Our Firm Foundation

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

Vol. 4, No. 12

December 1989

To Our Missionary Workers

Pentecostalism

The Sabbath: God's Seal

Character of the Last Conflict

Preaching End-Time Events

Agriculture and Our Health Work, see page 8
The fires of Battle Creek in 1902 were but the tragic consequences of Seventh-day Adventist failures to follow the counsel given of God through the Spirit of Prophecy. The burning of the Review and Herald, the loss of the sanitarium, the alpha of apostasy and pantheism are all recorded for our admonition in this final hour of the great controversy in 1989. Will God again be forced to deal with the apostasy, the rebellion as He did with ancient Israel and Battle Creek?

There are statements from God's prophets that tell us He will.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Hosea 4:6

"I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. ... For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof." Hosea 8:12,14

"In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease.

"That day had come to Jerusalem. Jesus wept in anguish over the doomed city, but He could not deliver her. He had exhausted every resource. In rejecting the warnings of God's Spirit, Israel had rejected the only means of help.

There was no other power by which they could be delivered.

"The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God's Holy Spirit may read their own condemnation." The Desire of Ages, 587

"I referred them to ancient Israel. God gave them His law, but they would not obey it...."

"If the people who now profess to be God's peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His Word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the Word of God. Consciences have been blunted because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised. And God will remove these testimonies from the people, and will deprive them of strength, and humble them." Testimonies, vol. 2, 607

"Let men become lifted up in pride, and the Lord will not sustain them and keep them from falling. Let a church become proud and boastful, not depending on God, not exalting His power, and that church will surely be left by the Lord, to be brought down to the ground. Let a people glory in wealth, intellect, knowledge, or in anything but Christ, and they will soon be brought to confusion." Testimonies, vol. 8, 127

"Page after page might be written in regard to these things. Whole conferences are becoming leavened with the same perverted principles. 'For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.' The Lord will work to purify His church. I tell you in truth, the Lord is about to turn and overturn in the institutions called by His name.

"Just how soon this refining process will begin I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of its moral defilement. He will thoroughly purge His floor. God has a controversy with all who practice the least injustice; for in so doing they reject the authority of God and imperil their interest in the atonement, the redemption which Christ has undertaken for every son and daughter of Adam. Will it pay to take a course abhorrent to God? Will it pay to put upon your censers strange fire to offer before God, and say it makes no difference?" Testimonies to Ministers, 372-373

"Let me entreat our state conferences and our churches to cease putting their dependence upon men and making flesh their arm. Look not to other men to see how they conduct themselves under the conviction of the truth, or to ask them for aid. Look not to men in high positions of responsibility for strength, for they are the very men who are in danger of considering a position of responsibility as evidence of God's special power. Our churches are weak because the members are educated to look to and depend upon human resources...."

"The warnings given in the Word of God to the children of Israel were meant, not merely for them, but for all who should live upon the earth. He says to them: 'Woe to the rebellious children, ... that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!!'" Ibid, 380

Will destruction, the Battle Creek kind, cause us to abhor ourselves? May God help us now. See Testimonies, vol. 8, 250

This is God's remnant church, our beloved church. There will not be another. God does not need another church, for He will purify this one. The process of purging and purification may have already begun. May God help us now to commence the long awaited revival and reformation in the remaining days of 1989.

Ron Spear—Editor
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—Editors

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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.
To Our Missionary Workers

We are laborers under God; and we must all work with intelligence, frugality, and humility. There are those who embrace too much in their labors, and by so doing accomplish little. Our efforts now must be more concentrated. Every stroke must tell. At present, the labors of our ministers cannot be so uncertain and extended as to cast the seeds of truth upon all waters. This is being done quite extensively by our publications; but God directs us, and reason tells us, that at this stage of this work, and with the present condition of our finances, our ministers must be more personal and concise in their labors, binding up the work as they go along. The work in Europe, as in America, has had to commence small; but even here it can be managed so as to become self-sustaining. One great means by which this can be accomplished will be by the well-directed efforts of those already in the truth to bring in others who will be a strength and support to the work. This was the way the Christian church was established. Christ first selected a few persons, and bade them follow Him. They then went in search of their relatives and acquaintances, and brought them to Christ. This is the way we are to labor.

A few souls brought out and fully established on the truth, will, like the first disciples, be laborers for others.

In the work of the laborers there should be a counseling together. No one is to strike out on his own independent judgment, and work according to his own mind, unless he has a treasury of his own from which to draw. Our heavenly Father careth for His children, and His grace is sufficient in every time of need. But if we consider ourselves sufficient to manage the work of God, and depend for success on our own individual wisdom to plan and execute, we may expect defeats and losses; for they will surely come. I have been shown that the management of the work must not be trusted to inexperienced hands. Those who have not had breadth of experience are not the ones to take large responsibilities, although they may think themselves qualified to do so. Their brethren may see defects where they themselves see only perfection. Too much is at stake now to allow any great risks to be run in investing means from the Lord's treasury. If any one wishes to try experiments, let him sustain himself from his own funds, so that if losses occur he alone will be the loser.

The workers are not many; the means are not abundant; and the work must be fashioned accordingly. It is not God's plan that large draughts should be made upon the treasury to support the workers, and then that they should labor in such a way that no special results can be seen. Our ministers should not feel at liberty to pay large sums for halls in which to hold meetings, when they do not feel the burden of following up the interest with personal labor. The results are too uncertain to warrant using up means so rapidly. I cannot see that much is accomplished by open-air meetings. These may be held at times, and on special occasions will be the best means of reaching the people. But to make this the regular manner of labor will not at present secure the desired results. The laborer cannot prove his work; he cannot make full proof of his ministry. The dearth of both men and means at this time will not warrant our brethren in doing this kind of work. The burden now is to convince souls of the truth. This can best be done by personal efforts, by bringing the truth into their houses, praying with them, and opening to them the Scriptures.

Those who do this work should be just as careful not to become stereotyped in their plans of labor as should the minister who labors in the desk. They should be

Ellen G. White
constantly learning. They should have a conscientious zeal to obtain the highest qualifications, to become able men in the Scriptures. They should not accumulate expensive furniture and become fixtures in any one place; for they know not how soon they may be called to other fields of labor. They should not gather burdens about them so that their thoughts and time will be occupied in serving tables; but they should cultivate habits of careful study and mental activity, giving themselves to prayer and to a diligent study of the Scriptures. Many are guilty of shortcomings on this point. The claims of God upon them are not small. But they are content with the limited understanding they have of the Scriptures, and do not seek to improve both mind and manners. Every argument in prophetic history, every practical lesson given by Christ, should be carefully studied that they may be wanting in nothing. The mind gains strength, breadth, and acuteness by activity. It must be made to work, or it will grow weak. It must be trained to think, to think habitually, or it will in a great measure lose its power to think. Let the mind wrestle with the difficult problems in the Word of God, and the intellect will be thoroughly awakened to bring forth, not inferior discourses, but those that will be fresh and edifying; and these will be presented in the fervor of an active mind.

The servants of Christ must meet the highest standard. They are educators, and they should be thoroughly versed in the Scriptures. Then from their own experience they will feel the necessity of devoting less time to sermonizing, and more time to educating those for whom they labor. They will study how to make these personal efforts interesting, and to impress upon all the necessity of searching the Scriptures for themselves. The study of the Bible taxes the mind of the worker, strengthens the memory, and sharpens the intellect more than the study of all the subjects which philosophy embraces. The Bible contains the only truth that purifies the soul, and is the best book for intellectual culture. The dignified simplicity with which it handles important doctrines is just what every youth and every worker for Christ needs to teach him how to present the mysteries of salvation to those who are in darkness.

The mind must be active to invent the best ways and means of reaching the people next us. We should not be far-reaching, incurring great expense. There are individuals and families near us for whom we should make personal efforts. We often let opportunities within our reach slip away, in order to do a work at a distance from us which is less hopeful, and thus our time and means may be lost in both places. The study of the workers now should be to learn the trade of gathering souls into the gospel net. Our cause is struggling in poverty because we are trying to do so much. The banner of truth is being planted in all countries and among all nations; and every worker should try so to shape his labor as to secure immediate results. He should remember that he is a light-bearer from God to the world, and should so educate those who receive the truth at His hands that they in turn will become light-bearers to others. This will require fore-sight and much careful study and earnest prayer. At this point in the history of our work we may spread over a great deal of territory, scatter our efforts, use up our time and money, and yet have little fruit to show for our labors—few souls who will help sustain the work by their influence, their efforts, and their means.

There must be a firm determination on the part of our laborers to break with the work in France. My heart aches as I hear our brethren say, Such an one does not understand how to labor for these nationalities. Does not God know what the people need? and will He not direct His servants? Is not the truth one? Are not the teachings of the Bible one? Let God give His messengers the word to speak, and His blessing will not fail to attend their labors.

In sending missionaries to distant countries, those men should be selected who know how to economize, who have not large families, and who, realizing the shortness of time and the great work to be accomplished, will not fill their hands and houses with children, but will keep themselves as free as possible from everything that will divert their minds from their one great work. The wife, if devoted, and left free to do so, can, by standing by the side of her husband, accomplish as much as he. God has blessed woman with talents to be used to His glory in bringing many sons and daughters to God; but many who might be efficient laborers are kept at home to care for their little ones. We want missionaries who are missionaries in the fullest sense of the word; who will put aside selfish considerations, and let the
Our missionary workers must learn to economize. The largest reservoir, though fed by abundant and living springs, will fail to supply the demand if there are leakages which drain off the supply. It must not be left for one man to decide whether a certain field will warrant large efforts. If the workers in one field so fashion the work as to incur large expenses, they are barring the way so that other important fields—fields which would warrant the outlay—cannot be entered. Our younger laborers must be content to work their way among the people slowly and surely, under the advice of those more experienced in the work. The ideas of many are too high. A more humble manner of working would show good results. It is encouraging to see the young entering the missionary field, and enlisting all their ardor and zeal in the work; but they must not be left to manage for themselves, and keep the cause of God weighed down with debt. Large vessels must not be intrusted to inexperienced hands to guide, lest they be wrecked. All should strive by wise management and earnest labor to gather enough to pay their own expenses. They should labor to make the cause self-sustaining, and should teach the people to rely upon themselves.

In every new field patience and perseverance must be exercised. Do not fret at small beginnings. It is often the humblest work that accomplishes the greatest results. Steady, persevering, determined efforts must be put forth by every laborer. stand off in a multitude and send down his voice to men, and move them as he could if he were brought into closer relationship with them. Jesus left heaven and came to our world to save souls. You must come close to those for whom you labor, that they may not only hear your voice, but shake your hand, learn your principles, and realize your sympathy. Whenever you can get access to the fireside, urge your way there. Take your Bible and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend upon your great knowledge and accomplishments, but upon your ability to find your way to their hearts. By being social and coming close to them, the current of their thoughts will be changed quicker than by the most able discourses.

The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is more successful in securing souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches. A chance speech or discourse may set minds on a train of thought which will, through other influences that may be brought to bear upon them, result in their conversion; but these cases are rare. We cannot afford to labor with such uncertain results.

