooed by God's mighty power. Can God save him now in this terrible hour? Can God justify and sanctify such a person in his eleventh hour of probation? Please read on. God has an answer as we study the great subjects of justification and sanctification.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1

We see immediately that peace with God is the fruit of justification. How few in our chaotic world have found this secret to peace! And we might add, how few Christians in God's remnant church have experienced this peace that passeth all knowledge.

Oh, how few, very few, really know the love of Christ that they may be filled with all the fullness of God!

How do we enter into this experience/relationship? Let us read Romans 5:2-5. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Then we have access to this grace by faith. Whose faith? Jesus' faith. Let us read this beautiful inspired scripture: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

It is the faith of the Son of God that justifies us. This faith is the everlasting gospel of the first angel's message. In the twelfth verse of Revelation 14, the revelator summarizes the three angels' messages: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

The faith of Jesus gives the patience of Jesus. These two attributes of character give the power to keep the commandments of God perfectly, which then produces the character of Jesus in the receiver perfectly.
"Christ came to the world to counteract Satan's falsehood that God had made a law which man could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, that he would not rebel." The Faith I Live By, 114

Let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous

Justification and sanctification are the products of the faith of Jesus in the believer. These two important elements of salvation can never be separated. They belong together. When the sinner is justified, he is sanctified. This experience takes place only when the sinner is so sorry for sinning that he is ready to covenant with God to stop sinning, and believes that this victory is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:6-9

Righteousness is right doing by the power of God, which is the righteousness of Christ in you. Not by what you do, but what you are willing to let God do in you. This relationship provides loving obedience to all truth.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:22-23

God's standard of righteousness is perfection and holiness. God says so in His Word: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" 1 Peter 1:15

When the sinner is justified and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit, God treats him as though he had never sinned. Praise God for His mighty forgiving love.

The tragedy is that another gospel has been preached in our pulpits. Paul had to meet this other gospel in his day. He speaks of it in the book of Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Galatians 1:6-7

John also had a problem with those who were preaching another gospel. They were called the Nicolaitans. This group of false preachers, Christ hates: "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." Revelation 2:15

One inspired writer comments concerning these false teachers: "The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by 'believing' we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 957

When we distort the gospel of justification and condone sin, we say that the law cannot be kept perfectly, and therefore we are saved in sin and not from sin. This false doctrine is as old as sin itself. And today many Christians are lulled to sleep in their carnal security by the thought that they cannot stop sinning. They believe a little sinning is acceptable to God; just don't sin in a big way. This lie is the devil's biggest and oldest.

Actually no one can be justified while practicing any known sin or neglecting any known duty. "But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place;

For man to retain justification there must be continual obedience

and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." Selected Messages, book 1, 366

"When He comes He is not to
They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh...

But God's grace does not cover man in sin. It only proffers him deliverance from sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, which makes him an overcomer in Christ until death, showing that he is sanctified.

What is man’s first step in seeking justification? The answer is repentance, and yet we cannot repent of ourselves. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” Acts 5:31-32

Jesus gives repentance. He draws us with His mighty everlasting love to His gift, which justifies the sinner. Then the Holy Spirit can accomplish the work of a lifetime, sanctification. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their righteousness because they had lost their trust in God. Immediately they became sinners in need of justification, which was promised to them in Genesis 3:15.

Since their sin began when they lost their trust in God, then, before they could be restored in righteousness, they must first be restored in faith, Jesus’ faith.

Jesus offers His faith as a gift to every sinner to assure his justification. The sinner then has the right to sanctification, which is the character of Christ superimposed on the life of the recipient.

In this relationship we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.... For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:4-6, 13-14

In this relationship we are accounted righteous, justified by the Spirit, perfect in our sphere as God is in His. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

Romans 6:3-7 explains further: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Let us remember that justification by faith brings perfect peace to the soul in tribulation, persecution, sickness, or tragedy, because there is perfect obedience worked out in the soul by faith.

This message is the third angel's message in verity. It is this message that must be revived in the church because it has been lost sight of. Then only can we give it to the world in the loud cry.

“There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people. The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel’s message. The Holiness people have gone to great extremes on this point. With great zeal they have taught, ‘Only believe in Christ, and be saved; but away with the law of God.’ This is not the teaching of the Word of God. There is no foundation for such a faith. This is not the precious gem of truth that God has given to His people for this time. This doctrine misleads honest souls. The light from the Word of God reveals the fact that the law must be proclaimed. Christ must be lifted up, because He is a Saviour who for-
Dying beside the Saviour, he recognizes Jesus as the Messiah

heart, and He sanctifies him, holding him fast in the Saviour's love until he dies.

1. See Christ's Object Lessons, 69
2. See Steps to Christ, 62
3. See Evangelism, 190; Selected Messages, book 1, 372; book 3, 168, 172, 184

Letters to the Editor

Please send me a subscription for your fine magazine. One came across my path one day and I thoroughly enjoyed every article.

It is the kind of paper we need in our homes in these last, trying days before Christ comes.

May God bless you greatly in trying to help prepare God's children for His kingdom to come.

Ruth Campbell
Indianapolis, Indiana

This magazine was sent by someone to me and I can hardly put it down. It has given me such a lift and comfort in my time of real need.

Name withheld
Loma Linda, California

We want to thank you for your dedication in spreading this beautiful message to all of us Seventh-day Adventists. We pray that more of us will wake up and see what is happening around us. Jesus is coming soon, much sooner than we think.

The 1888 movement, the nature of Christ, and righteousness by faith are very important messages to help us walk in the way towards translation.

Keep on giving us these messages and we pray that we'll be home soon. Praise the Lord!

Ronald and Gail Mitrowski
South Attleboro, Massachusetts

I surely do appreciate Our Firm Foundation magazine. Reading it is like hearing a good sermon. And I also appreciate the fact that you address current issues that we face in the church today. May the Lord continue to bless your work.

Elaine Kelley
Frankin, Louisiana

Thank you for the back issues of Our Firm Foundation. I'm very happy to have them. I know I'll be blessed, and so will others on account of them.

God can use a few modern Gideons with their 300s to bring great triumph and hold back evil in the remnant church with its compromises and courtship of the world.

Harold and Dottie Toms
Tazewell, Virginia

From Truth for Today Broadcast

Could you please send me further details on your church organization. I saw a very interesting program on TV three weeks ago in which the Catholic church was under discussion. Would it be possible for me to have a transcript of that discussion or some written material containing the facts that were mentioned?

Philip Eastman
Vancouver, B.C.

I want to thank you for helping me to understand the Word of God. I have been watching many pastors on TV to help me in my search for the right church. As you have said, there are many false teachers. Thank you and God bless. I would like the books that you advertised on TV.

Mrs Ivan David
Wilmington, North Carolina

Blessings to each of you for the wonderful Bible lessons you present each Tuesday on Channel 32 (TV).

Please send me your Bible study with Bible.

Doris Smithson
Manchester, Missouri

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The Testimonies Slighted

For the historical background of this testimony we refer the reader to the “Looking Back” section of this issue.—Editors

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Battle Creek: I understand that the testimony which I sent to Brother ——, with the request that it be read to the church, was withheld from you for several weeks after it was received by him. Before sending that testimony my mind was so impressed by the Spirit of God that I had no rest day or night until I wrote to you. It was not a work that I would have chosen for myself. Before my husband's death I decided that it was not my duty to bear testimony to anyone in reproof of wrong or in vindication of right, because advantage was taken of my words to deal harshly with the erring and to unwisely exalt others whose course I had not in any degree sustained. Many explained the testimonies to suit themselves. The truth of God is not in harmony with the traditions of men, nor does it conform to their opinions. Like its divine Author, it is unchangeable, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Those who separate from God will call darkness light, and error truth. But darkness will never prove itself to be light, nor will error become truth.

The minds of many have been so darkened and confused by worldly customs, worldly practices, and worldly influences that all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error, seems destroyed. I had little hope that my words would be understood, but when the Lord moved upon me so decidedly, I could not resist His Spirit. Knowing that you were involving yourselves in the snare of Satan, I felt that the danger was too great for me to keep silent.

Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them, I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?

What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks for God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It is the Lord's message of light to His people. If we wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness.

