The True, or the False

God's Holy Sabbath

Crisis!

The Church That Knowest Not

That Other Angel

What Might Have Been

Cowards and Heroes, see page 4
EDITORIAL

It is becoming more evident every year that there is a very serious problem in the attempt of our church to complete the great gospel commission in the setting of the three angels' messages and the cleansing of the sanctuary message. We are very grateful to God for pastors and workers around the world who still believe in the gift of prophecy and Ellen White, and are preaching victory over sin in the setting of the three angels' messages and the cleansing of the sanctuary, who are teaching our people how to prepare for the time of trouble and eternity. Many are confirming with us by phone and by letter their support for Our Firm Foundation magazine and what it stands for.

But tragically, many of our people and workers do not understand these important messages that have made our church distinct from the churches of Babylon and from the world. And there is now an attempt to placate our Protestant friends and even the Catholics by assuring them that we are truly "Evangelicals." Many of our pastors participating in local ministerial associations find it very difficult to give the important warning in Revelation 14:9–12. The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven cannot be finished until God has a people on earth who believe that they can stop sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit and cooperate with Him in that cleansing. When God has people around the world who avail themselves of the Holy Spirit's power, and their sins no longer pollute the sanctuary above, there will be a great demonstration around the world of what God can do in fallen human beings. See Evangelism, 196. They will be totally submissive to God and His righteous law. See The Faith I Live By, 114. God will then have a pure church, and the loud cry will be given by the outpouring of the long-awaited latter rain.

At the present time God is shaking the church, its laity, pastors, and leaders, and only those who are totally obedient to present truth and God's plans will survive the shaking. The shaking begins by false theories being taught in our schools, publications and from the pulpits of our churches. See Testimonies to Ministers, 112, 409–410. In the second phase, God answers by raising up men and women to give the straight testimony to the church. See Testimonies, vol. 1, 181–187; Early Writings, 270.

The third phase of the shaking—persecution in the church from within and without—begins at the same time as the second phase. "There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the Word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled." The Great Controversy, 48.

Throughout the ages of the church's history, when apostasy had taken charge of the church and its leaders and His people, God responded with the straight testimony given by men who were not afraid to be counted as God's messengers. There was Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, and then Christ Himself to name a few. They were persecuted, imprisoned, and sometimes slain by the church because of their strong testimony.

On the Mount of Olives, Christ wept over His church because of their apostasy. "Wherewithal, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:34–38.

We are told by the Lord's messenger, Ellen White, that we have been repeating the history of the ancient church. "I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leaving the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord's displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace, and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe." Testimonies, vol. 5, 75–76.

"All I can say to you is: Take up the light which God has given you and follow it at any cost to yourselves. This is your only safety. You have a work to do to come into harmony, and may the Lord help you to do it even if self is crucified. Gather up the rays of light that have been Continued on 27
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 a firm foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—EDITORS

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Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (2200-3600 words) manuscripts for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 3½- or 5¼-inch floppy disk in IBM ASCII format or neatly typed, using double-spacing. If you desire notice of a decision in regard to your article, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Address all correspondence to Editors, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328
Cowards and Heroes

The twelve spies had returned from their espionage mission into their enemy’s territory. Their Commander in Chief—the Lord of Hosts—had given them plain evidence of His power, and had also ensured an overwhelming victory over their foes. But as Israel listened to the report of these secret agents, they became discouraged and perplexed before the challenge and the apparent difficulties that they had to face.

“Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. The people did not wait to reflect; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land; they did not call to mind how wonderfully God had delivered them from their oppressors, cutting a path through the sea and destroying the pursuing host of Pharaoh. They left God out of the question, and acted as though they must depend solely on the power of arms. In their unbelief they limited the power of God.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 388

What a tragedy! And the price that they had to pay for their unbelief! Do we now limit the power of God to do something for us individually and corporately as well?

This experience was one of the many spiritual crises that God’s people encountered. Fortunately, the Lord has mercifully had light bearers who, in spite of thick spiritual darkness, have reflected the glory (character) of their Maker by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Caleb was one of these light bearers. When the church of his day faced a crisis, he “comprehended the situation, and, bold to stand in defense of the word of God, he did all in his power to counteract the evil influence of his unfaithful associates.” Ibid.

If it had not been for the intervention of the Lord of hosts, they (Joshua and Caleb) would have been stoned. These brave men valued the honor and glory of God as supreme and did not hesitate to expose themselves to the danger of losing their lives.

We do not find such examples in Holy Writ only. We could also mention Martin Luther, John Huss, the Waldenses, and others. All of them rose above unbelief, discouragement, and cowardice and left for us a tremendous legacy of faith and obedience.

We can also find this type of men within Adventism. M. L. Andreasen is only one of them who, in the midst of the religious crisis of his day (during the 1950s), kept himself faithful and firm to the historical Seventh-day Adventist teachings. For those who may not be acquainted with what took place, at this time, our leadership, trying to obtain the acceptance of the Evangelical churches, held meetings with two prominent Evangelical leaders—Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse. The price paid for this acceptance was very high, for we compromised some of our fundamental teachings held for nearly one hundred years. And as a partial consequence of the new theological position taken, a door was opened through which a train of evils has come into the church.

In each of the cases described above, we see there have been men who, filled with a spirit of holy boldness and bravery, overcame the mediocrity and the cowardice of many who had the opportunity to do something in favor of truth, but because of fear of censure, shame, and ridicule preferred to remain silent. “Soldiers in the army of Jesus Christ have turned cowards before ridicule, and Satan has worked through
cold, unconsecrated professors of his name, to intimidate those with the weapon of jest, who never would have been turned from their loyalty to God if the rack, the stake, the dungeon, and death alone had threatened them." The Home Missionary, August 1, 1894. All emphasis supplied

"Never let him who is named as a child of God, meet another who differs with him in his religious faith with a spirit of ridicule. This was the spirit the persecutors of Protestants had when dealing with those whom they termed 'heretics.' They could not show where dissenters were in error from the law and the testimony,' and therefore they resorted to ridicule, and some of the faithful found it more difficult to bear a sneer, than to face their enemies in open conflict." Ibid.

"Never for one moment should the impression be given to anyone that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he may not be so highly esteemed if his principles are known. Christ requires from all His followers open, manly confession of faith. Each must take his position and be what God designed he should be, a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. . . . Never, from cowardice or worldly policy, let the truth of God be placed in the background." In Heavenly Places, 363

Because "Nothing is gained by cowardice or by fearing to let it be known that we are God's commandment-keeping people. Hiding our light, as if ashamed of our faith, will result only in disaster." Testimonies, vol. 5, 527. "One man's cowardice or treachery may bring disaster upon the entire army." Gospel Workers, 85. It is then understandable why with ancient Israel the military officers were required by law to ask the people: "What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted?" And if there was any, they "let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." Deuteronomy 20:8

Yes, cowardice or fear can play an important role in leading us to a spiritual disaster, both individually and as a church. By the cowardice of the church in Jerusalem, Paul's ministry (in freedom) was shortened. The Acts of the Apostles, 404. Therefore, to understand how these feelings or attitudes originate in the human heart and what we can do to have victory over them, deserves our time and undivided attention.

Could it be that the precarious and difficult condition (near-disaster or perhaps in it) of our homes, and also of our educational, medical, evangelistic, and administrative systems, may be related to the "hiding of our light, as if ashamed of our faith?" I invite the reader to ponder honestly this question and to prayerfully ask the Lord which line of action must be taken.

According to the servant of the Lord, "A half service, loving the world, loving self, loving frivolous amusements, makes a timid, cowardly servant; he follows Christ a great way off." The Adventist Home, 431

Peer pressure, the fear of ridicule or of being rejected by the majority can also be a factor in leading us to waver in our principles and to take a cowardly escape. But "When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." See Proverbs 1:10. Do they sneeringly call you a coward, tell them that if it is cowardly to fear to do wrong, then you are a coward. The bravery that is evinced in sacrificing principle, for fear of ridicule, is a low, satanic spirit that you should ever hold in contempt." Signs of the Times, vol. 1, 371. "Even our friends will oppose us, and we shall have to meet scornful sneers, because we ven-

"I warn you to stand firm, and never do a wrong action rather than be called a coward. Allow no taunts, no threats, no sneering remarks, to induce you to violate your conscience in the least particular, and thus open a door whereby Satan can come in and control the mind." Fundamentals of Christian Education, 93

It is easy, in the situation of religious crisis in which we presently live, to adopt a position of silence, timidity and cowardice, while apostasy and error deepen and strengthen their roots within our ranks, but we should not forget that such must not be the line of action of Christ's followers. See Review and Herald, vol. 4, 298. "The Lord will not accept cowards in His army. . . . Christ's followers must stand ready to serve Him at all times and in every way that may be required. . . . Many have tried neutrality in a crisis, but they have failed in their purpose. No one can maintain a neutral ground. . . . Those who begin their Christian life by being half and half, whatever may be their intentions, will at last be found enlisted on the enemy's side. Doubledisposed men and women are Satan's best allies. Whatever favorable opinion they may have of themselves, they are dissemblers. All who are loyal to God and the truth must stand firmly, for the right because it is right." This Day With God, 240

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1:8

Never for one moment should the impression be given to anyone that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he may not be so highly esteemed if his principles are known.
Probably some may believe that by not participating in those actions that they do not approve, they will not be apostates, and consequently are free of any accountability and danger; but this thinking is false. “When existing evils are not met and checked, because men have too little courage to reprieve wrong, or because they have too little interest or are too indolent to tax their own powers in putting forth earnest efforts to purify the family or the church of God, they are accountable for the evil which may result in consequence of neglect to do their duty.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 516

Furthermore, “If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of a emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.” Ibid., vol. 3, 281. See also Prophets and Kings, 148

I am ashamed to write this, but “There are those who will not make a charge upon the enemy when required of God to do so. They will do nothing until others have fought the battle and gained the victory for them, and then they are ready to share the spoils. How much can will be ready, if there is a semblance of chance, to find fault with them and injure them if they can.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 316

The servant of the Lord could well address again the question asked in the past: “Where are the soldiers of the cross of Christ? Let the God-fearing, the honest, the single-hearted, who look steadfastly to the glory of God, prepare themselves for the battle against evil. There are too many faint, cowardly hearts in this hour of spiritual conflict. Oh, that out of weakness they may be made strong, and wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens!” Christian Service, 97