There is a great work to be done, and individual workers can accomplish more by laboring in a humble way than by incurring great expense. There may be times when broader efforts may be in the order of God. If churches and halls are opened to any of the laborers, and there home expenses. They should place their families where they can be cared for with as little expense as possible. Donations and bequests do not come to our people as they do to other denominations; and those who have not educated themselves to live within their means will surely have to do this now or engage in some other employment. Their habits must be frugal. They must not expend money for things that are not absolutely necessary. Economy must be the rule of every laborer. If he has not economical habits he must learn the lesson at once. All should learn how to keep accounts. Some neglect this work as nonessential; but this is wrong. All expenses should be accurately stated. This is something that many of our workers will have to learn.

We should not allow our habits to become loose and dilatory while we are engaged in God’s work. All should be prompt, sharp business men in His cause. With a little more study and punctuality, much time could be saved in our Conference business meetings, and many mistakes avoided. Everything that bears any relation to the work and cause of God should be as near perfection as human brains and human hands can make it. God is not pleased with the present lack of order and accuracy among those who do business in connection with His cause. He would have things done with as much order as was seen ancienly in the arrangement of His sanctuary and of the armies of Israel. No slack, bungling work was done there; for death would have been the penalty.

My ministering brethren, do not think that the only work you can do, the only way you can labor for souls, is to give discourses. The best work you can do is to teach, to educate. Whenever you can find an opportunity to do so, sit down with some family and let them ask questions. Then answer them patiently, humbly. Continue this work in connection with your more public efforts. Preach less and educate more by holding Bible readings, and by praying with families and little companies. If you, as God’s servants, do what you can in His love and fear, your efforts will be wholly acceptable to the Master; and in the records above you will be registered as good and faithful, and will receive at last from the lips of the Chief Shepherd the heavenly benediction, “Well done.”

Review and Herald, vol. 1, 571–572 (December 8, 1885)
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enclosed is a small donation to help you carry on your work. I have read a few issues of Our Firm Foundation, and I was really impressed by the straight preaching of our messages. I would like to receive this magazine for my family. I pray that the Lord our Saviour Jesus Christ will continue to send the Holy Spirit to work through you so we may awaken from our slumber.

—JW, Massachusetts

I'm a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister. I have been receiving Our Firm Foundation for about two years, and I believe that it lives up to its title.

This past August I took with me a former Assembly of God minister, whom I had baptized about four years ago, to the Hartland Institute camp meeting. There we had the privilege of seeing and hearing Elder Spear in person. I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for about 56 years and do not recall hearing as much preaching from the Spirit of Prophecy as we heard at that meeting. We were edified.

—PC, South Carolina

I thank you for keeping up the good work producing your magazine promptly every month.

Being a student doesn't afford me much time for outside reading considering all of the other things that need to be done, so to be able to read about the important things I have to choose my time carefully.

Your magazine helps to feed my mind with those things that are relevant to this time, and that are present truth. Thank you.

—RS, California

Thank you for having the strength and courage to stand up and "cry aloud and spare not." We are too close to the end to play along with the world. I especially appreciated your articles reprinted from The Ministry of Healing, "The Physician an Educator," and "From House to House." Our people (Seventh-day Adventists) need to wake up and realize we have strayed a long way from what we should be doing. As a registered nurse myself, I have had to turn my back on my own training in 1982 after reading The Ministry of Healing, Counsels on Health, and Medical Ministry. Our people need to be taught practical hydrotherapy and simple treatments. May God bless your efforts for a short medical missionary training session. A lot of times we tend to want too long a course of study. God bless your efforts!

—DW, Tennessee

I delayed this, hoping to include a note of appreciation for your work. The New Theology appears to be alive and well in our area. My problem is how to relate to the expression of it in the proper spirit of love without endorsing things that are not true.

I'm thankful for the effort to hold the Spirit of Prophecy materials in the proper light—a respected guide, but not supplanting Scripture. The more I read the Spirit of Prophecy the better it looks.

—RB, New York

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you so much and express my deep appreciation for your beautiful and ever so important work of standing for the straight testimony.

I've read Ron Spear's book Will the Real Seventh-day Adventist Please Stand Up as well as heard several tapes by him and Ty Gibson, and also studied a couple [issues] of your wonderful magazine Our Firm Foundation.

I did all this in just two weeks and I can't tell you what a blessing it was to me to be familiarized and understand about victory over sin as well [as] the importance of standing true to the Spirit of Prophecy at any cost.

I wish to congratulate and give you all of my spiritual support in this vital work that you're doing. I know it's been a blessing to many and it will continue to be as we draw even closer to the momentous events just ahead of us as Seventh-day Adventists.

May our Lord grant you even more of His powerful grace to stand amidst the trials and opposition. My prayers are with you always.

—FR, Colorado

I read, with interest, your note in the Letters to the Editor section of the July 1989, Our Firm Foundation, regarding E. G. White books in Europe.

You quoted from the "Foreign Checklist" put out by Pacific Press, listing E. G. White books in foreign languages. This list is produced for North American consumption, and in no way reflects the complete list of E. G. White books produced in Europe.

Your readers will be happy to know that in the last eighteen years, seventy-nine E. G. White books have been produced in one hundred and nine different languages around the world. The latest to be produced will be The Desire of Ages in Russian. Twenty-four titles have been produced in forty-four European languages, including Lappish, Romanian, and Greek. Thirteen titles are available in Hungarian, eleven in Polish, and ten in Swedish.

—Ron Appenzeller
Director, General Conference Publishing Department

In every country in the Trans-European Division where our church is presently established (we have no work as yet in Albania and in Afghanistan), our church has currently available a considerable range of Ellen G. White titles in their national languages.

It may interest you to know that a recently published list by the Association of Polish Authors, which is a national association, puts various books by Ellen G. White as the third most popular in the country [behind the Bible and the various works of Lenin].

—Jan Paulsen
President, Trans-European Division

We stand corrected. It is good to know that the Spirit of Prophecy writings are more widely available than we were led to believe. There is still, however, for most members the difficulty of the price of these volumes. Poor economies and high inflation keep this precious material beyond the reach of most laymen. The countries of Eastern Europe, especially, need our help. It would seem that recent events point to unprecedented opportunities.—EDITORS
Agriculture and Our Health Work

SEVENTH-DAY Adventists are blessed with an abundance of divine counsel in the Spirit of Prophecy on a wide range of subjects. It may be a surprise to some that there can be a blessing for us in comparing the instructions of the Lord in such disparate topics as health and agriculture. Such a comparison, however, will help clarify the counsels in regard to the respective subjects, and will help nurture a love for the truth and will assist us in escaping at least some of the strong delusions that God is permitting to come upon the earth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

There is a well-known but too often neglected statement regarding agriculture on page 179 of volume 6 of the Testimonies: “Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon.”

There is a parallel and also too often neglected counsel regarding the topic of health:

“A practical knowledge of the science of human life is necessary in order to glorify God in our bodies. It is therefore of the highest importance that among studies selected for childhood, physiology should occupy the first place.

“It is well that physiology is introduced into the common schools as a branch of education. All children should study it. It should be regarded as the basis of all educational effort.” Ellen G. White Pamphlets in the Concordance, vol. 2, 484

Before man can be restored to God’s kingdom, he must come to the awareness that “to transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one’s self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.” Education, 100

One of the basic principles soon learned in any agricultural endeavor is that success depends upon faithful obedience to the laws of nature. This principle found as well in all aspects of health. God has ordained that this lesson should be one of the first that we learn.

“No one can succeed in agriculture or gardening without attention to the laws involved. The special needs of every variety of plant must be studied. Different varieties require different soil and cultivation, and compliance with the laws governing each is the condition of success. . . .

“In cultivating carefulness, patience, attention to detail, obedience to law, it imparts a most essential training.” Child Guidance, 56

“The laws of nature, as truly as the precepts of the Decalogue, are divine, and only in obedience to them can health be recovered or preserved.” Loma Linda Messages, 110

Because of Adam and Eve’s sin, the earth was cursed. Its productivity was limited and it was necessary for man to earn his food by the sweat of his brow. During the long continuance of the great controversy, the fertility of the earth has continued to decline, and God out of mercy and compassion has intervened in a special way. In recent centuries He has raised up men to invent methods and machinery to lighten man’s load from the curse of sin.

“The greater the length of time the earth has lain under the curse, the more difficult has it been for man to cultivate it, and make it productive. As the soil has become more barren, and double labor has had to be expended upon it, God has raised up men with inventive faculties to construct implements to lighten labor on the land groaning under the curse.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1089

Vernon Sparks serves as the medical director of Life Abundant Missionary Institute, Eatonville, Washington.
Through modern technology, the production of food has greatly increased. In the United States in 1870, sixty percent of all workers were involved in the growing of food. In recent years only four to five percent are thus involved. In harmony with His character of love, the God who causes the rain to fall on the unjust as well as the just has worked through even unrepentant men to help alleviate and prevent not only hunger, but also physical disease and suffering. As catastrophes in the modern lines of travel—ordained of God for the great day of His preparation (see Fundamentals of Education, 409)—and as natural disasters have been on the increase, God has also worked through men of His choosing to bring about discoveries and inventions which help to lighten man’s load in the area of health. His heart of love has moved God to enlighten man as to how His wayward children can be brought back from the edge of the grave to have another opportunity to get better acquainted with their Creator, Sustainer, and Healer, as well as with their Redeemer.

“The great Physician co-operates with every effort made in the behalf of suffering humanity. . . . His heart of sympathy goes out to all earth’s sufferers, and with every one who works for their relief He co-operates.” Spalding-Magan’s Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 127

Presently extremely intricate and complex diagnostic equipment can visualize the separate components of the human cell. Sensitive tests can detect abnormal chemical reactions in remote areas of the body. Vaccinations have been developed to prevent many infectious diseases. Intricate surgical procedures in association with complex monitoring and resuscitative equipment obtain amazing results in a wide range of surgical problems. Arterial obstructing clots are dissolved with special medications. Hearts that have ceased to beat and lungs that have ceased to breathe are restored to function, and years of useful life ensue. Irreparably damaged kidneys, livers, bone marrow, lungs and even hearts are replaced with donor organs. Strong medications made necessary by man’s persistent disobedience (see Medical Ministry, 222, 259, 260 and Counsels on Health, 261) have been developed, many from natural sources such as plants, animals and even humans themselves. Human genes have been grafted into the chromosomes of a strain of bacteria causing them to produce human insulin which then is used to provide life-prolonging control of the blood sugar of diabetics.

“The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and wonderful research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought, and opened to view vast fields of knowledge; and these men have been honored as guides and benefactors of their race. . . . As the moon and stars of the solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, do the world’s great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gem of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world.” The Desire of Ages, 464–465

“Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God’s Holy Spirit. . . . [Such] acts show the working of a divine power.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 385

Many of the dramatic results in the areas of health and agriculture (as well as in transportation and communications, and so on) as a result of modern technology have apparently been ordained by God to demonstrate and communicate His compassion and longsuffering for wayward, stubborn man. He has permitted needy man to discover His laws in nature and man has learned that faithful obedience to the laws bring success.

“In the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unerring certainty.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 84. As scientifc man has learned this principle and has applied it in a rational (obedient to natural law) way to the problems around him, he has met with success. Irrational (out of harmony with natural law) approaches have led to failure. The progress of modern technology is a result of the use of rational methods.

