Our Firm Foundation

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

Volume 7  Number 5

The Greatest Deception
Separation from the World
The Two Parties
Impetuous Peter
The Great Need of the Holy Spirit

God's Plan for the Home, see page 8
THERE are many Christians today who attend church faithfully, pay an honest tithe, and participate in church activities, but who are not sure of their salvation. The pressure of life, the pressure of trying to become a success in life, of becoming educated, of marriage, children, business finances, and yes, materialism, all seem to engross and entangle the life until there is no time for the spiritual. The family altar disappears for lack of time.

Children grow from babyhood, childhood, to youth without the spiritual guidance of the father as the priest of the home. Mothers find themselves in the work place to supply the second paycheck to meet the material demands of this fast-moving computer age. And our youth are now leaving the church at a frightening rate, because they have not seen real religion in the home, in the school, and even in the church. Many have never experienced a real conversion, and ask what salvation is. Bible classes in our schools many times have only confused them. In one class the teacher gives one concept of righteousness and another teacher or preacher expounds another doctrine. Parents are sometimes so confused that it is no wonder that our youth are leaving the church or are indifferent to any religious doctrine concerning their salvation.

TV, movies, rock music, sensuality, premarital sex, cola drinks, coffee, hamburgers, and many times a very unhealthful diet, are producing a generation of irreligious youth with no assurance of their salvation. They have never met Jesus as their Saviour. They have not the assurance of having their sins truly repented of and confessed and forsaken; they know not the work of the Holy Spirit. Many have never witnessed the consistent justified and sanctified lives of their adult peers. Whether it is father, mother, teacher, or preacher, they want to see religion in action. They need to talk and counsel with examples of that great experience of knowing Jesus personally, who have experienced redemption in its fullest; men and women, mothers and fathers, teachers and preachers who have sought for this Pearl of great price with all their heart and soul, and found it, who know and have claimed daily the promise in Jeremiah 29:13: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” They desire to see in action those who have the faith of Jesus, the faith that can move mountains.

They have read in Revelation the promises to those who have overcome, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Revelation 2:17. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confessed his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Revelation 3:5. And they too have eagerly looked to their peers for evidence that victory is possible, and are told it is not. Their teachers or preachers explain that salvation is the work that God does for them just before Jesus returns for His people, and they receive assurance based on a counterfeit gospel, a forensic gospel that justified the sinner at Calvary. Sanctification is a bit of magic that comes at the second coming of Christ. No wonder Jesus said that many are called, but few are chosen, and Ellen White was forced to tell us that in our day, this last generation, there would be only a few in God’s remnant church who would survive its final apostasy and shaking. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 10, 50, 75-83; vol. 1, 608-609.

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 136. This test is soon to be made; are you ready? Where are the parents, teachers and preachers who by their godliness show the way of salvation to their children? Our prophet Ellen White states this concept in the following inspired statement: “Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and co-operates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.” Selected Messages, book 1, 397.

May God help our parents, teachers, and pastors now to live before our youth and children and demonstrate that faith, that patience, that love of Jesus that brings victory over all cultivated and inherited weakness of character to sin. See The Desire of Ages, 671; Education, 257; Testimonies, vol. 1, 144.

That the latter rain soon may come to our beloved remnant church is the prayer of the editorial staff of Our Firm Foundation.

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

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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
The Greatest Deception

Can the truth be a curse to its possessors, and through their influence a curse to the world? How many people I have met that profess faith in "present truth" and even some who are actively involved in teaching it to others, but, upon meeting them, their wives, and their children, I find their lives not in harmony with God! The children are quite often unruly, disobedient, and unmanageable. The wives hold to the forms without the power, and it is not unusual for the husband's conversations to be negative, faultfinding, or to have self-exalting comments mixed with a little jesting and joking.

Friends, do we, as Paul states in Romans 1:18, "hold the truth in unrighteousness"? If the truth we profess to hold does not make us and our families kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly minded, well ordered, well disciplined, compassionate, humble and meek, then we are told "it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world." The Desire of Ages, 310

One of the deepest lessons that those of us professing "present truth" have to learn is that the Word without a living experience in our lives is of little value. The Pharisees are a prime example of holding onto the "words" or "truths" while at the same time denying Christ in their lives. Christ said to them, "Ye search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life." John 5:39; all emphasis supplied. Is your Christian experience made up of the "theory of truth" while your life and those of your wife and children deny the power thereof? Many of us take for granted that we are Christians, simply because we subscribe to present truth. But if we have not brought the truth, as it is in Jesus, into the practical life of our families, I ask you, What have we? Doesn't the truth as it is in Jesus, always bring conformity of heart and life to the truths held?

Paul said it well in Romans 2:21, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" It is when we learn to live "the life hid with Christ in God" (see Colossians 3:3) that we will "finish the work." A mere sermonizing and profession of present truth will never do it.

Friends, have we taught others and not taught ourselves and our own families? We are told that "One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached." The Adventist

Jim Hohnberger and his wife, Sally, have a self-supporting ministry directed to uplifting the family.
Home, 32. People all over are saying, "Enough sermonizing, enough preaching; we want to see 'life hid with Christ in God,'" whole families, fathers, mothers and children living the true life they espouse, whole families walking with God, whole families transformed, not in profession only, but also in practical day-to-day life.

The Lord's prophet has warned us that "The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth... often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life... The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possessions of the oracles of God; yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. They thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory. The same danger still exists." The Desire of Ages, 309

Friends, the same danger still exists today. Do we have an assent to the truth without the hour-by-hour application of it in our life and our families' lives?

Do we have a "perfect" theoretical knowledge of "present truth" without a life and family that are held moment by moment from exhibiting the weaknesses of our fallen natures?

Do we boast of our possession of the oracles of God, while in our life and that of our wife and children are seen selfishness, disorder, unrule, irritation and self-sufficiency?

Do we think of ourselves as the greatest religionists of the day, yet at the same time crucify the Lord of glory afresh by our giving way to irritation, sarcasm, a jesting spirit, a critical fault-finding mouth, and tolerating an unruly household? If so, then we are in grave danger of entering into the greatest deception that can come upon God's people. That is professing we are all right, while in life we are all wrong.

It is time we start living our faith. And if we cannot bring the "life hid with Christ in God" into our families, then we cannot bring it abroad either, for we can give to others only what we ourselves possess. Our influence will retard the work. It is not that we cannot live the "life hid with Christ in God," it is that we choose not to.

Let us demonstrate to others that this "life hid with Christ in God" is a "present reality," a "present experience" here and now.

Should not the rule of our conversations be as the apostle Paul has well stated, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"? 1 Corinthians 2:2

Friends, have you learned to live your life knowing God is with you in reality every moment? That in the most difficult circumstances He is always more present and nearer than anyone or anything around you? All our knowledge of God's Word will help us very little unless that question is answered and implemented in our lives. One might be able to present the letter of the Word of God; he might be familiar with all its commands and promises, but unless his life is truly "hid with Christ in God," in constant dependence upon Him, all his knowledge and profession will be of no avail. Many, so many, are failing in their lives of imitating our holy Pattern because they are full of their own thoughts, their own words, their own plans, always active, always busy; but they seem not to have time or place for the precious Jesus to be a close, dear and present Companion to them. They do not refer every thought, word, action and plan to Him, inquiring, "Is this the way of the Lord?"

Friends, let us not break with the "present truth" we all hold dear and precious, but let us add to it a full and complete surrender of ourselves and our families. Let us all possess a living experience of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. Should not we all say, Enough of present truth without the application? Enough of profession without the power. Enough of knowledge without an active present-day living experience, lest we be guilty of living the greatest deception, and in the end receive not the seal of God in our foreheads.

How terribly grieved I would be if after having ministered to scores and scores of individuals and families, as
well as having conducted seminars and cottage meetings in and across this nation, should 1 be found unfit for the seal of God! And how saddened I would be if many of my friends and colaborers in bringing present truth to this world should also be found unfit for the seal of God! Perhaps even worse would be for me and my friends and colaborers to receive the seal of God while those of our loved ones are passed by. But we are told that this very thing is going to happen. Just listen closely to these words penned for our admonition:

Will you not covenant with me to give all to Christ? Covenant never to start a day unless you can say with David, My “heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord”

“There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 214

In the same way that the truth can be a curse to its possessors, so also can the church be a curse to its adherents and through their influence a curse to the world. Just the thought of the truth or the church being a curse is enough to raise one’s ire, but we must be naptly honest with ourselves lest we be deceived in these troublous times.

“Christ’s act in cursing the [fig] tree which His own power had created stands as a warning to all churches and to all Christians.” The Desire of Ages, 584. Why did Christ curse the fig tree, which represented the Jewish nation, the chosen people of God? Because Jesus found nothing in it but a mass of pretentious foliage. Or as the apostle Paul said, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:5. The tree drew people to itself with a hope of receiving life, but it had no life to give, only pretentious leaves. When any church draws followers to itself rather that pointing them to Christ, not in theory but in practice, it usurps the place of Christ and in turn becomes a curse rather than an instrument of grace.

Let me illustrate. When a man is giving an illustrated lecture, he often uses a long pointer to direct his audience’s attention to a specific area on a chart, drawing or blackboard. Do the people look at the pointer? No, the pointer is only to help direct their attention to the specific area of interest on the chart or drawing. The pointer may be of fine mahogany with inlaid gold, but the pointer cannot satisfy the people. They want to see what the pointer directs them to. The church is nothing more than a pointer, pointing us to our Saviour. It is the tool of God to take the three angels’ messages to the world, as well as to demonstrate to all men, women and children how to live the “life hid with Christ in God.” See Colossians 3:3

When a church draws people to itself and the “focus” becomes the support of the system, the allegiance to the system, the connection with the system and an elevation of the system, it is then that it can become a curse. There is no system or church that has ever saved a man. Not the Jewish church, nor the Adventist Church nor in any other church is there to be found salvation. We have been rightly cautioned that “The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, ‘I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received.’” Ibid., 675

The very system that Christ raised up, that was to point the people to the coming of the promised Messiah, was the very system that stole the allegiance of its adherents from the Messiah in order to lift itself up and to insure its own welfare. How very sad that the very One the church was to point all men to, it crucified! This same danger still exists today. Everywhere we hear the cry, Support the system; be faithful to the system; don’t leave the system.

But we need to ask ourselves, Where are the voices of concern for whether we are abiding in Christ, whether we have a living daily experience in Christ? Where are the concerns as to whether our families are well ordered, well disciplined, and Christ-centered? Where are those upholding us to remain with Christ in our thoughts, in our words and in our actions? We hear little or none of this. But we hear a great deal of whether we are supporting, attending and are in good standing with the system. But if that system steals the place of Christ, as the Jewish system did, then it is in jeopardy of becoming a curse to its adherents and through their influence a curse to the world. Christ says, “I am the Vine” and only as we are day by day, moment by moment connected to Him do we have life and salvation.

My plea to you is not to abandon the system but to so attach yourself to the Leader of the system, that through you He can awaken and revive His “pointer.” Let us not utter one word of cursing against the system, but let us rather cry over the sins found in her as Christ did over Jerusalem. We cannot and must not throw out the church, no more that we would throw out the truth. Now we need to give each of them its rightful place, as a “pointer,” to help direct us to a vital and intimate connection with our only source of salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Friends, examine your own hearts, judge your own course. Let each put the question to his own life: “Have I held to a system more than to Christ Himself? Have I trusted in my knowledge of the truth, more than a living experience in it?”

Then covenant with me to give all to Christ—all your allegiance, all your thoughts, all your words, all your actions. The true gospel can be found only when we give all—all we have, all we are, all we can be. God, the great I AM, witheld nothing from us. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” John 3:16. “He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as
our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature.” Ibid., 25

Calvary demonstrates that God withheld nothing. He gave all. The cross of Calvary is love's unanswerable argument of giving all. I ask you what more could God have given? What more could God have done? God sacrificed all. He had for our redemption, that we might enter into this “life hid with Christ in God.” God gave all that we might have all.