Yes, there is hope. We can transform our cowardice into strength and heroism. “Every man can be a man, a whole man. By patient, thoughtful effort, put forth with zeal and energy, all may overcome cowardice.” Manuscript Release, vol. 11, 79. See also Manuscript Release, vol. 18, 291. Such were the experience and example of the apostle Peter. When Peter’s trial took place in the very room and before some of those very men where weeks before he denied his Lord, Peter “had an opportunity of redeeming his cowardice. . . . Since his of the cross. . . . He knew that still other retractions must be made before he could be at peace with Rome. The path upon which he was entering could end only in complete apostasy. His resolution was taken: To escape a brief period of suffering he would not deny his Lord . . . He renounced his former recantation and, as a dying man, solemnly required an opportunity to make his defense.” The Great Controversy, 111-112

Thus, he became a hero of the faith. Jerome’s repentance and bravery are clearly seen as we recall his words: “Of all the sins that I have committed since my youth, none weigh so heavily on my mind, and cause me such poignant remorse, as that which I committed in this fatal place, when I approved of the iniquitous sentence rendered against Wycliffe, and against the holy martyr, John Huss, my master and my friend. Yes! I confess it from my heart, and declare with horror that I disgracefully quailed when, through a dread of death, I condemned their doctrines. I therefore supplicate. . . . Almighty God to deign to pardon me my sins, and this one in particular, the most heinous of all.” Ibid., 113

Yes, dear reader, it is imperative that we reach the victory that is within our grasp. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7. “God forbid that I should be a coward. When the children of Israel went out to fight, God told them to sing, and as soon as they began to sing, their enemies fled, for they saw the whole army of heaven before them. They were afraid of their destruction and fled. God wants us to vanquish the enemy. Let us pray as we never prayed before. We do not pray half enough. We ought to pray and have regular praise meetings together.” Sermons and Talks, vol. 1, 311

On the other hand, “the fearful [Greek Deilo= Cowards], and unbelieving, . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8. “The fearful and unbelieving, who are punished with the second death, are of that class who are ashamed of Christ in this world. They are afraid to do right and follow Christ, lest they should meet with pecuniary loss. They neglect their duty, to avoid reproach and trials, and to escape dangers. Those who dare not do right because they will thus expose themselves to trials, persecution, loss,
and suffering are cowards, and, with idolaters, liars, and all sinners, they are ripening for the second death." Testimonies, vol. 2, 630

"Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle... To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battle of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason." Ibid., vol. 5, 136

"There are today moral heroes, men and women who are living noble lives of self-denial. They have no ambition for worldly fame. Their will is subordinate to the will of God. The love of God inspires their ministry. To do good and to save souls is their highest aim." Manu- script Releases, vol. 2, 302

"In our day, as in ancient times, there is disagreeable work to be done in reproving sin. In this work, God uses men as his instruments—men of determined purpose, whom no threat or peril can intimidate, no hardship turn aside from the path of duty—men who will never forget their sacred commission as servants of the Most High. The Lord calls for men to act promptly, with the courage of heroes, and the firmness and faith of martyrs, to tear down the idolatrous images that have usurped His place in the minds of men, and meet the armed force of wrong on battle fields. But in all this there is no excuse for any to indulge in harshness or severity to gratify their own wrong feelings." Signs of the Times, vol. 1, 207

A Word of Caution

Satan seeks constantly to lead God’s people to take extreme positions and attitudes. Some take a timid and fearful stand in a religious crisis. Others indulge in harshness or severity to gratify their own wrong feeling. These extremes we must resolutely avoid.

"God calls upon you to yield pride and stubbornness, and to let His peace rule in your hearts. A meek and quiet spirit must be cherished. Carry Christ’s meekness with you in all your labors. An excited temper and cutting censure will not impress the people or gain their sympathy. If we have the truth, we can afford to be calm and unexcited. Our language should be modest and elevated. The spirit you have cherished within has left its impression upon the countenance. Christ, enthroned in the soul-temple, will efface that fretful, peevish, unhappy look; and as the cloud of witnesses look upon a man reflecting the image of Christ, they will realize that he is surrounded by a pleasant atmosphere. The world will see that amid storms of abuse he stands unmoved, like the lofty cedar. That man is one of God’s heroes. He has overcome himself." Testimonies, vol. 4, 348

"The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. He who can stand unmoved amid a storm of abuse is rush into danger unless God sends us there." Ibid.

A summary of this subject will clearly show us that "Men whose faith is weak and wavering are not the ones to carry forward the work at this important crisis. We need the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs." Testimonies, vol. 5, 187. And "We must now be learning the lessons of faith if we would stand in that time of trouble which is coming upon all the world to try them who dwell upon the face of the earth. We must have the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs." The Upward Look, 32

The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he subdues, not by the power of the feelings that subdue him

One of God’s heroes. To rule the spirit is to keep self under discipline; to resist evil; to regulate every word and deed by God’s great standard of righteousness. He who has learned to rule his spirit will rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances, to which we are daily exposed, and these will cease to cast a gloom over his spirit." Amazing Grace, 256

"Strength of character consists of two things—power of will and power of self-control. Many youth mistake strong, uncontrolled passion for strength of character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness and nobility of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he subdues, not by the power of the feelings that subdue him. The strongest man is he, who, while sensitive to abuse, will yet restrain passion and forgive his enemies. Such men are true heroes." The Faith I Live By, 316

Inspiration also warns us about calling cowards those who "are cautious in their plans that they may not unnecessarily provoke the rulers and powers of the earth." Review and Herald, vol. 2, 387. "While we trust in God, no one should be presumptuous; and that we may not take an unwise course, we should pray constantly. We should not

Some time ago I had the opportunity to visit one of our Union offices. A plaque had been placed at the entrance of the building, with the following engraved inscription: "The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." Education, 57. I praise the Lord, for there are workers in this field who live up to the loftiness of their noble and divine call. May Heaven grant us more of this kind of workers, not only within our denominational structure, but also within the self-supporting work.

May the words of our Commander in Chief, Christ Jesus, bring comfort and courage as we fight for His cause: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Ephesians 6:10

Dare to be a Daniel; Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm; Dare to make it known.
Looking for That Blessed Hope

FOR the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11–14

This scripture teaches a very different lesson from that which is presented in the words of many who profess to believe the gospel. We are exhorted to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and to look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Some have made an objection to my work, because I teach that it is our duty to be looking for Christ’s personal appearing in the clouds of heaven. They have said, “You would think that the day of the Lord was right upon us to hear Mrs. White speak in reference to the coming of Christ; and she has been preaching on that same subject for the last forty years, and the Lord has not yet come.” This very objection might have been brought against the words of Christ Himself. He said by the mouth of the beloved disciple, “Behold, I come quickly,” and John responds, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Revelation 22:7, 20. Jesus spoke these words as words of warning and encouragement to His people; and why should we not heed them? The Lord has said that it is the faithful who will be found watching and waiting for Him. It was the unfaithful servant who said, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” (Matthew 24:48) and began to smile his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.

The exact time of Christ’s second coming is not revealed. Jesus said, “No man knoweth the day nor the hour.” See Matthew 24:36. But He also gave signs of His coming, and said, “When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” Matthew 24:33. He bade them, as the signs of His coming should appear, “Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28. And in view of these things the apostle wrote: “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.” 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5. Since we know not the hour of Christ’s coming, we must live soberly and godly in this present world, “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. His people are to preserve their peculiar character as His representatives. There is work for every one of them to do. The rich should bring their means, the honored their influence, the learned their wisdom, the poor their virtue, if they would be effective workers with God. They are to bring themselves into right relation with God, that they may reflect the light of the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus Christ. We read of a class who put far off the day of the coming of Jesus; but upon such His coming will be as a thief in the night, and they will be suddenly overtaken with destruction. How many there are, who are willing to be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security; but it is time for us to wake out of sleep. Says the apostle, “We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” 1 Thessalonians 5:5–6

We should be awake to discern the signs of the times, and to give warning to the people. There are many in the world who seek to quiet the alarm of the people, who say, “Peace, peace; when there is no
peace; but we should take an opposite course from this. There are many who say to the aroused people, "Do not disturb yourselves, go on in godlessness, go on glorifying yourselves, and living in pleasure. The day of the Lord is not at hand." Did not Christ have an object in view when He said, "Behold, I come quickly"? Did He not see that His church would need to keep this solemn event in mind? Shall we say with the last-day scoffers, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"? 2 Peter 3:4. I do not mean to be with this class. I mean to arouse men with the message of Christ's near coming.

Those who have a knowledge of present truth are under a great responsibility before the world. They are to warn men of the coming judgments. They are to represent Christ to the people. They are not to go about deploring their condition, talking of their darkness, and murmuring and complaining of the hardness of the way; they are to lift up their minds to God, open the door of their hearts to Jesus, and let Him come in and abide with them. We must have Christ enshrined in the heart, that the soul-temple may be cleansed from every defilement. The soon coming of our Saviour must be a living reality to us. The question of all importance for this time is, "How is it with my soul? Am I seeking to reiterate the words of Christ? Am I teaching my children that they have souls to save; that peace and holiness must be a part of their life? Am I teaching them to place their hands in the hands of Christ, that He may guide them?"

We have most earnest work to do, and we have no time to waste in drinking at empty cisterns that can hold no water. We should come to Christ without delay for the water of life. We should diligently study the Bible. The study of the Bible is of the greatest importance to us. The Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, yet how few find time to search the Word of God! Men are all absorbed in the things of this perishing earth. They are building their hopes upon worthless foundations, and writing their names in the sand. Even those who profess to be followers of Christ do not heed His injunction. They are like the fig-tree whose leaves were abundant, but upon which the Master, seeking fruit, found nothing but leaves. The command will go forth at last concerning the fruitless tree, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7

God gives us His rich blessings to enjoy, and He expects us to bring forth fruit to His glory; but many neglect His work. They do not make a full surrender to His will. There are many who seem to feel that to think of God and heavenly things tends to make men gloomy and desponding; that it is detrimental to health to permit the mind to dwell upon religious subjects.

When in my youth God opened the Scriptures to my mind, giving me light upon the truths of His Word, I went forth to proclaim to others the precious news of salvation. My brother wrote to me, and said, "I beg of you not to disgrace the family. I will do anything for you if you will not go out as a preacher."

