Crisis!

The Plight of Sister Q

Rest a While

Primitive Godliness

Destiny

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Editorial

RECENTLY I was informed that there is another Ron Spear who is preaching in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have never met him, but I understand he has been criticizing the church and is calling it Babylon. He may be a separationist. This is very unfortunate, because my philosophy has always been that, even though this church is in a Laodicean condition, it is still God’s remnant church. It will never be Babylon. Those who remain in this condition may be shaken out to eventually join with those in Babylon, but God’s church will never be Babylon.1

“According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God’s people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God’s people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them. The straight testimony must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 324

Let us remember “strait is the gate, narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:14

This means not only that a Christian’s decorum is involved, but also that his belief and doctrine must be right, as well as his attitudes toward the church and his fellow believers. He must call sin by its right name, “Cry aloud, and spare not.” Isaiah 58:1.2 He must daily give a living testimony of the power of Christ in his life by his lifestyle, always animated by his love for God and his church. And so attitude becomes a very vital characteristic in the Christian life. Many I find are angry because of what has happened in their churches, and have expressed themselves in an unchristian manner to the pastors, leaders, and laity. We must be ready always to stand up against error and sin, but we must do it in the same sweet spirit of Jesus, not in anger.

What does it mean to sigh and cry for the abominations done in the church? “Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done’ in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying. Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel.” Ibid., 267

Then those who are in agony of soul over the abominations and sins in the world and in the church are the ones to be sealed with the seal of the living God. Only those Seventh-day Adventists will be saved who love God with all their heart and soul and their fellowmen as themselves. They alone will go through the time of trouble, that will soon come upon God’s people as an overwhelming surprise.

I must warn those who are proclaiming the church to be Babylon that they are twisting and disregarding the Testimonies. Again listen to God speak to us: “It will be found that those who bear false messages will not have a high sense of honor and integrity. They will deceive the people, and mix up with their error the Testimonies of Sister White, and use her name to give influence to their work . . . Those who receive the Testimonies as the message of God will be helped and blessed thereby; but those who take them in parts, simply to support some theory or idea of their own, to vindicate themselves in a course of error, will not be blessed and benefited by what they teach. To claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, is to make the same claim as does Satan, the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God night and day. By this misusing of the Testimonies, souls are placed in perplexity, because they cannot understand the relation of the Testimonies to such a position as is taken by those in error; for God intended that the Testimonies should always have a setting in the framework of truth.

“Those who advocate error will say, ‘The Lord saith, when the Lord hath not spoken.’ They testify to falsehood, and not to truth. If those who have been proclaiming the message that the church is Babylon had used the money expended in publishing and circulating this error, in building up instead of tearing down, they would have made it evident that they were the people whom God is leading.” Testimonies to Ministers, 42-43

Our greatest need now is true revival and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This can never be brought about by those who are calling the church Babylon and separating from God’s church, nor by those having an un-Christian attitude toward the church and its leaders. Ⅲ

RON SPEAR — Editor


See Testimonies, vol. 3, 260-269
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Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (1800-2800 words) manuscripts for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 5¼ inch floppy disk in IBM ASCII format or neatly typed using double spacing. If you desire notice of a decision in regard to your article, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Address all correspondence to Managing Editor, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328

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. —EDITORS
GENERATIONS come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. . . . What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:4-7, 9, NIV

And so the one called the Teacher (NIV) in the book of Ecclesiastes recognized the cyclic nature of many things in our world.

Our lives seem to consist of nothing but cycles, cycles in which we become very comfortable. We get up in the morning to face another eight-hour work cycle. We look forward to a rest period at the end of our weekly cycle. And the children look forward to birthday presents as another yearly cycle passes. Shirley MacLaine in her recent best-selling books would even like to convince us that we go through life cycles in a process known as reincarnation.

Psychologically the cyclic nature of our world can inhibit us from seeing that God has a plan of destination for those who choose to be His people. There is a straight line, a destiny line, within the cycle. Life shall not always go on as it is.

Peter recognized the cyclic thinking of nonbelievers: “First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised? Even since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’” 2 Peter 3:3-4, NIV, italics supplied

But Peter also recognized that God had a plan of destiny: “But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water. By water also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:5-7, NIV

We, as God’s people, need to be fully cognizant of the fact that God had a beginning for us, and He has a destination toward which we are headed. As we move along God’s destination line, more and more light is revealed to us, and therefore more and more understanding is required of us. A “light” line parallels God’s destination line. “Continual progress in knowledge and virtue is God’s purpose for us.” The Ministry of Healing, 503

As we gain in understanding, our responsibility to God increases. But He is always there to help us grow in both understanding and responsibility. “It is not for lack of knowledge that God’s people are now perishing. They
will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, but which has been neglected or refused, will condemn them. ... Light, precious light, shines upon God's people; but it will not save them unless they consent to be saved by it, fully live up to it, and transmit it to others in darkness. ... Religious knowledge has accumulated, and this has increased corresponding obligations." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 123-124

Our beginning was Creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image.' ... And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day." Genesis 1:1, 26, 31, NIV

Adam and Eve were placed into a perfect world. God's destiny for them was to produce and multiply their own kind, to have dominion over the other life forms, to enjoy life, and to have a relationship with their Creator.

As they were tempted and fell, their original destiny was changed. Eternal death now stood at the door. God, however, would not let them perish. He introduced a time line to guide them and their descendants back to the destiny He originally had for them. God also initiated a light line to help them understand in advance how they were to reach that destiny.

The first simple sacrifice was initiated soon after the fall to point them toward the ultimate sacrifice on the cross. God had a plan of restoration for them. The first prophecy of a coming Redeemer was given in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (NIV) Satan would cause problems for God and His people, but God would ultimately win.

God's time line continued. The people on earth grew more evil in spite of the additional light reflected upon them. God warned of a coming worldwide flood many years in advance. Light was shed upon the people. But only Noah and his family were prepared. And when the flood came, most of the world was destroyed.

As Noah descended from the ark after the flood, a sacrifice on a small stone altar was performed to help keep in mind the cross that was to come. A people was preserved to continue toward God's original destination.

The years passed, and God decided to preserve and pass His light, His truth, along in time through a special people, a people that would be the seed of Abraham. Thus, the nation of Israel came into existence to be light-bearers for God.

Through God's mouthpieces, the prophets, more and more light was given to this people to sped them and others whom they were to witness to as they moved along the line of destiny. However, many of these people chose to live in darkness, and God's purposes were delayed.

Through their failure to follow God's plan for their lives, this people went into captivity in Egypt, a captivity that God had warned about in advance. Genesis 15:13. After four hundred years of delay and darkness, again the people God had chosen began their journey.

The Exodus from Egypt was not for better understanding—light was continually being shed. This First Apartment taught of a coming Redeemer who would die in order to provide forgiveness for the sins of His people.

But there was also a Second Apartment, a Most Holy Place, that would carry the light of God's plan further down God's time line toward a final destination. The Second Apartment taught about the blotting out of sin, not only in the sanctuary, but also in the lives of God's people.

God's purposes were again delayed as these people, recently out of Egyptian bondage, failed to observe the abundant light God had shed on them. Forty years were spent wandering in a desert land outside the Promised Land.

The destiny for the people of God could not be forever delayed, and finally they came into that Promised Land symbolic on the light line of Heaven. But continual disobedience resulted in another captivity—this time in Babylon.

Some of God's brightest light came forth through the prophet Daniel during this time. Daniel not only told about the rest of world history down to

They placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly sanctuary

only an end to captivity, but also a beginning of a new revelation of light though the written commandments of God and the complete sanctuary service. God always seems to point His people to the future.

The single altar became a tabernacle with an altar, a basin for cleansing, a Holy Place with a candlestick, an altar of incense, and a table of shewbread. All were part of God's plan not only to help the people along the current time line, but also to open the future for better understanding—light would be continually being shed. This First Apartment taught of a coming Redeemer who would die in order to provide forgiveness for the sins of His people.

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Time passed. Nation followed nation. Christ came and died for all mankind. And the people upon whom so much light was shed failed to recognize their Redeemer.

"I was pointed back to the proclamation of the first advent of Christ. John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Jesus. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus. Their opposition to the message that foretold His coming placed them where they could not readily receive the strongest evidence that He was the Messiah. Satan led on those who rejected the message of John to go still farther, to reject and crucify Christ. In doing this they placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly sanctuary. The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered, and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the Holy Place." Early Writings, 259-260

A few saw the light so brilliantly shining from the cross and carried it forth to many others. God's new people, the Christian church, the body of Christ, was formed. The Old Testament Scriptures were opened up more fully as the light of Jesus shone upon its pages. "These are the Scriptures that testify about me." (Jesus speaking in John 5:39) The New Testament books were written as God's representatives and carried forth this light.

But again God's light line was darkened by a people who refused to surrender themselves to God's plans, seeking instead glory for themselves. "You refuse to come to me to have life." (Jesus speaking in John 5:40) The Dark Ages of Catholic paganism flooded the earth. The destiny God sought for His people was obliterated for many by the traditions of men as it had been so many times before. But God always maintained a faithful few—a remnant of people that sought His purposes in their lives. These people kept intact the destiny and light lines of God.

The Reformation came. The Reformers were able to rediscover some of the truths previously revealed by God—most important, righteousness by faith. Light again was seeking to burst upon all people that they might find their true destiny in Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Bibles became available to all people. People gained new insights into God's Word. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation were more thoroughly studied. God's people recognized that God had pointed out the history of this world in advance—the death of His Son in A.D. 31, the rise and fall of the Papacy, the transfer of the ministry of the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary from the First Apartment to the Second, the substitution of another day for God's holy Sabbath, and the second coming of Jesus.

And God's people recognized the parallels between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. Especially important for the people of God who lived just before Jesus was to come the second time, was the understanding of the work necessary in their hearts. It made plain the necessity of the total surrender of their lives to Jesus Christ that He might cleanse them from all sin. Jesus would be leaving His position of mediation to come for His people. They must be prepared.