It pains me to say, my brethren, that your sinful neglect to walk in the light has enshrouded you in darkness. You may now be honest in not recognizing and obeying the light; the doubts you have entertained, your neglect to heed the requirements of God, have blinded your perceptions so that darkness is now to you light, and light is dark—

Ellen G. White
ness. God has bidden you to go forward to perfection. Christianity is a religion of progress. Light from God is full and ample, waiting our demand upon it. Whatever blessings the Lord may give, He has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which we may draw. Skepticism may treat the sacred claims of the gospel with jests, scoffing, and denial. The spirit of worldliness may contaminate the many and control the few; the cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally.

The word is, Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts, if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ’s life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we will make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide.

The Lord is testing and proving you. He has counseled, admonished, and entreated. All these solemn admonitions will either make the church better, or decidedly worse. The oftener the Lord speaks to correct or counsel, and you disregard His voice, the more disposed will you be to reject it again and again, till God says: “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.” [Proverbs 1:24-31]

Are you not halting between two opinions? Are you not neglecting to heed the light which God has given you? Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. You know not the time of your visitation. The great sin of the Jews was that of neglecting and rejecting present opportunities. As Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, pharisaical pride and apostasy.

The tears which Christ shed on the crest of Olivet were for the impenitence and ingratitude of every individual to the close of time. He sees His love despised. The soul’s temple courts have been converted into places of unholy traffic. Selfishness, mammon, malice, envy, pride, passion, are all cherished in the human heart. His warnings are rejected and ridiculed. His ambassadors are treated with indifference, their words seem as idle tales. Jesus has spoken by mercies, but these mercies have been unacknowledged; He has spoken by solemn warnings, but these warnings have been rejected.

I entreat you who have long professed the faith and who still pay outward homage to Christ, Do not deceive your own souls. It is the whole heart that Jesus prizeth. The loyalty of the soul is alone of value in the sight of God. “If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace.” [Luke 19:42] “Thou... even thou”—Christ is at this moment addressing you personally, stooping from His throne, yearning with pitying tenderness over those who feel not their danger, who have no pity for themselves.

Many have a name to live while they have become spiritually dead. These will one day say, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” [Matthew 7:22-23] Woe will be pronounced against thee, if thou loiter and linger until the Sun of Righteousness shall set; the blackness of eternal night will be thy portion. Oh, that the cold, formal, worldly heart may be melted! Christ shed not only tears for us, but also His own blood. Will not these manifestations of His love arouse us to deep humiliation before God? It is humility and self-abasement that we need, to be approved of God... Our people are making very dangerous mistakes. We cannot praise and flatter any man without doing him a great wrong; those who do this will meet with serious disappointment. They trust too fully to finite man and not enough to God, who never errs. The eager desire to urge men into public notice is an evidence of backsliding from God, and of friendship with the world. It is the spirit which characterizes the present day. It shows that men have not the mind of Jesus; spiritual blindness and poverty of soul have come upon them. Often persons of inferior minds look away from Jesus to a merely human standard, by which they are not made conscious of their own littleness, and hence have an undue

Unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing

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estimate of their own capabilities and endowments. There is among us as a people an idolatry of human instrumentalities and mere human talent, and these even of a superficial character. We must die to self and cherish humble, childlike faith. God's people have departed from their simplicity. They have not made God their strength, and they are weak and faint, spiritually.

I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leaving the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord's displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace, and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe.

I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing as the people backslide from God. It is all through our ranks, all over the field. Few know what our churches are to experience. I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance; but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily

and gone in our congregations, but they seem only less and less sensible of the value of revealed truth. They do not hunger and thirst after righteousness. They have no relish for spiritual or divine things. They assent to the truth, but are not sanctified through it. Neither the Word of God nor the testimonies of His Spirit make any lasting impression upon them. Just according to the light, the privileges, and opportunities which they have slighted, will be their condemnation. Many who preach the truth to others are themselves cherishing iniquity. The entreaties of the Spirit of God, like divine melody, the promises of His Word so rich and abundant, its threatenings against idolatry and disobedience—all are powerless to melt the world-hardened heart.

Many of our people are lukewarm. They occupy the position of Meroz, neither for nor against, neither cold nor hot. They hear the words of Christ, but do them not. If they remain in this state, He will reject them with abhorrence. Many of those who have had great light, great opportunities, and every spiritual advantage, praise Christ and the world with the same breath. They bow themselves before God and mammon. They make merry with the children of the world, and yet claim to be blessed with the children of God. They wish to have Christ as their Saviour, but will not bear the cross and wear His yoke. May the Lord have mercy upon you; for if you go on in this way, nothing but evil can be prophesied concerning you.

The patience of God has an object, but you are defeating it. He is allowing a state of things to come that you would fain see counteracted by and by, but it will be too late. God commanded Elijah to anoint the cruel and deceitful Hazael king over Syria, that he might be a scourge to idolatrous Israel. Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more

standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, "Peace, peace," when the Lord hath not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that erelong all prophecies among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred

Many wish to have Christ as their Saviour, but will not bear the cross

devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in a tempestuous night, shine here and there among the clouds.

Many who complacently listen to the truths from God's Word are dead spiritually, while they profess to live. For years they have come

When holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people

the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.

When God shall work His strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people. Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh, that our people may, as did Nineveh, repent with all their might and believe with all their heart, that God may turn away His fierce anger from them!

There are men among us in responsible positions who hold that the opinions of a few conceited philosophers, so-called, are more to be trusted than the truth of the Bible, or the testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Such a faith as that of Paul, Peter, or John is considered old-fashioned, and insufferable at the present day. It is pronounced absurd, mystical, and unworthy of an intelligent mind.

God has shown me that these men are Hazael's to prove a scourgé to our people. They are wise above what is written. This unbelief of the very truths of God's Word because human judgment cannot comprehend the mysteries of His work, is found in every district, in all ranks of society. It is taught in most of our schools and comes into the lessons of the nurseries. Thousands who profess to be Christians give
head to lying spirits. Everywhere the spirit of darkness in the garb of religion will confront you.

If all that appears to be divine life were such in reality; if all who profess to present the truth to the world were preaching for the truth, and not against it, and if they were men of God guided by His Spirit—then might we see something

**I know that many think far too favorably of the present time**

cheering amid the prevailing moral darkness. But the spirit of antichrist is prevailing to such an extent as never before. Well may we exclaim: "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children men." [Psalm 12:1] I know that many think far too favorably of the present time. These ease-loving souls will be engulfed in the general ruin. Yet we do not despair. We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians; but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to "science falsely so called" will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven, but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs, will not find it a hard matter to yield to the the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful, but in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

The seeds of truth that are being sown by missionary efforts will then spring up and blossom and bear fruit. Souls will receive the truth who will endure tribulations and praise God that they may suffer for Jesus. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." [John 16:33] When the overflowing scourge shall pass through the earth, when the fan is purging Jehovah's floor, God will be the help of His people. The trophies of Satan may be exalted on high, but the faith of the pure and holy will not be daunted.

Elijah took Elisha from the plow and threw upon him his mantle of consecration. The call to this great and solemn work was presented to men of learning and position; had these been little in their own eyes and trusted fully in

**God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate**

the Lord, He would have honored them with bearing His standard in triumph to the victory. But they separated from God, yielded to the influence of the world, and the Lord rejected them.

Many have exalted science and lost sight of the God of science, continued on 31
IN RECENT months I have been favored with a steady trickling of new (and a few old) documents diligently prepared at the expense of much time and effort advising me to withdraw my membership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now this is a matter of considerable importance to me, and so I have taken occasion now and then to examine these gifts of someone's generosity. I have noted with interest the various lines of thought, the different points of reasoning, and the range of conclusions presented in these works.

On the whole, they may be characterized by two points: a strong concern over our failure as a people to fulfill the Lord's will for us (a concern I share), and an advocacy of separation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (a position I do not hold). In every case the author sees a strong connection between these two points. Having sufficiently established the first point (which was self-evident to begin with) these authors believe they have sufficiently established the second point as well. Right here I have a problem.