Will you not covenant with me to give all to Christ? Covenant never to start a day unless you can say with David, My “heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” Psalm 112:7. Never get off your knees unless you know that Christ is now by your side as your constant daily Companion.

Will you not covenant with me to refer every thought, word, and action to Christ, inquiring: “Is this the way of the Lord?” Will you not educate your mind and heart to ever feel the presence of God, and when in trial and perplexity allow your prayers to ascend to God saying, “What shall I do to honor thee, my God?”

I pray that God will open our eyes to see that “we are not God's children unless we are such entirely.” Steps to Christ, 44. We cannot just be Christ’s in profession; no, we are not His unless we are His entirely. All, and I mean all our thoughts, words and actions are to be consciously and continually filtered through our Mediator before they find expression. Is this your experience? If it is not, it can be. Will you choose it? If you will not, then will you succumb to the “greatest deception,” which is having a knowledge, a profession to the truth and an allegiance to the church, while your life, your thoughts, your words, and your actions are not every day, every moment “hid with Christ in God”?

This life of absolute dependence, absolute trust, absolute surrender is available to us all today. Now! Friends, we have heretofore lived a life to our own liking. Will you not begin today, by the grace of Heaven, to live a life fully and completely given to the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Will you not now choose a life in which Christ shall be All and in All? ☐

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**Bulletin Board**

**Sharing Our Firm Foundation**

Here are three ways you can share Our Firm Foundation with your fellow church members, friends, and relatives: 1) Give them a gift subscription. The suggested donation is $14.50 for one gift subscription or $10 each for three or more. 2) Write us for free sample issues to share personally with your friends and encourage them to subscribe. Please specify how many magazines you can use. 3) If you cannot afford a gift subscription for all you would like to share the magazine with, you can send us their names and addresses. We will mail one or more sample magazines to them at no cost to you.

**1992 Camp Meetings**

For those who need to make plans for this coming summer, we are announcing the tentative schedule for camp meetings sponsored by Hope International, Hartland, and Steps to Life. Please watch for further announcements from the sponsors.

**1992 Camp Meeting Schedule**

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<td>Hendersonville, NC</td>
<td>(703) 672-3100</td>
<td>Hartland</td>
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<td>May 6-10</td>
<td>Orlando, FL</td>
<td>(407) 438-6192</td>
<td>11th-Hr Ministry</td>
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<td>*May 15-17</td>
<td>Kettering, OH</td>
<td>(703) 672-3100</td>
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<td>May 20-24</td>
<td>Gazeley, England</td>
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<td>May 27-31</td>
<td>Grants Pass, OR</td>
<td>(703) 672-3100</td>
<td>Hartland</td>
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<td>June 4-7</td>
<td>Loudenville, OH</td>
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<td>June 9-14</td>
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<td>June 17-25</td>
<td>Singapore and Malaysia</td>
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<td>*June 24-28</td>
<td>Allentown, PA</td>
<td>(206) 832-6602</td>
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<td>July 8-12</td>
<td>Toronto, Ont., Canada</td>
<td>(703) 672-3100</td>
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<td>July 16-19</td>
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<td>July 22-26</td>
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<td>Sept 1-6</td>
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<td>*Sept 10-13</td>
<td>Hendersonville, NC</td>
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<td>*Oct 14-18</td>
<td>Yucaipa, CA</td>
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<td>Oct 14-18</td>
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* Note Changes

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God’s Plan for the Home

The home is the foundation and the fabric of society. As goes the home so goes the school, the church, the nation, and society in general.

“IT is by the youth and children of today that the future of society is to be determined, and what these youth and children shall be depends upon the home. To the lack of right home training may be traced the larger share of the disease and misery and crime that curse humanity. If the home life were pure and true, if the children who went forth from its care were prepared to meet life’s responsibilities and dangers, what a change would be seen in the world!” The Ministry of Healing, 351

“If we have unity in the church, we must first have it in the home; for it is from the home that the church is formed, and the temper and dispositions displayed in the family circle are the temper and dispositions found in the church.” Review and Herald, vol. 2, 315-316

“In the home the foundation is laid for the prosperity of the church. The influences that rule in the home life are carried into the church life; therefore church duties should first begin in the home.” The Adventist Home, 318

“Home religion is greatly needed, and our words in the home should be of a right character, or our testimonies in the church will amount to nothing. Unless you manifest meekness, kindness, and courtesy in your home, your religion will be in vain. If there were more genuine home religion, there would be more power in the church.” Messages to Young People, 327

Knowing this, God intrusted His remnant people with an abundance of wide-ranging counsels regarding His plan for our homes. The present high rate of divorce among us and the high loss of our youth to the world speak tragically of Satan’s success in making many of the Lord’s counsels regarding our homes of none effect. Our lack of faith and belief in the Testimonies and the Holy Scriptures has resulted in many ways in a turning back from following Christ in the leadership of them. Let us review some of the many instructions of the Lord regarding God’s blueprint for our homes.

The formation of most homes begins with the exchange of marriage vows. Too often we have failed to recognize the importance and desirability of marrying someone of our own faith. Too often we have placed the love of and our love for another person before Christ.

“The heart yearns for human love, but this love is not strong enough, or pure enough, or precious enough, to supply the place of the love of Jesus. Only in her Saviour can the wife find wisdom, strength, and grace to meet the cares, responsibilities, and sorrows of life. She should make Him her strength and her guide. Let woman give herself to Christ before giving herself to any earthly friend, and enter into no relation which shall conflict with this. Those who find true happiness must have the blessing of Heaven upon all that they possess and all that they do. It is disobedience to God that fills so many hearts and homes with misery. My sister, unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God.” Ibid., 440. (For further discussion of the Lord’s counsels regarding courtship and marriage see Our Firm Foundation, vol. 6, No. 8.)

The location of our home is to be determined by the environment which will best assist us in preparing for heaven. The moral and religious influences are of primary importance. Temporary benefits will have secondary consideration. “In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families.” The Adventist Home, 131

“In the selection of a home, parents should not be governed by temporal considerations merely. It is not altogether a question of the place where they
can make the most money, or where they will have the most pleasant surroundings, or the greatest social advantages. The influences that will surround their children, and sway them for good or evil, are of more consequence than any of these considerations. A most solemn responsibility rests upon parents in choosing a place of residence. As far as possible they are to place their families in the channel of light, where their affections will be kept pure, and their love to God and to one another active." Fundamentals of Christian Education, 421

We need to live where we can behold the works of God rather than the works of man. Our eternal salvation and that of our children is endangered by loitering in the cities. "During the night season I was in council. I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God's appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children. Some were loitering, making no determined efforts. The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean.' Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide-awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next." Pamphlet 68, 22

Education of children in city schools makes character building ten times harder. "Send the children to schools located in the city, where every phase of temptation is waiting to attract and demoralize them, and the work of character building is tenfold harder for both parents and children." Fundamentals of Christian Education, 326

Not only are we to live in the country, but we are also to be involved in the activity of tilling the soil. "I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country [places,] where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce. Thus they may bring their children up with simple, healthful habits. I see the necessity of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis." Country Living, 21

In choosing the location of our home, we are to consider not only our well-being but also the need for our witnessing in good works in the area in which we live. "It is not the purpose of God that His people should colonize or settle together in large communities. The disciples of Christ are His representatives upon the earth, and God designs that they shall be scattered all over the country, in the towns, cities, and villages, as lights amidst the darkness of the world. They are to be missionaries for God, by their faith and works testifying to the near approach of the coming Saviour.

"The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which, as yet, they have scarcely begun. None should move into new places merely for the sake of worldly advantage; but where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries. They should feel a love for souls, a burden of labor for them, and should make it a study how to bring them into the truth. They can distribute our publications, hold meetings in their homes, become acquainted with their neighbors, and invite them to come to these meetings. Thus they can let their light shine in good works." Testimonies, vol. 8, 244–245

Our homes are to be so constructed and situated as to permit sunlight and fresh air into every room. "No room in the house should be considered furnished and adorned without the cheering, enlivening light and sunshine, which are Heaven's own free gift to man." My Life Today, 138

"In the building of houses it is especially important to secure thorough ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Let there be a current of air and an abundance of light in every room in the house. Sleeping rooms should be so arranged as to have a free circulation of air day and night. No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine. In most countries bedrooms need to be supplied with conveniences for heating, that they may be thoroughly warmed and dried in cold or wet weather." The Ministry of Healing, 274

We are to have the trees and shrubs away from our homes in order not to interfere with the above objectives. "If we would have our homes the abiding place of health and happiness we must place them above the miasma and fog of the lowlands, and give free entrance to heaven's life-giving agencies. Dispense with heavy curtains, open the windows and the blinds, allow no vines, however beautiful, to shade the windows, and permit no trees to stand so near the house as to shut out the sunshine. The sunlight may fade the drapery and the carpets, and tarnish the picture frames; but it will bring a healthy glow to the cheeks of the children." Ibid., 275

The home should be on high and dry ground. "Shade trees and shrubbery too close and dense around a house are unhealthful; for they prevent a free circulation of air and shut out the rays of the sun. In consequence of this, dampness gathers in the house. Especially in wet seasons the sleeping rooms become damp, and those who occupy them are..."
away, a poisonous miasma arises, and fever and ague, sore throat, lung diseases, and fevers will be the result.”

Counsels on Health, 58

Our homes are to have durable and economical furnishings. “Furnish your home with things plain and simple, things that will bear handling, that can be easily kept clean, and that can be replaced without great expense. By exercising taste, you can make a very simple home attractive and inviting, if love and contentment are there.” The Adventist Home, 150

The purpose of a Christian home is to be an object lesson of the true principles of life. It can have a more powerful, ever-widening influence upon the hearts and lives than can any sermon. “The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Such an illustration will be a power for good in the world. Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives. As the youth go out from such a home, the lessons they have learned are imparted. Noble principles of life are introduced into other households, and an uplifting influence works in the community.” The Ministry of Healing, 352

For our homes to fulfill the above objectives great care must be given in regard to their spiritual and social atmosphere. If parents are fully surrendered to Christ their home may be a little heaven to go to heaven in.