"Disgrace the family!" I replied, "Can it disgrace the family for me to preach Christ and Him crucified? If you would give me all the gold your house could hold, I would not cease giving my testimony for God. I have respect unto the recompense of the reward. I will not keep silent, for when God imparts His light to me, He means that I shall diffuse it to others; according to my ability."

Did not the priests and rulers come to the disciples, and command them to cease preaching in the name of Christ? They shut the faithful men in prison, but the angel of the Lord came to them and released them that they might speak the words of life to the people. This is our work. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord," (Isaiah 43:12)

We have most earnest work to do, and we have no time to waste in drinking at empty cisterns that can hold no water. We should come to Christ without delay for the water of life and we must pursue that work with faithfulness. How many are there who fulfill the mission of Christ? After their baptism there are many who act as though they had graduated, as though there was nothing more to learn or to do; but baptism is only the beginning of our work. We are to go on to perfection, reflecting the light of Christ more and more, and bringing all that it is possible of the spirit and power of Heaven into our lives. We are to seek the salvation of souls around us.

We are to present the truth as it is in Jesus. Christ came into the world to save sinners. For thirty years He lived our example. He endured insult, ignominy, reproach, rejection, and death; yet He lives. He is a living Saviour. He has ascended on high to make intercession for us. Just before His crucifixion, He prayed that His disciples might be one with Him, as He was one with the Father. Is it indeed a possibility that sinful, fallen man may be brought into such exalted relationship with Christ? Such a union with Christ will bring light and peace and comfort to our souls. When He went to Heaven, He told His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:7. Who would not have the Comforter in times of trial? There are many who refuse the service of God; but let sickness or sorrow overtake them, let death come into the family, and they will realize the weakness of earthly dependence, and they will then want a God to lean upon.

The Lord is coming, and when He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," 1 John 3:3. We must have our treasures transferred to heaven, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. Let the light of the Sun of Righteousness into your hearts, and peace will rest upon you. I want you to enjoy the blessing of God. I want to direct your mind
The Three Angels' Messages and the Sanctuary

In 1843 and 1844 the Midnight Cry encircled the world. About 700 preachers from many denominations were giving the first and second angels’ messages; even a Catholic priest in South America gave the trumpet a certain sound. The whole world was astir. Without TV or radio they were warning the world of the soon return of Christ. Thousands left their churches as Revelation 14:8 identified the apostate churches as Babylon; and then the Great Disappointment, prophesied in Revelation 10, burst upon the waiting saints on October 23, 1844. Soon the thousands had dwindled to small groups of a loyal and faithful few who then studied the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Out of these few souls the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born. Ellen White was given the gift of prophecy; ship captains, farmers, and young people embraced the seventh-day Sabbath, and the third angel’s message sounded, joining the first and second angels’ messages. The religious world retaliated with satanic opposition.

The struggling pioneers of our church were careful students of the Word of God as they hammered out the doctrines of the apostolic faith of Jesus, guided by the prophet. When they had reached an impasse and could not go on, the Lord would intervene. Ellen White tells the story of those important years as the church was searching for truth. “Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph, Father Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the Scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.” Selected Messages, book 1, 206–207

In 1863 the still struggling church organized into what we now know as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church was called to restore, and then to preach, and to print the doctrines of salvation which had been perverted and lost sight of by the religious world through the apostasy of the 1260 years and the reign of terror of the Papacy. These doctrines are clearly defined by the prophet.

“The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God’s people upon the earth, [also] the first and second angels’ messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, ‘The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.’ One of the landmarks under this message was the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath
of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. The nonimmortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks." Counsels to Writers and Editors, 30–31

The demons know that when the doctrines of the sanctuary and the three angels' messages are experienced, lived, and preached, then Jesus can cut His work short in righteousness. A short work will the Lord then make upon the earth. See Romans 9:28. Satan knows when that demonstration is made by God's living saints experiencing the cleansing of the sanctuary message, which is embraced in the three angels' messages, that he and his angels with all the wicked are doomed to die in the lake of fire.

Satan has continually attacked these messages as revealed by our prophet. "We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to cloud our minds regarding the teaching of the Word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the message of Heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority." Selected Messages, book 1, 208. These messages have been established by an unquestionable authority, by Christ Himself.

By the 1880s the church was about 70,000 strong in membership. Our evangelists, colporteurs, pastors and leaders, were preaching and even successfully debating with the pastors and evangelists of the Babylon churches. The warning of Revelation 14:9–12 was being given with great fervor and dedication to the world. In all the Bible there is not a warning to the world that can be equaled by these inspired verses. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Revelation 14:9–12

Tragically, today these messages and their warning are very seldom preached from our pulpits. We are told very clearly by our prophet that Satan knows these messages are the greatest enemies to his counterfeits. "The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side is Christ, who has been given all power in heaven and earth. On the other side is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure, to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God out of the places that He should occupy in the minds of men.

While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshipers on earth should carefully review their life, and compare their character with the standard of righteousness

"In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?

"While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshipers on earth should carefully review their life, and compare with the standard of righteousness." Evangelism, 224–225. Let us remember not one pin is to be removed from the great landmarks that were faithfully secured by the pioneers and our prophet.

In the 1880s, even though the church was preaching Revelation 14:9–11, it was not grasping, and therefore not experiencing, the message of the twelfth verse. This failure was caused by their not understanding the message of the sixth verse, the everlasting gospel. What is this gospel? The devil has counterfeited everything God has done. He has counterfeited the creation theory with the theory of evolution. He has a counterfeit sabbath in Sunday worship and he has counterfeited the state of man in death. But he has deceived almost the whole world in nearly every generation with his counterfeit gospel, that man can be saved in sin, that it is not possible to completely overcome all one's hereditary and cultivated weaknesses to sin. See The Desire of Ages, 671; Education, 257. In effect they say that one cannot keep the law of God perfectly. If that be true then one cannot keep the Sabbath perfectly. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans taught this untruth, but Christ condemns this doctrine. See The Seventh-day Adventist

Bible Commentary, vol.7, 957; Revelation 2:6, 15. And so the cleansing of the sanctuary message and the three angels' messages are to instruct God's faithful and obedient people in perfect law keeping.

Consider these inspired words: "The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. . . . God has made provision that
we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace." Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 76

"Christ declared of Himself: 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

"It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God's providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus... It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls." The Great Controversy, 623.

"I delights to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thout through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever standing: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:97-105

Tragically, perfection has become a word that only few in Adventism want to use, because unfortunately it carries the stigma of fanaticism. This phrase is often heard, "No one can be perfect." The following inspired statements will help to clarify this misunderstanding: "To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life." Education, 15-16. "God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplated our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin." The Desire of Ages, 311. "Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong." Selected Messages, book 1, 82

Perfection is the standard of obedience and is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. God will not, cannot, accept anything less. Let us not forget
as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels' messages. All are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to the church, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place; but they live and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 17-18.

“I have had an experience in the first, second, and third angels’ messages. The angels are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming to the world a message of warning, and having a direct bearing upon the people living in the last days of this earth’s history. No one hears the voice of these angels, for they are a symbol to represent the people of God who are working in harmony with the universe of heaven. Men and women, enlightened by the Spirit of God and sanctified through the truth, proclaim the three messages in their order.” *Selected Messages*, book 2, 387

“The theme of greatest importance is the third angel’s message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost.” *Evangelism*, 196

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. If he can control minds so that doubt and unbelief and darkness shall compose the experience of those who claim to be the children of God, he can overcome them with temptation.

“That simple faith which takes God at His word should be encouraged. God’s people must have that faith which will lay hold of divine power; ‘for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’ Those who believe that God for Christ’s sake has forgiven their sins, should not, through temptation, fail to press on to fight the good fight of faith. Their faith should grow stronger until their Christian life, as well as their words, shall declare, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanseth us from all sin.’

“If we would have the spirit and power of the third angel’s message, we must present the law and the gospel together, for they go hand in hand. As a power from beneath is stirring up the children of disobedience to make void what God can do with fallen human beings who have the faith of Jesus, and who keep His commandments perfectly. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12

“ ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.’ Revelation 3:21. We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.

All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation

“It is our privilege to have faith and salvation. The power of God has not decreased. His power, I saw, would be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob, crying: ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.’ Enduring faith has been dying away. It must be revived in the hearts of God’s people. There must be a claiming of the blessing of God. Faith, living faith, always bears upward to God and glory; unbelief, downward to darkness and death.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 144

Let us remember Adam and Eve lost their trust in God, their faith. They believed what Satan said; they lost their righteousness, their godlikeness. Before man can be restored to his garden home he must first be restored in Jesus’ faith, and he must victory over every temptation and over every sin by partaking of the divine nature.
WHAT shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. The apostle decidedly denies the assertion: "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." Romans 7:7-8

What is sin?—It is the result of Satan's administration. It is his work to make of no effect the law of God. He is determined that man shall do what God has forbidden him to do. By his deceptive, artful temptations, he strives to make men disobey. This he did with Adam and Even in Eden, and this he will continue to do till the close of time.

"For I was alive without the law once," Paul continues; "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and [the law died]?—No I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." But because of this does Paul say, I am opposed to the commandment?—No; he declares: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:9-12

"Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Romans 7:13. Here we are plainly shown that the commandments of God are true and righteous, and that they are to be honored and obeyed. Right down on this side of the crucifixion, Paul declares, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Satan has invented thousands of errors to counterfeit God's truth. And the false paths that he has made have been followed as if they were paths of right. Thousands of false steps he has taken, and men seem eager to endorse the false, rather than to follow the path of truth and righteousness.

Counterfeits are made so as to resemble the true as nearly as possible. The Lord has specified the seventh day as the day that is to be kept holy. He has said, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:9-11. This day is God's great memorial, established to celebrate the work of creation. On this day God rested, sanctifying and blessing it as the day of His rest.