It is interesting to note the differing opinions among the various authors as to exactly when and for what reason the Seventh-day Adventist Church ceased to be God's remnant church. For some, it was the rewriting of the denominational constitution in 1903. Others point to the publishing of books containing dangerously erroneous doctrinal positions.

That every error in the church is cause for repentance, revival, and reformation is an undisputed fact. That any particular error, or even an accumulation of errors, has resulted in God's rejection of His once-chosen people requires clear demonstration. The question is, can it be demonstrated?

Some of the larger works of this class contain very detailed year-by-year delineations of the trouble spots in our denominational history. Such knowledge can be extremely useful as "examples unto us upon whom the ends of the world are come." Some of these failings, particularly the more recent ones, are of value in pointing out specific wrongs which in all fairness deserve to be righted. On these points I have little cause for quarrel with certain of the authors. Still, there is the "conclusion of the whole matter" which I find troublesome.

The concept of separating from the organized church body stems from a conviction that God Himself has separated from that body; therefore, in order to avoid separation from God, the individual also must separate from the church. Consequently the question hinges on whether or not God has completely and irrevocably separated Himself from that organized body of believers known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Certainly this is a matter of sufficient import that the Lord would inform us of His intentions. We are promised, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. How then might we expect such a revelation to occur? Herein lies the difficulty with what might be spoken of as the compiled-record-of-sins approach. Given the facts that every sin is serious, and that even one cherished sin is sufficient to separate a person from God, we still must decide how many sins are required to fill the "cup of iniquity."

The case of Achan may come to mind in this regard; but note that the lesson there was different. The Lord demonstrated once for all time that His people could never accomplish His will while there was sin in the camp. Israel would have to be pure to expect the Lord's full blessing. But did that one sin completely and irrevocably separate

Dave Fiedler
God from the children of Israel? No, of course not, for in a matter of days the process of repentance, revival, and reformation had prepared the way for Israel to once again move on successfully in the way of God’s choosing.

Then how many sins does it take? Obviously we are into sensitive territory with a question like that. Who, having previously been told that the “iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full,” (Genesis 15:16) would trust his own judgment to know that the refusal of a courteous request was the final act of defiance which marked the filling up of their cup of iniquity? (See Patriarchs and Prophets, 435)

Surely there is a more dependable way to decide. One approach would be to show that the church had committed specific sins which an inspired source indicates to be sufficient cause for the irrevocable withdrawal of God’s presence. A ready example of this would be the earmarks of Babylon—“the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God’s holy and sanctified day.” Testimonies to Ministers, 61

Should the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an organized body adopt these doctrines as their message to the world, I would have no difficulty in deciding to withdraw my membership. I doubt that any sincere student of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy would. But lacking evidence of anything other than (at best) poor judgment or (at worst) determined apostasy on these points by certain individuals within the church, I cannot see that this method gives clear indication of a need to sever my connection with the church body.

While considering this point we may well look back to the time of Elijah. I cannot help but ponder the course of action which I suppose the authors of these books would have felt compelled to choose during the reign of Ahab. If ever a high official of the chosen people of God departed from the Lord, it was Ahab. Yet all his devotion to the worship of Baal, and his support of hundreds of heathen priests did not prevent Elijah from praying, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel.” 1 Kings 18:36

Elijah did not feel that his sojourn in Zarephath had made him one whit less an Israelite, and his conviction remained unchanged that the Lord was “God in Israel.”

Drawing from this experience, indeed from the whole sorry record of the ancient church, I conclude that the unrighteous actions of delegated officials do not, in and of themselves, constitute sufficient cause for the complete and irrevocable departure of God’s presence. Yet I would not in the least minimize the seriousness of such actions. A fearful price must one day be paid by all who commit and sustain—even by silence—such actions. Membership in the remnant church is no automatic ticket to heaven. It carries with the honor an accountability which too few are willing to bear.

By far the simplest method which the Lord could use to indicate His complete and irrevocable departure from our midst would be a straightforward declaration from the mouth or pen of an acknowledged prophet of God. We should rather expect to see such a pronouncement prominently displayed in any publication maintaining that the rejection of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came before the death of Ellen White. There are, of course, those publications which contain clear statements of this kind from other “prophets” of more recent years, but as they fall on several points to meet the specifications of “an acknowledged prophet of God,” I’ll simply skip over such.

Again, I find myself faced with puzzling difficulties as I read examples of this line of reasoning. For, try as they might, the various authors I have read on this point fail quite miserably in their efforts to produce that “straightforward declaration.” Worse, I find signs of intentional misrepresentation, and a striking absence of information which would clearly call into question the conclusions of the authors.

One recent example asks the question, “Did Mrs. White separate from our professed but false church?” Aside from the prejudiced depiction of the church, this is a perfectly valid question, entirely appropriate for the range of study contained in the volume. Quoting from a personal letter of Mrs. White’s for which no readily available reference is listed, the author supplied this answer:

“... I have but very little confidence that the Lord is giving these men in positions of responsibility, spiritual eyesight and heavenly discernment. I am thrown into perplexity over their course, and I desire now to attend to my special work. To have no part in any of their councils, and to attend no camp meetings, nigh or afar off. My mind shall not be dragged into confusion by the tendency they manifest to work directly contrary to the light that God has given me. I am done. I will preserve my God-given intelligence. My voice has been heard in the different conferences, and at campmeetings. I must now make a change. ... I shall therefore, leave them to receive...
word from the Bible, . . . This is the light given me, and I shall not depart from it." Letter W-186, December 2, 1902. To Edson and Willie White." (All emphasis supplied by the author of the book in which the quotation appears.)

An interesting letter. Clearly Ellen White was distressed over the actions of "these men in positions of responsibility." We can easily sympathize with her sorrow over their "tendency . . . to work directly contrary to the light." But does this letter depict a total separation from the organized body of the church as the author implies? Or does it represent a period of detangling from perplexing situations in order to concentrate more closely on her "special work"?

A very simple method of judging the extent of this "separation" is to notice the entries in the Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White under the heading "White, Ellen G. (biographical data)." Remembering that this letter was written December 2, 1902, we find her—five days later—writing a testimony entitled "The Work in Europe." On January 3, 1903, she penned the memorable passage on "The Review and Herald Fire," now found in Testimonies, vol. 8, 97-101. On the third of April she addressed the full session of the General Conference meeting in Oakland, California. In May and June she was directing her attention to the relocation of the General Conference headquarters which she advised to be moved from Battle Creek. Beginning in April of 1904 she spent several months in the nation's capital assisting in the establishment of the newly moved offices.

Without belaboring the point, I notice that she attended the General Conference sessions of 1905 and 1909, both held in Washington, D.C. On the latter occasion she read to the delegates a testimony entitled "The Spirit of Independence." In all of this, I somehow fail to see that she made any significant long-term separation from the church.

I am disturbed by the fact that none of this information is contained in the volume I quoted from earlier. I am tempted to ask why it should have been left out. Was the author unaware of these facts? It seems unlikely, for he freely quotes her Review and Herald articles from as late as 1909. One wonders if he ever stopped to think that someone in the church was publishing her work. And what's more, she was still writing it for them. I fail to see the consistency of his position.

The Essenes played no active role in the greatest drama of history

And so it goes. Another example from history comes to mind—the Essenes. In an effort to separate themselves from the sinfulness of Israel (and there was plenty of it, to be sure) they withdrew to their exclusive communes in the wilderness. I trust that the country environment was a blessing to them (more of us could learn a lesson on this point), and we can thank them for the preservation of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. But I sometimes wonder where the Essenes were when Jesus Christ "came unto his own, and his own received him not," John 1:11.

It is a sad fact that all we know of the Essenes comes from extrabiblical sources. For reasons best known to themselves, they played no active role in the greatest drama of history. Not one word is said of them in the pages of the New Testament. Where were they when He needed them?

A common line of reasoning among many who choose to separate from the church is that history repeats itself. Church after church has apostatized and been rejected, they say. Should we not expect it of our church?

I freely admit that the challenges are great, greater than ever before in the 6000 years of conflict. But I trust too in the promise that "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Isaiah 4:3-4.

History does all too often repeat itself, because we don't learn its lessons. And so I wonder, will there be "Essenes" today, hiding away in their imagined caves of purity when the Lord God of Israel is working to save His church?