“The professed people of God should pray more, and talk less; for we are altogether too earthly. Our minds dwell too much on earthly things. We are to be as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, passing on to a better country. We are to be in earnest in our efforts for gaining eternal life. The blessed Saviour has a crown waiting for us. It is to be decided by us whether or not we shall have that crown. Christ must be revealed in your daily life. There must be no angry words spoken in the home, no seeds of coarse, common talk sown in your children’s hearts, or they will have no confidence in you when you speak in meeting. God help us to have the peace of Christ in our hearts, that we may teach our children the way of life and peace! We may have a little heaven to go to heaven in, if Christ breathes upon us His Holy Spirit. His love will be with us, and we shall be acquainted with Him, and can bring Him into our families.” Review and Herald, vol. 2, 481

The angels of God will often visit the home in which the will of God bears sway. Under the power of divine grace such a home becomes a place of refreshing to worn, weary pilgrims. The atmosphere of the home where Christ rather than self is in control will spread into other homes. “The home in which the members are polite, courteous Christians exerts a far-reaching influence for good. Other families will mark the results attained by such a home, and will follow the example set, in their turn guarding the home against satanic influences. The angels of God will often visit the home in which the will of God bears sway. Under the power of divine grace such a home becomes a place of refreshing to worn, weary pilgrims. By watchful guarding, self is kept from asserting itself. Correct habits are formed. There is a careful recognition of the rights of others. The faith that works by love and purifies the soul stands at the helm, presiding over the whole household. Under the hallowed influence of such a home, the principle of brotherhood laid down in the word of God is more widely recognized and obeyed.” The Adventist Home, 31

Common courtesy and sociability are essential ingredients of a Christian home. “In many families, there is no positive rudeness among the members, only a lack of those simple, affectionate attentions which awaken a spontaneous return; a want of that consideration and gentleness of demeanor which are well-springs of comfort in every household. The well-bred host does not fail to bid his guest ‘Good night,’ and ‘Good morning;’ why should not this simple expression of good feeling be always exchanged between parents and children? The kindly morning greeting will often nip in the bud some rising fretfulness; and the pleasant ‘Good-bye,’ from old and young, when leaving the house for office, shop, or school, is a fragrant memory through the day of separation. When the family gather alone around breakfast or dinner table, the same courtesy should prevail as if guests were present. Reproof, complaint, unpleasant discussion, and scandal, no less than moody silence, should be banished. Let the conversation be genial, and suited to the little folks as far as possible. Interesting incidents of the day’s experience may be mentioned at the evening meal, thus arousing the social element.” Health Reformer, February 1, 1874

Personal self-control will help to make home almost a paradise—the most attractive place on earth. “Let the evenings be spent as happily as possible. Let home be a place where cheerfulness, courtesy, and love exist. This will make it attractive to the children. If the parents are continually borrowing trouble, are irritable and faultfinding, the children partake of the same spirit of dissatisfaction and contention, and home is the most miserable place in the world. The children find more pleasure among strangers, in reckless company, or in the street, than at home. All this might be avoided if temperance in all things were practiced, and patience cultivated. Self-control on the part of all the members of the family will make home almost a paradise. Make your rooms as cheerful as possible. Let the children find home the most attractive place on earth. Throw about them such influences that they will not seek for street companions, nor think of the haunts of vice except with horror. If the home life is what it should be, the habits formed there will be a strong defense against the assaults of temptation when the young shall leave the shelter of home for the world.” Fundamentals of Christian Education, 154–155

Religion in the home is our great hope to save our children from destruction. “Parents are asleep. Their children are going to destruction before their eyes, and the Lord would have His
messengers present before the people, by precept and example, the necessity of home religion. Urge this matter home upon your congregations. Press the conviction of these solemn duties, so long neglected, home upon the conscience. This will break up the spirit of Pharisaism and resistance to the truth as nothing else can. Religion in the home is our great hope and makes the prospect bright for the conversion of the whole family to the truth of God.” Child Guidance, 475

There are to be morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise. “In every Christian home God should be honored by the morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise. Children should be taught to respect and reverence the hour of prayer. It is the duty of Christian parents, morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, to make a hedge about their children.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 110

Our work is unacceptable to God if we fail to show our children that we are dependent upon God for daily guidance, strength and blessing. “Every family should rear its altar of prayer, realizing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If any persons in the world need the strength and encouragement that religion gives, it is those who are responsible for the education and training of children. They cannot do their work in a manner acceptable to God while their daily example teaches those who look to them for guidance that they can live without God. If they educate their children to live for this life only, they will make no preparation for eternity. They will die as they have lived, without God, and parents will be called to account for the loss of their souls. Fathers, mothers, you need to seek God morning and evening at the family altar, that you may learn how to teach your children wisely, tenderly, lovingly.” Child Guidance, 517

During worship time children are to learn proper methods of speaking and praying. “Instruction in vocal culture should be given in the home circle. Parents should teach their children to speak so plainly that those who are listening can understand every word that is said. They should teach them to read the Bible in clear, distinct utterance, in a way that will honor God. And let not those who kneel round the family altar put their faces in their hands and in their chairs when they address God. Let them lift up their heads and, with holy awe and boldness, come to the throne of grace.” The Adventist Home, 435

We are to have a little church in our home with the father the priest and the mother the home missionary. “Some households have a little church in their home. Mutual love binds heart to heart, and the unity that exists among the members of the family preaches the most effectual sermon that could be preached on practical godliness. As parents faithfully do their duty in the family, restraining, correcting, advising, counseling, guiding, the father as a priest of the household, the mother as a home missionary, they are filling the sphere God would have them fill. By faithfully doing their duty in the home, they are multiplying agencies for doing good outside the home. They are becoming better fitted to labor in the church. By training their little flock discreetly, binding their children to themselves and to God, fathers and mothers become laborers together with God. The cross is erected in their home. The members of the family become members of the royal family above, children of the heavenly King.” Lift Him Up, 253

Our first and most important missionary work is to be in the home circle. With children in the home, mothers are not to neglect their God-given missionar-y work for “a larger field.”

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“In the fear of God, your first consideration should be for your children. As a Christian mother, your obligations to them are neither light nor small; and in order to fill them properly, you should lay down some of your other burdens, and devote your time and energies to this work. The home of your children should be the most desirable and happy place in the world to them, and the mother’s presence should be the greatest attraction.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 140

The father will leave his perplexities at his place of labor and will return home to contribute his part to the proper atmosphere and function of the home church. “The father when he returns from his daily labor will not bring his perplexities to his home. He will feel that home and the family circle are too sacred to be marred with unhappy perplexities. When he left his home he did not leave his Saviour and his religion behind. Both were his companions. The sweet influence of his home, the blessing of his wife, and the love of his children make his burdens light; and he returns with peace in his heart and cheerful, encouraging words for his wife and children, who are waiting joyfully to welcome his coming.” My Life Today, 198

The home church will be greatly improved if every member will participate in a home reading circle. “Fathers and mothers, take time to read to your children from the health books, as well as from the books treating more particularly on religious subjects. Teach your children the importance of taking care of the body—the house they live in. Form a home reading circle, in which every member of the family lays aside the busy cares of the day, and gathers for study. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, take up this work unitedly, and see if the home-church will not be greatly improved.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, 276

The home church is to be a place to learn self-denial. “Every church-member should cherish a spirit of sacrifice. In every home there should be taught lessons of self-denial. Keep in your homes a self-denial box into which you can put the money saved by little acts of self-denial.” Gospel Herald, May 1, 1910

Our homes should be a refuge for homeless youth and orphans. “Well then, how shall we occupy our time here? As pilgrims and strangers. You have a home. Thank God for that. There are many who have none. Make that
All are working in their order in their respective spheres. Woman in her home, doing the simple duties of life that must be done, can and should exhibit faithfulness, obedience, and love as sincere as angels in their sphere. Conformity to the will of God makes any work honorable that must be done." Testimonies, vol. 3, 79

Children are to be usefully employed a large share of the time as little helpers. "Work is good for children; they are happier to be usefully employed a large share of the time; their innocent amusements are enjoyed with a keener zest after the successful completion of their tasks. Labor strengthens both the muscles and the mind. Mothers may make precious little helpers of their children; and, while teaching them to be useful, they may themselves gain knowledge of human nature and how to deal with these fresh, young beings and keep their hearts warm and youthful by contact with the little ones. And as their children look to them in confidence and love, so may they look to the dear Saviour for help and guidance. Children that are properly trained, as they advance in years, learn to love that labor which makes the burdens of their friends lighter." The Adventist Home, 286

Parents should work with their children. "Mothers should take their daughters with them into the kitchen and patiently educate them. Their constitution will be better for such labor, their muscles will gain tone and strength, and their meditations will be more healthy and elevated at the close of the day. They may be weary, but how sweet is rest after a proper amount of labor. Do not intimate to your children that it is no matter whether they labor or not. Teach them that their help is needed, that their time to be, that they are doing the work of God just as surely as was Gabriel when sent to the prophets.

"Fathers... combine affection with authority, kindness and sympathy with firm restraint. Give some of your leisure hours to your children; become acquainted with them; associate with them in their work and in their sports, and win their confidence. Cultivate friendship with them, especially with your sons. In this way you will be a strong influence for good." The Adventist Home, 222

Common courtesy and participating in others' activities will greatly improve the quality of home administration. "Many who would not be guilty of discourtesy to a stranger, or to a friend in the world without, lay aside much, if not all, their suavity of manner on entering the home circle. The husband and wife dispense with those little graceful attentions which, though small, are never unimportant. The children are ordered hither and thither with crusty words; no 'Thank you' rewards the little tireless feet that run on countless errands. The dinner is eaten in silence, broken only by fault-finding and reproof from the parents, and ill-humor and teasing among the children. In the evening, the father devotes himself to his newspaper, and the mother to her sewing, interrupting themselves only to give such peremptory orders as 'Less noise, children;' 'Stop quarreling;' and, finally, 'Go to bed.'" Health Reformer, February 1, 1874

The first care of parents is to establish good government in the home. Required obedience to the parents is the child's first lesson in giving obedience to civil authority and to God. Nearly all of the crime and strife of society today is a result of improper discipline and the failure to learn self-control in the home.

"The first care of the parents should be to establish good government in the family. The word of the parents should be law, precluding all arguments or evasions. Children should be taught from infancy to implicitly obey their parents.

Work is good for children; they are happier to be usefully employed a large share of the time; their innocent amusements are enjoyed with a keener zest after the successful completion of their tasks.
This is the first lesson in teaching them to obey the requirements of God. Self-control is absolutely essential to the proper education of our children. The want of this quality of character is the key to the horrible records of crime chronicled every day by the press. The sins which curse mankind, which are found in high places, and which are concealed by a cloak of assumed godliness, as well as the open crime which runs riot among the lower strata of society, can be almost wholly traced to the bad training, or lack of training, of the children under the home roof, and the indulgence and perversion of their appetite around the family board.” Ibid., November 1, 1878

Love is to be the basis of parental rule. God’s Word is to be explained and enforced. “While the spirit of love should pervade the household, it is the duty of parents not to be ruled, but to rule. All under the roof should respect the parental discipline. The law of the household should be held sacred. Parents should bring up their children in

Let the children be taught to honor and obey their parents, that they may also learn to honor and obey their heavenly Father. Parents stand in God’s place to their little ones

the nurture and admonition of the Lord. By their own example they should lead the way to Heaven. The father, as priest of the household, should explain and enforce the Word of God. Let the children be taught to honor and obey their parents, that they may also learn to honor and obey their heavenly Father. Parents stand in God’s place to their little ones. When fathers and mothers realize this, they will find at home a field wherein to exercise their powers for the accomplishment of great good.” Review and Herald, vol. 1, 279

Parents are to work together in governing the home. “Not a particle of variance should be shown by parents in the management of their children. Parents are to work together as a unit. There must be no division. But many parents work at cross-purposes, and thus the children are spoiled by mismanage-

ment. If parents do not agree, let them absent themselves from the presence of their children until an understanding can be arrived at. It sometimes happens that of the mother and father, one is too indulgent, and the other too severe. This difference works against good results in the formation of the characters of their children. No harsh force is to be exercised in carrying out reforms, but at the same time no weak indulgence must be shown. The mother is not to seek to blind the eyes of the father to the faults of the children, neither is she to influence them to do those things which the father has forbidden them to do. Not one seed of doubt should the mother plant in her children’s minds in regard to the wisdom of the father’s management. She should not, by her course of action, counteract the work of the father. She should not complain that the father restricts the children too much. Nothing can save children but vigilance and wise discipline.” Ibid., vol. 3, 451

Children are to be in subjection to their parents as long as they are living

“Some indulgent, ease-loving parents fear to exercise wholesome authority over their unruly sons, lest they run away from home. It would be better for some to do this than to remain at home to live upon the bounty provided by the parents, and at the same time trample upon all authority, both human and divine. It might be a most profitable experience for such children to have to the full that independence which they think so desirable, to learn that it costs exertion to live. Let the parents say to the boy who threatens to run away from home, ‘My son, if you are determined to leave home rather than comply with just and proper rules, we will not hinder you. If you think to find the world more friendly than the parents who have cared for you from infancy, you must learn your mistake for yourself. When you wish to come to your father’s house, to be subject to his authority, you will be welcome. Obligations are mutual. While you have food and clothing and parental care, you are in return under obligation to submit to home rules and wholesome discipline. My house cannot be polluted with the stench of tobacco, with profanity or drunkenness. I desire that angels of God shall come into my home. If you are fully determined to serve Satan, you will be as well off with those whose society you love as you will be at home.’” Child Guidance, 241

As we have reviewed these inspired counsels from the Lord regarding our homes, who among us can say that we are without sin? Who among us can say that we have not failed to follow the Lord? Too often we have not had a love for the truth great enough to motivate us to study out God’s will for our home life. Too often and for too long we have let the devil make of none effect God’s will for our families. As we realize that character development (see Youth’s Instructor, April 21, 1886), sanctification (Manuscript Releases, vol. 13, 80), and preparation for Christian witnessing (The Adventist Home, 38–39) are preferably and best begun in the home we can better understand why we as individuals and as a people are referred to by the Lord as lukewarm Laodiceans in serious danger of being spewed out. May we seek humility, repentance, and pardon for the past and enabling grace and strength and faith for the future that our homes might indeed be lights to the world and ‘little heavens to go to heaven in.’"
A Testimony

Spiritual Somnolence Exposed

The past year proved to be a difficult one with our move from Southern California, with plenty of stress and readjustments to make. Loma Linda is a secure place for Adventists, a sort of Mecca, one might say. Life is busy, very busy. Complete with wall-to-wall people, parties, amusements, beaches, many friends, work, and an assortment of Seventh-day Adventist Churches to fit every mood and taste. I had little time to reflect on my life, my spiritual life, that is.