Daniel the prophet had told God's people in advance that Jesus would move into the Second Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 to begin a special ministry there parallel with the Day of Atonement in the earthly sanctuary. Daniel 8:14

Again there have been many who would seek to darken the light God has sent for His people by insisting there is no heavenly sanctuary. After all, why didn't we know about the Second Apartment ministry before 1844? They have failed to realize that both God's time line and light line grow along a straight line towards Jesus' second coming.

We, as God's people, must be open to our destiny, and God's light that will lead us there.

Ellen White in Early Writings, 55-56 warned us that some would fail to recognize the shift of the ministry of Jesus from the First Apartment to the Second Apartment.

"Those who rose up with Jesus [to go from the First Apartment to the Second Apartment] would send up their

Especially important for the people of God who lived just before Jesus was to come the second time, was the understanding of the work necessary in their hearts

faith to Him in the Holy, and pray, 'My Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

"I turned to look at the company who were still bowing before the throne [in the First Apartment]; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Satan
would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children.”

We are living in the days just before the coming of Jesus. We are near the end of both the destiny line and light line as they converge in His second coming. We have greater light and therefore greater responsibility than ever before in the history of mankind. Let's not obliterate that light in darkness.

We are advised in The Great Controversy, 488: “Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the Word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.”

And best of all, “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

“It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:12, margin, italics supplied). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.” Christ's Object Lessons, 69

The destiny of His people would be fulfilled. III

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, retired since 1978, and I am very much concerned about the state of our church, earnestly desiring the second coming of Christ to put things in order. I received from my daughter, who lives in Washington, D.C., the magazine Our Firm Foundation, and read it completely in a few hours with great interest. It expresses exactly what I believe and what I have long desired to say and publish.

I am writing to you to know if you permit to translate and publish this special issue [into Portuguese] to be sent to all the churches in Brazil. I think it is necessary because the apostasy that it refutes is here also.

Pastor
Brazil

Hope International is glad to give permission to any legitimate effort to further circulate the materials we publish. Photocopying of individual articles is perfectly acceptable. To reprint complete articles, we simply ask that proper credit be given. Translation is somewhat more involved. We ask that such efforts be co-ordinated with us in order to ensure accuracy and to avoid duplication of effort. Translation has begun on various works into Spanish, French, Norwegian, Swahili, and - soon we trust - Portuguese. - EDITORS

Last year was our first time at Hope International camp meeting. What a blessing! It is because of faithful workers like yourself and others that have preached the straight message that I started buying and reading the books by Ellen G. White. I was out of the church for some 26 years, but the Holy Spirit kept on calling. Two years ago my husband was baptized and I was re-baptized. For many years I resented those “do's and don'ts” from the pen of Ellen White—probably because I did not understand the whole message. Now, I love to read the Bible and the Testimonies.

Patricia Schuck
Oregon

Many months ago I received a copy of Our Firm Foundation, and because I have seen so many false movements come and go in the Seventh-day Adventist Church I am suspicious of any new group that comes along professing to represent the true Seventh-day Adventist Church and condemning the church organization.

I am a reasonable old man and wanted to be sure that you were not leading some stray offshoot movement. After reading these four copies of Our Firm Foundation, I am convinced that you are on the right track. I am a firm believer in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's last church, but over the years I have seen false teachings creep into the church and have seen a lowering of her standards.

I knew many of the pioneers as a boy in Battle Creek. We entertained some in our home, including G.I. Butler and A.G. Daniells, and I saw Sister White stand behind that desk pictured in your January 1988 magazine. I was born into a young Seventh-day Adventist family in 1894 and have been a church member for more than 80 years. My parents read themselves into the truth by reading the old Advent Review and Sabbath Herald and the Christian Sentinel.

Be sure you are right, then go ahead and always be humble before the God of heaven and before those you are trying to teach, and may God be with you and bless your work.

Ross Williams
Mansfield, Missouri
The Righteousness of Christ

The following letter was written in answer to a letter from a brother minister. As the subject dwelt upon is of general interest, it may be a help to others besides the one specially addressed.

DEAR BROTHER: It was with pleasure that I read your letter of inquiry to me, for the thought that the work of the Spirit of God wrought upon your heart at the Kansas meeting has so far not been effaced, is of great satisfaction. You have had a glimpse of the righteousness of Christ which you have not lost, as I am sure some others did when they came in contact with those who did not appreciate this blessed truth. I am glad that Jesus does indeed make His presence manifest when it is eagerly sought for and gratefully acknowledged.

When the third angel's message is preached as it should be, power attends its proclamation, and it becomes an abiding influence. It must be attended with divine power, or it will accomplish nothing. I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time, and, like the third angel's message, has been fulfilled and will continue to be present truth till the close of time. In the parable, the ten virgins had lamps, but only five of them had the saving oil with which to keep their lamps burning. This represents the condition of the church. The wise and the foolish have their Bibles, and are provided with all the means of grace; but many do not appreciate the fact that they must have the heavenly influence. They do not heed the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30]

Jesus desires to efface the image of the earthly from the minds of His followers, and to impress upon them the image of the heavenly, that they may become one with Himself, reflecting His character, and showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. If you have been permitted to stand in the presence of the Sun of Righteousness, it is not that you may absorb and conceal the bright beams of Christ's righteousness, but that you may become a light to others. The enemy has men in our ranks through whom he works, that the light which God has permitted to shine upon the heart and illuminate the chambers of the mind may be darkened. There are persons who have received the precious light of the righteousness of Christ, but they do not act upon it; they are foolish virgins. They prefer the sophistry of the enemy rather than the plain "Thus saith the Lord." When the blessing of God rested upon them in order that they might become channels of light, they did not go forward from light to

Ellen G. White
a greater light; they permitted doubt and unbelief to come in, so that the truth which they had seen became an uncertainty to them.

Satan uses those who claim to believe the truth, but whose light has become darkness, as his mediums to utter his falsehoods and transmit his darkness. They are foolish virgins indeed, choosing darkness rather than light, and dishonoring God. The character we cultivate, the attitude we assume today, is fixing our future destiny. We are all making a choice, either to be with the blessed, inside the city of light, or to be with the wicked, outside the city. The principles which govern our actions on earth are known in heaven, and our deeds are faithfully chronicled in the books of record. It is there known whether our characters are after the order of Christ or the order of the archdeceiver who caused rebellion in heaven. Are we wise virgins, or must we be classed among the foolish? This is the question which we are deciding today by our character and attitude. That which passes with many for the religion of Christ, is made up of ideas and theories, a mixture of truth and error. Some are trying to become good enough to be saved. They continually complain of their sins. The Lord says of them, “And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.” “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?” [Malachi 2:13, 17]

Penances, mortifications of the flesh, constant confession of sin, without sincere repentance; fasts, festivals, and outward observances, unaccompanied by true devotion—all these are of no value whatever. The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient; He made a whole, efficacious offering to God; and human effort without the merit of Christ, is worthless. We not only dishonor God by taking this course, but we also destroy our present and future usefulness. A failure to appreciate the value of the offering of Christ, has a debasing influence; it blights our expectations, and makes us fall short of our privileges; it leads us to receive unsound and perilous theories concerning the salvation that has been purchased for us at infinite cost. The plan of salvation is not understood to be that of God. The coming of Christ does not change the foolish virgins into wise ones. When Christ comes, the balances of Heaven will weigh the character, and decide whether it is pure, sanctified, and holy, or whether it is unclean, and unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Those who have despised the divine grace that is at their command, that would have qualified them to be the inhabitants of heaven, will be the foolish virgins. They had all the light, all

Halfhearted Christians obscure the glory of God, misinterpret piety, and cause men to receive false ideas as to what constitutes vital godliness through which divine power is brought to man in order that his human effort may be wholly successful.

To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons, is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, “A new heart also will I give you.” [Ezekiel 36:26] The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, heart, and soul. The apostle says, “But we have the mind of Christ.” [1 Corinthians 2:16] Without the transforming process which can come alone through divine power, the original propensities to sin are left in the heart in all their strength, to forge new chains, to impose a slavery that can never be broken by human power. But men can never enter heaven with their old tastes, inclinations, idols, ideas, and theories. Heaven would be no place of joy to them; for everything would be in collision with their tastes, appetites, and inclinations, and painfully opposed to their natural and cultivated traits of character.

In the parable of the virgins, five are represented as wise and five as foolish. The name “foolish virgins” represents the character of those who have not the genuine heart-work wrought by the knowledge, but they failed to obtain the oil of grace; they did not receive the truth in its sanctifying power.

Happiness is the result of holiness, and conformity to the will of God. Those who would be saints in heaven, must first be saints upon the earth; for when we leave this earth, we shall take our character with us, and this will be simply taking with us some of the elements of heaven imparted to us through the righteousness of Christ.

The state of the church represented by the foolish virgins is also spoken of as the Laodicean state. The True Witness declares, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous

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The request, "Will you pray for me?" has become simply a form of speech; you should pray to God for yourself, believing that He listens to every word you utter.

make of none effect His words, and obscure the plan of salvation. By their spirit and deportment they virtually say, "Jesus, in Your day You did not understand as well as we do in our day, that man can serve God and mammon." These professors of religion claim to keep the law of God, but they do not keep it. Oh, what would the standard of true manhood have become had it been left in the hands of man! God has lifted His own of redemption, and the Comforter will bring all things to your remembrance.

The more you study the character of Christ, the more attractive will He appear to you. He will become as one near you, in close companionship with you; your affections will go out after Him. If the mind is molded by the objects with which it has most to do, then to think of Jesus, to talk of Him, will enable you to become like Him in spirit and character. You will reflect His image in that which is great and pure and spiritual. You will have the mind of Christ, and He will send you forth to the world as His spiritual representative. He will be your only glory. You cannot affiliate with the world without becoming a partaker of its spirit, without becoming guilty of treason against the Lord who has bought you.