Apostasy may abound on every hand. The majority of our church members may be untrue. But that will all change. When the "spirit of judgment" and the "spirit of burning" are through with the church, I have no doubt that it will present a far different appearance than it now does. Much will be swept away as useless or worse, when, if consecrated wholly to the purposes of God, it could have been a great blessing to the saving of souls.

When the work goes forward "contrary to any human planning" (Testimonies to Ministers, 300) it will be contrary to my planning too. But this much I know: though the name Seventh-day Adventist be disgraced on every level, though every trusted friend and brother prove false, though the enactments of prelates and magistrates deprive me of all I have and threaten me with death; when questioned as to my beliefs I choose to bear with honor the name and insignia of Christ, confessing myself to be a Seventh-day Adventist.
IN 1890, Ellen White gave a warning all Seventh-day Adventists would do well to heed if they wish to discern Satan's deceptions in these last hours of earth's history:

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish,' Proverbs 29:18. Satan will work ingenuously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony." Selected Messages, book 1, 48

Let's analyze this warning about the "very last deception of Satan." First, the attack of Satan against Mrs. White's counsels will help him ensnare souls. By destroying confidence in the reliability of Mrs. White's counsel, Satan will have a much easier time leading Adventists to accept his deceptions.

"The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them [her writings] for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded." Ibid.

Second, those employed by Satan in this attack against Mrs. White's counsel will probably be unaware of the part they are playing, and may even think they are doing the Lord's work. Educators, pastors, scholars, and theologians, both within and without the church, may attack her writings in the name of "scholarly investigation." Her writings may be analyzed in the light of so-called "historic orthodox Protestant theology" and dismissed as "heretical." Her counsel may be rejected even by Adventist leaders as "irrelevant," "not applicable," or "obsolete." There may arise those who claim to have "new light" which, when carefully examined, contradicts various counsels of Mrs. White and, yes, also the Bible.

Third, this last deception of Satan will likely involve both overt and covert operations against Mrs. White's writings. One example of an overt operation is the writing and publication of books which attack Mrs. White as a "literary fraud" or "plagiarist." Another example is the publication of articles and magazines which point out alleged "mistakes" in her writings, or subject both her counsel and her as a person to contempt and ridicule. A covert operation may be illustrated by those Adventist pastors, teachers, and theologians who raise doubts and questions regarding the reliability of Mrs. White's counsels as well as historic church doctrines, while professing to believe in and support her.

Fourth, this last deception will occur both from within and from without the church. Attacks from within on her counsel have come from church pastors, college and university professors, theologians, and writers. Books, magazines, and tapes have been published and distributed by those inside the church who wish to undermine confidence in her counsel. Attacks on Mrs. White from outside the church have occurred from various people in the conservative Protestant churches, the most recent notable example being the John Ankerberg Show of about two years ago.

One highly important point is the fact that this very last deception of Satan will be "to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God" (emphasis supplied). The significance of this phrase "to make of none effect" should not be underestimated nor overlooked. A considerable portion of this final attack against Ellen White's counsel may be a subtle, muted opposition rather
than a direct, open assault on it, although this, of course, has happened and it is quite probable that open attacks against her writing will occur. An open and avowed defiance of her instructions by church leaders or others would be easy for many members to detect, and thus avoid deception.

A subtle opposition, on the other hand, would not be nearly as discernible and would be far more successful in deceiving church members. Those who are working in a subtle manner against Mrs. White’s writings may give an outward appearance of compliance with and support for them. They may verbally affirm their belief in her writings while tolerating and even encouraging actions, beliefs, and practices which are in direct opposition to them, as well as to the historic beliefs and standards of the church. Some church leaders may profess support for her writings while refusing to remove those in positions of authority whose lives, actions, and words clearly show they have no regard for her counsel.

Now, let’s consider four ways in which the writings of Mrs. White are being “made of none effect.” The first occurs in the lives and homes of many Adventists and is very powerful in destroying her influence, both within and without the church. It is called the “don’t do as I do, do as I say” attack. It may be described in one word: hypocrisy. Adventists involved in this attack profess belief in her counsels and then ignore them. For example, they speak praise regarding her dietary instructions and then set on their tables hot dogs and hamburgers, along with various sugar-loaded pastries and soft drinks. They give lip service to her counsel regarding separation from the world, and then watch the same banal situation comedies and the same sex-and-violence-filled movies on their TVs and VCRs as their so-called “worldly” neighbors watch.

Perhaps this is the place to insert two propositions which will clarify the issue: (1) If Seventh-day Adventist parents and leaders profess with their mouths to believe in the writings of Ellen White, but in their lives do not follow her counsel, why should these Adventist parents expect their children to follow her counsel, and why should these church leaders expect lay people to have confidence in her and take her writings seriously? (2) Furthermore, if Seventh-day Adventists do not heed her counsel, why should they expect the Christian world, much less the secular world, to have any confidence in, or to take seriously, the writings of Ellen White as messages from God? These propositions deserve serious consideration from every Adventist.

The second method which makes her testimonies of “none effect” is for Adventist pastors to simply ignore Ellen White’s counsel in their ministry. In some ways, this may be a more effective attack than raising questions and doubts regarding her counsel. This method can include ignoring her writings when preparing sermons. It should be quite rare that a sermon preached by an Adventist minister could be given by a minister of another denomination. Mrs. White has given the Adventist Church invaluable counsel in areas like last-day dangers, spiritual development, and witnessing to help people prepare to meet the Lord. For a minister to ignore inspired counsel in any of these areas is to betray his flock. Furthermore, in what other writings, with the exception of the Bible, is it possible to find such detailed information on the end of the world and how to prepare for it?

In addition, Adventist ministers have been given much important counsel from Mrs. White in many areas, such as mental and physical health, diet, and finances, to share with their flock. Mrs. White’s counsel, if followed conscientiously and wholeheartedly, is most effective in relieving emotional, physical, and spiritual suffering. For a minister to turn away from this counsel in favor of worldly counsel or human speculation is to betray a sacred trust. For a minister to depend on man’s thoughts to the exclusion of inspired counsel is to give counsel which is less than the best.

We are responsible for the evils we might have checked in others

Pastors can also “make of none effect” Mrs. White’s warnings by failing to reprove sin in the lives of individual church members and also in the church congregation. This task is not easy or pleasant. Yet on page 578 of Patriarchs and Prophets, Mrs. White gives this solemn warning:

“Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indifference or lack of interest make no 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 the evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own.”

Every pastor would do well to consider very seriously this grave thought.

A third way for making Mrs. White’s testimonies of “none effect” is for editors of church magazines to refrain from running her articles in their magazines. Her testimonies are made of “none effect” because they are seldom or never published. Her counsel, if it is heeded, will help church members avoid falling for the deceptions of Satan in these last hours and be prepared to face the Lord. In light of this, how can any church editor either decline to reprint Mrs. White’s articles, or run them only
infallibly? How can the writings of men be considered of more importance than these messages from the Lord?

In these closing hours of earth's history, let all the editors of our church magazines bring as much light as possible to church members by running in every issue articles by Mrs. White on vital subjects like true consecration, the impending conflict, working for Jesus, separation from the world, and the three angels' messages.

The fourth way to render of "none effect" Mrs. White's counsel is for church leaders to play down the importance of her writings as well as those doctrines of our church which are in opposition to mainline and evangelical Protestantism in order that the church will not be called a cult.

Our doctrines, such as Ellen White's prophetic gift, the seventh-day Sabbath, the nonimmortality of the soul, obedience to God's law, the investigative judgment, and the sanctuary in heaven are the foundation of our faith. It is highly dangerous for any within the church to muffle the proclamation of any of these doctrines for the sake of obtaining the favor of any section of Protestantism or the world.

For any church leader to mute Ellen White's counsel or any of our distinctive doctrines in any degree, no matter how small, is an extremely serious matter which will result in the Lord's being unable to pour out His fullest blessing and power on this church. Furthermore, muting the presentation of present truth to the world, including Ellen White's counsel, will only result in a delay in the Lord's return.

King Solomon warned, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe," Proverbs 29:25. Let our leaders break free of the bondage of trying to maintain the favor of any section of Protestantism or the world. Let our leaders disregard any labels like "sect" or "cult" man may apply to our church because of Mrs. White's ministry or our doctrines. Let our leaders stand fearlessly for all the truth, regardless of the consequences.