Then we moved to Minnesota, the small town of Rochester; blue skies, green trees, picturesque hills and valleys and the nearly unspoiled beauty of nature. For a while we were intent on settling in, starting new jobs and meeting new people. Then, strangely, life slowed down. The phone did not ring much. The weather cooled. The green landscape turned to gray, and I had time to reflect on my life and my priorities. I had time to search God’s Word and His testimonies to learn of His plan for my life.

You see, I did not realize it, but I had been sleeping, and I mean a deep sleep. Occasionally, something I read would nudge me, or a good sermon might make me toss a bit, but sleep is sweet and feels good. It did not take long before I comfortably pulled the blanket over my shoulders and slumbered on.

I recall sleeping right on through the Vatican’s tour of America a few years ago. Remember the pope’s little pope-mobile and the millions of adoring fans who followed him from state to state? I remember nodding off when the United States government appointed an ambassador to the Vatican (indicating clearly that the deadly wound was healing as prophesied in Daniel and the Revelation). I nodded groggily last year as Noriega sought asylum in the Vatican Embassy in South America, and American troops were helpless to arrest him and bring him to justice.

I stretched and yawned when the Berlin wall collapsed with East and West Germany reuniting, and communism evaporating all over Europe, the Soviet Union, and the world.

How easy it was to be unconcerned with the tragedy of the Savings and Loan bankruptcy, especially when one doesn’t have much savings! And how about the corruption in our government and its staggering deficit?

Sleep became less sweet as I witnessed the filth of television, with morality, family, and Christian values circling the proverbial drain. And dreams became more of a nightmare as I thought of what my young son, Ryan, has to look forward to as he grows. If I believed it was hard being a teenager only a few years ago, I shudder to imagine what it will be like in another ten to fifteen years.

All Creation groans with terminal disease. We are exhausting her resources. Recycling, now mandatory in Rochester, gives local evidence of that. Beyond this, we think of the polluted air, damaged ozone layers, the ocean’s dumping ground, nuclear sludge and so much more.

I remembered my patients. Many hung precariously to life by only a thread or two. What did all their worldly gain mean to them now, their years of work, work, work, to succeed in the competitive business world? Some had been too engrossed to look up to examine their eternal or spiritual welfare, for it was not a tangible priority. It seemed a horrifying predication. And I wondered for them: What now? What next?

Then I heard the alarm. The cry to wake up! Wake up! Wake up! I sat bolt upright in bed, looked around, and then at myself. I did a full assessment of my life and examined my spiritual experience, or lack of it.

I saw my own spiritual life as a graph with experience as its vertical plane and time as its horizontal plane. And then I noted the graph line, the hills and valleys that had frustrated me. I noted the line being highest just after the week of prayer, or some calamity in my life, and lowest while things were going great or I was the busiest, too busy to care.

I remember the groggy thoughts:
1. People have thought Christ was coming for hundreds of years; there’s still plenty of time.
2. I’m basically a good person, and I’m an Adventist, and I want to be saved someday. Isn’t that enough?
3. There’s never been a close of probation, there never will be, at least not in my lifetime.

And after each low experience on the graph, I had become sleepier and sleepier. The familiar verses and stories and even Christ’s life and death on the cross meant less and less, and I resented the clichés and questioned all the rules. The still small voice grew quieter and quieter until it was barely audible, so long had I slept in its wake to extinguish the sound.

I looked again at the earth. It is an easy life to do as we please, live for number one, to believe that anything goes. It all looks attractive, and it is fun for a while to be loved by the world, to receive its compliments, and go along with its philosophy of living for today. But now with eyes opened wide, I peered deeper. I saw the results of this type of life and where it led. I looked at the results even within my own family. Did I see happiness? Joy? Fulfillment? Yes, maybe glimpses here and there. But I also saw empty, hollow faces. I saw rejection, unhappiness, and bitterness. I saw chronic illness—the reaping rewards of living for number one. And it loomed before me, very, very ugly as I realized it was the death solution. The more I looked, the more nauseated I became. I felt dirty and dark as I dwelt there. I saw those creeping compromises for what they really were. And I saw with vivid detail where my life was headed.

Then I turned and looked at Jesus. What awesome light, what contrasting glory! I thought of heaven and tried desperately to make it a reality in my mind, so long had it been just an old worn story. I thought of His great sacrifice for me in living here on our fallen planet because He loves us so much. I realized He lived here not only to die, but also to represent what our lives would be like if we truly surrender and allow Him to live in and through us.

I saw an eternity of happiness and love. I knew He did not promise an easy life, but one of peace, and no regrets. I thought, “I’m sick of this roller-coaster

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spiritual ride.” I looked to Jesus’ promises:

“Call to Me and I will answer you, and tell you great and mighty things you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3, NKJV. There is no maybe or perhaps or probably in that promise. And in 2 Peter 1:3-4: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” NIV

Now I sat and stared at these promises, and wondered, Could it really, and I mean realistically, be true? I’ve read these promises before and thought, “Ho hum, that’s nice. Another cheerful promise.”

And then I read from Christ’s Object Lessons, 148: “The honor of His [God’s] throne is staked for the fulfillment of His Word unto us.”

And it brought me to my knees in two seconds. I learned what it is to surrender to Jesus, in every way. For the first time in twenty-five years I gave up, period. I didn’t even have the power to surrender, I had to ask for that. I had nothing at all worth giving up Jesus for. What can compare to Him? Surely, He is a solid Rock, and all else is sinking sand.

I am sharing my experience and concerns for the time we live in because I do believe God is calling us one last time. He has been waiting for us sleeping Adventists to be ready for 148 years since the heavenly judgment began, to individually strip ourselves of self and the world and to stand imbedded with the Holy Spirit, and to be trustworthy of the inheritance of heaven. We are told He would have come already had it not been for our disbelief, this sleeping sickness I was afflicted with. I realized I spoke little of Jesus because there was little of Jesus in me.

The earth groans, its filthy stench of sin rises to heaven, and very soon His grace will expire for those who persist in slumbering. We claim to be Seventh-day Adventists, which in part means looking towards the imminent advent of Jesus; it is a pillar of our faith. But how often do we long for it, live for it, even pray for it? The signs are all around us—everywhere. In the media, the weather, our communities and even our church. The great news is the hope we have in Jesus.

I have been receiving the paper, Our Firm Foundation for several months now. I notice you have several articles from the pen of Ellen White. The ones who write different subjects or topics on the Bible quite often quote Ellen White’s writings. I believe this is wonderful.

Never quit having articles from the pen of Ellen White appearing in the paper, Our Firm Foundation. I believe it proves a blessing to many others, just as it has to me.

—ES, Illinois

It is really a great blessing to receive and read your Our Firm Foundation magazine. The articles in it are so interesting and important to me as well as to every church member. Every church member needs to know what is the truth, the genuine truth of Jesus Christ, in preparing for the last days.

—RM, Indonesia

I don’t have a subscription to your magazine, but my girl friend shares articles with me. Lately the Lord has opened my stubborn eyes to things in the church that are not according to that which is written in His Word. Since then we’ve been opening the Word of God at her home and studying the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, and the antitypical Day of Atonement. We’ve been studying that God is in the Most Holy Place cleansing the sanctuary and that means we are to put away sin in our lives in order to stand in the presence of a Holy God without a mediator. I’m praying for your ministry and I’m asking God to richly bless it.

—DK, California

After reading through the latest issue of Our Firm Foundation I felt I should write a few words of encouragement to you. There seems to be much ado in our organization today with regard to independent ministries. I agree wholeheartedly with the article by Clark Floyd. It seems to me the leadership of this denomination ought to be preaching our message instead of spending their time trying to find fault with others. They need to be examining their own lives to see if they conform to what Christ desires. I believe there is a great work for independent ministries. I look forward each month to receiving Our Firm Foundation. Wish it were more frequent. There are always rich spiritual foods in these articles. I fully believe your ministry is called of God. I’m sure you have cause for discouragement from time to time, but look up and ever onward. God will sustain you. I’m afraid many well-meaning Adventists are going to be shocked when God takes control of His work and uses the honest-hearted souls who are willing to be led of Him and not appointed of men.

—RP, Kentucky

I thoroughly enjoy, am refreshed, and renewed by Our Firm Foundation magazine. Thank you and the staff of dedicated Christians who provide such a quality journal for us.

My prayers are with you and the efforts of Hope International as together all of us seek to see the work completed, the church standing pure and refined, and the glory of Jesus coming in the clouds. May that day be soon!

—GM, DC

We may not be worldly rich, but we are heavenly rich. One of the richest blessings we get from above is through your publication.

Truly indeed, if we turn our eyes to Jesus and listen to the call of the Holy Spirit, He will open the gates of heaven and the glory of God will be manifested. Thank you very much. Praise God for your publication.

—RC, California

Our Firm Foundation is the finest magazine I’ve ever read. We value every copy greatly. Will not part with one copy of all we have received. Such a blessing. We pray for you every day.

—RE, Tennessee
Separation From the World

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Revelation 3:11. “Let no man beguile you of your reward, ... vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. Colossians 2:18

The Bible is the story of a great eternal purpose; of the efforts made, being made, and yet to be made to defeat that purpose; and of the means ordained, employed, and available to fulfill that purpose. It teaches that this great purpose is the purpose of God concerning man; that this purpose is according to the will of God; that man was created to fulfill that purpose; that within that purpose man has been ordained to rule; that outside of that purpose man is a slave, and that that purpose can be fulfilled in and by those only who do the will of God.

The first teaching of the Bible regarding man is that human experience began right; that it was placed on an enduring foundation, even eternal truth, the essence of which is the will of God.

The next teaching is that notwithstanding its right beginning and its sound basis, man's experience went wrong. He chose a life outside the will of God. He voluntarily turned away from the life that fulfilled God's purpose, and elected to live in disobedience.

The third teaching is that man's turning away from God did not change God's purpose for man; that all the change which was made was in man himself, and in those things over which he had been given dominion.

Up to this point the two things that are especially set forth are first, that man, with everything in his favor, failed to fulfill God's purpose; and, second, that notwithstanding this, the purpose of God is unchangeable and indestructible.

The foundation laid at the beginning has stood. Man by his own choice took himself off that foundation. But man's moving off did not move the foundation. That foundation is the will of God, which is the essence of all truth. In order to build on that foundation, man must live and labor within the will of God. Life lived and service rendered outside of that divine will are not established upon that foundation.

The blight of human experience is that man has persistently failed to appreciate his opportunities and possibilities within God's purpose for him. The whole story of the Bible is a sad revelation of that tragic fact. The first section of that story ends with the Fall of man, the second ends with the Flood, and the third ends with Babel. Each of these periods in human experience ended in human failure. After that, the story tells of God's efforts to have His will done on earth by a family.