It is the privilege of every earnest seeker for truth and righteousness to rely upon the sure promises of God. The Lord Jesus makes manifest the fact that the treasures of divine grace are placed entirely at our disposal, in order that we may become channels of light. We cannot receive the riches of the grace of Christ without desiring to impart them to others. When we have the love of Christ in our hearts, we shall feel that it is our duty and privilege to communicate it. The sun shining in the heavens pours its bright beams into all the highways and byways of life. It has sufficient light for thousands of worlds like ours. And so it is with the Sun of Righteousness; His bright beams of healing and gladness are amply sufficient to save our little world, and are efficacious in establishing security in every world that has been created. Christ declares that our heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. The day of Pentecost furnished a wonderful occasion. In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, what a testimony was given to the abundance of the grace of Christ! Why is it that those who claim to believe advanced truth live so far beneath their privileges? Why do they mingle self with all they do? If they will cast out self, Jesus will pour into the thirsty soul a constant supply from the river of life. How can our ministers become the representatives of Christ, when they feel self-sufficient—when by spirit and attitude they say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"? [Revelation 3:17] We must not be in a self-satisfied condition, or we shall be described as those who are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked.
Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting, I have seen the state of the Laodicean church as never before. I have heard the rebuke of God spoken to those who feel so well satisfied, who know not their spiritual destitution. Jesus speaks to these as He did to the woman of Samaria: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." [John 4:10]

Like the Jews, many have closed their eyes lest they should see; but there is as great peril now, in closing the eyes to light, and in walking apart from Christ, feeling need of nothing, as there was when He was upon earth. I have been shown many things which I have presented before our people in solemnity and earnestness, but those whose hearts have been hardened through criticism, jealousy, and evil surmisings, knew not that they were poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Those who resist the messages of God through His humble servant, think they are at variance with Sister White, because her ideas are not in harmony with theirs; but this variance is not with Sister White, but with the Lord, who has given her her work to do.

Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, will have contribution of soul, will repent for their resistance of the Spirit of the Lord. They will confess their sin in refusing the light that Heaven has so graciously sent them, and they will forsake the sin that grieved and insulted the Spirit of the Lord. They will humble self, and accept the power and grace of Christ, acknowledging the messages of warning, reproof, and encouragement. Then their faith in the work of God will be made manifest, and they will rely upon the atoning sacrifice. They will make a personal appropriation of Christ’s abundant grace and righteousness, and He will become to them a present Saviour; for they will realize their need of Him, and with complete trust will rest in Him. They will drink of the water of life from the divine, inexhaustible fountain. In a new and blessed experience, they will cast themselves upon Christ, and become partakers of the divine nature. The human and the divine will co-operate every day, and the heart will well up in thanksgiving and praise to Christ. Heavenly inspiration will have a part in the Christian experience, and we shall grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

It is growth in knowledge of the character of Christ that sanctifies the soul. To discern and appreciate the wonderful work of the atonement, transforms him who contemplates the plan of salvation. By beholding Christ, he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. The beholding of Jesus becomes an ennobling, refining process to the actual Christian. He sees the Pattern, and grows into its likeness, and then how easily are dissensions, emulations, and strife adjusted. The perfection of Christ’s character is the Christian’s inspiration. When we see Him as He is, desire awakes to be like Him, and this elevates the whole man; for “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” [1 John 3:3]

I feel sad when I think how for long years there has been a gradual lowering of the standard. I have been shown that very few realize the constant presence of the divine Watcher who declares, “I know thy works.” Through the indulgence of sin, many have forfeited the favor of God, misrepresented Jesus, forgotten His presence, forgotten that they are living in His sight, and so have added evil to evil. All such are foolish virgins. They have no abiding consolation. The power of Christ is to be the comfort, the hope, the crown of rejoicing, of every one that follows Jesus in His conflict, in His struggles in life. He who truly follows the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, can shout as he advances, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” [1 John 5:4]

What kind of faith is it that overcomes the world?—It is that faith which makes Christ your own personal Saviour—that faith which, recognizing your helplessness, your utter inability to save yourself, takes hold of the Helper who is mighty to save, as your only hope. It is faith that will not be discouraged, that hears the voice of Christ saying, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and my divine strength is yours.” It is the faith that hears him say, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” [Matthew 28:20]

The reason the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” [Isaiah 30:21] Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and He can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another.

Every soul must have a realization that Christ is his personal Saviour; then love and zeal and steadfastness will be manifest in the Christian life. However clear and convincing the truth is, it will fail to sanctify the soul, fail to strengthen and fortify it in its conflicts, unless it

Continued on 31
Within the past dozen or so years there has arisen among persons within Seventh-day Adventism a movement whose advocates claim to have power to cast out demons through a process of exorcism. Accompanying this activity is the “messenger” movement wherein many individuals claim to receive heavenly messages for the remnant church. Those involved in these activities claim that they obtain their authority from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings.

Are these phenomena sponsored by God?

The Plight of Sister Q

IN A MANUSCRIPT recently released (1987) by the Ellen White Estate is to be found a most illuminating case report of demonic control and possession as recorded by Ellen White about one hundred years ago. The fourteen-page letter was addressed to a young gospel worker and his wife, to whom we will give the pseudonym of Sister Q. The young wife was impetuous, self-centered, scheming, and demanding of her own will and way. We report this case in rather extensive detail for the reason that every paragraph carries a tremendously instructive message.

We will first extract some of Sister White’s statements revealing that demons did verily control and possess the life and character of this benighted young wife. With only a few connecting words and phrases to facilitate reading, this chapter for the most part will consist almost exclusively of exact quotations of Ellen White’s own words. (All quotations in this chapter are taken from Manuscript C-34, 1890; Manuscript Release 1229.) The reader should take note of the fact that several times Sister White uses such phrases as “God has shown me” in describing this case. We can be assured that her counsels are from God and do not simply represent her own practical personal advice. It is Heaven-sent counsel.

Controlled and Possessed by Demons

Concerning Sister Q, Ellen White writes: “She is a fit subject for the insane asylum, for God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body, and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband.” She was to her husband “his evil angel; ... In fact, she is Satan’s agent.” If the husband would allow the sentiments of the “insane wife” to prevail over him “he would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also.”

Through “the spirit which actuates her, Sister Q, will create incredible difficulties. ... Should her spirit be allowed to have the ascendancy in the mission, evil angels would become the ruling power. ... Never, never must the power of Satan exercised through her be allowed to control” the mission. “She has followed the impulses of her own unconsecrated heart until Satan has almost complete control of her ... If Sister Q continues her present course, the time is not far distant when it will be impossible for her to break this power at will. Already Satan holds almost complete control of her will, her mind, and her judgment.” It is possible that her paroxysms “will be repeated once too many times, and God will [then] give her fully into the hands of Satan.” (Each time for the pseudonym “Q,” Ellen White uses the actual name.)

“If Satan sees how he can work through her when she thus casts soul and body into his hands—that he can use her as he pleases—he will throw her into these paroxysms more and more, whenever her will is crossed. In this case it is not the woman whom Brother Q is dealing with, but a desperate satanic spirit, ... the demon of hysteric and satanic imaginings. Satan takes entire control of her temper and will, and uses

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them like desulting hail to beat down every obstruction.” She is becoming more and more the sport of Satan’s temptations. I was shown that she has so thoroughly yielded herself into Satan’s hands, that her husband fears for his reason...Satan will so work through her that even the life of her husband will be unsafe.”

“I tell you plainly, she is controlled by demons...[by] evil spirits...[She is an] instrument in the hands of Satan to separate you [her husband] from God.” There is a “satanic spirit that dwells in this child...She is just as much possessed by a demon as was the man who tore and cut himself when Jesus cast out the devils.” Hers was a genuine demon possession.

An Ideal Case for Exorcism?

Thus far we have extracted statements concerning the demon control or devil possession of Sister Q. Surely this case would be ideal for prompt attempts to rebuke or cast out the devils from this tortured soul—an ideal case for the modern deliverance ministries. Right? No, wrong! God’s plan for her was different, and as we consider some of the rest of the letter we will understand.

Satanic Character Qualities

The letter describes some of the satanic character qualities of this insolent wife, Sister Q, as follows: “She has not been educated to self-control. ...She does not enjoy the self-denying, self-sacrificing part that all must learn who enter heaven....Like a spoiled child...[she is] indulging in outbursts of passion, until life is a burden to [her husband]. Sister Q is determined to rule or ruin...Controlled by a will as strong as steel” this “insane wife” would try to so influence her husband, that “the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also. ...There is no solidarity to her character....Most of her illness is feigned” (typical of conversion hysteria). “A continual burden is cast upon [her husband] by her manufactured disabilities.”

Past Character Training

Sister White addresses Sister Q directly: “I have been shown by the Lord the errors of your past life.” “[Your] mother’s characteristics have been transmitted to you, who have less experience and less power to control than she had. With a will like granite, you are a bundle of false ideas—false views of life,....Instead of being a modest, God-fearing, humble woman, you are bold, uncontrollable, is to take her home, and leave her with her mother who has made her what she is...This is the only thing to do, if he would not be ruined spiritually, sacrificed to the demon of hysteric and satanic imaginings.”

It would “be best for him not to be connected with her in any way...He is under no obligation to keep one by his side who will only torture his soul. I was shown that he has already been

I tell you plainly, she is controlled by demons and if the evil spirits have their way, your liberty, Brother Q, your manhood, is gone

exact, tyrannical. Thank God you have no children to reproduce your characteristics. Your mother needs to repent before God of her disregard of His Word in the education and training she has given you. Did she not know that the mold of character she was giving you, one of the younger members of the Lord’s family, was disqualifying you to become a member of the Lord’s family in heaven?”

Counsel to Her Mother

Sister White then directed some words directly to her mother: “You should be the one to carry the burden of her distorted character. All your neglected duty God has recorded in His book, and you must meet it again. Your daughter is an offense to God.”

Counsel to Her Husband

We note some of Ellen White’s counsels for Sister Q’s husband that are scattered here and there in the letter as follows:

“Her husband can do her no good, but is doing himself incalculable harm. ....His best course with this child-wife, so overbearing, so unyielding, and so losing his manhood, and has been influenced and molded by his wife. Their marriage was a snare of Satan.”