But a false sabbath has been instituted. Who instituted it?—The man of sin, who has thought to change times and laws. The world has turned from the true and living God to serve an idol, but because of this has Satan accomplished what he desired?—No; the Lord's Word reads just as it did when it was given. Satan's counterfeits do not bear God's signature. Though every son and daughter of Adam should endorse these falsehoods, God's truth would not be annihilated. Not the smallest jot or tittle of the law has ever been given over to Satan, to be manipulated according to his fancy. If this could have been done, it would have been when the matter was first agitated in the heavenly courts. But there the first intimation of a change in God's law was met by a decided No. This led to a battle in heaven, and Satan, next to Christ the most exalted being in the heavenly courts, was overcome, and with his sympathizers cast out of heaven. Thus it was shown that Satan was not in the right, and that God had not abrogated or changed His law. This law is the transcript of His character; and throughout the eternal ages it will remain Yea and Amen, perfect and unalterable, without variability or shadow of turning.

The principles of God's law are contained in the two precepts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy
neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:27. When we realize this, there will be a searching after truth, a deep conviction of the far-reaching claims of God's law.

That law takes cognizance of the thoughts of the heart, as well as of the actions of the life. A man may be a lawbreaker in heart, yet if the outward action is wanting, he is treated as loyal by the world. He may in heart be an adulterer, yet by his fellow men he may be regarded as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart, and pours a flood of light on things that have been buried in darkness. Why, then, do not the teachers of the people search for truth as for hidden treasure? Why do they not humble their souls in the dust, lest they be deceived, as were Adam and Eve in Eden?

By his deceptions, Satan has led the people away from God. The sayings of men are exalted above the Word of God. The world has accepted a false sabbath, discarding the holy, sanctified day of the Lord hosts. Men have shut themselves away from the light, saying, by word and action, Seek no further. And God says, Shall I not judge for these things? Why do not the religious teachers of today instruct the people regarding the traitorous movement that Satan has made in putting a common working day in the place of the day that God has set apart as holy?

The fourth commandment is the only one to which "remember" is prefixed. God says, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Do not forget it. "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." Leviticus 18:4-5. The Lord presents Himself as the authority for His requirements. There is to be no departure from the Word of God in order to exalt the word of man. God is authority and what He says is to be done.

The whole matter centers here. Obedience means eternal life; disobedience means eternal death. Error never becomes truth, though it may be hoary with age. Then shall intelligent beings decide that in this world, to which Satan was banished as an exile, God has given the rebel what he claimed and failed to gain in heaven? Shall the professed Christian churches change leaders, taking a "Thus saith Satan in the place of a "Thus saith the Lord"?

When there is so much at stake, why do not those who claim to be God's delegated messengers go to the Word of life, and make honest, wise, prayerful research, saying, We will know what saith the Lord in this matter? If the search is undertaken in the spirit of Christ, it will be rewarded. But if the teachers of the people echo the words of the great apostate, it will be found to their shame and ruin; and they will carry with them them whom they have deceived, as Satan in his rebellion carried out of the heavenly courts those who accepted his words instead of the words of God.

Sin lies at the door of those who do not allow their ignorance to be expelled by the rays of light from God's Word. They are doing what the Jews did in the days of Christ—teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. By their actions they say, We do not wish to be disturbed. Let us alone. Do not disturb our peace. To God's messengers, sent to them with words of warning and reproof, they say, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 1 Kings 18:17

God purchased men by giving His only begotten Son to die for them. If those who claim to be light bearers in the world lead the people in paths of transgression, they are not only answerable for their own souls, but also for the souls of those whom they mislead. By their profession of sanctity, they lead the unwary into disobedience, and their names are recorded on the books of heaven as workers of iniquity. God will not accept the inventions of men who in their work enter the inner circle of God, where only the Holy One, whose form is that of the Son of God, has a right to tread. In the great day of judgment, what will those who have taken sides with the apostate plead as an excuse for their conduct? How contemptible to them will appear the sparks which they have kindled, in contrast with the holy fire of God's kindling!

Sin is the most fearful thing in the whole universe. So fearful is it that it could be pardoned only by the sacrifice of the Son of the infinite God. If unpardoned, it must be followed by eternal death. There is a time coming when every unpardoned transgressor of God's law will know what it means to be a sinner, standing in God's sight uncovered, without the robe of Christ's righteousness, and with a full sense that there is no power in the law to save the transgressor.

Shall all the efforts that Heaven has made to restore in the human race the image of God be in vain because men teach for doctrines the commandments of men? Shall we sell our Lord, in order to be in harmony with the rebellious multitude? Shall our names be recorded in heaven as the names of those who have corrupted the way of the Lord? Shall we be of that number who say, "Lord, Lord," but refuse to do His will? Shall we be among those who present their supposedly good works to God, because they think He needs to be reminded of His duty toward them? God will say to all such, Why did you not keep sacred My memorial of Creation? Why did you not hear My warnings? "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say

Shall we be of that number who say, "Lord, Lord," but refuse to do His will? Shall we be among those who present their supposedly good works to God, because they think He needs to be reminded of His duty toward them?
On December 17, 1973, my wife and I returned with our three sons, Stephen (13), Timothy (10), and James (8) from our first period of mission service. Although life in Southeast Asia is sophisticated, our children had been sheltered from much of the lowered church standards we experienced upon our return.

Our first encounter with lowered standards related to Saturday evening entertainments. Frequently films, well below the high standards set forth in Scripture, were screened. God's standard is well known: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8

Yet some of these films breached every one of these criteria.

The first occasion upon which it occurred we found ourselves in a real quandary. Our lads had read the details of the evening entertainment in the church bulletin and did not doubt that our family would attend. It had been our practice to attend church socials in the mission field. When I informed our sons that we would not be attending they were upset. I was put on the spot, for we had taught our children to love and respect our beloved church and to trust its leaders. We had also done our best to teach our children God's standards of entertainment. Here we were confronted with a conflict. By explaining that we could not attend the film because it did not meet God's standard, we could but imply to the minds of our lads that the church had erred in selecting the film. This implication was not lost on our children who protested using two lines of argument.

1. "All the other church kids are going."
2. "It's put on by the church!"

It is unfair to place parents in this position. Frequently in our desire "to keep our youth in the church" we imagine that lowering standards is a sure-fire means to success. Yet the history of such strategies in other Christian churches has been a sorry one indeed. The Methodist Church brought in dancing to keep its young people away from the dance halls and worldly associates. The devil always gives us good reasons to do wrong. As a result of this strategy the young people simply danced out of the Methodist Church. I know of no church which improved its appeal to the youth and strengthened their dedication to the church by the lowering of church standards.

Frequently we assert that the vast majority of our youth are leaving the church because we are not providing the right social environment to meet the needs of these modern youth. Few of those proposing this cause-and-effect relationship ever pause to reflect upon the fact that when Seventh-day Adventists held the standards in line with God's paradigm, large numbers of our youth remained true to the faith. Nor do they consider the fact that for the past three decades there has been an escalating reduction in standards and a parallel loss of faith among the youth. The lowering of standards, rather than halting the loss of youth from our faith, has increased this trend. Should these two facts not receive our consideration? Are we correct in consistently ascribing the appalling loss of our youth to the fact that present-day youth are different from the youth of previous years?

I was requested, on one occasion, to present a worship service in the office of

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one of our Division headquarters. I spoke on these issues and suggested that we had forgotten one common English word— "No!" "No, this is not God's standard." At the conclusion of the worship I could have detected the sound of the proverbial pin drop. Not a soul spoke to me and I found my own way out of the front door, never again to be invited to speak. It was only when I returned to my physician's office that five of those in attendance, chiefly from the secretarial staff, rang me to encourage me with the view that the service expressed sentiments which were sorely needed. They had dared not express this view in front of their superiors in the Division headquarters.

These incidents occurred almost two decades ago. It is virtually needless to report that the situation in respect of standards has not improved in the intervening years. But God has called forth God-fearing lay people and pastors who have cried aloud against the ever-increasing disregard for God's standards. The righteous hearts of these men and women have been constrained to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The response of most church members has not been positive. Charges of "fanaticism," "extreme right sentiments," "perfectionism," and other uncomplimentary aspersions have been made against faithful souls simply discharging their duty as Christian brethren and sisters.

As the years have passed by and the mode of apostasy has deepened, so has the response against the faithful strengthened. Throughout the world, many have been deprived of church office, men have been removed from denominational appointments, false testimony against these persons is frequently heard, even from men of vast authority within the church, transfer of church memberships have been rejected, and now from the United Kingdom to the United States, from Australia to Germany, godly men and women are being cast out of God's church.

A similar situation prevailed in Christ's day. The delighted parents of the blind man to whom Jesus restored sight dared not confess Jesus, falsely stating that they were oblivious of the means by which their son was healed. Scripture plainly states the reason for their cowardly attitude.

"These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had accused already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." John 9:22

This punitive attitude of God's church at the time of Christ's first coming is now to be found in the church of God just before His second coming. It was not without effect in Christ's day, and has had a similar effect upon many in this day.

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John 12:42-43

Each one of us needs to examine his or her own heart in order to determine whether we value the praise of men more than the praise of God. Those of us who are ordained to the sacred gospel ministry, and those ordained to the holy offices of elders and deacons in God's church, have a special duty to address this matter upon our knees, for none of us is so strong that without the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we can but fail this test. God has warned us:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing threatening and actual disfellowshipping of earnest church members. In a few cases those who have been disfellowshiped have been requested to cease their attendance at church, despite the fact that they were courteous members deporting themselves in God's sanctuary with circumspection and reverence. Such actions border on excommunication. In one church where such has occurred the church notice-board reads, "A house of prayer for all who wish to worship here. All are welcome." Yet the actions of the church deny this claim. One can only pray that we will not, some day, condemn such worthy persons to purgatory.

A survey of grounds used to disfellowship members could be most enlightening. It may be that it would be found that the impressions of some church members will be confirmed. They believe that in their conference more souls are disfellowshipped for a desire to attend meetings uplifting the Seventh-day Adventist faith than for open sin. If this belief proved to be true, it would be a matter for the most serious reflection and soul-searching.

Inserted in our Church Manual as a ground for disfellowshipment is a matter which is vague and open to various interpretations. Such items are subject to

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God has called forth God-fearing lay people and pastors who have cried aloud against the ever-increasing disregard for God's standards

spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Having presented the warning, He then speaks to those who are ordained:

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." 1 Timothy 4:6

May no one who has accepted the role of a servant of God fail to receive this approbation.