Throughout the first three sections of the Bible story, God is dealing with humanity as a race, and almost without distinction. In the fourth section we have the record of His dealings with the race through one of its families. Through the family of Abraham, God ordained that His eternal purpose would be fulfilled. He gave the literal children of Abraham a wonderful opportunity. But the section of the story that gives us the history of that family ends with them all in bondage. What took it there?—Directly, the wickedness of its members. God gave to that family the knowledge of His will. The ways of obedience and disobedience were clearly marked for it in the experience of their father Abraham. But knowing his failures and their causes, they chose to depart from the will of the Lord. Consequently, at the end of the period they were found in bondage. Instead of being made rulers by the doing of God's will, they were made slaves by their departure from His will.

In the will of God there was one place in all the earth for that family. That place

Charles H. Watson served as General Conference president from 1930 to 1936.
was Canaan. But in the course of their story we find them for four generations outside of Canaan: Why was that? It was because they had fled from Canaan before the face of difficulty. They fled to Egypt, and Egypt became the place of their bondage.

Abraham, too, had gone down unbidden into Egypt before them, and in all the story there is scarcely anything more disastrous to God’s purpose than that sojourn of Abraham in Egypt. So far had the purpose of God dropped from the minds of that family while in Egyptian bondage that, though delivered at last with great wonders, and led by great power back to the border of the land where the Lord had willed them to be, they refused His purpose, they turned from the possibility of doing His will, and perished in the wilderness.

So the fourth section of the story ends in human failure as did the preceding three.

The fifth section of the story reveals God’s effort to have His eternal purpose fulfilled through a nation. Having brought Israel out of Egypt, He made them a nation. He Himself was that nation’s King. This part of the story teaches us the lesson of Israel’s failure as a theocracy. It would seem, as one reads the provisions for the success of Israel as a nation, that it could not possibly fail. With them the Lord dwelt in person. Day and night the people saw the manifestations of His presence and glory. They worshiped Him, seeing with their natural sight that He was among them. They heard His voice speaking to them the words of His divine will. They quaked at the power of His speaking. They witnessed the smoke-clouded glory of His majesty. They acknowledged themselves His people, and covenanted to obey His voice. Never since the Fall had there seemed to be brighter prospects of having God’s purpose for humanity fulfilled in His people.

But nearly four centuries after they heard God proclaim His will to them, they rejected Him as their King, and would not have Him reign over them any longer.

“The Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” 1 Samuel 8:7

Why had they rejected the Lord in this way? Had He failed in His leadership of them? Had He been unwise in His kingship? Had He brought the people into great difficulty? Had He brought them into great suffering? Were they unhappy under Him as King? Had the kingdom become divided? Was it about to become divided? Had the kingdom and the nation reached a crisis that demanded a change of rulership to save it from disaster?

No, none of these things had happened. None of them were about to happen. None of them were at all likely to happen under God as the nation’s King. What then had happened?

Samuel, the servant of God, had grown old, and his sons were unsatisfactory. Did that warrant the nation’s rejection of God? Not at all. That would have been no warrant for such a far-reaching action if it really had been the true underlying reason for their rejection of the Lord. But the Scriptures make it clear that Samuel’s age and his sons’ carelessness were not the reason, but the excuse, for their rejection of God as their King.

The reason for their action was within their own hearts. It was their own worldly-mindedness; and they were obstinately determined to have their own way. At the direction of God they were cautioned, they were warned, they were reproved, they were faithfully told that a human king would enslave them, would dispossess them, would take away their liberties, and would require their first, their best, and the goodliest of all for himself.

But the record is: “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.” 1 Samuel 8:19–20

As a nation, Israel was determined to be worldly, and their determination to be like the world is the one and great cause of their failure in this fifth part of the story. They did not call their action a rejection of God. They claimed to be concerned about the worldliness of Samuel’s sons, and especially in view of Samuel’s old age. Think of it! — determined to be worldly, they claimed that it was necessary for them to be like the world because Samuel’s sons were worldly and he was old. But God called it rejection of Him, and that is just what all worldly-mindedness is. He gave them no reason to be deceived by their own worldly desires. But they rejected His counsel as they were determined to reject Him.

This business of offering a pious reason to bring about a worldly end in the experience of God’s people, is an old-fashioned affair. It dates back at least to the days of Samuel. But it was wrong then, and age has not changed its nature a particle. It is still one of the methods pursued by the worldly-minded, and God’s people are still misled by it.

We need very much to beware of this old-fashioned foolishness and pious wickedness in this closing work. During the last quarter of a century I have seen efforts of the same kind among this people. But a pious reason for worldly action is as hypocritical now as it ever has been.

The next section of the story tells of Israel under their kings. It can hardly be expected that this part of the story will bring us to a happy conclusion. It was begun wrong. It continued to be wrong. It ended in captivity and failure.

There is no need for me to follow the course of their experience very closely through this period. Let it be sufficient for me to remind you that the trouble so faithfully foretold by Samuel began with
lived largely outside the will and purpose of God, and it all began by their pretended objections to the worldliness of Samuel's sons, while they themselves determined to be like the world about them.

That nation having rejected the kingship of God, because it was determined to be worldly, had become idolatrous, and idolatrous that it was sent into captivity. That was the end of that people as a nation. They might have fulfilled God's purpose, but they turned from His will, and the end was failure.

There is, of course, the story of the restoration. But those of them that came

it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.”
Acts 4:19

While this attitude of adherence to the will of God was maintained, the church was a conquering power. When it was forsaken, the church became a persecuting power.

From the book of Acts to the book of Jude, the story is of the development of the Christian church. But after the first century a change began to come into its experience. The church first became worldly, then it became cruel. It forgot the will of God, and began to enforce its own will upon the

While this attitude of adherence to the will of God was maintained, the church was a conquering power. When it was forsaken, the church became a persecuting power.

back were never able to throw off the yoke of foreign rulership. Never again had they a ruler of their own. They built up their city, they raised again its ruined walls, but they did it by the consent and under the patronage of foreign kings. They bowed their neck to the yoke of foreign princes. But they never again went into idolatry.

Then in the next period came the dispersion. Since that time they have been “a nation scattered and peeled, . . . a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled.” Isaiah 18:2

The seventh section of the story brings us to the establishment of Christianity. Its founder is the Lord Jesus. Its foundation is eternal truth as given us in His teachings. His life and teachings were all a manifestation to us of the will of God. He came as man to fulfill the purpose of God, and after He had won the right by His sacrifice on the cross, by His victory over death, and by His acceptance for us by the Father, He commissioned His church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Ended with power from on high, the church went forth, conquering and to conquer. But observe that the attitude of its leaders toward the will of God was very definite. They were determined to obey God at all costs. Hear them as they so declare themselves: “Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether
The message of this movement is to be preached with power, and by believing that message its adherents are to be separated in life and purpose and principle and belief and hope from the world all about them.

world.” God’s people have never been victorious while surrendering or surrendered to the world. They have had victory only when surrendered to God, to have His will done in and by them. It must still be so. The remnant people can no more have success by loving the world and surrendering to its allurements and claims and calls, than did Israel of old.

The message by which we are made the remnant requires that we be separate and influence their future. Such stock-taking is a good, a necessary, and a revealing thing. I believe that this is such an occasion with us. We, doubtless, will check up on finances, on membership, and on all statistical matters. We do that continually. But I am appealing this morning for a review of very important things that appear in none of our statistical and financial statements. They cannot appear there, for they are not
measured by statistics and statements, neither are they checked by our auditors.

There has ever been but one measuring line for God’s people. That measuring line is the will of God. Life and service are successful or unsuccessful, in God’s sight, according to their relationship to His will. Life and service that do the will of God are strong in every worthwhile way, while life and service that do not the will of the Father are accounted unworthy in heaven.

With this important truth in mind let us, then, consider the question, Are we successfully keeping the love of the world out of our hearts, and the influence of the world out of our work? or are we foolishly surrendering to the same spirit of worldliness that is responsible for all the failures of the church in those other sections of the story? Are we putting God’s will before all else in our work for Him? Are we living and laboring only to fulfill His eternal purpose?

Brethren, these things are very much on my mind and heart, and have been for some time past. I see in this movement many, many things that are there by the hand of God—strong things, true things, divine things. These must continue with us and have yet a larger place and stronger service in our experience and work. This must indeed be so, if we are to reach final success. But I see also some things that are not good, taking hold in the church, and being given an enlarging place in the control of the church; and those things resemble very much the evil things that came into and ruined the experience of the church in all those former periods of the story. There is setting in on this people a tide of worldliness to which we are surrendering. I do not mean to imply that we are not resisting these influences at all; but I believe that the measure of resistance that we are putting forth is not holding us. We are gradually being swept backward, and should be alarmed about it.

As we look back over the story, we discover that nowhere in it is the world found accomplishing God’s purpose. Everywhere upon the record is impressed the lesson that whenever the church and the world have united, the union has destroyed the church. The story in brief is this: When the church has kept itself separate from the world, the world has sought to kill it by persecution; but when the church has received the patronage of the world and joined hands with it, the church itself has used the world to destroy God’s people by persecuting them. Nowhere in all the story do we find real Christianity united with the world, or pleased with worldly patronage, or robbed with worldly grandeur.

We as a people know all this. There is no people on earth more zealous or more vigilant in its determination to keep the church and the state in their own fields and spheres. But notwithstanding all this, we are in danger of walking the way of failure because of our growing attachments to the world. There is a union prescribed for us in the Word of God that is far different well-being of the church and the success of its evangelical mission have depended, next to God, upon the uprightness of its teachers. Their corruption has always been the downfall of the church. It is essential, therefore, that the church be continually led by a truehearted, believing ministry. If we learn anything at all from our study of Christ’s efforts to prepare those whom He ordained for their work of ministry, it is that He purposed for His church a leadership by men who themselves are in the innermost secret of the Lord.

Everywhere upon the record is impressed the lesson that whenever the church and the world have united, the union has destroyed the church.

from this. Here is the prescription as Goodspeed gives it in his translation of Colossians 2:6-9:

“So just as you once accepted the Christ, Jesus, as your Lord, you must live in vital union with Him. You must be rooted and built up in Him and made strong in faith, just as you were taught to be, overflowing with it in your gratitude.

“Take care that nobody exploits you through the pretensions of philosophy, guided by human tradition, following material ways of looking at things, instead of following Christ. For it is in Him that all the fullness of God’s nature lives embodied, and in union with Him you too are filled with it.”

Going back to the third century of Christianity, we remind ourselves that after the Diocletian persecution, from which the church suffered no spiritual hurt, the church fell upon an evil day when the throne of state began to patronize it. First the state tolerated Christians, then it patronized the church, then it espoused the church, and finally it compassed the church’s spiritual ruin.

Thomas Cooper, author of the book, “The Bridge of History Over the Gulf of Time,” has stated this: “Constantine’s wily patronage of the Christian teachers . . . did much to strengthen his power, while it tended to ruin the Christian church spiritually.”

From the time when the Saviour sent forth His church to preach His gospel, the There must, then, be continued for the work of the church an unworlidy ministry. Constantine took the certain way to ruin the church, to make a Papacy possible, and to bring into being a beast power that would war against the church to the very end, when he patronized the teachers of the church in his day, and thus destroyed their humility and made them worldly. And it is important for us to observe that what he did so successfully in the early years of the fourth century has been successfully repeated again and again in the experience of Protestantism. The Protestant churches are where they are now as the result of their teachers’ being corrupted.

The simple teaching of the gospel is that sinful man can enter life only through death. He must die to the world that he may live unto God. How, may I ask, is it possible for worldly ministers to lead the people into the experience that that teaching requires? If they themselves are not dead to the world, how can those who are influenced and led by their teaching be brought to sense the necessity of their dying to the world? And if neither the minister nor the church member is dead to the world, how can the life of God be experienced in the church?