“He will make the gravest mistakes of his life if he permits himself to be controlled by Satan through the device of his wife. I tell you plainly, she is controlled by demons and if the evil spirits have their way, your liberty, Brother Q, your manhood, is gone; you are a slave to her caprices. If you yield to her sway she will surely be an instrument in the hands of Satan to separate you from God.”

“Let her stay in her mother’s house till her character is transformed and the demon dispossessed. ...There are but few men strong enough to resist, day after day, week after week, such a will as that of Sister Q.”

Shocking Counsel

There is given such strong advice to the husband from the pen of Ellen White, that it may shake up some readers—even those engaged in the current exorcism excitement—but upon reflection one can see that the counsel which follows is sound:

“Brother Q must let Satan rage” and not yield to his wife. “If she runs
away, let her go. Even if she threatens to take her own life, do not yield to her wicked demands. Even if she should carry out her threat, it would be better to look upon her silent in death than to allow her to murder not only her own soul but that of her husband, and be the means of destroying many others.

She then advises the wife that if there should be a separation, "the marriage vow that binds the husband to the wife must remain unbroken.... even if he never looks upon your face again."

God's Solution

Nowhere in this manuscript does God counsel Sister White to intercede for this child-wife with any kind of exorcism. As we stated earlier, if ever there were a case where such warfare should be declared by exorcists against demons this seems ideal; but not in God's eyes.

In the letter quotations that follow, please note the God-given solution:

If ever there were a case where such warfare should be declared by exorcists against demons this seems ideal; but not in God's eyes

Ellen White recommended to Sister Q “continuous study of His Word, earnest prayer ... and a turning to the Stronghold as a prisoner of hope.... I entreat you,” she continues, “my poor, weak, erring sister, to accept the strength that is waiting your demand upon it.... Separate yourself from the world, and cease to love its society. Bring Christ into all your associations; that the dark, sinful soul will have chapters of the love of Jesus open to its contemplation.”

If through the grace of Christ Sister Q “would bend her determined will to the work of putting away the wicked spirit which controls her, and would use wholly to Him, not seeking your own will but God's will, no longer trying to please self but educating yourself to be useful. ... You must forget your darling self.”

“My sister, is eternal life of any value to you? ... Seek the Lord with all your heart before it shall be too late.”

So ended the letter of appeal to this demon-tormented housewife and her husband. We do not know how her life changed, if at all. But valued principles were here set forth for our consideration. We have quoted at length some detail in this case, for it demonstrates clearly how God would have us approach serious cases of demon control and possession whenever persons still have the power to make choices and decisions for themselves.

Summary of God's Solution

The solution offered this child-wife (who was “just as much possessed by a demon as was the man [of Gadara] who tore and cut himself” among the tombs), was not that of having a session of exorcism. Different from that of the man at Gadara, who had fully lost his will to Satan, in her case God did not suggest that the demons be rebuked and cast out of her. Rather God counseled her that though “the time was not far distant when it [would become] impossible,” it was as yet possible “for her to break the power [of Satan] at will” — her own will. Though she had a “will like granite, ... strong as steel” to do evil, through Christ she could still redirect it to do righteousness if she would so choose.

The remedy offered was given to the girl herself: She must accept the divine strength that was waiting her demand upon it, and bend her determined will to the work of putting away the wicked spirit which controlled her. To seek the Lord with all her heart before it was too late. “Repent, ... seek forgiveness,” and “submit yourself wholly to Him. ... Partake of Christ and His goodness: and live unto Him and Him alone.”

Self-surrender, death to self, confession, repentance from sin, and a putting away of sin—all old-fashioned principles that are still valid in our day, were the remedies offered to Sister Q.

No “Quick-Fix”

There is no “quick-fix” for character building. It is the work of a lifetime — be it long or short. This girl had been all her young lifetime building a selfish, self-centered, satanic character. Should she accept the remedy sent to her from God, her thoughts and feelings could have been changed as soon as Christ, at conversion, cleansed her heart of the demon control and entered her mind to dwell there through His Holy Spirit. Yet it would take the re-
minder of her lifetime to remedy her defective character and to build in its place a character patterned after that of Christ.

There are, as we all know, times when demons must be openly rebuked and cast out in accordance with the command of Jesus (such as Jesus did at Gadara and Capernam). But such action must never be akin to the magic-like séances so often used in modern exorcism.

It is well to notice in this Ellen White letter that she makes no fine distinctions between being possessed or controlled by Satan. She at least twice refers to Sister Q as being possessed and repeatedly as being controlled by Satan. Perhaps we also would do well not to make such fine distinctions between the two types or degrees of demonic control.

Choose Ye This Day

Faced with the realities of the experience of Sister Q, who among us would wish to permit demons to control our minds—our lives? According to the choices we make will be the characters we form. Down through the ages of time this invitation still clearly rings: “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.”

This article appears as Chapter 15 in the Rosenvold’s new book, The Battle for the Mind. This excellent book, dealing with God's methods for breaking the enslaving power of satanic agencies, is available from Hope International. Suggested donation $6.00 each plus 10% ($1.00 min.) shipping and handling.

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**Bulletin Board**

**HOPE INTERNATIONAL CAMP MEETING**

**Date Change**

The new dates for the 1988 Hope International Camp Meeting are August 3-7. When originally planning our camp meeting dates we sought to avoid conflict with other camp meeting schedules. Unfortunately, our original choice of dates, based on faulty information, accomplished the very deed we were attempting to avoid. Our apologies for any inconvenience which this change of dates may occasion.

**Reservations and Accommodations**

If you plan to attend the 1988 Hope International Camp Meeting, and wish to stay on our grounds, you need not make a reservation with us. You should, however, make reservations ahead of time at the hotel or motel of your choice. The following may be of some assistance:

- **Motel Puyallup**—25 miles north of Hope International. Rates from $30-$38 per night; kitchen units available for $3 extra. Call (206) 845-8825.
- **Eagle’s Nest Motel**—10 miles south of Hope International. Rates from $35-$40 per night. Call (206) 569-2533.
- **Tanwax Lake Resort**—6 miles north of Hope International. Full RV hookups $10 per night, trailers $7, tents $5. Call (206) 879-5533.

**Children’s Meetings**

We plan to provide limited weekday meetings for children, in addition to a regular Sabbath school. Any assistance with this work which you may offer would be very much appreciated. If you would be able to help, we ask that you write our office and let us know what you could do. One particular need is for musical accompaniment, since pianos are unavailable for the children’s divisions. You may also be able to help with stories, activities, or song service. We are not planning meetings for infants.

**HARTLAND INSTITUTE CAMP MEETING**

An “Old-Fashioned Family Camp Meeting” is scheduled to be held at Hartland Institute July 27-31. Speakers will include Joe Crews, Warren Peters, Gayle Wilson, John Goley, David Grams, Colin Standish, Hal Mayer, Ron Spear, and others.

For details, including costs and application information, write to “Camp Meeting,” Hartland Institute, Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733.

**MIDWEST 1888 BIBLE CONFERENCE**

Those in the central states will be interested in the Midwest 1888 Bible Conference. This series, scheduled for July 1-9, will be held at the Institute of Ministry in Derby, Kansas.

We encourage you to write or call for additional details. The address is “Bible Conference,” Institute of Ministry, 5001 S. Webb, Derby, KS 67037. Information may also be obtained Monday through Friday by calling (316) 788-5559.

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AN END IS come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.” Ezekiel 7:6

It is very difficult for us as a people who have enjoyed security and freedom to awaken to the reality of the end. The end is not near; it is here. The following questions and answers stress this point.

1. What sinister forces are at work in the world today to overthrow that cause to which we have pledged our loyalty?

"The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis... Human beings have federated with satanic agencies to make void the law of God." Testimonies, vol. 9, 11, 43

2. Just how is this crisis coming on the world?

"The Word of God plainly declares that... the professed Protestant world will form a confederacy with the man of sin, and the church and the world will be in corrupt harmony. Here the great crisis is coming upon the world." Selected Messages, book 2, 367

3. Of what are church federations and ecumenical movements a forerunner?

"When this [bowing the knee to the power of apostasy] shall be gained, then, in the effort to secure complete uniformity, it will be only a step to the resort to force." The Great Controversy, 445

Whether Catholic Spain or Puritan New England, every historic union of church and state proves this statement.

4. How is American Protestantism betraying the United States?

"In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the Papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World." Ibid., 573

Efforts for Sunday legislation and to secure state aid for parochial schools still continue.

5. What leads the church to seek the aid of the state?

"It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the Papacy—the beast... So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast." Ibid., 443-444

"The goodness, mercy, and love of God were proclaimed by Christ to Moses. This was God's character. When men who profess to serve God ignore His parental character and depart from honor and righteousness in dealing with their fellowmen, Satan exults, for he has inspired them with his attributes. They are following in the track of Romanism." Testimonies to Ministers, 362

"It is the rejection of Bible truth which makes men approach to infidelity. It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the

Ron Spear
Papacy.” Signs of the Times, February 19, 1894

6. What is meant by the “image to the beast”?

“When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.” The Great Controversy, 445

7. What is meant by giving life unto the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15)?

“When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law ... it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to spring again into active despoticism.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 712. "The enforcement of Sundaykeeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image.” The Great Controversy, 449

8. What are we told as to the time when the image is formed?

“The image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided.” Selected Messages, book 2, 368

9. What is the mark of the beast?

“The mark of the beast is ... the observance of the first day of the week. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 117

10. When is the mark of the beast received?

“There are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath [when the Sabbath is proclaimed more fully in the loud cry], then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God... He is worshiping the beast and his image. ... And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive ‘the mark of the beast.’” The Great Controversy, 449 (One should read this entire passage.)