We come now to a matter of major concern. There is an alarming rise in abuse and would be better deleted. The ground states:

"Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church." Church Manual, 1986 edition, 162

It is this ground which is frequently invoked when faithful members refuse to submit to unscriptural demands of the church. We believe in "properly constituted church authority" and also "order and discipline" within the church, but such authority, order, and discipline must be authorized by Scripture. It must not be based upon pastoral or lay
desires, such as demands to desist from hearing the preaching of God’s Word.

Christian history can assist us. When Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, set out to uphold true principles being breached within the Roman Catholic Church, he had no desire to leave the church nor any design to found the Lutheran Church. These acts were forced upon him by his own church which, rather than appreciating his godly call to reformation, cast him out of the church.

In the eighteenth century Protestantism slipped back into apostasy. God called John Wesley, an Anglican priest, to point out sin and call men to a life of holiness. Incredibly, the Anglican Church resented his pious ministry. Originally he and his followers were designated as Methodists as a term of derision and refused the pulpits in the Anglican Church, the very church in which Wesley was called to the ministry. On one occasion Wesley visited the church which his late father had pastored and in which he was reared as a little lad. Even here this Anglican preacher was refused the pulpit. He was forced to resort to standing by his father’s tombstone in the church courtyard at the conclusion of the regular service and preaching to those willing to listen.

On another occasion John Wesley, while preaching in the open in Somerset, was confronted by an arrogant lay Anglican who demanded to know by whose authority he deigned to speak of Christ in their town. Clearly, supporting ministries were little appreciated two hundred and fifty years ago and today our attitudes have not altered. Wesley was quick to point to the Holy Spirit as his authority. The experiences of John Wesley are instructive for Seventh-day Adventists today.

Eventually the antagonism of the Anglican Church to the faithful messages of John Wesley, and those who humbly heeded his cry for holiness in love to Jesus, was so intense that they were impelled to accept a new denomination, despite the fact that Wesley never intended such an eventuality.

As the decades passed even Methodism lost its high and holy principles to such a degree that when Methodist families such as the Harmones sought to learn deeper truths from God’s Word through the ministry of William Miller, an itinerant Baptist preacher in a supporting ministry, they were cast out of the Methodist Church.

These people had no desire to sever their allegiance to the Methodist Church, but, as with the Lutherans and the Methodists and the first century Christians, they were cast out by mother churches so steeped in apostasy that they feared the preaching of righteousness more than they feared sin.

These precedents are cited in order that God’s people in His church today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, might take a backward glance and in the light of that assessment consider the actions of our beloved church against those who once more are called of God to sound the alarm. That a most severe spiritual declension is currently in our church is beyond denial. Few doctrines

are regarded so perverse or foolish that none will value them, the standards of the church and the standards of the world are merging and even more disturbing, most of our institutions now focus on financial matters rather than on spiritual outreach.

Yet our response to those who bear the burden of alerting God’s people to these facts and who call God’s people to prepare for participation in Christ’s remnant church, has differed very little from that of the churches of the past.

Our response to those who bear the burden of alerting God’s people to these facts and who call God’s people to prepare for participation in Christ’s remnant church, has differed very little from that of the churches of the past.

Already we have seen such scenarios in our church in our treatment of some of the most faithful church members in Europe. Men and women who suffered persecution and imprisonment and had seen fellow believers put to death rather than bear arms, were so scorned by leadership in Central Europe after the First World War, that they felt no option but to form the reformed Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church leader whose callous actions led to this consequence, Pastor Louis Conradi, later demonstrated his true spirit by apostatizing. Yet God’s flock meekly confirmed the will of this false leader.

In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1928 those who refused military service and attendance of students at school on Sabbath were obliged to form the True and Free Seventh-day Adventist Church when the official church compromised its principles. A similar situation occurred in recent years in Hungary when those standing for true principles of nonconformity to the ecumenical activities of our church, were forcibly expelled from God’s church by an illegal act of the Hungarian Union Conference. These members were com-

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A Testimony

Perfection and Motives

CHRISTIANS always become a little uncomfortable whenever the following scripture is read. Christ said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. “Well,” they say, “We won’t ever be perfect. We were born sinners and we will be sinners till we die.” Or you might hear, “Well, if we spend all our time concentrating on perfection——” Most people just don’t like to think about it. It seems too far-fetched a goal. We can’t possibly achieve it. After all, since sanctification is the work of a lifetime, why bother to try? It sounds too much like justification by works.

I was six years old when I received my first spanking for disobedience. My mother was ironing, and as I watched her thought to myself, “That looks easy——just slide the iron back and forth, and the wrinkles are gone. I could do it.” I asked my mother if I might try. Mother said that I could not because I was not tall enough. When she left the room to answer the door, I decided to try my hand at ironing. The board came up to my chest and I reached up with my arm, took hold of the iron and began to slide it. It slid right off the end of the board, with a loud thud, making a huge gash in the recently purchased inlaid linoleum. Mother was just returning to the kitchen and she screamed, “I told you not to iron.”

I was spanked soundly for disobeying Mother. I told her I was sorry, but she spanked me anyway. Mother was near to tears herself. She told me to wash my face and go down the street to visit my aunt for a while. Later I learned that she sent me away so that she could have a good cry herself. She felt worse than I did. She suffered because she had to punish me.

As long as we lived in that house, the gash in the kitchen linoleum reminded me of my disobedience.

We were in the midst of the Great Depression, and Mother and Dad were struggling to keep their bills paid and food on the table. I remember that my mother wore a green coat for many years. I had new coats and dresses as I grew, but she and Dad never bought anything for themselves. I began to realize that everything I had I owed to them. They cared for me, bought me new clothes and toys on my birthday, but there was never anything for themselves. I used to wish I could find a sum of money to give them. My childish fancies gave way to reality——there was no pot of gold to be found even if I could walk to the end of the rainbow. I began to look forward to the day when I could grow up and make money to give something back to my parents. In the meantime, I realized that the only thing I could give them was loving obedience. I never forgot the tears in my mother’s eyes when she spanked me that memorable day. I learned to look for the glow of approval in my parents’ eyes when I brought home a good report card. It became my goal to be a credit to them. I did not say words that Mother said were “bad words.” I tried to be obedient to my teachers, and co-operative at home. Later in my early teen years, many of my classmates began to meet boys at the movies when ostensibly they were going with girlfriends. I could not do that. There were many things I would not do, not because I was concentrating on being perfect, but because I could not bear to think of the hurt in my mother’s eyes if she ever found out that I had done something which she did not approve.

There are some in the church who would say I was being a legalist every time I obeyed my parents’ wishes, either by doing what they wished, or not doing that which they did not approve. Salvation by works, some would say. But I could never forget the pain in my mother’s eyes, nor the deep gash I had caused. Could I ever make up for that? NO!

And what about God? Has He not given me everything I am and have? And when I was in bondage to Satan, did He not pay the ransom by giving His only begotten Son to die that I might be redeemed? How can I ever forget that? Can I ever erase the deep wounds in His hands, feet, and very heart? Not all the right doing, or not doing wrong can erase them, or in any way pay back my Saviour. Like the gash in the linoleum, they are there as a reminder.

“But,” some would say, “We were born sinners, and we will sin until we die.” But I must say that although we are born with a sinful nature, and we are capable of sinning until we die, we don’t have to say “Yes” to Satan. Jesus was in all points tempted like as we, the Bible tells us, yet He did not sin. He did not say “Yes” to Satan. He countered with “It is written.” And Satan had to slink away defeated. Is it not in our power to do the same?

The Desire of Ages, 311 says, “He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.”

There are others who say that all we must do is believe and we are saved. They would have us believe that if we talk about right doing, we are legalists. We are trying to earn salvation, which is impossible. But “It is the life of Jesus Christ in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone makes the soul fruitful unto good works.” Testimonies to Ministers, 468

It all goes back then to the purpose in the heart. If as a child I was obedient and compliant just to avoid a spanking, then my obedience was tainted with selfishness. If I obeyed to gain rewards, then my obedience was of little value. But on the other hand, if my obedience was the result of deep love and appreciation for all that my parents did for me, then it was “faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” Fundamentals of Christian Education, 398.

Is it not the same way with our relationship with God? Do we have the desire to obey because we know we have caused deep sorrow to our heavenly Father? Do we wish to obey in even the smallest matter because we have a great love and appreciation for all that He has done? Are we constantly aware of the deep wounds in those precious hands put there by our disobedience? If we are, then we will not sin lightly. We will develop such a hatred toward sin that by God’s grace we will overcome sin, and send Satan slinking away in defeat.

Is it possible then for us to “be perfect” even as our heavenly Father is perfect? Is there not heavenly grace available to us to keep us from sinning? Yes, yes, there is. But God will not force obedience upon us. If we but ask, and ask again daily, for His Holy Spirit, He can keep us from sinning. He and He alone can impart that power.

Pam Caruso, a writer, grandmother, and Sabbath school teacher, writes from Enfield, Massachusetts.

Pam Caruso
God’s Holy Sabbath

In this world the controversy between the Prince of Life and the prince of darkness is being carried on. Ever since Satan fell, the conflict between right and wrong has been waging. After Christ was crucified, and had ascended to heaven, those who believed in Him took up the work, and carried forward the warfare in His name. This conflict is still going on, and is becoming more and more earnest and positive. Satan is marshaling his forces for the last great battle; and the great question at issue is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

Satan has been blessed with great advantages. There can be no one greater or more talented, none more wise and good, than was Satan before he apostatized. But he allowed a spirit of selfishness to take possession of him, and he fell through self-exaltation. Angels fell with him because they placed themselves on the side of the great rebel instead of on the side of Christ. We read in Jude: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Verse 6

Satan has a great mind, but it is prostituted to evil; it is wise only to plan and to do evil. Ever since his fall, he has worked against God. He has striven to tear down God’s appointed institutions. He led the Jewish leaders to pervert the true meaning of the Sabbath. Their teaching in regard to it was altogether wrong. They piled their own traditions and maxims upon it, burying it out of sight.

Satan is the sharpest critic that the world has ever known, and he works to hinder and pervert truth. He has induced men to strive to change the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Under his dictation the first day of the week has been adopted by the Christian world as the Sabbath. He has used his masterly mind to influence other men to adopt the same views that he himself entertains. But if we turn aside from the fourth commandment, so positively given by God, to adopt the inventions of Satan, voiced and acted by men under his control, we cannot be saved. We cannot with safety receive his traditions and subtleties as truth.