It has always been important that the ministry of the church be trained right. It has always been important that God’s work in all lines be done by godly workers. But it has also always been the unyielding purpose of the enemy of the
church to control as far as possible the training of God's workers. Knowing that with a Spirit-filled ministry, nothing under heaven could defeat God's church, Satan is determined that the church shall be led by an unspiritual, unbelieving, worldly-taught, and worldly-minded ministry. To bring this to pass he has gradually introduced his policies and teachings into the great institutions of learning where the ministers and teachers of Protestantism are taught and trained. This is the basic explanation of the defeat of Protestantism, and of its powerlessness in face of the widely offered challenge of unbelief today.

Our Own Situation

Well may we ask, then, Are we successfully keeping the love of the world out of our hearts, and the influences of the world out of our work? Well may we pause to consider whether we in our efforts to serve God are putting the will of God before the ways of the world. My serious conviction is that there is grave reason in fact for our most earnest consideration of these questions. I believe that there is a growing love within our ranks for the frivolities of the world. Our resistance of worldly influences is seriously diminishing. Our willingness to yield to worldly control of important matters is more noticeable. These things I see, and they trouble me. I am troubled by the sanctions which we give to weak and questionable things. I am troubled by the direction that our educational and training work is definitely taking. I am concerned by the more and more obvious fact that in the education and training of our workers we are inquiring more of the world and less of God than formerly. I am grieved because we are allowing the erroneous belief that the highest in standards is reached by the ways of the world rather than by the way of God.

I believe that the highest and truest in all things are reachable for us only by doing the will of God, and I am fearful as I measure all the effort and expense that we are putting forth to reach our goal by other means. Brethren, I do not believe there is help for us in the way we are going in this thing, and I recognize with regret that we have been forced in that direction by a spirit of institutional competition of our own origination, about as much as we have been by the requirements of powers beyond our control.

This people cannot, anywhere within the purpose of God, receive its educational program from the world. Nowhere within the purpose of God can we delegate the training of our ministers and other workers to worldly influences. We have been spoken to from Heaven itself upon those matters, and we have instruction of such volume and minuteness of detail that we are without excuse if we are found working contrary to what has been written. The one practical, foreshadowed way for us to escape the plagues that shall fall on Babylon is for us to come out and be separate from Babylon, and to remain out and to continue to be separate.

It is my conviction that this is all so vitally important that we would do well to take honest bearings, and if necessary, rechart our course apart from the world, and fill us with strength that is all of the Holy Spirit.

Above every other thing that we can possibly sense, the remnant people need to realize that Christ is calling them to an experience which will not only instruct and clarify their minds, but purify their hearts, and invade the innermost places of their souls, cleansing their motives, and making them willing to have the will of God done in their lives and through their service. Unless it be so, we shall not hold fast that which we have, and we shall indeed be beguiled of our reward. Our success depends, not upon that which the world has brought to us, but upon our appropriation of divine resources.

What we need just now is a large reception of divine grace to enable us to do God's holy will at any cost. May the good Lord come to us and open our hearts and make us willing to receive it. We have to do the work of God in an age of doubt, and for a world that is sinking altogether in sin. Let us not trifle with that work at such a time and in face of such need. Foolish indeed shall we be if we seek from that lost world the power, the help, the equipment of mind and heart that we need, to be God's messengers of salvation to that same ruined world. If we do, may it not truthfully be said of us that we have turned again to the weak and beggarly elements of the world?

Brethren, my heart tells me that our need is great, far, far too great to be met by anything that the world can supply. We must go to a source of help higher than the world, where our need can be reached farther in and deeper down than ever the world can penetrate. Oh, shall we not now "search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord"? Shall we not "lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens"? He will have mercy on us. He will lead us in the way of His purpose, and according to His divine will. Walking in that way, and living only to fulfill that unchanging purpose, this people will finish the work victoriously; and when the world, which now would allure and ruin us, shall go down in its own ruin, we shall be crowned with life eternal, and enter into our reward.

Let us, then, love not the world, neither the things of the world, but let us cherish the ways of God and love to do as He has bidden. May the good Spirit of the Lord be with us and help us in such a time as this, for Christ's sake.

Review and Herald, November 21, 1935
The sanctuary message of 1844 opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, according to the prophet to the remnant church. This system of truth was the everlasting gospel in the setting of the judgment. With it came a clear understanding of the fall of Babylon and the mark of the beast, which we call the third angel’s message. See The Great Controversy, 423.

Since time began, no people have been so privileged and blessed with such a beautiful message and trusted with such awesome responsibility. What did God have in mind when He gave us this complete system of truth, connected and harmonious? Obviously the two events of first necessity were to prepare all on Planet Earth for Christ’s return and to vindicate the justice and mercy of God.

Since justification by faith is the heart of the everlasting gospel, and there is more than one view as to what constitutes justification by faith, which one is the third angel’s message? The 1888 message was a clarification of it. Ellen White said scores of times that the Lord sent that message. Read it carefully: “The present message, justification by faith, is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness.” Selected Messages, book 1, 359.

Notice that the date was 1889. The footnote at the bottom of that page says, “Drawn from the report of camp meeting at Rome, New York.” That was the place where the 1888 message was being presented, and she was there. That is why she referred to it as the present message—justification by faith. E. J. Waggoner’s book Christ and His Righteousness came out in 1890, and on page 57 he writes, “The question, then, is, How may the righteousness that is necessary in order that one may enter that city, be obtained? To answer this question is the great work of the Gospel. Let us first have an object lesson on justification, or the imparting of righteousness.” At first, it seems strange that he would use the word imparted, since we always consider imparted righteousness to be sanctifying righteousness, as did Waggoner. He was answering the question he asked about how one receives personal righteousness. He wasn’t confused. Following through his book to page 66, we find his conclusion to be that one is made righteous by the new birth.

On page 67 he says God’s righteousness is “given unto” and “put upon” the believer; that is, one is declared righteous in forgiveness, and also made righteous by being born of the Spirit. It should be clearly understood by Christ’s words to Nicodemus in John 3:3-5 and Romans chapter 8 that there is no eternal life apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The following statement is just one of many by E. G. White about God sending the 1888 message:

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human

Lowell Scarbrough writes from Oroville, California.
agent. This is the message [righteousness by faith] that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” Testimonies to Ministers, 91–92.

This paragraph is so wonderfully fraught with meaning for our church that I hesitate to make comment upon it, but to re-emphasize several parts may draw the reader’s attention to closer study. We say it was Waggner and Jones’ message, but it wasn’t, neither was it Ellen White’s. It was the Lord’s. He gave it to coincide with the sanctuary message, the fall of Babylon and the mark of the beast. It was given to uplift Jesus and His great loving sacrifice for humanity. His rich gifts included His imparted righteousness for keeping all the commandments of God. Notice, it is the third angel’s message, and God commanded that it be given to the world and carry with it the outpouring of His Spirit. Can you imagine the power that would have attended our church back then if it had been fully accepted? It would do no less today.

The power is in God’s love and the latter rain is an accelerated experience in His love. See That I May Know Him, 344. Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 77, says: “Love is the agent He [God] uses to expel sin from the heart.” Since the message is the latter-rain message, we have many descriptions of what it will accomplish: “It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 214, “The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman.” Ibid., 216.

This victory is possible only from love and loyalty to Jesus, and centers on His sacrifice for us. The inspired statements above describe, as space permits, the third angel’s message and what God has destined it to do for His people, to take them, completely victorious, beyond the close of probation without a mediator. See Revelation 14:1–6; The Great Controversy, 623. Then God’s justice and mercy are vindicated. Notice The Desire of Ages, 762, “By His life and His death, Christ proved that God’s justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan’s charges were refuted.” “He [Satan] declares that it is impossible for man to keep the law.” Review and Herald, vol. 4, 405.

Now compare another message on righteousness by faith that is largely believed, preached and taught in our church. In a regional camp meeting for the past three years, two main speakers have said they did not believe that sanctification was any part of righteousness by faith. They said one could not keep the law because the demands of the law were too high. Every subject they preached, if believed, would have weakened one’s faith in true Adventism. Those who knew another speaker stated he took the same position as the first two. In one of our local churches we have had at least four pastors in the last twelve years who did not believe one could overcome sin by Christ’s power. One of them did not believe anyone could be righteous at all. A young assistant pastor stated that moral perfection was impossible. He said that is what he was taught in the university and he believed it. What has been mentioned above is just a faint glimmer of the real truth of the rejection of the third angel’s message in high and low places over the world.

Do you see the great difference between the two messages? The third angel’s message that has just been briefly described. The following is a prediction that Ellen White made in 1896. It is from Selected Messages, book 2, 114. “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.”

From the context we know that this division is not just a Laodicean state. It is over the three angel’s messages. Let us look further at the context. This new life from heaven taking possession of all God’s people is without doubt the latter rain. This latter rain is precipitated by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. See Early Writings, 270. All who truly receive it will obey it and be purified. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it and thus will cause a shaking among God’s people. The ones who rise up against it must of necessity develop a gospel other than the third angel’s message, and this attempt has brought in division.

Another statement in the context says those who are laborers together with God will contend most earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. This contending most earnestly for the faith strongly suggests there is a contention in the church over the straight testi-
mony, which would naturally be the case, according to Early Writings, 270 (they rise up against it). The word con-
tend means to strive in combat, or opposition, or struggle. The context also says they will not be turned from the present message, which is already light-
ening the earth with its glory.

This present message was the mes-
sage God sent in 1888. One will find that the earth had begun to be lightened by the glory of God in Selected Messages, book 1, 234–235, 363. Despite the op-
opposition that might come from the di-
vision in the church, they will not be turned from the third angel’s message. They will settle into the truth intellectually
and spiritually, so that they cannot be moved. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1161. No doubt the party who rejects the third
angel’s message will move into areas where the third angel’s party will not con-
form.

Another prediction is made of those
who would discard the message God
sent, that they will receive the most
unreasonable assertions and false theo-
ries. Many will stand in our pulpits with
the torch of false prophecy in their
hands, kindled from the hellish torch of
Satan. “If thou hast known,” said
Christ, “even thou, at least in this day,
the things which belong to your peace!
but now they are hid from their eyes.”
See Testimonies to Ministers, 409–410.
This last sentence is taken from Luke
19:42 when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on
a colt and wept over the city.

It is truly a tragic picture for those
who have discarded the third angel’s
message. Jesus seemed to be saying to
the Jews, “The die has been cast, your
irrevocable decision has been made and
many will meet their fate in the destruc-
tion of Jerusalem.” A further clarifica-
tion of what has been presented here is
in Review and Herald, vol. 2, 397, right
column. Ellen White is rebuking those
who mistreated Waggoner and Jones in
this statement: “The third angel’s mes-

sage will not be comprehended, the light
which will lighten the earth with its


glory will be called a false light, by those
who refuse to walk in its advancing
glory.”

No one can claim, teach or preach
adherence to the third angel’s message if
his view contradicts it. God designed
that the third angel’s message of right-
eousness by faith would move His

people in its advancing glory to the latter
rain. See Testimonies to Ministers, 469.
Look carefully at the statement before.
The latter rain message (complete

victory over all sin, as we have seen)
will be called a false light by those who

refuse to walk in its advancing glory.

Unfortunately, they will say the de-
mands of the law are too high and cannot
be reached. And this new gospel in
Adventism has brought division in the
church and developed another party, and
now we have pluralistic views on salva-

tion.

I pray that those who have turned
from the third angel’s message, and read
these statements from inspiration, will
study them carefully and return to the
solid platform of truth and be forever
grateful.