Yes, “God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in both science and art.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 113. Too often modern man fails to give God any credit, but scientific progress has been made because of man working in harmony with God’s laws. “Whenever man accomplishes anything, whether in spiritual or in temporal lines, he should bear in mind that he does it through co-operation with his Maker.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 82

But as always, Satan has been active in persuading man to misuse God’s intended blessings. “But God has not been in all man’s inventions. Satan has controlled the minds of men to a great extent, and has hurried men to new inventions which has led them to forget God.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1089. Certainly God cannot be credited with the present fearsome weapons of modern warfare.

Also much of the food which God intended should alleviate malnutrition and hunger is squandered in alcoholism and gluttony. The ability to produce such great amounts of food and to develop such marvelous means of restoring health and relieving suffering has led many to worship the creature (science) rather than the Creator. Many, when beholding the successes of science, tend to feel that perhaps man can indeed solve all of his problems and thus he needs no higher power. However, the inanimate inventions of modern technology in the proper hands can just as well be used for God’s intended purposes as they can be used by Satan for his diversionary purposes. The technology of modern grain harvesting, cardiac resuscitation, internal combustion engines, television, radio, airplanes, and in other areas, is not evil of itself and can be used to the furtherance of God’s kingdom. God has ordained that they come into existence for that very purpose. It is the evil in man that has misused and misapplied them in many ways, leading him to forget God rather than to remember Him.

It is well known among us that Christ could have come within a few short years

God has permitted needy man to discover His laws in nature and man has learned that faithful obedience to the laws bring success
of 1844 and again in 1857 and 1888. At these times God had made available to His people an experience and message with the availability of the latter-rain power of the Holy Spirit to have finished the Lord’s work in our souls and in the world. This fact tells us that the failure of God’s people has resulted in the continued increase in the earth waxing old and the human race falling more and more under the heavy hand of physical suffering and disease. The delay of Christ’s coming due to the failure of His people tells us that the modern technology in agriculture, medicine, in other lines, is ordained of God to counteract to some degree the harmful effects which come as the consequences of the failings of those with greater light on those with lesser light. This perspective helps to place the role of modern technology in its proper light. Of itself it is not evil. It is a work ordained by a loving and compassionate God, but it is not an essential part of the everlasting gospel which must be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people before Christ can return. To a great extent God moved upon the minds of worldly men to invent modern technology, thus indicating that it is largely a work for those with lesser light to carry out. We have all been witnesses to the fact that those of lesser light can do a loving and compassionate work. God has given them this work.

This concept is clarified in the Spirit of Prophecy counsels regarding the care for orphans and also for derelicts. Certain tasks of revealing His character of love and compassion have been given to other groups and even to the world itself.

“The Lord has marked out our way of working. As a people we are not to imitate and fall in with Salvation Army methods. This is not the work that the Lord has given us to do. Neither is it our work to condemn them and speak harsh words against them. There are precious, self-sacrificing souls in the Salvation Army. We are to treat them kindly. There are in the Army honest souls, who are sincerely serving the Lord and who will see greater light, advancing to the acceptance of all truth. The Salvation Army workers are trying to save the neglected, downtrodden ones. Discourage them not. Let them do that class of work by their own methods and in their own way. But the Lord has plainly pointed out the work that Seventh-day Adventists are to do.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 184-185

“To care for these needy ones is a good work; yet in this age of the world the Lord does not give us as a people directions to establish large and expensive institutions for this purpose. If, however, there are among us individuals who feel called of God to establish institutions for the care of orphan children, let them follow out their convictions of duty. But in caring for the world’s poor they should appeal to the world for support. They are not to draw upon the people to whom the Lord has given the most important work ever given to men, the work of bringing the last message of mercy before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. The Lord’s treasury must have a surplus to sustain the work of the gospel in ‘regions beyond’.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 286

God has given a different type of work to His health institutions and health professions from those of the world. We have been encouraged in the Lord as we have seen science confirm the vast majority of the principles of healthful living given through Ellen White. The discoveries of science in regard to cancer as a “germ,” tobacco as a slow malignant poison, and the importance of lifestyle change, such as in exercise and diet in the treatment of disease, have helped to confirm the divine origin of the Spirit of Prophecy and the Seventh-day Adventist movement. Unfortunately, however, we have interpreted science’s agreement with our health habits as an indication that science is also a safe guide to follow in health-care delivery. We have followed the Pied Piper of science into the emphasis of modern technology to the neglect of the health work God has called us to do. As we have coveted the world’s role of large medical centers capable of supporting expensive diagnostic and treatment equipment and qualified to serve as trauma centers, we have largely abandoned our role of operating many small country sanitariums. As we have coveted the expensive, complex equipment of modern technology, we have too often neglected our instructions to emphasize the simple, economical and readily available remedies.

“Always study and teach the use of the simplest remedies, and the special blessing of the Lord may be expected to follow the use of these means which are within the reach of the common people.” Selected Messages, book 2, 298-299

“Health or high position, costly equipment, architecture or furnishings, are not essential to the advancement of the work of God.” Ministry of Healing, 36

“There are many inventions which cost large sums of money which it is just as well should not come into our work. They are not what our students need. Let the education given be simple in its nature,” Loma Linda Messages, 355

“Those who go from the Sanitarium should go so well instructed that they can teach others the methods of treating their families.

“There is danger of spending far too much money on machinery and appliances which the patients can never use in their home lessons.” Ellen G. White Pamphlets in the Concordance, vol. 3, 135

Modern technology requires large amounts of time and money to develop. It usually takes years of controversial trial and error labor to determine whether a new procedure has a rational basis and really gives the results that it promises. It requires expensive specialists to monitor and operate. Rather than being leaders in modern technology, we have been instructed to move slowly.

“Now I am certain that great care should be taken in purchasing electrical instruments and costly mechanical fixtures. Move slowly, Brother Burden, and do not trust to men who suppose that they understand what is essential, and who launch out in spending money for many things that require experts to handle them.” Ibid.

The Lord has not given to us the task of developing through trial and error, and promoting through costly means and extensive manpower, the discoveries of modern science even though they are a manifestation of God’s concern and care for wayward man. To utilize modern technology when needed to save life is certainly not a moral wrong, but it is wrong in God’s eyes when we do so to the neglect of the methods and objectives that God has asked us to follow and that only we can do. To covet the methods and task of the world to the neglect of our God-designated methods and task, delaying the Lord’s return and creating an even greater need and demand for modern technology, creates and prolongs a vicious cycle, participation in which is fraught with great danger to our soul’s salvation.

Understanding our proper relationship with modern technology helps us to understand more clearly many of the Lord’s counsels regarding our health work. Especially does it clarify the following:

“There are many ways of practicing the healing art, but there is only one way that Heaven approves. God’s remedies are the simple agencies of nature that
**God has given us the task of snatching suffering man from the jaws of the dragon—not from the restful sleep of the first death, but from the perpetual oblivion of the jaws of the second and true death**

The bodies of the redeemed throughout eternity. These eight simple rules of health are thus indeed the true remedies. To promulgate a knowledge of these laws of health and share with others the source of the power to live in harmony with those laws is the most enduring, the most effective, loving and compassionate service that one mortal can do for another. This is our task. This is the world cannot do. The longer we delay in the finishing of our task the more prolonged and more complex will be the work of modern technology and the more serious will be the charges of malpractice against us in the health-care courts of heaven.

“There is always a danger of taking upon ourselves a work the Lord has not placed in our hands, and neglecting that which He has given us to do, and which would better honor His name; that which to human eyes may appear praiseworthy, may be the very thing the Lord has not placed in our hands.” *Spalding-Magan’s Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White*, 116

In light of our task we can better understand the various counsels as to how God’s health professionals are to work. They are to work as medical missionary evangelists for the organization on a sacrificial pay scale, side by side with ministers in a demonstration of Christ’s sacrificial ministry of pardon for physical and spiritual sin. To do otherwise is to misrepresent and distort Christ’s ministry for fallen man.

In agriculture, as in the field of health, there are those who sincerely believe that God’s plan is that we should not use any man-made chemicals. They follow the concept that everything should be “natural.” Certainly this may be the ideal, but we are not living in an ideal world. To hold rigidly to this concept is to go contrary to the laws of nature and the instructions and example of the servant of the Lord.

“This earth has been cursed because of sin, and in these last days vermin of every kind will multiply. These pests must be killed, or they will annoy and torment and even kill us, and destroy the work of our hands and the fruit of our land. In places there are ants [termites] which entirely destroy the woodwork of houses. Should not these be destroyed? Fruit trees must be sprayed, that the insects which would spoil the fruit may be killed. God has given us a part to act, and this part we must act with faithfulness. Then we can leave the rest with the Lord.” *Selected Messages*, book 3, 329

Some believe that all fertilizer should be natural or “organic.” They base this on the assumption that plants utilize only organic and no inorganic (chemical) nutrients. The truth is that plants can use only the chemical form of nutrients. All organic fertilizer must break down into its chemical form before it is effective. Therefore small amounts of chemical fertilizer can, when used rationally—in harmony with natural law—make a tremendous contribution to improved harvests. The best results come from using measured amounts of chemical fertilizer determined by tests to be deficient in association with goodly amounts of organic fertilizer or humus.

The problems that arise from the use of chemical fertilizers are largely due to being used in excess or when they are not really needed, or in the absence of...
organic material to maintain the normal looseness (tilth) of the soil.

The same concepts apply to the use of modern medications. Many have their origin from natural substances. They have been put in dosage form in measured amounts and when indicated by proper tests and evaluation, can be administered in a rational form to obtain, to a great extent, very favorable results. They give the best results when used along with good health habits.

Problems tend to arise when modern medications are used in excessive or inadequate amounts, or when they are not really needed or when there is allergy to the given medication.

Those living in harmony with natural law will not tend to have much sickness in the first place. If they do become ill, the simple natural remedies pointed out to us by the Lord will facilitate recovery in the majority of cases. But those who disobey natural law will create a need for modern drugs, and their need may occur occasionally in those obedient to natural law. As long as we are in a less than ideal world we will have to relate to modern therapeutics on the basis of the lesser of two evils. Modern medications are indicated when the results of the illness with the medication is less risky than the results of the illness without the medication.

"I thank the Lord that it is our privilege to co-operate with Him in the work of restoration, availing ourselves of all possible advantages in the recovery of health. It is no denial of our faith to place ourselves in the condition most favorable to recovery."

Spalding-Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 7

"All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him."

The Ministry of Healing, 113

Modern medications given in specified amounts for a specified time with a known action for a known disease and with an awareness of potential side effects and prescribed by an experienced clinician are quite regularly blessed of God with restoration to health of the patient. We must beware, though, of diagnostic and treatment methods such as hypnotism, and acupuncture, that are many times associated with complex rational therapeutics, but that themselves are not rational in that they are not in harmony with the laws of nature such as found in anatomy, physiology, physics, and chemistry. Also we must recognize that if a simple remedy or remedies will resolve the problem, then it is irrational to resort instead to more complex remedies. It is irrational to use a more complex or vigorous remedy than is really needed.