The man of sin has exalted Sunday; but whatever has been done in the change of the fourth commandment, has been done without God’s sanction, and is in direct opposition to His express commands. What we all need is truth—plain, simple, unvarnished truth—that will sanctify the soul. Many will advance theories in regard to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week; but God has made positive declarations in regard to the sacredness of the Sabbath instituted at Eden and proclaimed from Mount Sinai, and a penalty is attached to the disregard and dishonor of the seventh day of the week.

It becomes every one blessed with reasoning power to beware from what source he receives light and knowledge. We should not be dazzled by men who boast of their education and talent, but who use their power to bewilder souls. Thoughts flash from their minds which charm, but are soon forgotten. When these supposed grand thoughts, which perplex and mystify while they please, are presented, let those who have souls to save or to lose, inquire, Is there Scripture to prove the truth of these utterances?

Where eternal interests are involved, it becomes every soul to require ministers of the gospel to give scriptural evidence for everything they say. The traditions of the Fathers, the customs and sayings of professedly good men, the opinions of the most learned divines or of the highest critics—all are worthless unless they harmonize with the Word of God. We must go back from the so-called “Fathers” to the great heavenly Father, the Creator of the universe. The Sabbath of the Lord must rest on its own basis—the Word of the living God.

Every one is tested and tried in probationary time in regard to his obedience to the Word of God. But what is the matter with the professed Christian world?—That which was the matter with Adam and Eve in Eden—they are listening to...
When the Sabbath interfered with their business, they found it inconvenient to observe it. They did not give up the Sabbath in theory, but they did not keep it according to the fourth commandment.
tions of the enemy with the only weapon that the soldier of the cross of Christ can successfully use—"It is written." Where—in the Old and New Testaments. With these words we are to defend ourselves and warn others, holding forth to them the Word of life.

Many have never understood that Sunday is not the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. In his subtlety, Satan has covered up this fact, and has presented a common day as sacred, that the whole world may become guilty before God by transgression. Many are utterly ignorant that they are not keeping the fourth commandment. It is essential for all to seek for truth from the divine Guidebook, that they may decide what the Lord says on this question. Men have said much, but we cannot build our faith on the words of any man. There are two sides to this question. The God of heaven presents His law, and Satan holds out his spurious Sabbath. There are two classes—the obedient and the disobedient, the tempted and the tempters.

The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel’s message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God. Of all who receive this mark, God says, “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” Revelation 14:10

If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false Sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls “My holy day,” you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place?—When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God. If we receive this mark in our foreheads or in our hands, the judgments pronounced against the disobedient must fall upon us. But the seal of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. . . . And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Genesis 6:5, 11, 13. They were to be cut off because they had polluted the earth which God created to be enjoyed by a righteous people.

The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are testing us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His own chosen, peculiar people.

“As it was in the days of Noe,” declared Christ, “so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” Luke 17:26. And is it not so? Any one who will look into the daily papers may see a long list of crimes—drunkenness, theft, robbery, embezzlement, murder. Sometimes whole families are murdered, that man’s desires to possess money or goods that do not belong to him may be gratified. The world is indeed becoming as it was in the days of Noah, because men openly disregard God’s commands.

Sunday is a child of the Papacy. It has been nourished and cradled by the Protestant world as a genuine requirement of Jehovah, but it has no foundation in the Word of God. The Christian world is tested by their relation to this matter. God moves upon men to search the Scriptures for evidence to sustain Sunday. Those who search with a desire for truth will see that in the past they have been relying on tradition, and have accepted an institution of the Papacy. Those who, with contrite hearts, search the Word of God for truth, will receive a blessing from God. Their characters are formed after the divine similitude. The mind is in a state of continual advancement. By beholding they become changed into the divine likeness. Their education is begun on earth to be carried on in the school above.

As the searcher for truth advances in his investigation, he sees that inferences and traditions and the suppositions and sayings of men, have baptized Sunday as a Sabbath. The more earnestly and candidly this question is canvassed, the more clearly will men who are judgment-bound see that there is not a particle of scriptural evidence to sustain Sunday. God never placed His sanctity upon that day. Those who observe it offer God strange fire in place of sacred. God has never said, “Keep sacred the first day of the week,” but He has said, “Moreover also I gave them my sab-

baths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Ezekiel 20:12

This subject opens before the earnest seeker after truth. It becomes more and more clear to him that God has not changed or altered the thing that has gone out of His lips. He sees the sanctity and blessing placed upon the seventh day, and the necessity for its observance. The more earnestly he investigates this subject, the more convinced he becomes of the truth of God’s Word, as seen in the law of the ten commandments. His interest in truth is tested, his love for God proved, as he advances. If he submits his will to God’s will, all will be well. If he chooses obedience to God’s commandments at any cost, his peace and happiness will increase.

Many excuse themselves for keeping Sunday by saying, “My father and grandfather were good Christians, and they died keeping Sunday. They will be saved, and I am willing to run the risk of doing as they did. The whole world keeps Sunday; and I am as well off as the rest of the members of my church.” But will these excuses be accepted in the judgment?—No, no. Had their fathers had the light and the messages of warn-
ing which God has sent to His people in these last days, they would, if they were candid, God-fearing men, have obeyed the commandments of God. Our fathers are not accountable for the light they never received, or for the messages of warning they never heard; and shall their habits and customs be thought worthy of respect merely because they have been handed down from generation to generation? "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said Christ, referring to the Jews, "they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sins. . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." John 15:22, 24

Special truths have been adapted to the conditions of the nations as they have existed. The present truth, which is a test to the people of this generation, was not a test to the people of generations far back. If the light which now shines upon us in regard to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, had been given to the generations of the past, God would have held them accountable for that light.

We are accountable only for the light that shines upon us. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are testing us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His own chosen, peculiar people. When perfect faith and perfect love and obedience abound, working in the hearts of those who are Christ's followers, they will have a powerful influence. Light will emanate from them, dispelling the darkness around them, refining and elevating all who come within the sphere of their influence, and bringing to a knowledge of the truth all who are willing to be enlightened, and to follow in the humble path of obedience.

Great blessings are promised to those who keep holy God's Sabbath. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath," God says, "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: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13-14

*Review and Herald*, vol. 3, 479-482 (July 6, 13, 1897)
Your magazine, Our Firm Foundation, is one of the best I’ve read in a long time. It’s solid food. I read every bit of it to a blind man. I feel that I know how the two disciples on the road to Emmaus felt. My heart burns within me when I read it. May God bless all of you, and prosper you in His work, and protect you from all your spiritual enemies, grant you health and a rich harvest, and supply all your needs.

—RG, New York

I believe beyond all question that God is using you and your ministry to do the work He entrusted to our church, and which, tragically, it is not doing. Your ministry has been such a rich blessing to me, and so very informative and helpful. I want you to know that I sincerely appreciate you and other ministries who are keeping us informed about the apostasy that is raging within our church. Please continue to stand loyal and faithful to God, and please don’t let the accusations, criticisms, and harsh treatment discourage or deter you in any way. You are on God’s side, and that’s really all that matters. You have many, many friends with you. Thank you again for your faithfulness in keeping us informed. I pray for you daily. God bless all of you at Hope International as you continue to press forward in the important work you are doing for Him.

—ES, Ohio

Your magazine, Our Firm Foundation, is like a breath of fresh air. You give the readers much food for thought. I wish that I could have had a magazine like yours when I first became a believer in the “blessed hope.”

—IB, California

What Might Have Been

One day at noon I was writing of the work that might have been done at the last General Conference if the men in positions of trust had followed the will and way of God. Those who have had great light have not walked in the light. The meeting was closed, and the break was not made. Men did not humble themselves before the Lord as they should have done, and the Holy Spirit was not imparted.

I had written thus far when I lost consciousness, and I seemed to be witnessing a scene in Battle Creek.

We were assembled in the auditorium of the Tabernacle. Prayer was offered, a hymn was sung, and prayer was again offered. Most earnest supplication was made to God. The meeting was marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The work went deep, and some present were weeping aloud.

One arose from his bowed position and said that in the past he had not been in union with certain ones and had felt no love for them, but that now he saw himself as he was. With great solemnity he repeated the message to the Laodicean church: “‘Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’ In my self-sufficiency this is just the way I felt,” he said. “And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” I now see that this is my condition. My eyes are opened. My spirit has been hard and unjust. I thought myself righteous, but my heart is broken, and I see my need of the precious counsel of the One who has searched me through and through. Oh, how gracious and compassionate and loving are the words, ‘I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.’” Revelation 3:17–18

The speaker turned to those who had been praying, and said: “We have something to do. We must confess our sins, and humble our hearts before God.” He made heartbroken confessions and then stepped up to several of the brethren, one after another, and extended his hand, asking forgiveness. Those to whom he spoke sprang to their feet, making confession and asking forgiveness, and they fell upon one another’s necks, weeping. The spirit of confession spread through the entire congregation. It was a Pentecostal season. God’s praises were sung, and far into the night, until nearly morning, the work was carried on.

The following words were often repeated, with clear distinctness: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Verses 19–20

No one seemed to be too proud to make heartfelt confession, and those who led in this work were the ones who had influence, but had not before had courage to confess their sins.

There was rejoicing such as never before had been heard in the Tabernacle. Then I aroused from my unconsciousness, and for a while could not think where I was. My pen was still in my hand. The words were spoken to me: “This might have been. All this the Lord was waiting to do for His people. All Heaven was waiting to be gracious.” I thought of where we might have been had thorough work been done at the last General Conference, and an agony of disappointment came over me as I realized that what I had witnessed was not a reality.

Testimonies, vol. 8, 104–106

Ellen G. White
MANY of our Seventh-day Adventist pastors join the local ministerial associations in the districts in which they serve. In fact, I joined the Ministerial Association in Powell, Wyoming, when I pastored the Powell-Greybull district in the Rocky Mountain Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. But I had questions in my mind then, and even more questions today about doing so. Does such membership cause our pastors to compromise our message as contained within the three angels’ messages? Are Protestant churches that teach Sundaykeeping, the immortality of the soul, and the completed atonement at the cross “Babylon” or are they not? Are we really opening any possibilities of communicating our distinctive messages to the Protestant churches and their members when we join in a ministerial association with their pastors, or do we in fact close out their churches as avenues for our message?