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Impetuous Peter

JOHN the Baptist was more that a prophet. He was called while in his mother's womb to prepare a people for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. As He spoke in the wilderness of Judea, near the Jordan River, many came to hear him. One of those was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Andrew was present when John the Baptist indentified Jesus as the one who was to come, the Lamb of God, the long-hoped-for Messiah. Andrew immediately sought out his brother, who was also

in the area because of John the Baptist's preaching, and brought him to see Jesus. (Oh, if each of us could, like Andrew, bring people to Jesus!)

"When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." John 1:42

Ellen White says of Peter that "the eye of Christ rested upon him," reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all." The Desire of Ages, 139

But this encounter was only the first between Jesus and Peter. The meeting that really brought Peter into the fold occurred later at the seaside. Several, including Peter, had been fishing all night, but to no avail. Their nets returned to them empty. But then the Creator of the world appeared, sat in Peter's boat, spoke to the crowd, and there directed Peter to again let down his nets. Peter reluctantly complied, while reminding Jesus that he had already toiled all night in an unsuccessful fishing venture.

"And when they had this done, they enclosd a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." Luke 5:6. Peter recognized now more than before that the Man Jesus was more than human, and in seeing the purity of Jesus, Peter saw his own sinfulness more fully. See verse 8. He was now ready to be called as one of Jesus' disciples.

"At the moment of success, when the nets were filled with fish, and the impulses of the old life were strongest, Jesus asked the disciples at sea to leave all for the work of the gospel. So every soul is tested as to whether the desire for temporal good or for fellowship with Christ is strongest." Ibid., 273

Dear reader, how is it with you? "Principle is always exacting. No man can succeed in the service of God unless his whole heart is in the work and he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. No man who makes any reserve can be the disciple of Christ, much less can he be His colaborer." Ibid.

Peter walked with Jesus for three and one-half years. During that time he walked on water, cast out demons, healed people, was at the Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane. But Peter still lacked an important element in his life, which would move him from the "wooing" and initial conversion experience into a total conversion. He was still a "babe" in Christ.

"The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. Again, it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandmen. In like manner those who are just converted to Christ are, "as new-born babes," "to grow up" to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. 1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:15." Steps to Christ, 67

Jesus, near the end of His earthly ministry, spoke many times of His coming crucifixion. See, for instance, Mark 9:31-32:
“For he taught his disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.”

The Jewish people had been so taught and ingrained from childhood with the idea of a Messiah who would exalt the Jewish nation to the leadership of the world, that their minds could not grasp the thought of a Messiah who must die to bring salvation to a sin-filled world. And Peter was no different.

“Peter did not desire to see the cross in the work of Christ...”

“Love for souls for whom Christ died means crucifixion of self. He who is a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost. The Christian is ever to realize that he has consecrated himself to God, and that in character he is to reveal Christ to the world. The self-sacrifice, the sympathy, the love, manifested in the life of Christ are to reappear in the life of the worker for God.

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” Mark 8:35, Selfishness is death.” The Desire of Ages, 415, 417

Without the cross in his life, Peter could not be fully converted. And even though he had been with Jesus for over three years, without self-sacrifice the total conversion experience would remain foreign to Peter.

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“Conversion is a work that most do not appreciate. It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind and bring it to understand the unspeakable love of Christ, the charms of His grace, and the excellency of God, so that the soul shall be imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. When he understands these things, his former life appears disgusting and hateful. He hates sin, and, breaking his heart before God, he embraces Christ as the life and joy of the soul.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 294

But Peter was totally unaware of the fact that he was not fully converted. He did not recognize the self-love and assurance that were still buried deep in his heart. He did not know his own need. See The Desire of Ages, 673. Jesus had to speak frankly with Peter. He said:

“I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Luke 22:32

Even then as he replied to Jesus, Peter did not recognize the elements of evil hidden in his heart that would be brought to life by circumstances to come: “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.” Luke 22:33

The denial of Christ soon followed, thus allowing Peter to see himself as he really was; he also began to recognize the cross which was to come. Jesus looked at Peter with unfathomable love as Peter made his third denial with cursing and swearing, and that look of Jesus melted Peter’s heart and saved him. “He went bitterly and repented of his great sin, and was converted, and then was prepared to strengthen his brethren.” Early Writings, 169-170

“As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross [which Peter now recognized], and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He

within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.” Ibid., 384

Peter had walked with Jesus for three and one-half years, yet denied Him before His death. This denial left Peter feeling totally unworthy of being a disciple, until Jesus reassured him soon after the resurrection of the great love He had for him.

Through the young man “clothed in a long white garment,” sitting on the right side of the sepulchre, was given Christ’s message to Mary Magdalen and the others (Mary the mother of James, and Salome). “Tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee.” See Mark 16:1-7; emphasis supplied.

Peter knew from this that Jesus had not repudiated him. And later Christ restored Peter among his brethren by directing him to feed the sheep. See John 21:15-17.

Jesus spent time with the disciples before returning to His Father in heaven and strengthened them in their understanding of the Scriptures concerning Himself. See Luke 24:27. After Jesus’ ascension on the fiftieth day following His resurrection, Peter gave his powerful sermon at Pentecost. What was his preparation for this?

“The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now.” Testimonies to Ministers, 507

“When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost will fall on us.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 246

“Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.” In the next several verses, from Acts 2:14 on, Peter preaches the gospel as he has never preached it before. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41

“More people than we think are longing to find the way to Christ. Those who preach the last message of mercy should
Bear in mind that Christ is to be exalted as the sinner's refuge. Some ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith; they take it for granted that their hearers are acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. But many people are sadly ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation; they need more instruction upon this all-important subject than upon any other.  
*Evangelism*, 185

Peter continued to preach during the ensuing days in various places throughout Jerusalem. See Acts 3, 4, 5. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both men and women." Acts 5:14. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Acts 6:7

Peter throughout this time did not waver from the faith, although faced with persecution and even the threat of death. "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:18-20

"Those present who remembered the part that Peter had acted at the trial of his Master, flattered themselves that he could now be intimidated by the threat of imprisonment and death. But the Peter who denied Christ in the hour of His greatest need was impulsive and self-confident, differing widely from the Peter who was brought before the Sanhedrin for examination. Since his fall he had been converted. He was no longer proud and boastful, but modest and self-distrustful. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and by the help of this power he was resolved to remove the stain of his apostasy by honoring the name he had once disowned." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 62-63

But in spite of his conversion experience, Peter still had room for growth. "At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be constant advancement." *Education*, 106. Peter was now self-surrendered, and knowing that God's will was best, was willing to conform to God's plan for his life, even if he did not fully understand every aspect of what God was asking of him.

Peter had been raised to believe that there was a definite difference between the Jew and the Gentile, a difference that made the Jew more favored by God. This prejudice had been ingrained into his mind, as well as into the minds of other Jews, from early youth. It was a racial prejudice based on a lack of knowledge and understanding brought about by a cultural teaching. Paul pointed out the problem to Peter in Galatians 2:11-14, and Jesus, in His loving way of doing things, brought it home to Peter in Acts, chapter 10.

Through the vision of the unclean animals given to Peter just before he was called by the Spirit to go and preach to Cornelius and other Gentiles, God gave him a new understanding of what it meant to go to the whole world with the gospel. Peter said to Cornelius and the others: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:28

"How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 136

In chapter 11 of Acts, Peter was instrumental in helping the rest of the Jewish brethren to overcome their bias against Gentiles. "Thus, without controversy, prejudice was broken down, the exclusiveness established by the custom of ages was abandoned, and the way was opened for the gospel to be proclaimed to the Gentiles." Ibid., 142

Thus, impetuous Peter became loving Peter, willing to follow God whithersoever He might lead. And he left counsel for each of us, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." 1 Peter 4:1-2. And he has also given us "the divine plan for the development of Christian character" in 2 Peter 1:1-8. Ibid., 529

Peter changed as he allowed God to work on his heart. We likewise may change as we open our hearts to God. "In the full light of day, and in hearing of the music of other voices, the caged bird will not sing the song that his master seeks to teach him. He learns a snatch of this, a trill of that, but never a separate and entire melody. But the master covers the cage, and places it where the bird will listen to the one song he is to sing. In the dark, he tries and tries again to sing that song until it is learned, and he breaks forth in perfect melody. Then the bird is brought forth, and ever after he can sing that song in the light. Thus God deals with His children. He has a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the shadows of affliction, we can sing it ever afterward." *The Ministry of Healing*, 472

"The apostle Peter had had a long experience in the things of God. His faith in God's power to save had strengthened with the years, until he had proved beyond question that there is no possibility of failure before the one who, advancing by faith, ascends round by round, ever upward and onward, to the topmost round of the ladder that reaches even to the portals of heaven." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 533

"In the providence of God, Peter was permitted to close his ministry in Rome, where his imprisonment was ordered by the emperor Nero about the time of Paul's final arrest..."

"Since his reinstatement after his denial of Christ, Peter had unflinchingly braved danger and had shown a noble courage in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour..."

"Peter, as a Jew and a foreigner, was condemned to be scourged and crucified. In prospect of this fearful death, the apostle remembered his great sin in denying Jesus in the hour of His trial. Once so ready to acknowledge the cross, he now counted it a joy to yield up his life for the gospel; feeling only that, for him who had denied his Lord, to die in the same manner as his Master died was too great an honor. Peter had sincerely repented of that sin and had been forgiven by Christ, as is shown by the high commission given him to feed the sheep and lambs of the flock. But he could never forgive himself. Not even the thought of the agonies of the last terrible scene could lessen the bitterness of his sorrow and repentance. As a last favor he entreated his executioners that he might be nailed to the cross with his head downward. The request was granted, and in this manner died the great apostle Peter." Ibid., 537-538

Jesus is our Example, but Peter shows each of us what can be done with a life truly consecrated to God. Will you not, dear brethren and sisters, make that commitment to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads you? Time is short and Jesus is calling.
The Great Need of the Holy Spirit

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. God has left nothing undone that could in any way work for the recovering of man from the toils of the enemy. He poured upon the disciples the Holy Spirit, in order that they might be enabled to co-operate with divine agencies in reshaping and re-modeling human character. Of the Holy Spirit Jesus said, "He will reprove ["convince," margin] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. The Holy Spirit is not only to sanctify but to convict. No one can repent of his sins until he is convicted of his guilt. How necessary, then, it is that we should have the Holy Spirit with us as we labor to reach fallen souls! Our human abilities will be exercised in vain unless they are united with this heavenly agency.

Men have fallen low; they are sunk in depths of sinful degradation, and it is because of a lack of knowledge, of the want of connection with vitalizing truth, and because they are contaminated by the corrupting influence of error. In the work of saving men, men and angels are to work in harmony, teaching the truth of God to those who are unlearned therein, in order that they may be set free from the bonds of sin. Truth alone can make men free. The liberty that comes through a knowledge of truth is to be proclaimed to every creature. Our heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the angels of heaven are all interested in this grand and holy work. To man has been given the exalted privilege of revealing the divine character by unselfishly seeking to rescue man from the pit of ruin into which he has been plunged. Every human being who will submit to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is to be used for the accomplishment of this divinely conceived purpose. Christ is the head of His church, and it will glorify Him the more to have every portion of that church engaged in the work for the salvation of souls.

Our Saviour is to be more distinctly recognized, and acknowledged as the all-sufficiency of His church. He alone can perfect the faith of His people. There is to be no wrestling for the supremacy among us, no exalting of self. No, brethren, let us lift up Jesus, and we shall reap a rich harvest. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Lift him up, then; exalt the Holy One; proclaim him "the Desire of all nations," the "chiepest among ten thousand," the one "altogether lovely." Let every church of every clime take hold with an intense interest to help advance the cause. And while you labor for your own locality, pray for the general prosperity and upbuilding of the church throughout the vast harvest field.