11. What will be the enforcement of a national Sunday law do to the church? (I wish I did not have to read these words:)

“When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” Selected Messages, book 2, 368

12. What part will satanic marvels and miracles play in this crisis of the remnant?

“And he doeth great wonders ... and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.” Revelation 13:13-14

“Communications from the spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday of their error, affirming that the laws of the land should be obeyed as the law of God. ... Great will be the indignation excited against all who refuse to accept their testimony.” The Great Controversy, 591

13. What will be the inevitable result to a nation which, against great light, officially makes void God’s law?

“National apostasy will be followed by national ruin.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 977

14. Of what three tremendously important events will the national Sunday law be a signal to the remnant?

“... that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 451

“It will then be time [for God’s people] to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.” Ibid., 464-465

“... that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.” Ibid., 451

It is one thing to talk about the coming crisis in quietude and safety, well protected as we are by the laws of our beloved country—laws which now safeguard to every man his right to worship God as his conscience dictates. It is one thing to discuss it, calmly and impersonally, conscious that we have the economic security which guarantees against religious and racial discrimina-

It is one thing to talk about the coming crisis in quietude and safety in our employment. It is one thing to be pondering it when we know very well that we can go home to our well-furnished homes and our well-stocked refrigerators, riding there in our late-model cars, quite certain that if our food or fuel supplies run low, we can quickly replenish them at a favorite market or filling station.

It is one thing to think about and, at the same time, be comfortably cognizant that as Adventists we have now an accepted place in America’s religious community, and are no longer thought
These apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan

before councils, and every position of truth which you hold will be severely criticized." Testimonies, vol. 5, 717

"Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone." Ibid., 463

Are you ready to do that? Could you do it now?

Those whom we call friends today will be our worst enemies when the hour strikes and persecution is revived. In that hour some of the most trusted "men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth" will have "become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them." The Great Controversy, 608

It is one thing to talk about it, to believe it theoretically; it is quite another for a sanctified and sufficiently vivid imagination to reach out and grasp its actuality. Of course, from the authority upon which our religious faith is based, the Word of God, we know that it is coming, but we reassure ourselves with "Not just yet!"

But when you and I wake up to realize that the crisis, which has been "watching for" us more than we have been "watching for" it, has come, when the hour that marks its commencement is here, the hour when, listening to some newscast, or reading some headline, we look at one another in a solemn realization, and say, "This—is—it—that will be something altogether different.

The formation of the image and the enforcement of its mark are the commencement of that "short period" (Early Writings, 55), "the hour of visitation." This period, all too little comprehended, comes just before the time when the plagues are poured out. Christ is still in the sanctuary above, and the work of salvation is closing. The winds of Revelation 7:1-3 have begun to blow, and are gathering momentum, and yet their full fury is not unleashed. Significant is the wording of our text, "An end is come, the end is come." (Ezekiel 7:6) This period is not the great time of trouble, but it is very definitely a time of trouble—for the world, and for God's saints. Sister White refers to it as "the commencement of the time of trouble."

The making of the image does not mark the final close of probation; but it is a close of probation for a nation that officially makes void God's law. (Read Testimonies, vol. 5, 451) We have not yet the final tempest which bursts in its awfulness when the Spirit of God is fully withdrawn from the earth, but it is the time when "the storm of persecution really breaks" upon God's people (Testimonies, vol. 6, 401), the time when "the fires of persecution" are "rekindled." (See Testimonies, vol. 5, 712) From that moment until the last act in the drama takes place, that storm will intensify, those fires burn the more fiercely. The beginning of this "short period" of trouble marks an end to religious liberty in the land that has had the greatest light—and rejected it.

An understandable and frequently asked question regarding the making of the image—and the giving of life to it is:

How Will It Come?

The servant of the Lord in Testimonies, vol. 5, 711-719 expressed great concern that our people should awake to the activities of the National Reform Association who were agitating for a religious amendment to the Constitution. In the Review and Herald of December 18, 1888, she wrote: "The Sunday question is now assuming large proportions. An amendment to our Constitution is being urged in Congress, and when it is obtained, oppression must follow."

The possibility of changing our Constitution is very real today. It is spoken of in the committee rooms of Congress and the White House. The Genocide Treaty, ratified by the Senate, will automatically change our Constitution, for an international treaty when signed by the President and the Congress will override the Constitution. This treaty is in the appendix. We may say, it could not happen now, but let there come a time of stupendous crisis to the nation, a terrific national emergency, and unprecedented emergencies could occur overnight.

No Seventh-day Adventist can afford to be unfamiliar with the picture

But suppose we stop thinking for a few moments in terms of peace time, with normal democratic processes in control—under the functioning checks and balances of the legislative, the executive, and the judicial branches of government—and consider what might happen.

How IT COULD Come

In at least two places in the Spirit of Prophecy there are charted for us,
from crisis to climax, the satanic assaults ahead for those who love God and keep His commandments. (See Testimonies to Ministers, 472, and The Great Controversy, 589-592) No Seventh-day Adventist—I repeat, NO Seventh-day Adventist can afford to be unfamiliar with the picture given in Chapter 36 of The Great Controversy.

There are two master strategies of the great adversary—deception and destruction. Cleverly he works upon the law of action and reaction. From his method of brainwashing, of mental poisoning, he swings to the brutality of physical assault. He does this personally. He does it on as large a scale as

It staggers the mind to realize what man can do with the touch of a button

men who yield to him permit. He steps up his targets from smaller to vast mass attacks. How? For one thing, by the "elements of nature" which man as yet has not learned how to prevent or stay; by "fearful calamities" of various kinds in ever-increasing destructiveness. As everything that science achieves today is on an unprecedented scale, so "accidents and calamities will reach staggering proportions." Fires, floods, earthquakes, pestilences are the devil's pleasure. The "prince of the power of the air" rides the cyclone, and his fiendish laugh of glee is in the shriek of every hurricane.

He exults in every deed of violence. Already at some summit conferences and at the United Nations we have seen uncivilized bursts of passion, raging tirades, "dethronement of reason." He who was "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44) delights in war, and is sowing its dragon's teeth across this planet.

There are other strangely striking phrases found in The Great Controversy, 589-590, "He [Satan] has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature." (And found there weapons of unimaginable destructiveness.) "He will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation." How puny were the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki compared with the megaton bombs of today and tomorrow. "He imparts to the air a deadly taint." Consider radioactivity through which nearly as many, or perhaps more, would die as painfully as those instantly annihilated. Can any atmospheric taint be any more "deadly"? Not unless it be the poisonous gases known only in scientific laboratories, and only waiting further development to annihilate whole nations.

It staggers the mind to realize what man can do with the touch of a button.

"Human agents are being trained and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and kill." Testimonies, vol. 8, 50. Think of the intercontinental missiles! Think of nuclear-powered submarines! Ellen White also saw such devastation as could be accounted for only by the use of such weapons. Human lives will be sacrificed by the millions. (Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890) Thousands of cities will be destroyed. See Evangelism, 29

We know by the Bible that neither this planet nor our country will be annihilated by such means. But there is no assurance anywhere that there may not be sudden and awful devastation visited.

The Results of These Possibilities

I am not an alarmist. But I am a realist. God alone knows to what extent and how soon the climax will come. We may talk wishfully of "peace and safety"; but "sudden destruction" may come upon us—as it did at Pearl Harbor, only on an infinitely vaster scale. I cannot say that this is the way the image to the beast will be formed in this country, but in the light of the wording of The Great Controversy, 589-590, this certainly is how it could come. And the very phrases quoted above, that so vividly suggest atomic attack, provide the setting for it. Read page 590, paragraph 1, very carefully.

Picture a series of national catastrophes, becoming "more and more frequent and disastrous" upon our land. Picture "disaster and destruction until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation." A state of gravest national emergency exists. There is mass hysteria. In times of extremity people turn to religion—at least people with a religious background. In this dire crisis, what is more natural than religious leaders of this nation, both Protestant and Catholic, calling for a united religious front? In the tidal wave of fear and emotionalism there will be some "Back to God" movements. "America has sinned!" will be the cry—as indeed, in her forgetfulness of God and His law, she has. There will be a call for national unity. As a sign of national repentance, and to avert further judgments of divine wrath, there will be a call to stop the desecration of Sunday by enforcing total attendance at mass and church. At war with an atheistic power or powers, Sunday will be stressed as the "Christian Sabbath," a symbol of opposition to Red godlessness. This must become the "Christian nation" it was intended to be—with the old and now petty differences between all Christian factions wiped out—and Sunday, "the Lord's day" put, in effect, into the Constitution.

At such a time, Sunday observance could become a law by executive decree
"Rest A While"

Phil Brewer

THE WORDS OF Jesus, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" [Mark 6:31] came right at the needed moment. The disciples were suffering from the double stresses of a successful missionary tour and the burial of their fellow worker, John the Baptist. Even these hard-working, physically active fishermen needed a rest from the wearing labor of ministry and the pain of sorrow.

Jesus again demonstrates His divinity in offering them the best remedy for tired, stressed nerves. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." The wonderful, miraculous property of life is that it has the ability to recuperate. After a hard day's work the tired muscles and weary mind can be refreshed and replenished during a quiet, restful sleep.

Sleep is nature's sweet restorer, and during the sleeping hours all the body systems are refreshed and replenished. But in this verse, Jesus does not suggest only a good night's sleep, but He says, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Into a desert place, away from the crowds, out into nature was His call. His disciples needed more than a good night's sleep. The double burden of an expanding ministry and the fear of further persecution from the local monarchy would doubtless render sleep fitful at best. The rest they needed was deeper than ordinary sleep.

They needed communion with God and nature. "Though Jesus could work miracles, and had empowered His disciples to work miracles, He directed His worn servants to go apart into the country and rest." The Desire of Ages, 361. Out in nature, away from contact with the questioning multitude, out under the beautiful canopy of the blue sky beside some flowing brook, they could find the needed refreshment.