The Ministerial Association in Powell sent out a letter (on a letterhead listing the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a member) to the softball leagues in the area asking them not to have softball games on Sunday morning because it interfered with their morning worship services. A newspaper clipping recently sent to me from the Canon City, Colorado, Daily Record newspaper speaks of the Ministerial Association having an Easter sunrise service for the people of Canon City. It also speaks about setting aside denominational differences and relating to each other and the community on the basis of our love for Christ. It states that we are each part of Christ’s universal church. The signature to this article is that of the Ministerial Alliance president, the local Seventh-day Adventist pastor. Recently an apology went out from the assistant ministerial director of the Idaho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to the clergy of the Treasure Valley apologizing for the mailing of the booklet “The National Sunday Law” to the people in that area—“for the invasion into your life without your permission.”

It is human nature to desire to be liked. We as Christians want to get along with others. Christian love between brothers and for those who are even our enemies is a theme in the Bible. But is this aim accomplished through compromise with those whom we as Adventists should see as having a wrong theology and who are facing eternal destruction if not warned of the false path they are on? Can we collaborate with those who teach a false Sabbath, when one day this fate could result, if they are not instead warned about receiving the mark of the beast? Will we really seek to reach the members of churches whose pastors are in the same ministerial association as we are? Might we not be afraid to jeopardize our standing with our fellow pastors in the group? What happens to our evangelistic efforts of carrying forth our distinctive Adventist message?

“There is to be no compromise with those who are worshiping an idol sabbath... Men will employ every policy to make less prominent the difference between the faith of Seventh-day Adventists and those who observe the first day of the week. In this controversy the whole world will be engaged, and the time is short. Now is no time to haul down our colors.”

“A company was presented to me under the name of Seventh-day Adventist, who were advising that the banner or
sign which makes us a distinctive people should not be held out so strikingly, for they claimed it was not the best policy in securing success to our institutions ... I saw some reaching out their hands to remove the banner, and to obscure its significance." Selected Messages, book 2, 385

"Exalt before the people the banner hearing the inscription, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Revelation 14:12; ibid., 226

At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus had occasion to cleanse the temple. In fact He did so soon after the wedding at Cana of Galilee.

"When he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.' John 2:15–16

At the end of His public ministry, shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus again cleansed the temple of God. See Matthew 21:12

Ellen White refers to these two cleansings of the temple by Jesus, and then she speaks of two distinct calls that are made "in the last work for the warning of the world." The first of these calls was made between 1840 and 1844 calling people out of the fallen Protestant churches as the three angels' messages were given.

"While you hold the banner of truth firmly, proclaiming the law of God, let every soul remember that the faith of Jesus is connected with the commandments of God. The third angel is represented as flying through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Revelation 14:12. The first, second, and third angels' messages are all linked together. The evidences of the abiding, ever-living truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to us, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, cannot be extinguished. Satan is constantly seeking to cast his hellish shadow about these messages, so that the remnant people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time, and place; but they live, and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last . . . .

"When Jesus began His public ministry, He cleansed the temple from its sacrilegious profanation. Among the last acts of His ministry was the second cleansing of the temple. So in the last work for the warning of the world, two distinct calls are made to the churches. The second angel's message is, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' Revelation 14:8. And in the loud cry of the third angel's message a voice is heard from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities.' Revelation 18:4–5; Review and Herald, vol. 2, 620; emphasis supplied

"Thus the substance of the second angel's message is again given to the world by that other angel who lightens the earth with his glory. These messages all blend in one, to come before the people in the closing days of this earth's history." Selected Messages, book 2, 116; emphasis supplied

We can very clearly see that the call to come out of Babylon is to be sounded again in the "last work for the warning of the world in the closing days of this earth's history." In a degree, this last message of that other angel coming involved with the World Council of Churches. Seventh-day Adventists have held ecumenical services with the fallen Protestant churches, and we have reached our hands "across the gulf" in various ways. Desmond Ford in a recent interview on Australia radio indicated that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is heading in the direction of mainline Protestantism, and he applauds this move. Others have spoken of unity between Christians. What should be our position?

"There has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint, must necessarily be waived . . . .

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influencethe state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result." The Great Controversy, 444–445

As Seventh-day Adventists we cannot be a part of the various movements seeking Christian unity since they are

How can we give the trumpet a certain sound if we are linking hand in hand with those pastors that are preaching the false wine of Babylon?

down from heaven with great power and lightening the earth with his glory is to be accomplished through our publishing houses. See Testimonies, vol. 7 139–140. But it will also have to be sounded through our pastors, "giving the trumpet a certain sound." See Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 111. How can this truly be done, if we are linking hand in hand with those pastors who are preaching the false wine of Babylon?

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. In the past, we Seventh-day Adventists have become

not based on correct doctrine. "We are not to cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth: we should scorn concealment. Unfurl your colors to meet the cause of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise. In your opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of wavering: the world has a right to know what to expect of us." Evangelism, 179

"Jesus lived in the midst of a sinful and perverse generation. He could not be
at peace with the world unless He left them unwarned, unpreached, and this would not be in accordance with the plan of salvation.” Ibid., 368

"There is to be no compromise with those who make void the law of God.... Our testimony is not to be less decided now than formerly; our real position is not to be cloaked in order to please the world’s great men. They may desire us to unite with them and accept their plans, and may make propositions in regard to our course of action which may give the enemy an advantage over us. ... While we should not seek for controversy, and should not needlessly offend, we must present the truth clearly and decidedly, and stand firm to what God has taught us in His Word.” Selected Messages, book 2, 371

The Lord is coming soon. Many will perish if they are not warned. It is quite difficult to warn if we are in any form of a compromising position. If our pastor is in such a position, let us not criticize, but instead let us approach him in love and show him from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that we each need to be able to proclaim the last-day message of that other angel, “Come out of her, my people.”

May the three angels’ messages be preached to a dying world, may a noble character be developed in all those who love the Lord, and may Jesus come soon.

Editorial

Continued from 2

s slighted and rejected. Gather them up with meekness, with trembling, and with fear. The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.” Ibid., 93–94

"It is a solemn and terrible truth that many who have been zealous in proclaiming the third angel’s message are now becoming listless and indifferent! The line of demarcation between worldlings and many professed Christians is almost indistinguishable. Many who once were earnest Adventists are conforming to the world—to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. Instead of leading the world to render obedience to God’s law, the church is uniting more and more closely with the world in transgression. Daily the church is becoming converted to the world. How many professing Christians are slaves of mammon! Their indulgence of appetite, their extravagant expenditure of money for selfish gratification, greatly dishonors God.” Ibid., vol. 8, 118–119

"This is our message, the very message that the three angels flying in the midst of heaven are proclaiming. The work to be done now is that of sounding this last message of mercy to a fallen world. A new life is coming from heaven and taking possession of all God’s people. But divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest.

"The work will grow deeper and become more earnest to the very close of time. And all who are laborers together with God will contend most earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. They will not be turned from the present message, which is already lightening the earth with its glory. Nothing is worth contending for but the glory of God. The only rock that will stand is the Rock of Ages. The truth as it is in Jesus is the refuge in these days of error.” Selected Messages, book 2, 114

Let us remember that the prophet of the Lord wrote these inspired statements before the turn of the century, but she was looking at our day—the end of time, the time when the Elijah message was to warn the church and the world of the soon-coming Redeemer, when the third angel’s message would be joined by the fourth angel of Revelation 18 to swell to a loud cry.

Let us also remember that truth does not divide, but when truth meets error and apostasy there is a division—error divides. But let us have courage now. The revival and reformation promised is on its way and God is now taking the reins into His own hands. See Testimonies to Ministers, 300. Many will be surprised by the simple means He will use to perfect His work in righteousness. He is working through His Holy Spirit around the world with people who are willing to be made willing to perfectly obey present truth and to purify their souls through justification and sanctification.

They are symbolized by the three angels flying in heaven in this final hour of the church’s probation. See Testimonies, vol. 6, 17–18; Selected Messages, book 2, 387. Our prophet says: "There are few really consecrated men among us, few who have fought and conquered in the battle with self. Real conversion is a decided change of feelings and motives; it is a virtual taking leave of worldly connections, a hastening from their spiritual atmosphere, a withdraw-
The Church That Knowest Not

I

t is well recognized among us as Seventh-day Adventists that the messages to the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 picture the experience of the Christian church down through the centuries. As early as 1856 our leadership recognized that the message to the last church, Laodicea, was prophetic of our experience as God's remnant church. See Ellen White, The Early Years, vol. 1, 1827-1862, 342-345. What has been less recognized and accepted is the content of the message to Laodicea and the significance to those to whom it is addressed.

Each of the messages to the seven churches is addressed to the "star," or angel, of that respective church. See Revelation 1:16, 20, 2:1, 8, 12, 18, and 3:1, 7, 14. The angel represents the ministry or leadership of each respective church. See Gospel Workers, 13 and The Acts of the Apostles, 586. The Bible does not say that these seven letters are given to the respective leaderships for them to serve to the church as communicants of the message. Scripture does not say that these letters are descriptions of only the laity throughout the Christian era. No, it seems that these descriptions of Christ's church till the close of time are describing the conditions of both leadership and laity, but especially of leadership. Human experience tends to follow the dictum: "Like leader, like people." Christ addresses His messages to the leadership of each of His churches because the messages are descriptions of the leadership as well as of the people. He also addresses these messages to leadership because He holds the undershepherds responsible for the condition of the sheep.

In His message to the first church (Revelation 2:1-7), Christ informs leadership that there is apostasy in the church in the form of "false apostles" (verse 2). He also states that the church as a whole is apostatizing by leaving their first love and are in need of repentance (verses 4-5). A careful study of the messages to churches two, three, four, and six reveals that each had individuals or groups disobedient to the Lord (Revelation 2:8, 12, 18 and 3:7). The majority body of each of these four churches, however, was not greatly condemned by the faithful and true Witness. Evidently these churches contained apostasy, but they as a body were not in apostasy.

The condition of the fifth church, Sardis, was less favorable. It had a name of being spiritually alive, but in reality it was dead. Its members were unaware of their true condition and were in need of waking up (Revelation 3:1-6). Only a few in Sardis were not involved in the apostasy (verse 4). The majority, or body, were in disobedience to Christ and in need of repentance. We are told that the message to Sardis is sent to Christ's present-day church.