We have Ellen White’s example as to how she related to modern therapeutics on the basis of the lesser of two evils. She herself used or approved the rare use of coffee (Selected Messages, book 2, 303) and tea (ibid., 302) for their medicinal effects, x-ray (ibid., 303) for skin lesions, smallpox vaccine (ibid.), blood transfusions (ibid.), surgery (ibid., 284; Testimonies, vol. 8, 188) and “strong stimulants” (A Sketch of the Last Sickness and Death of Elder James White, [a statement made at the funeral by Dr. J. H. Kellogg], 19) ordered by a physician in a health crisis of James White. When asked about the use of quinine to save the life of a malaria patient, she is quoted as stating, “We are expected to do the best we can.” Selected Messages, book 2, 282, note

Ellen White lost two of her children to infectious diseases. The firstborn died in 1860 of pneumonia and the last born in 1863 from erysipelas, a bacterial infection of the superficial tissues, usually of the face. See Health Reformer, 64; Testimonies, vol. 1, 244–246. Both of these illnesses will frequently respond to the simple home remedies with a strong emphasis on hypertherapy. However, home remedies may not always be adequate, and the use of antibiotics will usually resolve nonresponsive cases of these types of problems without serious complications. Antibiotics would have probably saved the lives of her two children, and to have used them if they had been available for that purpose in those circumstances would have been in harmony with her counsel and example. See Health Reformer, 122

With such difficulties and trials around and before us, what degree of success can we expect from following the Lord’s instructions regarding simple gardening and simple remedies?

"If the land is cultivated, it will, with the blessing of God, supply our necessities. We are not to be discouraged about temporal things because of apparent failures, nor should we be disheartened by delay. We should work the soil cheerfully, hopefully, gratefully, believing that the earth holds in her bosom rich stores for the faithful worker to garner, stores richer than gold or silver. The niggardliness laid to her charge is false witness. With proper, intelligent cultivation the earth will yield its treasures for the benefit of man. The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads a table for His people in the wilderness, will never cease." Testimonies, vol. 6, 178

"If the sick and suffering will do only as well as they know in regard to living out the principles of health reform perseveringly, then they will in nine cases out of ten recover from their ailments.”

Medical Ministry, 224

“But if all would seek to become intelligent in regard to their bodily necessities, sickness would be rare instead of common. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Selected Messages, book 2, 291

Loving obedience to God’s will for man will result in eternal life in the hereafter, but it also has dramatic effects on the longevity in this life. Studies are showing that the men among us who follow the complete lifestyle recommended for us can expect to live on the average an amazing twelve years longer than non-Adventist males. See “The Adventist Lifestyle,” David Nieman, Vibrant Life, March/April 1988

Modern technology requires long years of training to utilize it properly. But the simple health remedies that we are to specialize in can be learned and utilized by all. In fact, God calls every church member to be a medical missionary. It is somewhat the same in agriculture. Our emphasis is not to be on the big business, but gardening for home use is recommended for everyone.

We are counseled that troublesome times are just before us and during the little time of trouble before probation closes personal skills in both gardening and medical missionary work will be to our advantage. With the predicted increase in social unrest, wars, natural calamities, economic instability, and prohibitions to buy or sell, modern technology, dependent upon refrigeration, transportation, and electricity, will be in its death throes and as unstable as a bruised reed. But those who have learned and followed God’s simple ways will be prepared for the ensuing crisis.

"When power is allied with wickedness, it is allied to satanic agencies, and it will work to destroy those who are the Lord’s property. . . For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country [places], where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce. Thus..."
Pentecostalism

THE PROMISE of the bestowal of God’s Spirit upon His people is a wonderful and long-looked-for reality to all who long for the return of Jesus.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” Joel 2:28–29

That God has promised His Spirit in unprecedented measure at the end of time is undeniable. This latter-rain power, evidenced in a measure on the Day of Pentecost, will so arouse God’s people that they will be compelled to take His message of truth to every corner of this earth. No human knows this fact more accurately than Satan. It is therefore his studied purpose to thwart the outpouring of the latter rain at all costs.

One of Satan’s ploys is to attract God’s people to worldly living so that they do not plead for God’s Spirit as they live in Laodicean comfort. This tactic is sufficient for the lukewarm, the halfhearted in our midst. It will not suffice, however, to deceive those more advanced in their faith. These can only be seduced from God’s desire to bestow the great gift of the latter rain by subtle deception. They feel a conviction that God has bestowed this gift, when in fact it is derived from another source.

No counterfeit of the latter-rain experience has been more successful than that of Pentecostalism. While enthusiastically singing, “We are one in the Spirit,” many are unaware that more than one spirit is urging for their souls. While the most evident feature of Pentecostalism is glossolalia (speaking in unknown tongues), it consists of much more than this. It is a phenomenon whereby men and women embrace an emotional form of religion which produces an inner sensation of heightened religious arousal while they perform various external mannerisms. Some of these include the closing of the eyes while elevating the arms heavenward and performing various motions with the arms and hands, holding hands with others in a similar semitrance state, embracing fellow believers, speaking in unrecognizable languages, falling fainting to the floor and even rolling about the floor in jerky, exaggerated movements. Such is sure evidence to these people that they are possessed of the Holy Spirit.

It is little wonder that when three days before His crucifixion, Jesus spoke earnestly to His apostles concerning the events surrounding the Second Advent, His very first admonition was, “Take heed that no man deceive you.” Matthew 24:4. And this cautionary advice must be taken to heart by every true believer, for “insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24

All too often we mouth this awesome warning far too lightly. This is no minor matter, nor is it one which any of us dare ignore.

Pentecostalism falls down when examined in the light of the most basic criteria of truth—the law and the testimony. Those resorting to these manifestations soon find doctrine and truth of little significance as compared with the “possession of the Spirit.” One who demonstrates specified external manifestations is deemed to be “filled with the Spirit,” irrespective of his beliefs and, in some cases, despite following a lifestyle manifestly opposed to the Christian faith. However, “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

Colin D. Standish and Russell R. Standish serve as president of Hartland Institute and medical director of Penang Adventist Hospital, respectively.
Many Christians have lost the concept that the Holy Spirit has been sent to guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and as a consequence truth has become secondary to them.

When Robert Brinsmead began to actively promote his so-called objective gospel, he offered it as a doctrine which would withstand the inroads of Pentecostalism with its almost totally subjective emphasis. Some, even among the ministry, were impressed with this claim. But error is never a valid defense against a second error. Even more incongruous was the fact that the New Theology Robert Brinsmead promoted materialized into the very vehicle which encouraged some of those who listened to his word to turn toward these false manifestations which they blindly attributed to God the Holy Spirit. Indeed it was the very sterility of the New Theology that in frustration thrust many of these followers toward a lack of restraint and a type of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism, far from promoting true piety, leads to sacrilegious and boisterous conduct in God’s house. How different from the pure and holy God we serve!

Why then did the New Theology promote, among some, the very conduct and concepts it was guaranteed to resist? The answer is not too difficult to discern. The New Theology is as dry as the proverbial hills of Gilboa. It promotes neither holy living nor deep spiritual satisfaction and understanding. Since it is error through and through there is only a limited group of scriptural passages which, even with gross misuse, can be utilized in expositions by its proponents. Thus the flock becomes bored and experiences an emptiness of soul. As a consequence many search to fill this automatic void. One answer is in the Pentecostal movement.

Here the emotions are stirred, the adrenaline rises, a pseudorevival is experienced and for a time a sense of exhilaration sweeps away the emptiness which quite naturally develops from following the New Theology. Even in Pentecostalism, however, the apparent satisfaction to the soul is short-lived unless more and more extreme measures of emotional excitement are indulged. Every activity based upon severe emotional arousal produces a corresponding letdown in the following hours. It is simply a biological axiom that as the adrenaline ceases to flow, the body returns to a state akin to depression. Thus the body craves more excitement, often leading to wild music and behavior. Thus that peace which passeth all understanding is ever an unattainable goal. Indeed, it remains a perpetual far-off mirage. Cruel indeed are the counterfeit's of Satan.

As more and more of our people are attracted to these external manifestations, what responsibility do we, the pastors of the church, bear for this unfortunate trend? That question can only be answered by each individual minister. Are we preaching those truth-filled messages which alone satisfy the thirsty soul? Or are our services, week after week, indistinguishable from those preached by the clergy of the fallen churches of Christendom or even Roman Catholicism? We need to do much self-examination. Would we be regarded as extremists if we were to suggest to our fellow pastors that the overwhelming number of sermons we preach each year should be incapable of having been preached by ministers of any other faith? You see we are different! We are Seventh-day Adventists! Our messages must reflect that difference.

When did we last preach the three angels’ messages? the Sabbath? the in-azines or preached by our audio- and video-media evangelists. Then in terms that he alone could utter, he stated (and how we wish we could convey in writing his magnificent intonation), “There are men and women, now our dear brethren and sisters in the faith, for whom the very first words they heard from this old voice of mine, were words spoken in exposition of this grand old topic of the mark of the beast.” Initially such a statement may sound astounding, and indeed it is. But we should not feel surprised that men and women were drawn to God’s truth by this topic since it is a central feature of the third angel’s message. Revelation 14:9. God alone knows that which will convict, and in His supreme love for mankind He has placed His optimal salvation “weapons” in His last message to sinners. Are we preaching these mighty themes, however, or are we choosing topics of our own devising and ignoring God’s instructions?

If we are not presenting the meat of the Word to our congregations, then we are guilty of preparing the way for such an emptiness of soul that some will turn to Pentecostalism in desperation. It may not be the extreme forms we have detailed, but externals will become the means to, and not the consequences of, a

God alone knows that which will convict, and in His supreme love for mankind He has placed His optimal salvation “weapons” in His last message to sinners

vestigative judgment? the 2300-day prophecy? the state of the dead? the law of God and the faith of Jesus? Babylon? the mark of the beast? The mark of the beast! Now there’s a thoroughly Adventist topic. It is twenty years ago that the veteran Australian evangelist and church administrator, Pastor J. W. Kent, preached a never-to-be-forgotten sermon on this topic in the Wahroonga Church at the headquarters of the South Pacific Division. He was past his allotted span at the time. He mourned the fact that he no longer heard sermons on this topic. He regretted that no longer was this vital doctrine a topic favored by most of the editors of our message mag-

Christian experience. The former is counterfeit, the latter genuine.

Jesus emphasized that only those born of water and of the Spirit will be saved in the kingdom.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John 3:5

Being born of water encompasses forgiveness (justification).

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Matthew 3:11
Being born of the Spirit occurs only when Christ empowers obedience to God’s Word.

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” Acts 5:32

Colin dialogued with a Pentecostal lady who assured him that she was born of the Spirit because she had frequently spoken in tongues. Having a mother who is a Seventh-day Adventist, she knew the Seventh-day Adventist mes-

We were all youth ourselves not many years ago. Do we not recall our own experiences? Those who left the deepest impressions upon our souls were those deeply devoted to the truths of God’s Word irrespective of their age

sage well. He pointed out the Spirit (if it was God’s Spirit) led to all truth. He explained that Catholics who had embraced the Pentecostal movement claimed it had enhanced the meaning of the rosary and the mass. She shocked Colin by saying she could accept that though she claimed to be a good Baptist. Then Colin broached the Sabbath question and she assured him she would keep the Sabbath when the Spirit told her. It was pointed out that the Spirit had already brought that to her attention, for “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:21

This incident highlighted the fact that the false revival of the Spirit leads to disobedience although Peter affirms that only those who are obedient receive the power of God’s Spirit.