Today the promises of rest come in many packages. We can take a Caribbean cruise, a European tour. Those who cannot afford such luxuries can withdraw into a meditative trance or take a chemical tranquilizer. All these numerous methods of recuperating the vim and vigor of life end in being a situation of robbing Peter to pay Paul. Even the hope that science will perhaps discover a biofeedback loop capable of creating the sensation of rest, leaves us feeling, Is there a better way? Let's take a look at Jesus' words again. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Here are a few thoughts that demonstrate the value of the suggested remedy of rest and contact with nature.

The beauties of nature are God's blessings provided to give health to body, mind and soul. They are given to the well to keep them well, and to the sick to make them well. Together with water treatments they are more effective in restoring health than all the drug medications in the world. "Nature is God's physician. The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving—the elixir of life. Outdoor life is the only medicine that many invalids need." Testimonies, vol. 7, 76-77.

For many suggested remedies there are always the questions: How does it work? What body systems are affected? What chemical changes take place and what are the serious side effects? These are good questions that should be applied in an effort to reason from cause to effect. An illness is sometimes caused and extended by an unnatural environment, as described in The Ministry of Healing, page 262, "The noise and excitement and confusion of the cities, their constrained and artificial life, are most wearisome and exhausting to the sick. The air, laden with smoke and dust, with poisonous gases, and with germs of disease, is a peril to life." What should the remedy be? "The sick need to be brought into close touch with nature. An outdoor life amid natural surroundings would work wonders for many a helpless and al-
most hopeless invalid." Ibid. But with all the hazards of modern medicine, the natural questions are, What are the side effects? How many other body systems are going to be deranged?

And with this remedy, outdoor life, we should look at the side effects. From the same chapter in the Ministry of Healing, page 265, comes the counsel: “Surround him with the beautiful things of nature; place him where he can see the flowers growing and hear the birds singing, and his heart will break into song in harmony with the songs of the birds. Relief will come to body and mind. The intellect will be awakened, the imagination quickened, and the mind prepared to appreciate the beauty of God’s Word.”

It would be foolishness to suggest that a trip to the country would be a suitable remedy for a person suffering with a critical health problem demanding immediate medical attention. But it would also be foolishness to suggest that a person broken down in health from a lack of rest and peace of mind can be cured without a restoration of the broken communion with his Creator. Sickness is not just a sore spot on the body. Its roots are generally found in the mind. A cure to be effective must also involve the mind.

The overworked laborer, the tired businessman, and the sick and suffering are hearing many voices. Suggested remedies are endless. But who will say, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while”? Who will point to the paths that are safe to dwell in? Who shall build the old waste places? Who shall be called the “repairer of the breach”? Who are the Creator’s people who know Him to be not only the God of salvation but also the Author of creation, who know by their own experience the voice of God in nature? Now is the time to come apart and rest a while.

Phil Brewer manages Silver Hills Guest House and provides a very effective program of physical and spiritual restoration based on the simple principles of physical and moral law. Write or call to receive their newsletter. Silver Hills Guest House, R.R. 2, Lumpby, B.C. V0E 2G0 (604) 547-9433 – EDITORS

The work of publishing has been inextricably bound up with the growth and history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its influence, both in the strengthening of church members and as an evangelistic tool to reach those not of our faith, can scarcely be estimated. As this work and influence continue, it is the purpose of Copyright Berea to direct our readers’ attention to publications of merit and usefulness.

Stories Worth Rereading, 319 pages, Review and Herald Publishing Association (1913), Reprinted 1987 by Angela’s Book Shelf, $7.95 “Stories Worth Rereading can only be obtained as a premium with the Youth’s Instructor, a sixteen-page weekly, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.” So proclaimed the preface in the original edition of this volume. No doubt such was the case at the time, but since the title of the book is still an accurate description, and since it was long unavailable to all except rarebook collectors, someone felt it should be made available once again.

The book contains seventy stories, all with the distinctive flavor of two generations ago. The stories are simple, the morals basic and valuable. Though they may not carry the drama and suspense of contemporary television productions, their effect on the minds of young listeners is doubtless much to be preferred.

Please notice that Hope International does not offer these books for sale. Please order directly from the publisher. Because the next selection is from the same source, the address is given at the end of that listing.

Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle, 400 pages, Angela’s Book Shelf, $7.95

Though this is a photo-offset reproduction of a 1905 edition, Sabbath Readings was originally published in 1877. The compiler of the book was none other than Ellen G. White. This volume is similar to Stories Worth Rereading in style and content, though the actual stories are different.

Again, you will note that the stories are simple. To children raised on the complex plots, fast pace, and violent action of prime-time television, I suspect that these stories may even seem simplistic. I don’t mean for a minute that there is something wrong with the book; rather I fear that many parents may find something wrong with their children. The remedy, I think, is obvious, and these two books are a good first step in the process.

Both Sabbath Readings and Stories Worth Rereading may be ordered directly from Angela’s Book Shelf, 9746 North Mason Road, Wheeler, MI 48662. Please add $1.25 postage for the first book, 35¢ for each additional.

Christ and His Righteousness, 96 pages, E.J. Waggoner, Reprinted 1988 by The Upward Way, $2.50 (price breaks to 80¢ in quantity)

This volume, now reprinted as one of the “Advent Classics Series,” first went to press in 1890. For clarity, practicality, and spiritual value it has long been exactly that—a classic. It has, in fact, been reprinted a number of times. This present edition is perhaps most notable for two features: attractive packaging and affordable price. These improvements make it a good consideration for large-scale distribution to non-Adventists.

Order from The Upward Way, P.O. Box 8761, Riverside, CA 92515 (714) 351-0209

April 1988 Our Firm Foundation 21
Some years ago I was invited to convey to the congregation of a large church the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. After the discourse, I answered many questions and had opportunity to visit with the pastor of the church. I asked him whether he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. His evasive answer was, “Yes, we are all sons of God.”

The next question was an attempt to get a more definite confession. “Do you believe that God sent Him to this world?”

“Yes, God sent Him, but He has sent us all to help our fellowmen.”

“But, sir,” the next question pressed him, “do you believe that He was divine?”

The answer came lightly, “We all have a little divinity in us.”

Then came the final question, which brought from the lips of a so-called Christian minister the most astonishing reply. “Do you believe that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary?”

The reply, “No—ah—no, I can’t believe that. He was just a very good man.”

There was no need to say to the poor man, “Then why have a church? Why call yourself a Christian minister when you are leaving out Christ as your Saviour? How do you expect to save yourself without Christ, when ‘there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?’” Acts 4:12

There was no need to ask these questions, because the man was smugly satisfied with himself and his way of worship. He would have shrugged them off and condescended to be sorry for anyone so old-fashioned that he believed the Bible literally. It is doubtful that his early Christian experience was as inconsistent and hopeless. Like multitudes since the days of Cain, this minister had probably drifted into careless habits of worship, slowly permitting his religious life to meet his convenience and desires. Gradually his “godliness” became modern, and God’s fundamentals became “old-fashioned.” Finally, he became willing to give up the Saviour and hoped that someday he could work out his own plan of salvation.

To Cain the pleasures and selfish satisfactions of life became all-important, and he finally lost all interest in serving God. Not only did he disregard his own salvation, but he also tried to influence others in his ways of disobedience. “This one apostate, led on by Satan, became a tempter to others; and his example and influence exerted their demoralizing power, until the earth became so corrupt and filled with violence as to call for its destruction.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 78

When called to account for his cardinal sin, he tried to talk his way out by asking, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” “Cain had gone so far in sin that he had lost a sense of the continual presence of God and of His greatness and omniscience.” Ibid., 77

Whether one lives a life of humble obedience or is a selfish unregenerate sinner, he has an influence upon those with whom he associates. A tiny baby or even a dead man has an influence. One need only walk into a room where either of them is present to realize quickly how his actions change. So everyone to the extent of his influence will be considered his brother’s keeper.

Lawrence E.C. Joers
In wisdom the Creator gave His children a weekly memorial of His power and love. “The Sabbath was honored by all the children of Adam that remained loyal to God. But Cain and his descendants did not respect the day upon which God had rested. They chose their own time for labor and for rest, regardless of Jehovah’s express command.” Ibid., 80-81

How easy it is to get away from primitive Sabbathkeeping! To many, Sabbathkeeping has become boring.

When God said, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” He was not offering an idle threat or making an attempt to coerce obedience.

Thus it becomes easy for them to do their “own ways,” and speak their “own words,” and to lose the happiness, the peace, and the wonderful blessing promised to those who remember. See Isaiah 58:13-14

Our Creator calls for consecrated Christians to help repair the breach in His holy law and restore the paths of consistent Sabbath observance. Throughout the ages He has chosen stable persons to represent Him. He calls today for those who will follow the admonition given to Timothy to be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12

These various aspects of Christian living are elements of primitive godliness, for it is in one or another of these things that many grow careless and indifferent. And thus they begin the toboggan ride downward to destruction. Compromise in any of these areas is a sellout to the devil, and represents the end of a witness leading others to victory.

“In integrity in little things, the performance of little acts of fidelity and little deeds of kindness, will gladden the path of life; and when our work on earth is ended, it will be found that every one of the little duties faithfully performed has exerted an influence for good—an influence that can never perish.

“The youth of our time may become as precious in the sight of God as was Samuel. By faithfully maintaining their Christian integrity, they may exert a strong influence in the work of reform. Such men are needed at this time.” Ibid., 574

Throughout the ages God has had men and women who demonstrated doubtless would have ended in the wilderness, worshiping a golden calf. Contrast the examples of Daniel, who would not “defile himself” with the king’s meat, and Esau, who sold out for a mess of pottage. Esau’s lack of self-control has been inherited by multitudes today who indulge in harmful foods and overindulge in some of the good things of life.

Disobedience in any form is sin and carries with it the inevitable penalty of death. When God said, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” He was not offering an idle threat or making an attempt to coerce obedience. His statement was simply a warning of love, a protection against selfishness still unborn. It was an invitation to continue a happy, carefree life and to live forever. But the father of lies deceived the woman and she gave up her original godliness.