Another dimension of this problem regarding leadership is that it is time for church leaders to confront the fact that there are some in positions of authority and responsibility in the church whose public statements, actions, and lifestyles clearly reveal open contempt for Mrs. White's counsel, not to mention historic church doctrines. Some of these people continue in power even after much protest has been raised by concerned lay members. For church leaders to remain silent about and keep in power those who attack Ellen White, Christian standards, and historic church doctrines, only causes concerned lay members to question just how deeply church leadership believes Mrs. White's counsel. This doubt, in turn, results in a crisis of credibility for church leadership.

These four areas are by no means the only areas where Mrs. White's counsel is being made of "none effect," yet I believe they will serve to illustrate how deeply this deception has overtaken some in the church.

In these final hours of earth's history, let any who have been making of "none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God" carefully consider their course of action and prayerfully ask the Lord for forgiveness and for power to bring their lives into harmony with inspired counsel. As they do this, they will be strengthened emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Furthermore, the Lord will then be able to abundantly bless the Adventist Church with great spiritual power, thus enabling the members to go forth to fulfill their divine commission by giving the loud cry to a perishing world.

Let our leaders stand fearlessly for all the truth, regardless.
CHANGE IN the administration of a small college always comes as a landmark and a hazard. Battle Creek College discovered this for the first time in 1881 when Alexander McLearn was made president to succeed [Sidney] Brownsberger.

"McLearn, a Canadian by birth (1832) and a Baptist minister by choice and training at Prince of Wales College and Newton Theological Seminary, accepted Seventh-day Adventist only days before being asked to assume the presidency of the College. Although he never officially joined the denomination, he had a Doctor of Divinity degree which would lend prestige to the College. And the Seventh-day Adventists hoped he would eventually be baptized into the church.

"The Battle Creek situation was especially fluid when the school elected McLearn to the helm of the College on July 24. In August, James White, with his genius for leadership and management, died. A few weeks later his widow, Ellen, departed for California. Moreover, because General Conference President George I. Butler would be often absent from headquarters,"1 "Battle Creek would have to rely on Uriah Smith as elder of the Tabernacle Church and chairman of the College board and on the community for direction. And both failed.

"For instance, Mrs. T.M. Steward later admitted that she did err when McLearn came to Battle Creek in telling him what she thought of Professor Bell. Others, she said, did the same thing, and the one who was specially engaged in it was Professor Ramsey. All this she confessed in the Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society meeting in December in order to clear her conscience."2

"The College opened as usual, and the enrollment for the year reached 433. Almost at once President McLearn made an impression with his sermons—he reasoned cogently and spoke forcefully. Some of his sermons he separately printed to satisfy the demand for them. "In their enthusiasm some... [gave] him undue confidence and praise," a contemporary [Ellen White] commented. He easily concluded that he had quickly achieved stature with the church.

"Winning the good opinion of the students proved a greater problem. He had been informed that a disciplinary battle waged throughout the school. Too many young men had lost their spirituality in forbidden amusements in the city. Many of both sexes chafed under the strict social regulations of the College. Some had become bewitched with thoughts of courtship and marriage. McLearn apparently hoped to win the battle against 'city vices' by giving ground on the social front; he accordingly began to use a dispensing power which he did not possess."

"A few days after the College opened the available trustees met to discuss discipline. "... Professors McLearn and Osborne expressed themselves as believers in rigid discipline." But what could McLearn have meant? As a fact, he had 'suspended' College rule 10 which forbade courting.4 "Needless to say, many of the students, convinced that the rules were too strict, hailed him as a reasonable, sensible leader.

"Such a step was more than Bell could stand, for order and discipline comprised vital parts of his life. ... He feared that the new president followed a course that might jeopardize the existence of the College. Bell had woven his life into the school during the previous thirteen years and felt that he had a kind of proprietary interest in it. Adverse health and home factors also aggravated his smoldering distrust of the new administration.

"Bell's apprehensions were confirmed when the General Conference and corollary organizations met in annual sessions in December. Ellen G. White returned briefly from California to attend the meetings. Standing before the leaders at Battle Creek, she read a paper, Our College" (now found in Testimonies, vol. 5, 21-36).

"Among other things, she pointed out that 'no one should strive for supremacy among the faculty; they should draw together. Bell should curb his 'unkindness, harshness, and severity.' Strife was inevitable if the criticism of Bell by students and community did not cease; critics ought to remember his years of arduous toil and look to their own imperfect conduct.

"Unfortunately, none of the leaders in Battle Creek exerted a dominant enough influence to quench the smoldering embers with a shower of words."

"Before long, a feud raged between McLearn and Bell, with the majority of the faculty and students sympathetic with McLearn. Arguments, mass meetings, and petitions followed."6 "The most persistent complaints centered around the idea that Bell talked too much and too harshly of others, and that McLearn was trying to cut Bell down to size and had demoralized the student body in the process."8

"How would the board react? Chairman Uriah Smith, in lawyer-like manner, permitted both contestants to draw up formal 'charges.' Eight investigatory meetings convened, usually at Smith's residence (to accommodate his artificial leg) to facilitate open hearings. Any and all community people and students could speak their minds on Bell, who had resided among them since 1868, and McLearn, who had lived there only months. ... The hearings ruined both Bell and McLearn in Battle Creek."

"A letter from Ellen G. White in
March upbraided Smith and the church for their lack of wisdom and forbearance in the controversy, and denounced their heartlessness toward Bell. 7 "She received letters from others on this matter, but none from Bell or his sympathizers. Nevertheless she sided with the teacher, telling Smith that she had been made sad by the contents of his letter. 'I am pained to find you, my much-esteemded brother, involved in this matter, on the wrong side,' Ellen White wrote. She was opposed to the way Brother Bell had been treated by those favoring lax discipline, even though she was aware of his unwise harshness and had reproved him for it. It was clear to her that parents had attacked Bell with gossip because he had restrained their spoiled children, and that the professor's lack of self-control was owing largely to overwork and a situation of constant irritation at home. To the Battle Creek Church she declared, 'Whatever may be Brother Bell's faults, your course is unjustifiable and unchristian,' and added, 'I . . . wash my hands of your cruel work.' "Focusing on Brother Smith, the testimony continued: "'I am sorry that Elder Smith, who has been considered so mild, so kind, and so tender that he shrank from reproving wrongs in the office, or performing his duty in the church and in his own family, is for some unexplainable reason found on the side of the accuser. I can but think that this is due to some influence which has blinded his eyes and confused his senses. I cannot say to Brother Smith, God speed you in this work, for it is wrong. He must meet its results hereafter. His position of trust and his long experience render him more accountable for this state of things than any other one in the church. Had he been right, he could have prevented the disgrace and the sin."

"Brother Smith, the stand which you have taken in this case proves you responsible for all your past neglect of duty in the church and in the office. You have shown that you can be firm, decided, and severe, even when it is uncalled for. . . ."

"You have made a great mis-

The unrepentant element in the church remained the real problem

"As Battle Creek Church elder, Uriah was asked to read her letter of reproof publicly to those involved. Rather than do this, he resigned from the board of directors of the College, and General Conference President George I. Butler took over the post. A second such letter was read to the church two months later."

"Again Ellen White addressed the church at headquarters from Healdsburg, California, writing that word had come to her that for several weeks after receiving her precious communication to the church, Elder Smith had refused to read it. 'If God was leading him, . . . He was not leading me,' she asserted. Beyond this, she understood that he did not feel the letter ought to be brought before the church at all, and commented, 'Thus he takes the responsibility of standing between God's word of reproof and the people.' 8"

In August Elder Smith wrote a short letter of explanation: "I have never had any controversy with the Testimonies, or with your work; and I do not intend to have, he insisted. Rather, 'the ground of my hesitancy to regard that part of your communication to the special school trouble as a testimony, was the fact that I had always supposed that you had [not?] had any vision since the recent trouble in the College commenced; hence I did not see how there could be any "testimony" in the common acceptance of that term.' However, 'I had not the least intention of withholding it from the church, or of belittling or casting any slight upon it.' 9"

"Thus Smith revealed an escape mechanism he had conjured up. He would not accept Mrs. White's writings as true testimony unless they were shown to be accurate by visions. 10 "Nevertheless, he added, 'I said that if you should claim that it was a testimony, I would accept the situation; and so I do.' 11"

"Some in the church reacted unfavorably to Mrs. White's correction, demonstrating that when in 1873 James White had feared the Battle Creek Church would not be a suitable environment in which to locate a college, he had diagnosed correctly. . . ."