We would take a moment to speak to our youth pastors. So often we copy the ways of the fallen churches in our feeble efforts to halt the overwhelming tide of apostasy among our young people. In order to attract them to our meetings we attempt to provide them with at least the milder forms of externalism—clapping hands, stamping feet, sometimes hissing, hand holding, and rock singing, to name a few. Since the other churches do this we follow suit. We never stop for a moment’s reflection upon the almost total failure of these other churches to arrest the hemorrhage of youth from their folds. Why follow faulted methods?

Other youth leaders feel that they can entertain our youth into God’s kingdom. Sports of many forms, unsanctified music, Hollywood films, the ballet, the opera, all have been utilized in mis-directed attempts to use externals to satisfy the soul. But God’s truth alone can achieve this goal whether a person is sixteen or sixty. Pastors, we must not direct our youth towards superficial, external modes of religion. Most assuredly to do so will lead them astray and God will require their souls at our hands.

Conference committee members, resist the false premise that the most liberal of our pastors is the one most likely to attract our youth to a lifelong commitment to our faith. It is amazing just how many sober leaders fall into this trap. We were all youth ourselves not many years ago. Do we not recall our own experiences? Those who left the deepest impressions upon our souls were those deeply devoted to the truths of God’s Word irrespective of their age. Indeed aged men like Pastor R. A. R. Thrift who baptized us, Pastor Cyril Palmer, Pastor W. J. Kent, and middle-aged men like Pastor O. K. Anderson, Pastor Ralph Tudor, and Pastor George Burnside left the most indelible impressions upon our early lives, for they were men of deep belief. They left us with no void which hankered after the superficialities of Pentecostalism.

Our congregations need the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They must be encouraged to pray for the latter rain. May this blessing be sought in all diligence by God-fearing men and women encouraged by true shepherds of the flock.

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter 5:4
Adventism and Walter Martin

Part Two: 1962–1979

Part One dealt with a series of conferences between representatives of the Evangelical community (Walter Martin, George Cannon, and Donald Grey Barnhouse) and key officials of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (L. E. Froom, W. E. Read, R. A. Anderson, and T. E. Unruh). These meetings, held in the years 1955 and 1956 resulted in the publishing of two books, Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine, and The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism. Not all within Adventism were pleased with this turn of events. M. L. Andreasen, for one, expressed great concern over what he saw as a tragic departure from the historic truths of his church. He identified two main issues: the assertion that the atonement was completed at the cross, and that Christ had come in the Incarnation in the human nature of un fallen Adam rather than in fallen human nature. Andreasen's protest continued until the time of his death, February 19, 1962.

DIRECT contact between Walter Martin and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been continuous. The publication of The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism in 1960 was followed by nearly two decades of relative silence, punctuated only by the publication of Martin's The Kingdom of the Cults in 1965. In this second book he included Adventists, not as a cult, but as much misunderstood and maligned Christians. He would readily admit that they were perhaps immature in their theology, holding to concepts and teachings which he considered absurd, but he took pains to say that the leaders of the denomination had testified that they were in basic harmony with the Evangelical world in what he considered the important points of Christian faith, and thus they should be considered brothers in Christ.

Though our primary concern here is the interaction between Mr. Martin and the Adventist Church, it is unrealistic to completely ignore the developments of twenty years in order to follow only the major line of our story. For the truth of the matter is that the developments of the 1960s and 1970s would have been inconceivable were it not for the earlier influence of Walter Martin. With this in mind, then, we will first take a whirlwind tour of events and happenings with which Walter Martin had no personal involvement, so far as we know.¹

The 1960s saw the church much distracted by the "Brinsmead agitation," more formally known as the Sanctuary Awakening Fellowship. Frustrated with weak and superficial explanations of the saints’ preparation to stand before God without a mediator, Robert Brinsmead set forth his belief that perfection of character was unattainable at the present time (due to the influence of "original sin"—a subject we shall hear more of shortly), but that such perfection was nonetheless a requirement for translation. In Brinsmead’s thought, this lack was to be supplied through the grace of God in the closing act of Christ’s high priestly ministry, the final atonement.

This movement attracted many church members, and confused many others. A major contribution to this confusion was that the efforts of those who sought to discredit Brinsmead’s teachings were themselves self-contradictory and mutually exclusive. It was argued that Brinsmead put off character perfection until it was too late; and again it was argued that Brinsmead taught perfection too early. Some said that if any had failed of reaching perfection by the time of the final atonement their case was hopeless. Others said that, final atonement or no final atonement, there would be no character perfection this side of glorification. Even those outside Ad-
ventist circles have been perplexed as to how the church survived such conflicting viewpoints.2

Once the dust had settled, it appeared that the (more or less) official position of the church was that there was no possibility of believers reaching a state of sinlessness before the Second Advent. Advocated first by Edward Heppenstall in the late 1960s, this belief was the united position of men such as Raymond Cottrell, Harry Lowe, E. W. Vick, L. C. Naden, Norval F. Pease, Hans K. LaRondelle, Taylor G. Bunch, Ralph S. Watts, and Desmond Ford.3

It is somewhat too simplistic to say that these men favored disobedience, while the Awakening group favored obedience. All were wrestling with an as yet largely unrecognized interjection into Adventist thought. Brought to the church's attention for the first time by Robert Brinsmead, and later adopted and adapted by the Awakening movement's foes, the theological concept of original sin was making itself felt.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the period was that both the General Conference and Robert Brinsmead abandoned their early-1960s positions on the subject of perfection (the General Conference Defense Literature Committee and many representative authors of the day had stood for perfection before the close of probation; Brinsmead had advocated perfection at the time of the final atonement). The concepts first used by Heppenstall to combat the Awakening were eventually persuasive enough that Brinsmead and the majority of his followers capitulated in the early 1970s.

Choosing to retain his concepts of original sin, and cut loose from the restraining influence of the Adventist Church as a body, Brinsmead at last carried his new-found theories to their logical conclusion, thus discarding his belief in victory over sin, the perfecting of the final generation, and—harking back to Questions on Doctrine—the post-Fall nature of Christ. It would only be a matter of years before the other great concern of the late 1950s—that of the atonement and the sanctuary doctrine—would also be rejected.4 Sabbath observance would come in for criticism by 1981.5

During the years when Brinsmead flashed his way across the Adventist horizon, others chose to proceed in less spectacular style. As has been said, by the late 1960s the prevailing view of the church seemed to be quite solidly settled into the no-perfection-short-of-glorification point of view. This view was, of course, logically built on the pre-Fall nature-of-Christ concept found in Questions on Doctrine. Combined with the traditional Evangelical teaching of the completed atonement, this concept made the theological landscape of our church quite acceptable to those who were looking on.

One might suspect that if no sudden moves had been made, the dubious teachings left after the Brinsmead battles could well have become the universally accepted status quo. But it was not to be. In what has been interpreted as an effort to solidify the positions taken by Questions on Doctrine, and for a very simple reason—its pages contained what could easily be classed as some of the most careless, or some of the most dishonest "research" that had ever found its way through a Seventh-day Adventist press.

Perhaps the most glaring of the examples which might be cited is found on page 497. Under the heading, "Took Sinless Nature of Adam Before Fall," Dr. Froom has arranged nineteen statements containing his supporting evidence. Each statement incorporates one or more excerpts from the writings of Ellen G. White. None of these support his position; several—when provided with their original context—explicitly contradict what they are supposed to be supporting.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth of these nineteen selections from Ellen White are drawn from the same original source, and may now be found in Selected Messages, book one, 252-256. It is with considerable perplexity, then, that we find that the passage from which these quotations are drawn begins with the words, "In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition . . . "6 How such evidence could be presented under the heading "Took Sinless Nature of Adam Before Fall" has defied the imagination of all who have become aware of the matter.

Perhaps it was this new volume which sparked into action the dormant voices of protest within the church. In any event, the early 1970s marked a noticeable change in this regard. Two of the editors of the Review and Herald led the way. Thomas A. Davis wrote first in Romans for the Everyday Man. Broaching the subject while discussing Romans 8:3 ("God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"), he simply quoted with approval Ellen White's clear statement that "like every child of Adam He [Christ] accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.7

Herbert E. Douglass was the second voice to be heard. Writing in the editorial column of the Review, he asserted that Christ "undertook the cause of man, and with the same facilities that man may obtain, withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them."8

For three successive weeks in late 1971 and early 1972, Douglass expounded his topic, becoming more clear and forcible—and employing a greater number and more direct selections from the Spirit of Prophecy—each time. For three more years Douglass followed this pattern of stressing the reality of Christ's humanity at the time of the Christmas

Perhaps the greatest irony of the period was that both the General Conference and Robert Brinsmead abandoned their early-1960s positions on the subject of perfection

holidays. When asked what motivated him to do so, Douglass wrote: "Obviously it became a rallying point or flag for many who thought they never again would see the truth in print. . . . I simply wanted to give warm support to a point of view that had been very prominent in the history of our church and was still prominent in the lives and thinking of many of the General Conference brethren with whom I fellowshipped from day to day."9

With the topic of the nature of Christ is closely linked the question of character
If Christ came with a fallen nature and no advantage which man may not enjoy, it is logical to accept at face value the Bible’s call for holy living

these two volumes with what was, in the early 1970s, being taught by the Review. It would seem that, once again, a major theological shift had taken place. But all was still quite peaceful. Soon this situation, too, was to change.

In 1975 Gillian Ford issued a paper entitled “The Soteriological Implications of the Human Nature of Christ.” Though published under her name, it was obvious to all that the views she set forth were identical to those of her husband, Desmond. Three major issues were addressed and positions taken: the doctrine of the fallen human nature of Christ was totally repudiated; righteousness by faith was defined as justification alone (meaning that one’s sanctification had nothing to do whatsoever with his salvation); and the concept of character perfection in this earthly life was declared to be complete heresy. If nothing else, the paper made it clear that matters were coming to a head.

In early February 1976 the positions of Dr. Ford were examined before a large conference of Australian church leaders. J. W. Kent and F. A. Basham took the lead in expressing their concerns that Dr. Ford had placed himself in the position of being irrefutably opposed to the teaching of the church. Such a charge seems to have been no surprise to Ford. Apparently this conference settled nothing, and a second conference to consider these matters was appointed for April 1976, to be held in Palmdale, California. The Palmdale conference produced a statement intended to clarify the issues. In reality, it clarified nothing. Still, Dr. Ford returned to his homeland proclaiming that it was “a wonderful thing” that the statement supported his belief that righteousness by faith included nothing more than forensic (legal) justification.

Others, however, saw the statement differently. Kenneth Wood, editor of the Review and Herald, and Robert H. Pier-son, president of the General Confer-

of Christ’s humanity, we believe that the central concept is to recognize Jesus as the Saviour of all mankind, and that through His victorious life, lived in human flesh, He provides the link between divinity and humanity.”

Here was a clear statement that this point of truth was considered a nones-ential. Church members were free to choose between two mutually exclusive views leading to vastly different conclusions (though this may not have been clearly recognized by all at this time), and still be held in good and regular standing. While it should ever be borne in mind that all men everywhere are always to be left free to choose in spiritual matters, it is indeed unfortunate that the historic stance of Adventism — and particularly of the Spirit of Prophecy — on this topic was so little understood and appreciated. We can only wonder what might have been the result if Ralph Larson’s exhaustive study of Adventist Christology (The Word Was Made Flesh) had been completed ten years earlier, and thus able to exert its influence at the time when it was perhaps most needed.