Disobedience can bring only remorse, and true remorse will bring tears and repentance. But no amount of tears, even bitter tears, can wash away one little sin. “Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” Hebrews 9:22. So just outside the Garden it was necessary for primitive sinners to set up an altar of sacrifice to help re-establish their primitive godliness. They must show that they believe and remember their Creator’s promise of a Saviour. Their God, who warned them concerning sin, was doing everything possible to help them to be overcomers, and to realize that “those who overcome as Christ overcame will need to constantly guard themselves against the temptations of Satan.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 163

The starting place for a return to true primitive godliness is the home. The family altar must be rebuilt and morning and evening worship must call each member to his knees around it. Morning and evening consecrations are just as important for Christians living now, as for those who lived before the cross of Christ. Primitive godliness entails complete, happy obedience to our Creator, by those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ. This rebirth can be the beginning of victory and happiness.
Where Your Treasure Is

Jesus has left us word: “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” [Mark 13:35-37] We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. What time is here referred to? Not the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” [Revelation 22:11]

When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. Probation closes; Christ’s intercessions cease in heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. They became weary of waiting and watching; they became indifferent in regard to the coming of their Master. They longed not for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching. They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there was time enough yet to arouse. They would be sure not to lose the opportunity of securing an earthly treasure. It would be safe to get all of this world they could. And in securing this object, they lost all anxiety and interest in the appearing of the Master. They became indifferent and careless, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried up in their worldly gains, the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary, and they were unprepared.

If such had only known that the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary would close so soon, how differently would they have conducted themselves, how earnestly would they have watched! The Master, anticipating all this, gives them timely warning in the command to watch. He distinctly states the suddenness of His coming. He does not measure the time, lest we shall neglect a momentary preparation, and in our indolence look ahead to the time when we think He will come, and defer the preparation. “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not.” Yet this foretold uncertainty, and suddenness at last, fails to rouse us from stupidity to earnest wakefulness, and to quicken our watchfulness for our expected Master. Those not found waiting and watching are finally surprised in their unfaithfulness. The Master comes, and instead of their being ready to open unto Him immediately, they are locked in worldly slumber, and are lost at last.

A company was presented before me in contrast to the one described. They were waiting and watching. Their eyes were directed heavenward, and the words of their Master were upon their lips: “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning lest coming suddenly He find you

Ellen G. White
Many were sleeping, stupefied with the cares of this life

believing watchers, lest they be too sorely tried, and sink under the toil and hardships made doubly severe because their brethren had been diverted from their watch, and become drunk with worldly cares and beguiled by worldly prosperity. These heavenly angels grieved that those who were once watching should, by their indolence and unfaithfulness, increase the trial and burdens of those who were earnestly and perseveringly endeavoring to maintain their waiting, watching position.

I saw that it was impossible to have the affections and interests engrossed in worldly cares, to be increasing earthly possessions, and yet be in a waiting, watching position, as our Saviour has commanded. Said the angel: "They can secure but one world. In order to acquire the heavenly treasure, they must sacrifice the earthly. They cannot have both worlds." I saw how necessary a continuance of faithfulness in watching was in order to escape the delusive snares of Satan. He leads those who should be waiting and watching, to take an advance step toward the world; they have no intention of going further, but that one step removed them that much further from Jesus, and made it easier to take the next; and thus step after step is taken toward the world, until all the difference between them and the world is a profession, a name only. They have lost their peculiar, holy character, and there is nothing except their profession to distinguish them from the lovers of the world around them.

I saw that watch after watch was in the past. Because of this, should there be a lack of vigilance? Oh, no! There is the greater necessity of unceasing watchfulness, for now the moments are fewer than before the passing of the first watch. Now the period of waiting is necessarily shorter than at first. If we watched with unabated vigilance then, how much more need of double watchfulness in the second watch. The passing of the second watch has brought us to the third, and now it is inexusable to abate our watchfulness. The third watch calls for threefold earnestness. To become impatient now would be to lose all our earnest, persevering watching heretofore. The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay. But the coming of the morning to the faithful, and of the night to the unfaithful, is right upon us. By waiting and watching, God's people are to manifest their peculiar character, their separation from the world. By our watching position we are to show that we are truly strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. The difference between those who love the world and those who love Christ is so plain as to be unmistakable. While worldlings are all earnestness and ambition to secure earthly treasure, God's people are not conformed to the world, but show by their earnest, watching, waiting position that they are transformed; that their home is not in this world, but that they are seeking a better country, even a heavenly.

I hope you will not read these words without considering their import.

Many were sleeping, stupefied with the cares of this life

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I hope you will not read these words without considering their import.
watching ones, and inquire: "Where is the promise of His coming? You have been disappointed. Engage now with us, and you will prosper in worldly things. Get gain, get money, and be honored of the world." The waiting ones look upward and answer: "We are watching." And by turning from earthly pleasure and worldly fame, and from the deceitfulness of riches, they show themselves to be in that position. By watching they become strong; they overcome sloth and selfishness and love of ease. Affliction's fire kindles upon them, and the waiting time seems long. They sometimes grieve, and faith fails; but they rally again, overcome their fears and doubts, and while their eyes are directed heavenward, say to their adversaries: "I am watching. I am waiting the return of my Lord. I will glory in tribulation, in affliction, in necessities."

The desire of our Lord is that we should be watching, so that when He cometh and knocketh we may open to Him immediately. A blessing is pronounced upon those servants whom He finds watching. "He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." [Luke 12:37] Who among us in these last days will be thus specially honored by the Master of assemblies? Are we prepared without delay to open to Him immediately and welcome Him in? Watch, watch, watch. Nearly all have ceased their watching and waiting; we are not ready to open to Him immediately. The love of the world has so occupied our thoughts that our eyes are not turned upward, but downward to the earth. We are hurrying about, engaging with zeal and earnestness in different enterprises, but God is forgotten, and the heavenly treasure is not valued. We are not in a watching, watching position. The love of the world and the deceitfulness of riches eclipse our faith, and we do not long for, and love, the appearing of our Saviour. We try too hard to take care of self ourselves. We are uneasy and greatly lack a firm trust in God. Many worry and work, contrive and plan, fearing they may suffer need. They cannot afford time to pray or to attend religious meetings and, in their care for themselves, leave no chance for God to care for them. And the Lord does not do much for them, for they give Him no opportunity. They do too much for themselves, and believe and trust in God too little.

The love of the world has a terrible hold upon the people whom the Lord has commanded to watch and pray always, lest coming suddenly He find them sleeping. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." [1 John 2:15-17]

I have been shown that God's people who profess to believe present truth are not in a waiting, watching position. They are increasing in riches and are laying up their treasures upon the earth. They are becoming rich in worldly things, but not rich toward God. They do not believe in the shortness of time; they do not believe that the end of all things is at hand, that Christ is at the door. They may profess much faith; but they deceive their own souls, for they will act out all the faith that they really possess. Their works show the character of their faith and testify to those around them that the coming of Christ is not to be in this generation. According to their faith will be their works. Their preparations are being made to remain in this world. They are adding house to house, and land to land, and are citizens of this world.

The condition of poor Lazarus feeding upon the crumbs from the rich man's table is preferable to that of these professors. If they possessed genuine faith, instead of increasing their treasures upon the earth they would be selling off, freeing themselves from the cumbersome things of earth and transferring their treasure before they have a chance to our Lord. Then their interest and hearts will be there, for the heart of man will be where his greatest treasure is. Most of those who profess to believe the truth testify that that which they value the most is in this world. For this they have care, wearing anxiety, and labor. To preserve and add to their treasure is the study of their lives. They have transferred so little to heaven, have taken so little stock in the heavenly treasure, that their minds are not specially attracted to that better country. They have taken large stock in the enterprises of this earth, and these investments, like the magnet, draw down their minds from the heavenly and imperishable to the earthly and corruptible. "Where you treasure is, there will your heart be also." [Matthew 6:21]

Selfishness girds many about as with iron bands. It is "my farm," "my goods," "my trade," "my merchandise." Even the claims of common humanity are disregarded by them. Men and women professing to wait and loving the appearing of their Lord are shut up to self. The noble, the godlike, they have parted with. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, have so fastened upon them that they are blinded. They are corrupted by the world and discern it not. They talk of love to God, but their fruits show not the love they express. They rob Him in tithes and offerings, and the withering
curse of God is upon them. The truth has been illuminating their pathway on every side. God has wrought wonderfully in the salvation of souls in their own households, but where are their offerings, presented to Him in grateful thanks for all His tokens of mercy to them? Many of them are as unthankful as the brute creation. The sacrifice for man was infinite, beyond the comprehension of the strongest intellect, yet men who claim to be partakers of these heavenly benefits, which were brought to them at so great a cost, are too

forever).” [6-8] If all would bear in mind, and could in a small degree appreciate, the immense sacrifice made by Christ, they would feel rebuked for their fearfulness and their supreme selfishness. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” [Psalm 50:3-5]

Because of selfishness and love of the world, God is forgotten, and many have barrenness of soul, and cry: “My leanness, my leanness.” The Lord has lent means to His people to prove them, to test the depth of their professed love for Him. Some would let go of Him and give up their heavenly treasure rather than to decrease their earthly possessions and make a covenant with Him by sacrifice. He calls for them to sacrifice; but the love of the world closes their ears, and they will not hear.