There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, than over the ninety and nine who suppose they need no repentance. When we hear of the success of the truth in any locality, let the whole church join in songs of rejoicing, let praises ascend to God. Let the name of the Lord be glorified by us, and we shall be inspired with greater zeal to become workers together with God. The Lord urges us to fulfill the injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to
every creature.” Mark 16:15. But we need to leave more room for the working of the Holy Spirit, in order that laborers may be bound together and may move forward in the strength of a united body of soldiers. Let all remember that we are “a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” 1 Corinthians 4:9. Therefore each one should inquire with meekness and fear, What is my path of duty? Entire consecration to the service of God will reveal the molding influence of the Holy Spirit at every step along the way. When apparent impossibilities arise in your path, present the ever-ready, complete efficiency of the Holy Spirit before your unbelieving heart, that it may shame away your overcautious spirit. When your faith is weak, your efforts feeble, talk of the great Comforter, the Strength of heaven. When you are inclined to doubt that God is working by His Holy Spirit through human agents, remember that God has used the church and is using it to the glory of His own name. If men will not obstruct the way, God will move upon the minds of many more to engage in active service for Him.

Christ’s prayer to His Father in behalf of His followers was not in the interest of a few; it embraced every believer in the Son of God. “Neither pray I,” said Christ, “for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:20–21. The words of this prayer are very precious. Notice what follows: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:22–23

Of all persons on the earth the true Christian is the one that the world has the most need of. But while they remain in the world, they are not to be of the world. The Saviour prayed: “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” John 17:15. The religion of the Bible is to be revealed in this world, in order that souls may be led to discern Christ, the Light of the world. As light is revealed, by following that light we may escape from all darkness; for He has said, “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12. The rays of the Light of life shining from the Lord Jesus enable humanity to pick their ground, to wage successful warfare, and triumph over the powers of darkness. This glorious Light reveals the abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Walking in its beams we find ready admittance there.

The great General is not only leading a few soldiers; but the Captain of the Lord’s host is leading the armies of both heaven and earth to battle; they are marching on to a glorious victory. Every soldier is to put on the whole armor of God, and fight courageously, realizing that he is battling in full view of the invisible universe. If the Lord’s army will obey orders, they will find themselves influenced by the Holy Spirit to work the works of God. The battlefield is glorified with the light shining from the cross of Calvary.

The prayer of Christ; “that they may be one in us,” should be responded to by every Christian. Each one should show an example of holy devotion, of unreserved consecration, to His service. They should be models of self-denying, self-sacrificing laborers, after the example of Jesus, that God may be glorified on the earth, and that, beholding the love which binds the believers together, the world may realize that God has sent His Son to save them from their sins; and that, believing, many souls may be sanctified through the truth.

When apparent impossibilities arise in your path, present the ever-ready, complete efficiency of the Holy Spirit before your unbelieving heart, that it may shame away your overcautious spirit

The promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is not comprehended as it should be. The privileges to be enjoyed through its acceptance are not appreciated as they might be. God desires that His church shall lay hold by faith upon His promises, and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to help them in every place. He assures us that He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Since it is possible for every one to have the heavenly union, “ye need not that any man teach you (1 John 2:27),” and there is no excuse for shunning responsibilities. No duty should be unwelcome, no obligation evaded. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally.” James 1:5. Place more confidence in “Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Corinthians 1:30. The work of God is retarded by criminal unbelief in His power to use the common people to carry forward His work successfully. Because men cannot see every step forward distinctly marked out before them, they question, doubt, and hesitate, under the plea of caution. They will not walk by faith, but move by sight alone. Oh, that frail man would realize that it is the General of the armies of heaven that is leading and directing the movements of His allies on earth. Christ Himself is the renewing power, working in and through every soldier by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Every individual is to become an instrument in His hands to work for the salvation of souls. Not one who desires to labor for the Master is to be refused a place, if he is a true follower of Christ. Every one has his responsibilities to bear in the cause of Christ. The efficiency of the Spirit of God will make effective the labors of all who are willing to submit to His guidance. Therefore, how careful every officer in the Lord’s army should be that he does not interpose the command-
give the warning in every locality. God is testing the devotion of His churches and their willingness to render obedience to the Spirit's guidance. Knowledge is to be increased. The messengers of Heaven are to be seen running to and fro, seeking in every possible way to warn the people of the coming judgments, and presenting the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The standard of righteousness is to be exalted. The Spirit of God is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence will become lights in the world. Everywhere they are seen going forth to communicate to others the light they have received as they did after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And as they let their light shine, they receive more and more of the Spirit's power. The earth is lighted with the glory of God. But, oh sad picture! those who do not submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit soon lose the blessings received when they acknowledged the truth as from Heaven. They fall into a cold, spiritless formality; they lose their interest in perishing souls: they have "left their first love." And Christ says unto them, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." Revelation 2:4–5. He will take His Holy Spirit from the church, and give it to others who will appreciate it. There is no greater evidence that those who have received great light do not appreciate that light, than is given by their refusal to let their light shine upon those who are in darkness, and devoting their time and energies in celebrating forms and ceremonies. Thoughts of the inner work, the necessary purity of heart, are not entertained. The absence of harmony with God becomes apparent. The light grows dim, goes out; the candlestick has been removed. There is much exercising of man-made authority by those to whom God has not given His wisdom because they did not feel the need of the wisdom from above. This wisdom, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17)," is contrary to their disposition. They have not the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, with which the believer in Jesus should be adorned. They do not represent the meek and lowly Carpenter of Nazareth. They set aside as of little value that which God has said "is of great price."

God has not appointed any man guide, nor made any man conscience for another; therefore let human hands be withheld from restraining His servants who feel the burden to enter His vineyard to labor. Let God work with His own chosen agents by His Holy Spirit. No human being is to sit in judgment upon his brother. Neither are any to feel that they can handle roughly the precious pearls for which Christ gave His life. The pearl, the precious human pearl, was found by Christ. Let man be warned; be careful how you treat the Lord's "peculiar treasure." All discourtesy, all pain, all neglect, which these souls suffer at your measure, and the Lord shall leave them to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings. None are to exercise their human authority to bind minds and souls of their fellow men. They are not to devise and put in practice methods and plans to bring every individual under their jurisdiction.

Those who know the truth are to be worked by the Holy Spirit, and not themselves to try to work the Spirit. If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus. If men would act toward their fellow men as to those whom Christ loves,

God will move upon men of humble position in society, men who have not become insensible to the bright rays of light through so long contemplating the light of truth, and refusing to make any improvement or advancement therein.

hands, is charged against you as inflicted upon Jesus Christ. They are not to be treated in a lordly, commanding manner. Laws and rules are being made at the centers of the work that will soon be broken into atoms. Men are not to dictate. It is not for those in places of authority to employ all their powers to sustain some, while others are cast down, ignored, forsaken, and left to perish. But it is the duty of the leaders to lend a helping hand to all who are in need. Let each work in the line which God may indicate to him by His Holy Spirit. The soul is accountable to God alone. Who can say how many avenues of light have been closed by arrangements which the Lord has not advised nor instituted? The Lord does not ask permission of those in responsible positions when He wishes to use certain ones as His agents for the promulgation of truth. But He will use whom He will use. He will pass by men who have not followed His counsel, men who feel capable and sufficient to work in their own wisdom; and He will use others who are thought by these supposedly wise ones to be wholly incompetent. Many who have some talent think that they are necessary to the cause of God. Let them beware lest they stretch themselves beyond their
the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from Heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man’s machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit’s power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.

Many of those who are professedly followers of the Lord at the present time do not submit themselves to the guidance of His Spirit, but try to harness up the Holy Spirit, and drive it in their way. All such must abandon their self-sufficiency, and yield themselves unreservedly to the Lord, that He may work out His good pleasure in and through them.

The seven last plagues are about to descend upon the disobedient. Many have let the gospel invitation go unheeded; they have been tested and tried; but mountainous obstacles have seemed to loom up before their faces, blocking their onward march. Through faith, perseverance, and courage, many will surmount these obstructions and walk out into the glorious light. Almost unconsciously barriers have been erected in the strait and narrow way; stones of stumbling have been placed in the path; these will all be rolled away. The safeguards which false shepherds have thrown around their flocks will become as naught; thousands will step out into the light, and work to spread the light. Heavenly intelligences will combine with the human agencies. Thus encouraged, the church will indeed arise and shine, throwing all her sanctified energies into the contest; thus the design of God is accomplished; the lost pearls are recovered. Prophets have discerned this grand work afar off, and have caught the inspiration of the hour, and traced the wonderful descriptions of things yet to be.

Our people have had great light, and yet much of our ministerial force is exhausted on the churches, in teaching those who should be teachers; enlightening those who should be “the light of the world”; watering those from whom should flow springs of living water; enriching those who might be veritable mines of precious truth; repeating the gospel invitation to such as should be scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth communicating the message of Heaven to many who have not had the privileges which they have enjoyed; feeding those who should be in the byways and highways heralding the invitation, “Come; for all things are now ready.” Luke 14:17. Come to the gospel feast; come to the supper of the Lamb; “for all things are now ready.”

Now is the time for earnest wrestling with God. Our voices should join with the Saviour’s in that wonderful prayer: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Many may ask, “Who is sufficient for these things?” 2 Corinthians 2:16. The responsibility rests upon every individual. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” 2 Corinthians 3:5. The scheme of salvation is not to be worked out under the laws and rules specified by men. There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon. But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unity must and will be preserved.

All the revelations of the past bring added responsibilities upon the workers in these last days. The past, present, and future are linked together. We must learn lessons from the experiences of other ages. If there are any of our brethren who think that they have devised plans by which they can secure a monopoly of any line of God’s work, they are released from all such burdens. Individually we form a part of the great whole, fulfilling our part in the scenes foreseen long ages ago. In the counsels of God a place was assigned to every person, and each one is to devote his entire ability, his influence, the energy of his whole being, in an earnest endeavor to discharge the responsibility laid upon him. It is the duty of every human intelligence to put into daily practice the instructions of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John by living a practical, Christian life. We are to be united to one another in the bonds of Christlike love. This is the path marked out for all. By following in it, without boasting, without self-exaltation, we may satisfy the high claims of God upon us. If any are inclined to boast of their superior talents, let them bear in mind that these talents are another’s, only lent to them for a season, and that if they are not employed in the Lord’s work, they will be taken from them. Make no boasts of your extensive knowledge and influence. The great plan of redemption connects every man with his fellow laborer. The influence of the past helps to mold the work of the present, and that in its turn enables us to lay hold of the work line after line, upon which we may carry on the future work. All these agencies have a close relation, not only to time, but to the endless ages of the future, reaching into eternity.

Let man now cease to trust in man. While they should respect God’s plan for unity of action, let all remember that the Holy Spirit is molding and fashioning the human agent in the divine similitude. The life that is hid with Christ in God is revealed through men. We are now living in the closing scenes of this world’s history. Let men tremble with the sense of the responsibility of knowing the truth. The ends of the world are come. Proper consideration of these things will lead all to make an entire consecration of all that they have and are to their God. There should be no boasting, no seeking for the highest places; but all should be ambitious to do with fidelity, with an eye single to the glory of God, the sacred work which it is our exalted privilege to engage in. The eye should not be so constantly looking to man, studying the plans which men devise; but rather seeking for a knowledge of the plans which are determined by the Source of all wisdom. Then there will be no danger of having plans for the work contaminated by flowing through impure human channels. Look to God; pray to God; wait and watch and pray to God; work for God. The weighty obligation of warning a world of its coming doom is upon us. From every direction, far and near, calls are coming to us for help. The church, devotedly consecrated to the work, is to carry the message to the world: Come to the gospel feast; the supper is prepared, come. The weak must not now trust in finite men if they would be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord. If we have ever imported God, wrestling for His blessing as did Jacob, let it be now. God calls to the church to arise and clothe herself with the garments of Christ’s righteousness. Crowns, immortal crowns, are to be won. The kingdom of heaven is to be gained. A world, perishing in sin, is to be enlightened. The lost pearl is to be found. The lost sheep is to be brought back in safety to the fold. Who will join in the search? Who will bear the light to those who are wandering in the darkness of error? □

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