The second quarter of 1977 (April through June) featured a Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly written by Herbert Douglass. Entitled “Jesus the Model Man,” the series of lessons dealt with such topics as the human nature of Christ, Christ as our Example in overcoming sin, and the perfection of the final generation. Whereas an occasional magazine article could be overlooked by those opposed to its viewpoint, thirteen weeks of daily lessons proved too bitter a pill to swallow. There was soon strong and vocal opposition to the use of the materials prepared. One concerned protestor wrote that opposition to these teachings was, “extremely widespread among ministers throughout the church, and it appears that it will continue to grow if the men in Washington do not admit their mistake.”

In August, a new publication entered the arena of discussion. Oddly enough, the author was one Geoffrey J. Paxton, an Anglican minister who professed great interest in the fate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Shaking of Adventism claimed to be a friendly eval-uation of the church’s assertion that it is the continuation of the Reformation. Paxton, however, fell prey to the almost universal idolatry of mankind. Instead of seeing a continuation of the progress of...
the Reformation, he measured everything according to his concept of a fixed form of the Reformation. Obviously, any advanced understanding beyond that of Luther and Paxton’s own hand-picked selection of “Reformation scholars” would appear as confusion or heresy.

As evident as this bias was, however, it did not prevent him from drawing large crowds of Adventists as he traveled across the United States calling on the conservative leadership of the denomination to repent of their “Roman Catholic” theology, and extolling the views of Desmond Ford and Robert Brinsmead. It is of interest that, although Paxton certainly had no appreciation whatever for the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary, he scrupulously avoided it in his discourses. As close as he was to Dr. Ford, one can only surmise that he was being kind enough not to proclaim the latter’s beliefs prematurely.

On the Sabbath, October 27, 1979, Dr. Ford at last put into place the final piece of the Questions on Doctrine puzzle. For reasons best known only to himself, he chose that day to publicly admit that he had not believed the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary for more than thirty years. Clearly his concept of the inspiration of Ellen White was placed in question as well. The obvious implications of such a statement he was willing to accept and defend. He was, at any rate, a logical man. Having accepted false premises, he was at least logical enough to carry them through to their final conclusions.

That day was a turning point for many. Some hailed Ford’s announcement with joy. Others started back in shock and surprise. Still others were saddened to find that their uneasiness with the gifted preacher from down under was more than founded. For all, it was a day of decision. What would they believe?

It was in such a setting that Walter Martin would renew his acquaintance with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To be continued

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Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father’s house? The Ministry of Healing, 251

If all our workers were so situated that they could spend a few hours each day in outdoor labor, and feel free to do this, it would be a blessing to them; they would be able to discharge more successfully the duties of their calling. Healthful Living, 136

Satan is seeking to overcome men today, as he overcame our first parents, by shaking their confidence in their Creator and leading them to doubt the wisdom of His government and the justice of His laws. The Great Controversy, 534

Whatever our position, we are dependent upon God, who holds all destinies in His hands. He has appointed us our work, and has endowed us with faculties and means for that work. So long as we surrender the will to God, and trust in His strength and wisdom, we shall be guided in safe paths, to fulfill our appointed part in His great plan. But the one who depends upon his own wisdom and power is separating himself from God. The Desire of Ages, 209

The fact that one does not in all things conform to our personal ideas or opinions will not justify us in forbidding him to labor for God. Christ is the Great Teacher; we are not to judge or to command, but in humility each is to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. Every soul whom God has made willing is a channel through which Christ will reveal His pardoning love. How careful we should be lest we discourage one of God’s light bearers, and thus intercept the rays that He would have shine to the world! Ibid., 438

Those who receive Christ by faith as their personal Saviour cannot be in harmony with the world. There are two distinct classes. One is loyal to God, keeping His commandments, while the other talks and acts like the world, casting away the Word of God, which is truth, and accepting the words of the apostate, who rejected Jesus. Notebook Leaflets, 20

If you fail ninety-nine times in a hundred, but succeed in saving the one soul from ruin, you have done a noble deed for the Master’s cause. But to be a co-worker with Jesus, you should have all patience with those for whom you labor, not scorning the simplicity of the work, but looking to the blessed result. Testimonies, vol. 4, 132
The Sabbath: God’s Seal

We Seventh-day Adventists are Sabbathkeepers, or would it be safer to say Saturday keepers? Do we really keep a holy day or is it a holiday? A day to sleep in or a day to socialize with friends, or a church potluck and Sabbath afternoon naps to prepare us for Saturday night television?

How does God’s holy Sabbath become the test, the seal? Real testing truth reveals the true intent of the heart. Testing truths will reveal the development of our character. “And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:20

Sabbathkeeping is our greatest testing truth. “And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” Mark 2:27-28

The Sabbath was made for man to worship his Creator. It is a day when all the pressures of the world and materialism are to be put away for 24 hours for communion with God. It is a time for singing praises, a time to count our blessings, and a time to witness to our neighbors and friends of the power of God in us which has given us joys and victories during the past week.

The Sabbath is a great symbol to God’s faithful, loyal, and obedient people, a symbol of His power, His mercy, and His love. But God’s people have not sufficiently demonstrated to the world how it should be kept and why it should be kept. True Sabbathkeeping is essential to the perfection of Christian character.

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

The evangelistic presentation of the Sabbath today has not produced the polarizing effect in our moral direction that the issue did in Jesus’ day or as it did in the days of our pioneers.

“I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question, to unite the hearts of God’s dear, waiting saints....

“And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.” Early Writings, 33

The only way we can preach the Sabbath more fully is to live the Sabbath more fully according to Isaiah 58:13: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.”

This verse teaches us how to worship that we may receive the righteousness of Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath. We are to pattern our lives and Sabbathkeeping after the God who made the Sabbath, rested, then blessed and sanctified it.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1–3

“In the beginning the Father and Son had rested upon the Sabbath after Their work of creation. When ‘the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them’ (Genesis 2:1), the Creator and all heavenly beings rejoiced in contemplation of the glorious scene. ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Job 38:7.

Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven.” The Desire of Ages, 769

“The warfare against God’s law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

“Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch (Malachi 4:1)—Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, ‘Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;... I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.... Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.’ Then ‘the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be; ‘they shall be as though they had not been,’ Ezekiel 28:6, 16, 19; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16.” Ibid., 763

Thus the Sabbath test will be similar to the test that Jesus faced through His
throughout life on earth. The nature of this struggle in the final days of the great controversy will be a soul-wrenching contest of the faith of God's saints which they have developed in their experience of character building.

Jesus experienced the results of sin without experiencing sin. He experienced the actual conflict in His inner being that occurs when the weight of divine justice is brought to bear against sin in the life.

In His closing hours, while hanging on the cross, He experienced to the fullest extent what man must experience when striving against sin. He realized how bad a man may become by yielding to sin.” The Youth's Instructor, vol. 3, 544

“Had there been one deviation from the divine mind in the work of Christ, the plan of redemption would have proved a failure.” Review and Herald, vol. 3, 544

“In what contrast is the second Adam as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed! Since the Fall the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth. And in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us.” Selected Messages, book 1, 268

“Christ came to the world to counteract Satan’s falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, that he would not rebel.” The Faith I Live By, 114

“Through being partakers of the divine nature we may stand pure and holy and undefiled. The Godhead was not made human, and the human was not defiled by the blending together of the two natures.” Selected Messages, book 3, 131

Yes, praise God that we can receive the character of Jesus and then the seal of God in true Sabbathkeeping! His life and His Sabbathkeeping are our example today. He kept the law and the Sabbath as it should be kept, perfectly. He was the author of Isaiah 58:13.

“Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.” Leviticus 23:3

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.” Psalm 95:6

“But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20

“Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.” Isaiah 56:2

“The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people—a sign that they are His obedient subjects, that they keep holy His law. The observance of the Sabbath is the means ordained by God of preserving a knowledge of Himself and of distinguishing between His loyal subjects and the transgressors of His law.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 198

The observance of the Sabbath is the means ordained by God of preserving a knowledge of Himself and of distinguishing between His loyal subjects and the transgressors of His law.

“All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.” Ibid., vol. 6, 353–354

The seal of God will not be placed on any Seventh-day Adventist who has not perfected his character through true Sabbathkeeping.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven.” Ibid., vol. 5, 216

“However high any minister may have stood in the favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go into darkness and satanic delusions and will lead others in the same path.

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

As we read the eighth chapter of the book of Ezekiel, we see the abominations that were done in the church. These conditions preface the sealing chapter of Ezekiel 9. As we read to the thirteenth chapter of the same book, we see the sad and tragic story of the church. Were these chapters also written for our admonition? Let us remember that we are told that the majority of Seventh-day Adventists will reject the message to the Laodiceans and became the enemies of God’s faithful, loyal Sabbathkeepers. See Testimonies, vol. 3, 252–253; vol. 5, 463; Selected Messages, book 1, 122; The Great Controversy, 608

“The Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 351

May God help us now to keep the Sabbath holy so that we can keep it in heaven!
Character of the Last Conflict

His manner to lessen His influence over those with whom He came in contact. The world’s Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature; yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself. He speaks to all, saying, “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.” Matthew 11:28–29

Christ is man’s example. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:4, 9, 14. Christ, our Redeemer, comprehended all the necessities of man. He formulated the mighty plans by which fallen man is to be uplifted from the degradation of sin. In every circumstance, however trivial, He represented the Father. Though upholding the world by the word of His power, He would stoop to relieve a wounded bird. O that we all had an intelligent knowledge of Jesus Christ! Weary and worn as He often was, He pleased not Himself. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.” John 17:3; Hebrews 12:25. Who are those that refuse to hear the voice of Christ!—They are those who do not hear and practice His word. They are those whose hearts are crowded and overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life; who are eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage.

Ellen G. White
They are those who will not receive the message of warning for these last days.

The agencies of Satan are at work to keep the minds of men engrossed with the things of this life, in order that he may work counter to the mission and work of Christ. Of Satan, Christ declares he “abode not in the truth.” Once Satan was in copartnership with God, Jesus Christ, and the holy angels. He was highly exalted in heaven, and was radiant in light and glory that came to him from the Father and the Son; but he became disloyal, and lost his high and holy position as covering cherub. He became the antagonist of God, an apostate, and was excluded from heaven. He established his empire and planted the standard of rebellion against the law of Jehovah. He invited all the powers of evil to rally about his standard, in order to form a desperate companionship of evil to league against the God of heaven. He worked perseveringly and determinedly to perpetuate his rebellion, and to cause men to turn from Bible truth, and to stand under his banner. As soon as the Lord through Jesus Christ created our world, and placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Satan announced his purpose to conform to his own nature the father and mother of all humanity, and to unite them with his own ranks of rebellion. He was determined to efface the image of God from the human posterity, and to trace his own image upon the soul in place of the divine image. He adopted methods of deception by which to accomplish his purpose. He is called the father of lies, an accuser of God and of those who maintain their allegiance to God, a murderer from the beginning. He put forth every power at his command to win man to co-operate with him in apostasy, and succeeded in bringing rebellion into our world.

All the vast, complicated machinery of evil agencies is put into action in these last days. Through generation after generation, from age to age, Satan has gathered human agencies through whom to work out his diabolical purposes, and to bring about the enforcement of his plans and devices in the earth. The great putrid fountain of evil has been continually flowing through human society. Though unable to expel God from His throne, Satan has charged God with satanic attributes, and has claimed the attributes of God as his own. He is a deceiver, and through his serpentine sharpness, through his crooked practices, he has drawn to himself the homage which man should have given to God, and has planted his satanic throne between the human worshiper and the divine Father.