"The unrepentant element in the church remained the real problem. Consequently, on September 12 the board with 'mortification and anguish' announced that Battle Creek College would suspend operations. The future of the College, if any, passed to the Educational Society—and to the Battle Creek Church."

"The school's directors probably took no more symbolic action that summer than their order to keep the hay cut in the College yard." 11"
The Ministerial Dilemma

Russell R. Standish
Colin D. Standish

The following scenario is not based upon one specific experience, but underscores the dilemma of the young minister in the work of God today. A young man, like so many who are trained for the ministry, is newly converted to the Adventist faith. He is on fire for the great message that pulsates within his being. Thus he dedicates his life to the gospel ministry. He quickly enrolls in the theological department of a Seventh-day Adventist college. Like so many new Seventh-day Adventists, he has studied widely the Advent message and is more informed than many who have been decades in the faith. With great enthusiasm he approaches his Bible classes, only to find that some of his teachers no longer share his belief in the authenticity of the Advent message. These teachers, having been students in the theological seminaries of the world, have dared to bring their aberrant beliefs into the institution where they are employed and are now being used of Satan to indoctrinate the upcoming generation of ministers in a "faith" which is defective. Years of teaching experience have honed the professor's arguments, and many within the class are as lambs to the slaughter before the persuasive arguments of a much more experienced professor. Further, most students are prone to accept the word of the man who holds their academic grades in his hands.

But this young man is not deceived. He understands the errors of his professor. After his initial shock, he seeks in a careful way to point out that the teacher is presenting beliefs that are not in harmony with the Adventist faith. At first his interjections in class are handled kindly by the professor. But soon the professor becomes agitated by these interruptions and challenges to the integrity of that which he is teaching. Even many students in the class share the professor's concern because they do not have the background of this young man and feel that he is a negative influence upon the class.

Eventually the professor calls the young man into his office to give him some "wise counsel." He is flattered. "You are a promising student who can do a great work for God, but remember you have come to college to learn and to understand from those of much wider experience and background." The young man, while respectful, tries to explain his position to the professor. The professor plays upon his youth and inexperience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He infers that the evangelist who baptized him is not really a scholar. The young man is now more careful in class. Often he says nothing when he is deeply disturbed by the questionable teachings of his professor. However, he does often raise these issues with his fellow students, most of whom prove to be unsympathetic to his viewpoint. The teacher senses that he is still an "agitator" within the class and once again the young man is counseled. With integrity he tries to put forward the principles of truth in his term paper or in his written examinations, only to receive poor, if not failing, grades from his professor. He now faces a crisis and a dilemma. He is convinced that he is
called to the ministry, yet he realizes that his achievement of this ambition is largely in the hands of his professors. They not only teach him, they will also grade him and will be the ones primarily responsible for making recommendations to the employing conferences.

Eventually and reluctantly the young man comes to the conviction that he must remain silent within the class. However, he vows that as soon as he has graduated and has been appointed to ministerial work he will preach the truth unadulterated and untrammeled by human thought. He graduates and is appointed to an internship. But now he finds himself interning with a minister who is less than clear upon the distinctive truth of God’s Word. However, with courage he begins to preach the Adventist faith, to encourage the members with the power of Christ to give them victory over sin. Within the congregation there are those who for many years have not heard such straight preaching, and they raise their concerns with the senior minister. The minister, himself not clear on the Adventist message, sees it as his responsibility to dialogue with his young Intern. The counsel is mixed with flattery. The intern is told that he has a very promising future in the ministry, but he must learn that the preaching of certain sermons is unwise. His sermons are causing disunity in the church and already a number have spoken to the senior minister concerning this matter. It is not that those members do not value this young man, he is assured, but they’re afraid that his preaching will bring controversy and instability into the church, known for many years as a bastion of stability. Once again the young man is faced with a dilemma and reluctantly he decides that he will tone down his sermons while awaiting appointment to his own church.

Eventually that opportunity comes, and again with vigor the young pastor launches into a presentation of the great truths of Adventism. But again there are those in the church who are neither in harmony with, nor ready to receive, the straight testing truths that this young man presents. Influential men within the church approach the conference president, complaining about the preaching of the young man. In a meeting with the president, he is told that shortly the conference will be considering the possibility of his ordination. The president assures him that he is considered to be a promising young man with a bright future in the ministry, but he must learn to preach in a way that will maintain unity and peace within the church. The president explains that members of the church who are held in high regard, men of experience and respect within the conference, have been concerned with the messages that he has been delivering from the pulpit. The conference president urges him to be careful with the subject matter of his preaching.

By now the intern is married and his wife adds to his anguish. Ambitious for him, she urges him to do nothing that will jeopardize his ordination or future in the ministry. He is torn between loyalty to truth and an earnest concern for the souls of his church members, and his future in the ministry. He begins to rationalize that if he is dropped from the ministry he will lose all influence.

He gives much the same counsel that he himself received as a young man

In frustration the young minister decides to wait until after his ordination to present the message. But since many times he has compromised his preaching and salved his conscience, no longer does he have the same burden to preach with power. He has step by step been led into a political environment in which the favor of the congregation becomes one of the most critical determinants of his future success. Indeed, he flatters himself that he has now learned how to present the message in a winning and appealing way. He realizes that there is much worldliness and secularism among his church members, but he deceives himself that if he preaches the love of Christ independent of some of the deeper calls for repentance, that the members will eventually turn from their worldliness to the path-way of Christ. Eventually he is given bigger churches and wider responsibilities, until one day he too is voted to the post of conference presidency. And by this time he gives much the same counsel that he himself received as a young man. He even points out his own inadvertent rashness as a youth and explains how “wise” leadership had helped him to develop a ministry that was fruitful in his churches.

Sadly, to a greater or lesser extent, this story has been repeated over and over again. It is possible that we as ministers have been deceived, greatly deceived, as to the purpose of our calling and face a crisis in our lives in that we no longer see the need to present the straight testimony of the True Witness to our congregations. Indeed, we believe to do so would be contrary to the call of Christ. But such is not the case. The servant of the Lord tells us that in these last days, we, the ministry of God’s church, will be called to give a straighter testimony than even John the Baptist. We are also told that many will rise up against the messengers as they have in generations past. The situation will be intimidating and will call forth the greatest anguish in our souls. But if it leads us to a deeper relationship with Christ and a fuller leaning upon Him, then He will indeed multiply our ministry, and many who would have been lost will be saved in the kingdom of heaven. And after all, it is to such a work that God has called us.

This is chapter 1 of the dynamic new book by the Standish brothers entitled Keepers of the Faith. You cannot afford to miss this challenging book. It can be ordered at the prepublication price of $5.50 (regular $6.95) plus $1 for postage and handling. Write now for your copies: Hartland Publications, P.O. Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733 or phone (703) 672-3566.
Two Christs Within The Church

Marshall Grosboll

Christ and the Plan of Salvation

What one believes about the nature of Christ will often shape his whole concept about the plan of salvation. Upon this point nearly all theologians agree, whatever their view on the nature of Christ. Systematic theologians who believe that Christ had Adam's unfallen nature generally believe that total victory over sin is an impossibility in this life and that to believe in such a concept is "perfectionistic." Those who believe in "perfectionism" are derided as "legalists." These theologians tend to believe that justification is all that is required for salvation, although they usually encourage their followers to try to overcome their major, socially unacceptable sins. Since they conclude that committing sins will not generally affect a person's salvation, these theologians often believe in the "once-saved-always-saved" theory, or something close to it.