I looked to see who of those who professed to be looking for Christ’s coming possessed a willingness to sacrifice offerings to God of their abundance. I could see a few humble poor ones who, like the poor widow, were stinting themselves and casting in their mite. Every such offering is accounted of God as precious treasure. But those who are acquiring means, and adding to their possessions, are far behind. They do comparatively nothing to what they might. They are withholding, and robbing God, for they are fearful they shall come to want. They dare not trust God. This is one of the reasons that, as a people, we are so sickly and so many are falling into their graves. The covetous are among us. Lovers of the world, also those who have stinted the laborer in his hire, are among us. Men who had none of this world, who were poor and dependent on their labor, have been dealt with closely and unjustly. The lover of the world, with a hard face and harder heart, has grudgingly paid over the small sum earned by hard toil. Just so they are dealing with their Master, whose servants they profess to be. Just in this grudging manner do they put into the treasury of God. The man in the parable had not where to bestow his goods, and the Lord cut short his unprofitable life. So will He deal with many. How difficult, in this corrupt age, to keep from growing worldly and selfish! How easy to become ungrateful to the Giver of all our mercies! Great watchfulness is needed, and much prayer, to keep the soul with all diligence. “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” [Mark 13:33]

Testimonies, vol. 2, 190-199

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April 1988 Our Firm Foundation 27
Crisis!
Continued from 19

However crippled, the United States would retaliate. With loss of war potential and the vast need of more potential, all manpower would be conscripted for Saturday work, and Sunday would be rigidly enforced as a sign of religious unity against a barbaric enemy.

A Peculiar People

However the crisis comes, here is a group of Christians who cannot in conscience unite with the great majority in Sundaykeeping and Sabbathbreaking. They are patriotic. They love their country. They are willing to die for it. But much as they love their country and their fellow men, they must, like the apostolic Christians, put God first. They must “obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29) Presenting their reasons, they are compelled to say, with their hands upon the Bible, like Martin Luther, “Here I stand. God help me, I can do no other!”

As Elijah was called a “troubler of Israel,” so will they be.

In the emotionalism of that time, they will, like Elijah, be accused of being the cause of the divine displeasure that is upon the land. As he was called a “troubler of Israel,” so will they be. The remnant will be denounced as obstructionists, disloyal, saboteurs of Christian unity. I will not go on with the picture. Read it for yourself in The Great Controversy, 590-592.

The material presented here is very grim. We surely are in an awesome hour. We can no longer bury our heads in the sand, hoping these realities will disappear. The watchman must warn of danger ahead. Again I repeat, it may not come in just this way, but the crisis is coming. Let none of us be fooled by any present prosperity. The “storm is coming, relentless in its fury.” Let no one think he can escape it by shutting his eyes or ears to it. Let us not sing to ourselves any false lullabies.

“My brethren, do you realize that your own salvation, as well as the destiny of other souls, depends upon the preparation you now make for the trial before us? Have you that intensity of zeal, that pious and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition shall be brought against you? If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when you will be brought before councils, and every position of truth which you hold will be severely criticized. The time that so many are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge that God has given us of preparing for the approaching crisis.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 716-717

My heart cries out to our leadership and ministry. Let us no longer delay to give the warning message to our people.

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1

The blood of the souls of our people will be required at the hands of the minister who did not sound the alarm.

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.” Ezekiel 33:6

In closing this important subject, let us again read this inspired warning and rebuke:

“It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with. Already His judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.

“Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls.

The very ones who should be most vigilant are neglecting their duty.

“My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The Word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand. Those who seek to lessen the faith of God’s people in these testimonies, which have been in the church for the last thirty-six years, are fighting against God. It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 234-235
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The Futility of Ecstasy

For many Adventist young people, revivals and similar occasions hold little to be desired. Many on our campuses dread the approach of the annual weeks of prayer. Somehow, acceptance of Christ and religious experience have gotten a very bad name. A recent author, describing her senior year at an Adventist academy, recalls a typical week-of-prayer experience—the fleeting lapses into devotion by wayward friends, the swell of a restless murmur in the audience just before the dismissal bell, and the nearly meaningless repetition of the words “prayer, Bible study, and sharing your faith” as the means of sustaining an ill-defined commitment. Those of us with similar backgrounds can read such accounts only with pain—vignettes of uncertain experience from the not-so-honorable past.

The Futility of Ecstasy

The week of prayer is on. A charismatic speaker, with a good voice and a persuasive manner, is the guest. “Being in Relationship” is the subject of the series. The need to “fall in love with Jesus Christ” is driven home to the youth every morning and evening, usually with emotional and melodramatic stories. A pursuit of alcohol and drugs before his conversion, the speaker enlarges on the much greater ecstasy found through “getting high on Jesus.”

Very little in the way of serious Bible study occurs. The historic principles and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are almost totally ignored. Only an occasional sarcastic gibe about “legalism” or “thinking we have all the truth” reminds the audience of even a hint of something special about the church they belong to. Nothing is said of the ongoing investigative judgment, the need for sinless living through the aid of God’s Spirit, or the ever-quickening rush of events pointing to the soon return of Christ.

The series offers nothing that wouldn’t be acceptable at a rally of Campus Crusade or Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Style has taken the place of substance. All that is left is emotion.

The final meeting is now in progress. The emotions of the week approach the anticipated crescendo. Predictably, the altar call is sounded, and the predictable souls advance to the front to take their predictable stand, only to lapse into predictable sins with the passage of a predictable period of time. The speaker’s history of drug addiction is not entirely irrelevant. One political analyst described the current economic recovery in America as comparable to a drunken spree, after which comes the inevitable hangover. What recent years has passed for revival in Adventism could well be described in the same manner.

The Roots of Emotionalism

It would be quite unfair to describe emotionalism as the conscious goal of the men and women responsible for the spiritual guidance of our youth. Many are genuinely concerned about it. Voices fraught with desperate anxiety are heard in committee meetings, asking one another how the rush to feeling-based religion can be halted. Many times the youth are faithfully admonished not to trust their emotions as the basis of experience. In most cases, tragically, the young people have no choice. In the absence of doctrinal and moral clarity, feelings are all one has to trust. So long as the feelings last, the experience will also last. Whatever practices the person knows to be wrong are temporarily relinquished. At this point, wise leaders do their best to create interest in regular Bible study. Many respond favorably, as people in a state of
ecstasy usually do. But in most cases, such attempts to harness and direct spiritual energy are much too late. The people have already been made to feel good without a concrete, conceptual framework. The intrusion of such a framework, with its summons to doctrinal and moral accountability, arouses anger and frustration. Only the dramatic intervention of God can save such an experience from a quick death in the smothering miasma of dissolution.

For much of the last thirty years, there has been a tendency to downplay the doctrinal distinctive of our faith. The worst casualty of this experiment has been the religion of our youth. Whatever notions of “balance” certain people wish to impose on the historical pendulum become meaningless, since many of today’s youth have no personal acquaintance with the “doctrinaire” sermons of past generations so that these might be counterbalanced by the “love gospel” with which they are now saturated. A few standards of behavior linger on—some with an inspired basis, some without one. Devoid of the doctrinal framework of historic Adventism, they leave the youth with just enough religion to make them miserable.

Emotions are not evil. God created them. But if they are not preceded by the concrete precision of present truth, they become only a quick sensation, a moment of ecstasy before the drums of futility. The high-school senior mentioned at the beginning writes, regarding typical week-of-prayer speakers, “They always make a big pitch for you to give your heart to the Lord, and I’ve done that so many times that it’s no big deal.” Of course it is not! Without the concise definitions and statements of doctrinal truth, giving one’s heart to the Lord becomes meaningless. The emotion feels great for a time, but the aftermath brings disgust, disillusionment, and shame.

Graphic stories of the crucifixion will avail nothing unless the listener is shown from God’s Word how to take up the cross of self-denial and follow in the Saviour’s footsteps. The present writer never ceases to be inspired by the awesome grandeur of the final chapters of The Great Controversy. But the emotions thus ignited must serve to reinforce the bedrock of truth which remains when Christianity no longer feels good, when a reservoir of power is needed for the daily struggles of life. Many will say, “Christ is the Truth, the Rock of strength! Why do you keep emphasizing doctrine?” Perhaps we should let Christ speak for Himself. In His story of the two house builders He states, “Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.” (Matthew 7:24)

The truths taught by Christ throughout the written Word are the expression and definition of what God is like. The popular distinction between Christ and doctrine, so basic to the religion of thousands of Adventist youth in the late twentieth century, is utterly without support in Scripture. Jesus declares, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples.” John 8:31. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you.” Hosea 4:6

Ellen White declares that the life of Christ “we receive by receiving His Word, by doing those things which He has commanded. Thus we become one with Him.” Elsewhere we read, “All truth is to be received as the life of Jesus. Truth cleanses us from all impurity, and prepares the soul for Christ’s presence.” Indeed, “the whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ.”

One day soon a great revival will sweep across the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Aflame for the truth of God, Adventists young and old will be the shock troops leading the final assault on Satan’s kingdom. The great passion of their hearts will be no cheap emotion, no fleeting thrill soon to be forgotten. Their faith will be grounded in the solid rock of truth, and nothing of earth or hell can shake them from it.

1Trudy J. Morgan, My Love, Kate (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 11-21
2Ibid., 13
3All Bible texts are from the Revised Standard Version.
4The Desire of Ages, 660
5Our High Calling, 208
6In Heavenly Places, 134

Righteousness

Continued from 11

is brought in constant contact with life. Satan has achieved his greatest success through interposing himself between the soul and the Saviour.

Christ should never be out of the mind. The angels said concerning Him, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” [Matthew 1:21] Jesus, precious Saviour! assurance, helpfulness, security, and peace are all in Him. He is the dispenser of all our doubts, the earnest of all our hopes. How precious is the thought that we may indeed become partakers of the divine nature, whereby we may overcome as Christ overcame! Jesus is the fullness of our expectation. He is the melody of our songs, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is living water to the thirsty soul. He is our refuge in the storm. He is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. When Christ is our personal Saviour, we shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

This great spiritual destitution is not caused by any failure on the part of Christ doing all that is possible for the church. Our heavenly Father bestowed all Heaven in one gift—that of His dear Son. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to daub with untempered mortar, but it is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment to come. Jesus says, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” [John 12:32] The revelation of the Son of God upon the cross, dying for the sins of men, draws the hearts of men by the power of infinite love, and convinces the sinner of sin. Christ died because the law was transgressed, that guilty man might be saved from the penalty of his enormous guilt. But history has proved that it is easier to destroy the world than to reform it; for men crucified the Lord of glory, who came to unite earth with heaven, and man with God.

Review and Herald, August 19, 26, 1890
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