But in man’s behalf, Christ met the specious temptations of Satan, and left man an example as to how to overcome Satan in the conflict. He exhorts His followers, saying, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. Satan has made masterly efforts to perpetuate sin. He arrayed all his evil agencies to war against Jesus Christ in an active, desperate conflict, in order that he might bruise the heart of infinite Love. He seduced the people to bow to idols, and thus gain supremacy over earthly kingdoms. He considered that to be the god of this world was the next best thing to gaining possession of the throne of God in heaven. In a large measure he has been successful in his plans. When Jesus was on earth, Satan led the people to reject the Son of God, and to choose Barabbas, who in character represented Satan, the god of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ came to dispute the usurpation of Satan in the kingdoms of the world. The conflict is

Christ will be represented in the person of those who accept the truth, and who identify their interest with that of their Lord
The people of God are now to stand as representatives of the attributes of the Father and the Son

The very worst passions of the unregenerate heart, and stirred up the worst elements of human nature by the most unjust accusations and representations. What a scene was this for God to look upon, for seraphim and cherubim to behold! The only begotten Son of God, the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, was mocked, insulted, taunted, rejected, and crucified by those whom He came to save, who had given themselves to the control of Satan.

Christ said, “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” “They shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.... Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Luke 23:31; Matthew 10:17–18, 21–22; 24:14. The agencies of Satan are having their last chance to develop before the world, before angels and men, the true principles of their attributes. The people of God are now to stand as representatives of the attributes of the Father and the Son. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Matthew 24:42–47


Our Health Work

continued from 12

they may bring their children up with simple, healthful habits. I see the necessity of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis.” Country Living, 21

“Perilous times are before us. The whole world will be involved in perplexity and distress, disease of every kind will be upon the human family, and such ignorance as now prevails concerning the laws of health would result in great suffering and the loss of many lives that might be saved.” Counsels on Health, 504

“As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake, they should, while they have opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. And those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth.” Ibid., 506

Modern technology is a stopgap measure born out of God’s compassion, and prolonged and expanded because of the rebellious wandering of God’s people in the wilderness. God is waiting for a generation who will accept and promulgate His ways for permanent solutions to man’s physical and spiritual needs. Throughout eternity physical health will be maintained and disease prevented by each saint’s faithful adherence to God’s simple eight true remedies. God’s people will each plant their vineyards and individually partake of the fruits thereof. Throughout eternity the redeemed of God will be active gardeners and health reformers. Those who are introduced to, and accept and follow, God’s ways of agriculture and health care, can begin to live that eternal life now. The seemingly humble, insignificant task God has assigned us has critical, far-reaching implications.

“A moment of repose has been graciously given us of God. Every power lent us of Heaven is to be used in doing the work assigned us by the Lord for those who are perishing in ignorance. The warning message is to be sounded in all parts of the world.... A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth for this time.” Maranatha, 266

As was Christ, we must each be about our Father’s business. If someone, why not we? If some day, why not now?
Preaching End-Time Events

IT HAS BEEN said that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was conceived in crisis, and that we have been in crisis ever since. For not only did the Great Disappointment fail to terminate Adventist preaching on the coming of Christ, we have also continued—despite repeated delays and the lengthening of time—to say He is coming soon.

Like so much of distinctive Adventism in the past three decades, the preaching of last-day events has seriously declined in much of our church’s Anglo-Saxon community. Two major factors are the likely problem here: (1) the general Laodicean climate in which worldly preoccupations cause such preaching to be viewed as a bothersome disruption of pleasant lifestyle patterns; and (2) friendlier relations with the popular Christian world, making less palatable the proclamation of the traditional mark-of-the-beast message. Both factors involve tragedy and the betrayal of our historic mission. As the church experiences greater comfort with the world, both religious and secular, the resulting loss of purpose saps our vitality, drains our resources, and sunders the confidence of laity in leadership.

Moreover, the general absence of solid preaching on the signs of Jesus’ coming has given birth to some bizarre, distorted substitutes. The neglect of vital doctrines usually results in their returning with a vengeance. Examples would include recent attempts to reapply some of Daniel’s prophecies, and the consequent projection of certain prophetic time periods into the future. The protest of so many against these aberrations is very much in harmony with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy consensus.

The older ones among us can doubtless recall other misjudgments in prophetic understanding—such claims, for instance, that World War I was Armageddon or that John F. Kennedy was antichrist. The latter notion was destined to become especially embarrassing, since Kennedy proved to be perhaps the strictest protector of church-state separation ever to hold the White House in the twentieth century.

Satan is a clever strategist. He knows that extremism provides an easy target for those wishing to discredit all but the most mundane preaching on last-day events. This fact is especially true as signs of the end increase to the crescendo we find in our world today. One pleasing theory I have encountered lately in some of our circles is that the specific symbols of Daniel and Revelation are really not important, that all God is really trying to say is that many things will happen before Jesus returns and most of them will be bad, with Christ prevailing at the end. I find it hard to believe that God would consume many chapters with intricate and potentially confusing symbolism to say what could far more easily be said in a few verses. The detail of these prophecies makes it clear that God intends specific meanings to be sought and found.

A notion even more strange is the contention that this subject really ought to be left alone, and that believers should rather focus on a personal relationship with Christ. But if one is truly in love with the Lord Jesus, would not evidence of His soon return be cause for great rejoicing and considerable attention? Suppose I were to have a girl friend who lived far away, and after months of saving her money and working overtime she finally was able to buy a plane ticket and come visit me. My love relationship with her would make her coming the most exciting thing to talk and think about. The only circumstance under

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which I might not be happy is if my heart had been given to another. Could misplaced affection be the real problem behind the current Adventist reluctance to preach the soon return of our Lord?

The Readiness of the World

But careful students of prophecy in the Adventist Church realize that there are two poles of tension in a properly balanced emphasis on last-day events. One is the readiness of the world, the other is the readiness of the church. When either of these is forgotten, confusion and possible embarrassment are the result.

Clearly, as we read the Gospels, Christ expects His people to watch for evidence of His approaching return. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates." Matthew 24:32–33.1 Moreover, He intended these signs to be cause for rejoicing. "Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Luke 21:28

Ellen White, as we would expect, agrees with our Lord. "As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study."12 "Prophecy is fast fulfilling. More, much more, should be said about these tremendously important subjects."13 "Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly."14

Many discredit the hope of a soon Second Coming with the claim that Christians have expected Christ's immediate return for two thousand years, that to figuratively bring people "to the edge of the cliff" so many times tends after a while to dull their responsiveness to similar appeals. This is a half-truth which, typically, conveys the effect of an untruth. Undoubtedly there have been Christians in every age who have believed and taught the Saviour's imminent return. However, a significant number of prominent Christian thinkers have through the centuries found a biblical, prophetic basis for concluding that Jesus would not come in the immediate future. Many of these interpreters held to a prophetic timetable nearly identical to that preached in historic Adventism. In The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, Leroy Froom gives evidence that the apostolic fathers, Christian leaders living close to the time of the original apostles, believed they were living during the time of the fourth beast in Daniel 7 (the period of pagan Rome), that erelong Rome would be partitioned into ten kingdoms out of which would arise the little-horn power, following which would be the second coming of Christ.5 Irenaeus, a later church Father, even equates Daniel's little horn with the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2 and the beast of Revelation 13.6 Tertullian, another early church leader, clearly held that pagan Rome's dominance of world affairs was delaying the march of final prophetic events.7 Secular historian Stephen Williams notes another church Father, Hippolytus, as holding similar views. In later centuries Martin Luther placed the final judgment a full three hundred years from his day.9 One is amazed how closely he came to hitting the mark!

But let us assume, for the sake of argument, that one could legitimately find reasons for the hope of a soon Second Coming in every age of the Christian era (as, indeed, some have). This hope still would not annul the fact that the world's crises in our modern age have accelerated far, far beyond anything conceived of in earlier times. Even when Adventist evangelists first preached the end of the world, no one had heard of nuclear weapons, the disintegrating

When Adventist evangelists first preached the end of the world, no one had heard of nuclear weapons, the disintegrating ozone, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ozone, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The capacity for instant communication through the televised media, together with the advent of computers and fax machines, has clearly heightened the rapid acquisition of knowledge, and thus the dissemination of evil. Combine with these the advanced modern forms of terrorism, overpopulations, and the problem of world hunger, and one understand how a growing number of nonreligious experts doubt that normal life on this planet can last another fifty years. Previous generations may have had their signs of the times, but who can objectively deny that today's signs are infinitely more compelling?

Inevitably, one hears nowadays in certain Adventist circles that such talk constitutes scare tactics—frightening the church into harmony with God. Certainly the question of style—the care and manner in which such information is publicized—is extremely crucial in this regard. However, a serious problem often arises here. Just as there are those who think any form of physical parental discipline constitutes child abuse, there are those who think any preaching which connects prophecy with current world affairs is an exercise in sensationalism. One friend of mine who was recently student-body president at a major Adventist college spoke of how his college president resisted a speaking invitation to a Union religious liberty director because the latter was supposedly guilty of "sensational preaching." How anyone could be fair in so accusing this gentleman, with whom the present writer is well acquainted, is hard to understand. All this religious liberty secretary has done is to show how the American Religious Right, through its philosophical presuppositions and civic moral crusades, is paving the way for what will one day become the image to the beast. It is indeed a denominational tragedy when attention to such an ob-
The Readiness of the Church

But not only is the readiness of the world important in the timing of Jesus’ return; the readiness of God’s people is of far greater significance. The first three verses of Revelation 7 give the real reason for the delay of the final events: “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.’”

Elsewhere in Scripture this sealing imagery is linked with the Holy Spirit’s presence in the heart as a guarantee, or earnest, of His work in us. See 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. We also read that the Spirit’s inward presence enables us to be “filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:19. No wonder Ellen White declares, “Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully.”

What Revelation is telling us is that the failure of God’s last-day people to allow the full accomplishment of the Spirit’s sanctifying work is ultimately responsible for the delay of Christ’s coming.

The harvest principle behind the delayed Advent is more fully explained by Jesus in Mark 4: “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” Verses 26–29

John was shown this principle in action in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation: “Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, ‘Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.’” So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.” Verses 14–16

Elsewhere in the New Testament total sanctification is upheld as a prerequisite for the coming of Jesus. “Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.” 2 Peter 3:11–12, 14. “And every one who thus hopes in him [Jesus’ return] purifies himself as he is timing, have nevertheless neglected its emphasis. This principle would have spared them a large degree of embarrassment. It is never wise to preach the imminence of catastrophic events without at the same time declaring that God is the absolute Lord of history, that He will not—as Revelation says—permit the world’s final dissolution until His people are ready. Being aware of the pace of world events can help us get ready, as we discover how the stage of history is being set and that we are the only missing factor in the eschatological equation. (Of course, the capacity of such events to arouse a sincere response diminishes with their increased intensity, which is the reason a close of probation is ultimately necessary. It is for the same reason that God could not leave the ark door open until just after the rain started.) But at the bottom line, God is not waiting on the pope, the popular churches, the world economy, or the United States government. God is waiting on Seventh-day Adventists.