On the other hand, those theologians who believe that Christ took Adam's fallen nature believe just the opposite about the plan of salvation. They generally believe that God has power to free us from every sin as He points them out in our lives. They believe that justification is our title to heaven, and that overcoming sin in no way earns our way to heaven, but nevertheless, the free gift of salvation is offered on condition of victory over sin. Victory over sin is a day-by-day, moment-by-moment process. These theologians will generally not believe in the "once-saved-always-saved" theory, for salvation is dependent upon an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ.
These are the two major viewpoints on Christology and salvation. There is one other theory, however, that is gaining prominence in Adventism which should be briefly mentioned, and that is the theory that Jesus took Adam’s unfallen nature, but that we can still overcome every sin. This is a theory that accepts Desmond Ford’s view on the nature of Christ, but comes out with a very different conclusion. The reason we can completely overcome, they say, is that Jesus does the overcoming for us. For us to try to overcome sin would be “works.” When we have a faith relationship with Jesus we no longer have temptations to sine, only temptations to break our relationship of faith. In essence, we also receive Adam’s unfallen nature, or very close to it. This is similar to the belief of the “holy flesh” movement in Indiana at the turn of the century. The major variation in today’s belief is that receiving this new nature must be a daily process of faith, whereas some in Indiana believed that they permanently had a changed nature.

In this article we examine statements from the Bible first, and the Spirit of Prophecy second, as to what nature Christ had. This study will help determine our understanding of the Bible plan of salvation. While none of us can ever in this life or throughout eternity fully understand Christ’s deity or incarnation, we can accept by faith what the Bible says. If we refuse to accept the plain biblical account of who Jesus was, we may refuse to believe the biblical plan of salvation as well.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

The first words of Paul in the New Testament are a startling declaration of the nature of Christ: “The gospel... concerning... Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit.” Romans 1:1-4 (All Scripture references, except within Spirit of Prophecy quotations, are from the New King James Version.)

Though not a popular Jewish concept, Paul boldly begins with a declaration of the humanity and the divinity of Christ. He was both the Son of man and the Son of God. As to His divine nature, there is no question among conservative Christians. The questions of Christ’s nature concern His humanity. Did He have a humanity such as you and I are born with, or was it a human nature such as Adam was created with? Paul says He was born “of the seed of David.”

The word “seed” means lineage, from which we inherit our nature. In 1 John 3:9 the apostle John affirms that when God’s “seed,” or His divine nature, inherited through Jesus and given by the Holy Spirit, resides in us, we cannot be made to sin. We have “been born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible.” 1 Peter 1:23. Thus we have been made “partakers of the divine nature.” 2 Peter 1:4. When we are born again, we are born of the seed of Christ according to the Spirit. Jesus was born “of the seed of David according to the flesh.”

In the New Testament, “flesh” is the seat of passion and sin. It specifically refers to our fallen, human natures that are weak and susceptible to temptation. As Paul points out, “the works of the flesh... are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idoltry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and there were no unfallen human beings. Adam fell before he had his first offspring. Adam was a fallen being, not an unfallen being. The plan of redemption was for fallen Adam and his children. All the sons of Adam inherited Adam’s fallen nature—in fact, there was no other human nature to inherit. If Jesus had inherited an unfallen nature, it could not have been inherited from Adam. Paul, wanting to make sure we understand that it was Adam’s fallen nature that Jesus inherited, testifies that He was born of the seed of David. David was fallen from his very conception. David confessed, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” Psalm 51:5

Was Jesus really born of such a nature as far as his inherited human nature is concerned? There was no other human nature to inherit. It was within that nature that He overcame sin on our account. Thus Paul says: “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [because of our fallen natures], God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:3

So well do all authorities agree that the word “flesh” here refers to our fallen, human nature that the New International Version felt free to translate the word flesh in this verse as such: “What the law was

Theologians who reject the teaching of Romans 8:3 say that Paul should have used the word “sameness” if he meant the same thing, but he used only the word “likeness”
being sanctified are all of one. ... Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren. ... For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” Romans 8:4; Hebrews 2:11, 17-18.

Romans 8:3 fully proves that this fallen nature was indeed the very nature that Christ took. Therefore theologians who reject this plain Bible teaching have searched for ways to discredit and distort this verse. They have found it in the word “likeness” from the Greek *homoiooma*. They say that Paul should have used the word “sameness” if he meant the same thing, but he used only the word “likeness.”

*Homoiooma* is the same word Paul uses in Philippians 2:7 when he says that “[Christ] made Himself of no reputation . . . coming in the likeness of men.” Did Jesus really become a man or did He just come in the image of a man without really becoming a part of the human race? The word “likeness” here does not mean “unlikeness.” It means that Jesus was like us.

Like us (homoiooma), Jesus inherited a sinful, fallen nature. Like us, He had to rely on another, spiritual and holy nature in order to overcome. Like us, He had to crucify the deeds of the flesh in order to live a holy life. Did He live a holy life within that weakened nature that He inherited? Most assuredly He did. He was “that Holy One” (Luke 1:35), something that no human can ever say, for we have all fallen and come short of the glory of God, something Jesus never did. Jesus was holy from His very birth. From birth he had the two natures—spiritual and carnal. From birth His carnal nature was kept in subjection. Throughout His lifetime He continued to crucify the deeds of the “Flesh” so that never once, even by a thought, did He yield to its clamorings. So it may be with us once we too receive the new nature, called the new birth.

Without crucifying the deeds of the flesh and receiving the new birth, none can be saved. See Romans 8:13; John 3:3. Jesus showed us that it can be done. By coming down in our nature and overcoming, He opened the door for every child of Adam to also overcome and inherit eternal life.

“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Hebrews 5:8-9.

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16.

“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” Hebrews 2:18

This is the truth that Satan hates, for it is the victory of Jesus in fallen nature that frees us from his dominion. It is for this purpose that Satan has sought to undermine this great bulwark of New Testament theology. He knows that if He can make Jesus different from us, then we are still his subjects. In fact, the theologians who believe in Christ’s “pre-fall” nature almost unilaterally agree that we are still the subjects of Satan. They laugh at the idea of being able to overcome sin. Jesus said that “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.” John 8:34. These theologians claim that since we can never overcome sin, we must always remain the slaves of Satan. That is Satan’s purpose precisely.

The way the antichrist would deceive people into thinking they didn’t need to overcome sin would be to reject and deny the fallen, human nature of Christ

“Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.” *Desire of Ages*, 664. Because Jesus came down in our nature and overcame, we too can overcome within that same human heredity.

Since it is necessary for us to overcome though encumbered with a fallen nature, the only way Jesus could save us was by coming down in our shoes, so to speak, and overcoming as we must overcome. “The great work of redemption could be carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam . . . that through His name, man might overcome the foe on his own account.

“What love! What amazing concession! The King of glory proposed to humble himself to fallen humanity. He would place His feet in Adam’s steps. He would take man’s fallen nature.” Ellen G. White, *Confrontation*, 17-18

Satan’s Deception

Satan’s claims are false. We can be free from sin through Christ. “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed [not just in theory].” John 8:36. “You know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one [theologian or otherwise] deceive you. He who practices righteousness [not he who is declared righteous] is righteous just as He is righteous.” 1 John 3:5-7.

Evidently John foresaw that there would be a great deception and apostasy on this point, for no warning of the Bible is given without just cause. He warns us to let “no one deceive” us into thinking we are righteous while still practicing known sin. “He who sins is of the devil.” 1 John 3:8. Not only does John indicate that there would be a great deception on this point, but
he identifies the apostate power that Satan would use to champion this deception, and he tells how he would do it. The power he would use was the great antichrist power of prophecy, and the way the antichrist would deceive people into thinking they didn't need to, or could not, overcome sin would be to reject and deny the fallen, human nature of Christ. Here is John's prophetic warning:

"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist. ... You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because in the world—the lust of the flesh [fallen human nature] . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:16

Peter says, "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh [fallen human nature], arm yourselves also with the same mind, for we who have suffered in the flesh [crucified the clamors of the fallen nature] has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God." 1 Peter 4:1-2. Peter says we are not to live in the flesh—certainly he is not referring to our literal skin and bones. Neither is he referring to some weakened constitution that requires physical food and rest, for

According to 1 John 4, the great "antichrist" power, along with all the spirits of the devil, would deny the plain biblical teaching that Christ came in our flesh, that is, our nature. This power came up with what is termed the "immaculate conception" that teaches that Jesus was born of an unfallen woman. This doctrine was the very Alpha of apostasy in the New Testament church that led to the formation of the beast power of Revelation. At least the beast power is logical enough to know that if Jesus was born with an unfallen nature, He had to be born of a woman with an unfallen nature. Thus it claims that Mary was sinless too. Of course, to be totally logical, Mary would need to have been born of a line of unfallen parents reaching back to Adam. But Paul affirms that Jesus did not come to "give aid to [unfallen] angels, but He does give aid to the seed of [fallen] Abraham." Hebrews 2:16

Thus, one of the identifying marks of the antichrist power is that it rejects the human, fleshly nature of Jesus. On the other hand, one of the tests of a true prophet is that he or she teaches that Jesus had such a nature as we have. Does Ellen White pass this test?