"In the message to the church at Sardis two parties are presented—those who have a name to live, but are dead; and those who are striving to overcome. Study this message, found in the third chapter of Revelation. Who are meant by those that are ready to die? and what has made them thus? The explanation is given, 'I have not found thy works perfect before God.' To the church of the present day this message is sent." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 939
The condition of Christ’s last church is the least favorable of all. No individuals or groups are singled out by the True Witness. It is seemingly not a problem of some in the church being asleep or dead or in apostasy. The whole body is involved. The whole leadership and laity alike are described as having a lukewarm relationship with Christ and in danger of being rejected by Him. We are told that “there are Enochs in this our day,” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 332) but according to the account of the Faithful and True Witness they must be in the minority.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:14-16. That the entire end-time church is in a less than ideal spiritual condition is confirmed by the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25:1-13. All leadership and laity alike, are described as being spiritually asleep just before the arrival of the bridegroom. Christ described His last church as being in a wretched spiritual condition. “Because thousayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17

Does the end-time prophet confirm our condition as described by the faithful and true Witness? “The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people.” Ibid., vol. 7, 961. “The message to the church of the Laodiceans applies especially to the people of God today.” Review and Herald, vol. 4, 548. “The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time. . . . The Lord here shows us that the message to be borne to His people by ministers whom He has called to warn the people is not a peace-and-safety message. . . . The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 252-253

What will happen if we do not awaken to our true condition? Our churches and institutions will become weakened and dead. “The church is like the unproductive tree which, receiving the dew and rain and sunshine, should have produced an abundance of fruit, but on which the divine search discovers nothing but leaves. Solemn thought for our churches! solemn, indeed, for every individual! Marvelous is the patience and forbearance of God; but ‘except thou repent,’ it will be exhausted; the churches, our institutions, will go from weakness to weakness, from cold formality to deadness, while they are saying, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’ The True Witness says, ‘And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ Will they ever see clearly their true condition?” Review and Herald, vol. 2, 454; italics in original

How concerned should we be by the exposure of our true condition as a people? Is the condition of being lukewarm very serious? Is there any greater danger involved in remaining in the comfortable lukewarm condition? “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:16

How concerned should we be about the danger of being spewed out? “Will the churches heed the Laodicean message? Will they repent, or will they, Adventist Church, calling themselves the commandment-keeping people of God, and yet possess no more vitality and consecration to God than do the nominal churches, will receive of the plagues of God just as verily as the churches who oppose the law of God. Only those that are sanctified through the truth will compose the royal family in the heavenly mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him and keep His commandments.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, 176

There can be no apostasy with more serious consequences than that of Laodicea who will suffer the seven last plagues unless she repents. Laodicea’s serious condition is compounded by her blindness to her condition. It is serious enough to be in danger of the punishment prepared for those who receive the mark of the beast. It is even a more serious and desperate situation to be blinded to that danger. There can be no greater danger than remaining asleep in the church that knowest it not. “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:16-17

What will happen if we do not awaken to our true condition? Our churches and institutions will become weakened and dead

With reason Isaiah tells us to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1. Woe to those who continue to rock the cradle of the slumbering church when such messages are given.

“Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances, and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin, and that they may prosper in purity, and the name of God be glorified, will ever meet with resisting
influences from the unconsecrated. Zephaniah describes the true state of this class, and the terrible judgments that will come upon them: 'And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their reprove sin. Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or popularity. And by some it is considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God should never allow his own spirit to be mingled with the reproof which he is required to give; but responsible for the sins of the guilty. Those men who have excused wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable, and of lovely disposition, simply because they shunned to discharge a plain and scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it."  *Review and Herald*, vol. 1, 133

We need not study far into the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy as to how Christ has asked us to live for Him and as to how we are to do His work on this earth to realize that as a people we are in disobedience to many of those counsels. (see *Our Firm Foundation*, December 1991, 5) One does not have to study far to agree with the General Conference leadership of 1973–1974 that "Leaders and people are in some ways disobedient to divine directives, both in personal experience and in the conduct of the church's commission. . . . As Seventh-day Adventists we cannot plead ignorance of God's will concerning His expectations, either for the individual or for the church. If we ignore or reject God's counsels, this may well be defined as an act of insubordination, which will affect our relation to the coming of the Lord."  *Annual Council 1973/1974 Appeals* (see *Our Firm Foundation*, December 1991, 19)

Our degree of Laodicean slumber is measurable by how we perceive ourselves in comparison as to how God perceives us as portrayed by His messenger in the following reference:

"I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of punishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

"The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining

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Woe to us if we try to diminish our personal responsibility or that of leadership by downplaying the seriousness of disobedience to the Lord or apostasy in the church.

lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.' Zephaniah 1:12. . . . God will not be trifled with. It is in time of conflict when the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then the standard-bearers need to be firm, and let their true position be known. It is then the skill of every true soldier for the right is tested. Shirkrs can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might into the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will. God is a sin-hating God; and those who will encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse." *Review and Herald*, vol. 2, 49–50

Woe to us if we try to diminish our personal responsibility or that of leadership by downplaying the seriousness of disobedience to the Lord or apostasy in the church. The lesson to be learned from Achan's experience is that the whole body, and especially leadership, is held responsible when there is sin in the camp. When we fail to do what we can to remove apostasy from our ranks we become guilty of and parties to that apostasy.

"The history of Achan teaches the solemn lesson, that for one man's sin, the displeasure of God will rest upon a people or a nation till the transgression is searched out and punished. Sin is corrupting in its nature. One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands. Those who occupy responsible positions as guardians of the people are false to their trust, if they do not faithfully search out and

he is under the most solemn obligation to present the Word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name. Those who by their carelessness or indifference permit God's name to be dishonored by His professed people, are numbered with the transgressor—registered in the record of heaven as partakers in their evil deeds." *Signs of the Times*, vol. 1, 221

When we perceive spiritual coldness and declension among us, we need to seek wisdom from God as to how to recognize the evil in the camp and how to get rid of it.

"We repeat, God holds the church responsible for the sins of its individual members. When coldness and spiritual declension exist, God's people should put away their pride and self-confidence and self-exaltation, and should come to the Lord in sorrow and humility, not charging Him with injustice, but seeking wisdom to understand the hidden sins which shut out His presence.

"Those who have the true love of God in their hearts will not teach that sin should be handled with gloved hands. The words of God to Joshua contain a solemn lesson for every one who professes to be a follower of Christ—'Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.'"  Joshua 7:12; ibid., 222

"If wrongs exist among the people, and the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are guilty alike with the sinner, and will receive the displeasure of God just as surely as the sinner; for they will be made re-
Crisis!
Continued from 18

We were warned that Satan’s final deception for us a people would be to turn back from following Christ by permitting His leadership of us to be made of none effect by our lack of faith in the Spirit of Prophecy.

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

Tragically, to a great extent, Satan has been successful in accomplishing his objective. Yes, our condition as leaders and laity is indeed wretched, and as long as we refuse to recognize our insubordination and apostasy, our condition is truly desperate. But let us not despair. The Faithful and True Witness has more than adequate power and remedies to cope with our dire straits. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” Revelation 3:18

"In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God’s remnant church. He writes: ‘I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory... stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.’ ” Revelation 15:2–3; Sons and Daughters of God, 358

In what ways do God’s plans for us differ from our present ways of living and working for Him? What will it take to awaken us from our comfortable, lukewarm, slumbering condition?

What is to be our response to apostasy? What measures are being used by Christ and will be used by Him to prepare presently lethargic leaders and members of the church that “knowest not” to stand perfected on the sea of glass? These matters will be discussed in future issues.

from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 217

The Lamb, had agencies, of different and objective.

"The three instances for two reasons. First, they verify that what has happened within older denominations has also taken place already within our church. Second, to warn of the inevitable consequence of pursuing a policy of persecution and disfellowshipment against those dedicated to the purity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And it is this purity for which God calls.

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:27

"Therefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” 2 Peter 3:14

The results of the three previous losses of dedicated members from our church has been relatively small, although tragic. But if we do not judge the present worldwide situation aright and continue to still the voices of warning at this time of abject apostasy, if we continue to disfellowship the church’s most able and loyal supporters, the schism which we in the denominational ranks will have caused may be beyond the ability of God’s church to recover. Even allowing for the fact that some now boldly opposing error will capitulate if the ecclesiastical pressure becomes fiercer, nevertheless, the worldwide distribution of men and women who will not yield conviction to the dictates of those who, while accepting posts of leadership, are unfaithful to Jesus and His Word, will be catastrophic.

These are those who live sacrificially in order to spread God’s message. They have spent all in the cause of their Saviour. To lose from our midst these, with their even more important godly testimonies, would be as surely the death knell of God’s church as was the dismissal of the early Christians from the Jewish organization. The day has come when Christ’s prophecy is being fulfilled in our own church.

“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh that whoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” John 16:2–3

This self-destructive process must be halted immediately, for the survival of God’s precious church is at stake. Furthermore, those disfellowshiped must be welcomed back into fellowship, and full, open confession of the wrong done must be made.

In these acts we are contravening the explicit directions of our Lord.

“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.” Matthew 13:27–29

Of course, some church members become so profligate that it is necessary to sever their church connection. But our present action in separating from the church those living upright lives is quite different. In these cases we are taking God’s prerogative to ourselves in seeking to read the hearts of men and women. All churches which have in the past usurped this divine prerogative have claimed to be genuine churches of God.

It is not yet too late for our church. But there must be an immediate halt to the rash of punitive actions taken by leadership against humble, earnest church members. We must reinstate the memberships and credentials taken from godly members for less than proper cause. Failure to do so will initiate a crisis for our church of unprecedented proportions, for which we in denominational service will be responsible. I pray that God will preserve His treasured church.

We have reached the very time foretold by God’s servant when she stated that “the church may appear as about to fall.” Selected Messages, book 2, 380

If we did not have the assurance of Inspiration that it will not fall we would be sorely tempted to doubt this fact. This assurance does not lessen our responsibility to heed the warnings of the faithful and to seek our God that the almost overwhelming apostasy in our midst be cast out of God’s church. Let us face the present crisis by rising in purity, preparing to meet our God.
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