Two poles of tension. Two issues of readiness. Both are essential to the proclamation of the straight testimony, to the world as well as to the church. If either is lost sight of, the true force of Adventist eschatology is lost and the door is opened for the cause of God to suffer needless confusion, ridicule, and shame.

Surely it is clear, both biblically and logically, that the gospel must be lived for its preaching to be most effective.

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1 Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are from the Revised Standard Version.
2 Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, 133
3 White, Fundamentals of Christian Education, 335
4 Ibid., 336
6 Ibid., 246–247
7 Ibid., 257–258
8 Stephen Williams, Diocletian and the Roman Recovery, (New York: Methuen, Inc., 1985), 165
9 White, The Great Controversy, 303, 356
10White, Early Writings, 71
11White, Christ’s Object Lessons, 69
Lessons From the Sanctuary

Part Eight

The first lie that Satan told Eve, that she had life unborrowed and underived (would never die), was but the reflection of the mind of Satan—the essence of self-exaltation. With his Fall, man received this mind which became a part of his nature. This nature was quickly reflected in man’s attempt to cover his nakedness with a covering of his own devising.

“The garment of innocence, a covering from God, which surrounded them, departed; and they supplied the place of this heavenly garment by sewing together fig leaves for aprons. “This is the covering that the transgressors of the law of God have used since the days of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover their nakedness, caused by transgression.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1084

The same attitude was evident in the offering of Cain, who presented the work of his own hands to gain the favor and acceptance of God. His offering showed no faith, reflected no need and required no humility, and was typical of the uncovered mind. As a result it was totally unacceptable.

“In every offering to God we are to acknowledge the one great Gift; that alone can make our service acceptable to Him. When Abel offered the firstling of the flock, he acknowledged God, not only as the Giver of his temporal blessings, but also as the Giver of the Saviour. Abel’s gift was the very choicest he could bring; for it was for the Lord’s specified claim. But Cain brought only of the fruit of the ground, and his offering was not accepted by the Lord. It did not express faith in Christ. All our offerings must be sprinkled with the blood of the atonement.” Ibid., 1086

If the creature is in fact independent of God, the obvious deduction is that he doesn’t have to do as God says. This second lie of Satan became a part of man’s perverted nature at the Fall. Within man was a spirit working in opposition to the principles of the government of God. While Christ had intervened and broken the absolute power of Satan over man’s mind, freeing his will and giving him freedom of choice, his nature still reflected the mind of Satan. Obedience no longer seemed necessary or desirable.

That man might better appreciate the consequence of even a small deviation from the will of God and might have an awareness of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, God gave him a system of sacrifices. In the offering of these sacrifices, he would demonstrate his faith in the great sacrifice to be made, in love for him purchasing for him a second probation.

“Sin is the transgression of the law, and it is not the magnitude of the action in iniquity that stamps it as sin... Sin is sin, and it is the delusion of Satan to look upon it in any other light than that it is grievous.” Review and Herald, vol. 3, 70

Satan was able to so pervert the meaning that the sacrifice became an end in and of itself—a method of gaining favor or of appeasement. The more valuable the sacrifice, the greater the favor obtained. It was only another step to offering human sacrifices.

“Error cannot stand alone, and would soon become extinct if it did not fasten itself like a parasite upon the tree of truth. Error draws its life from the truth of God.” Review and Herald, vol. 3, 301

Satan was not willing that man should understand the love of God lest he be drawn to Him and receive the righteousness Christ freely offered.

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Satan knew better than man that, separated from God, man had no ability to do any righteous works. Even the motives of his fallen nature are so corrupted and his efforts so permeated with self, that, like the offering of Cain, they are totally unacceptable.

"The Lord urges His supremacy. But Satan well knows that the worship of the living God elevates, ennobles, and exalts a nation. He knows that idol worship does not elevate, but that it degrades man's ideas, by associating with worship that which is base and corrupt. He is at work constantly to draw the mind away from the only true and living God." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1145

"But let no one think that it is possible for human beings in their own power to reach the ideal that God presents before them. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them... There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before man can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness." Signs of the Times, vol. 4, 242

Satan therefore sought with consummate skill to remove from men's minds anything that reminded him of his Maker, seeking instead to cast his own shadow between men and God. His character he attributed to God until men served God through fear. Even the Jewish mind was for the most part motivated by fear.

"Satan had represented him [God] to man as arbitrary, stern, and unforgiving. All the misery and suffering he had brought upon man, he charged to God. He declared that man could not keep the law, and that God was arbitrary and cruel in demanding of him something that he could not do." The Youth's Instructor, 446

When God brought Israel to Sinai He gave them His law. It would not be correct to conclude that they did not previously have the law, for we know that their deliverance from Egypt was in pursuance of the covenant made with Abraham 400 years earlier. God had made his covenant with Abraham because Abraham kept His laws and His statutes. It was six weeks after leaving Egypt and before the arrival at Sinai, that in giving them the manna, God designed to test them as to whether or not they would keep His law. Later, referring to their failure to do so, He inquired as to how long they would refuse to obey Him.

What then was the object of giving the law from Sinai? It was twofold. Amid the thunders and darkness God spoke to impress upon the people His righteousness as opposed to their sinfulness. He gave the law that recognition of the offense might abound, not that there might be more sin in order to call forth more marked manifestation of God's grace. He desired sin that already existed to stand out in its true nature and extent and that the people might realize their own inability to keep it. Second, that the grace of God might be appreciated for what it is.

"The proclamation of the law of ten commandments was a wonderful exhibition of the glory and majesty of God. How did this manifestation of power affect the people? They were afraid. As they saw 'the thunberings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking,' they 'removed, and stood afar off.'... In a great measure they had lost a knowledge of God and of the only way to approach Him. They had lost nearly all sense of what constitutes sin and of what constitutes righteousness." Review and Herald, vol. 4, 401

The great sin of the children of Israel was unbelief—trust in self rather than in God. They needed to destroy self-confidence that faith might enter. The law was given in a way calculated to do this and to emphasize the fact that only by faith, and not by works, does righteousness come. How could it ever be presumed that God, in the giving of the law, designed men to obtain righteousness by works of the law when they could not even touch the mountain from which it was spoken, without perishing?

"Idolaters are condemned by the Word of God. Their folly consists in trusting in self for salvation, in bowing down to the works of their own hands." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1105

Sinai is rightly regarded as a synonym for the law; but it is no more so than is Christ Himself. Jesus said, "I delight to do thy will, O My God; yea, thy law is within my heart." We know therefore that the law was Christ's life, for out of the heart are the issues of life.

Christ, the giver of the law, was the Rock smitten in Horeb, which is Sinai. That stream was life to those who drank, and none of those who received it in thoughtful gratitude could fail to know that it came directly from the Lord. They could be assured of His great love for them, and of the fact that He was their life, and hence their righteousness. Although they could not approach the mountain without dying—an evidence that the law is death to men out of Christ—they could drink of the stream that flowed from it, and thus in the life of Christ drink in the righteousness of the law.

While the mountain spoke death, without the water that flowed from it the people would have perished. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. Both came at the same time. Moses was the minister of the law as an instrument of death, because of the hardness of the people's hearts; but the law of grace and truth through Christ was at the same time abounding. This truth can be seen in the events that took place a few weeks later.

In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, the people chose to enter into a covenant with the Lord based on mutual promises. Life and restoration have always been available to the fallen race, but contingent upon obedience, the only possible way. For God to open heaven to man as he is would be to immortalize sin. It becomes obvious that a change in man must take place.

"Those who refuse to obey His law during probationary time could not with
safety be received into His kingdom; for they would labor as earnestly and zealously against the law of His government as did the first apostate. There would be a second rebellion in heaven.” *Signs of the Times*, vol. 3, 465

It was but a few weeks later that Israel returned to Egyptian idolatry and made themselves a golden calf to worship. At this point they had violated their agreement, thus voiding the covenant. Death was the alternative, and this penalty God purposed to enforce.

“God’s covenant with His people had been disannulled, and He declared to Moses, ‘Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.’… Their sins had already forfeited the favor of God, and justice called for their destruction. The Lord therefore proposed to destroy them, and make of Moses a mighty nation.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 318

Moses then pled with God in behalf of the people. Nowhere does Moses’ prayer refer to the covenant of God with the people or of the people’s promises, but only to God’s promises. Moses realized what the people failed to realize—the utter worthlessness of any covenant that depended on their promises. Moses came down from the mountain and dealt with the people who had broken the

“There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1061

Many years later, through the prophet Jeremiah, God spoke of a future time when a new covenant would be made. Paul also refers to this promise in Hebrews. There would be no difference in the provisions, but rather in the implementation of them. Whereas the Old Covenant depended on the people to fulfill their promises, the New would be superior in that it would rely on the promises of Christ alone, and in this respect it would be superior to the Old.

“Under the New Covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the Old—perfect obedience.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 931

The weakness of the Old Covenant was the weakness of the people. Flesh cannot be depend upon to fulfill the covenant. Abraham found this truth out the hard way in trying to produce the promised heir. That a son was obtained cannot be questioned, but it was the son of a bondwoman. The Lord had already told him that his son was to be born free when he had asked if Eliezer would be his heir.

“Only through faith in Christ is it possible for man to live the law. Man is not able to save himself, but the Son of God fights his battles for him, and places him on vantage ground by giving him His divine attributes. And as man accepts the righteousness of Christ, he is a partaker of the divine nature. He may keep the commandments of God, and live.” *Review and Herald*, vol. 3, 541

After the birth of Ishmael, the Lord again appeared to Abraham and renewed the promise of an heir by Sarah and then as a token of the worthlessness of the flesh and of the righteousness which is of faith, He gave him the rite of circumcision.

The problem of self-reliance and independence is not just a Jewish problem, but a problem of the unregenerate heart. The early Christian church showed itself prone to the Old Covenant in spite of its previous repeated failure in fulfilling the people’s great need, namely righteousness.

Before the Fall, man was covered by a robe of light, indicative of the righteousness which He had by faith. When He chose to act independently and to believe the serpent, He no longer had faith, and when faith was lost, He sinned, thus forfeiting the righteousness and the covering of light.

Realizing his need, he set about to devise his own covering and in the fig leaves we see man’s best attempts to clothe himself with works of his own. Just as the dead leaves were worthless to cover him, so also are his dead works.

The need was supplied, but in an entirely different way. Christ came to the fallen pair and replaced the dead leaves with the covering of skins. The lesson was significant. There was nothing that the guilty race could do to get back the lost righteousness. A covering was to be obtained, but only through the sacrifice of an innocent victim.

Not only did fallen man need forgiveness, but in order to again take his place as a part of the heavenly family, he also required a change of nature. For God in some supernatural way to change him, bringing him back to his prefallen condition, would not be a solution (if this were the solution, it would have been easier to begin it with Adam), for it had already been demonstrated that human perfection had failed. Not only must man of his own free choice choose to be brought back into harmony with God and His purposes, but he must also learn the lesson of total dependence on a power out of and beyond himself to keep him there. Only then would he be safe to return to his place in the heavenly family.

“Out of harmony with the nature of God, unyielding to the claims of His law, naught but destruction was before the human race. Since the divine law is as changeless as the character of God, there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his trans-

Moses realized what the people failed to realize—the utter worthlessness of any covenant that depended on their promises.
The carnal mind may desire life, it may strive for obedience at times, but it is still the flesh over which Satan gained the victory.
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