Indeed she does. Many Adventist theologians who have espoused this view that John warns against have eventually thrown out the Spirit of Prophecy. We cannot continue to believe the Spirit of Prophecy, if we really know what it says, and continue to hold to a "pre-fall" theology that makes us still slaves of the devil and sin. Ellen White is too clear.

"Satan represents God's law of love as . . . impossible for us to obey . . . Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature and passed through our experience. 'In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,' Hebrews 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us . . . He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not...

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Every spirit that confesses that Jesus came in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that denies that Jesus came in the flesh is not of God—that is an absolute identifying mark

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:2-4

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus came in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that denies that Jesus came in the flesh is not of God. That is an absolute and clear-cut identifying mark of the spirits. Humans may be confused, but the spirits are not. Every prophet can be judged by this test. There are many false prophets who admit that Jesus came in human skin and bones, and got tired and had to eat food like other humans, but neither the devil nor any of his angels will ever acknowledge that Jesus came in fallen nature and overcame sin. This would be an admission of defeat and an acknowledgment that we can be Saved. He continues to claim that we are his subjects and slaves.

Remember, the word "flesh" is a New Testament term for fallen, human nature. This is the way all New Testament writers use the term, and that is the way John uses it in 1 John: "For all that is if that were the requirement of salvation, we would all be doomed. But this passage is referring to the same truth as Paul when he says, "in me [that is, in my flesh] nothing good dwells. . . . I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Romans 7:18, 23. It is only by the power of the "Spirit" that we can "put to death the deeds of the body." Romans 8:13. Paul's "flesh" was his weakened, selfish nature that in and of itself was powerless to overcome the clamorings of sin. This is the very "flesh" that Jesus was born with. This is the same flesh He had to crucify day by day, hour by hour. It become His nature to crucify the flesh. Thus he developed a perfect character. Thus, and thus only, could He be our Saviour.

Like Jesus, we are to crucify our fallen natures and live a new life under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This new life is signified by baptism in Romans 6.
Food for Thought

In the days of the apostles the Christian believers were filled with earnestness and enthusiasm. So untiringly did they labor for their Master that in a comparatively short time, notwithstanding fierce opposition, the gospel of the kingdom was sounded to all the inhabited parts of the earth. The zeal manifested at this time by the followers of Jesus has been recorded by the pen of inspiration for the encouragement of believers in every age. Of the church at Ephesus, which the Lord Jesus used as a symbol of the entire Christian church in the apostolic age, the faithful and true Witness declared: 

"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted." Revelation 2:2-3

At the first the experience of the church at Ephesus was marked with childlike simplicity and fervor. The believers sought earnestly to obey every word of God, and their lives revealed an earnest, sincere love for Christ. They rejoiced to do the will of God because the Saviour was in their hearts as an abiding presence. Filled with love for their Redeemer, their highest aim was to win souls to Him. They did not think of hoarding the precious treasure of the grace of Christ. They felt the importance of their calling; and, weighted with the message, "On earth peace, good will toward men," they burned with desire to carry the glad tidings of salvation to earth's remotest bounds. And the world took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Sinful men, repentant, pardoned, cleansed, and sanctified, were brought into partnership with God through His Son.

The members of the church were united in sentiment and action. Love for Christ was the golden chain that bound them together. They followed on to know the Lord more and still more perfectly, and in their lives were revealed the joy and peace of Christ. They visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and kept themselves unsullied from the world, realizing that a failure to do this would be a contradiction of their profession and a denial of their Redeemer.

But after a time the zeal of the believers began to wane, and their love for God and for one another grew less. Coldness crept into the church. Some forgot the wonderful manner in which they had received the truth. One by one the old standard-bearers fell at their post. Some of the younger workers, who might have shared the burdens of these pioneers, and thus have been prepared for wise leadership, had become weary of oft-repeated truths. In their desire for something novel and startling they attempted to introduce new phases of doctrine, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel. In their self-confidence and spiritual blindness they failed to discern that these sophistries would cause many to question the experiences of the past, and would thus lead to confusion and unbelief.

As these false doctrines were urged, differences sprang up, and the eyes of many were turned from beholding Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith. The discussion of unimportant points of doctrine, and the contemplation of pleasing fables of man's invention, occupied time that should have been spent in proclaiming the gospel. The masses that might have been convicted and converted by a faithful presentation of the truth were left unwarned. Piety was rapidly waning, and Satan seemed about to gain the ascendancy over those who claimed to be followers of Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles, 578-581
We must not cry "Peace," when God has not spoken peace

set for unwary feet. But these slavish bands must be broken; the flesh must be crucified with the affections and lusts. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's people unless we are such entirely. Every weight, every besetting sin, must be laid aside. God's watchmen will not cry, "Peace, peace," when God has not spoken peace. The voice of the faithful watchmen will be heard: "Go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." [Isaiah 52:1]
The church cannot measure herself by the world, nor by the opinion of men, nor by what she once was. Her faith and her position in the world as they now are must be compared with what they would have been if her course had been continually onward and upward. The church will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. If her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon her, she will be found wanting. The light has been shining clear and definite upon her pathway, and the light of 1882 calls her to an account. If her talents are unimproved, if her fruit is not perfect before God, if her light has become darkness, she is indeed found wanting. The knowledge of our state as God views it, seems to be hidden from us. We see, but perceive not; we hear, but do not understand; and we rest as unconfused as if the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, rested upon our sanctuary. We profess to know God, and to believe the truth; but in works deny Him. Our deeds are directly adverse to the principles of truth and righteousness, by which we profess to be governed.

Testimonies, vol. 5, 62-84

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Slighted, from 15
This was not the case with the church in the purest times.
God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the action of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals.
There are few really consecrated men among us; few who have fought and conquered in the battle with self. Real conversion is a decided change of feelings and motives; it is a virtual taking leave of worldly connections, a hastening from their spiritual atmosphere, a withdrawing from the controlling power of their thoughts, opinions, and influences. The separation causes pain and bitterness to both parties. It is the variance which Christ declares that He came to bring. But the converted will feel a continual longing desire that their friends shall forsake all for Christ, knowing that unless they do, there will be a final and eternal separation. The true Christian cannot, while with unbelieving friends, be light and trifling. The value of the souls for whom Christ died is too great.
He "that forsaketh not all that he hath," says Jesus, "cannot be my disciple." Whatever shall divert the affections from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. Its golden chain binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. These are Satan's snares,
A Time for Choosing

The October 1987 issue of Our Firm Foundation was prepared as a special issue focusing in on the major challenges many Adventists face today. We hear all too often that our prophetic and doctrinal foundations are weak and crumbling, that Ellen White just wasn’t what we thought she was, that sinning is inevitable, and that the Jesus who came to our planet was so unlike us that we can never hope to overcome as He did. In short—though they may not speak so clearly—they are saying that Historical Adventism is now just history.

Many Adventists feel surrounded by seemingly insurmountable obstacles of liberalism, lethargy, and apostasy. It’s not hard to end up feeling somewhat like Elijah, alone, hiding in a cave. A Time for Choosing takes a good hard look at the reality facing us today. Despite many regrettable aspects, all is not hopeless. As in Elijah’s day there are thousands who have never bowed the knee to Baal. But too many of them still think they’re the only ones left. And too many others don’t know what the choices are.

Do them all a favor. Give them a copy of A Time for Choosing. Available in small quantities for 50¢ each, or in larger lots for $30 per hundred.

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