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

God's Plan for Our Recreation
Lazarus, Come Forth!
Preparing for Heaven
An Appeal to Silent Faithful Ministers
Out of the Cities!

Show Me Thy Glory, see page 4
There is power in the Word, for Jesus is the Word. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:12-14

Jesus’ humanity is the same as our humanity. It is the mystery of Godliness. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

He accepted the deterioration of the human race after four thousand years of falling. See The Desire of Ages, 49, 117. He could not use His own divinity, for He had pledged not to use it in this great controversy between good and evil.

Christ and Satan were at war over who should rule the universe. Satan wanted to be God on the sides of the north. See Isaiah, chapter 14. The battle was to be fought over the law of God, as God explains through His last-day prophet. “Christ came to the world to counteract Satan’s falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law.” The Faith I Live By, 114

Christ’s sinless life was an example of what every Christian can become as he continually submits to the power of the Holy Spirit. See Prophets and Kings, 233; The Desire of Ages, 664

God’s great plan to redeem the family of Adam, to restore them finally to their Eden home, requires explicit obedience to His unchangeable, perfect law. “God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.” The Desire of Ages, 311; see also ibid., 313

God has only one standard of righteousness. That standard can be found only in the life of Christ, His character, and His perfect obedience. Gospel Workers, 250–251. He tells us we can, we must, by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit reach that standard.

“The soul is never safe unless it is under the divine guidance. Then it will be led into all truth. The word of Christ will fall with living power upon obedient hearts; and through the application of divine truth, the perfect image of God will be reproduced and in heaven it will be said: ‘Ye are complete in Him.’ Colossians 2:10.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 167; see also Christ’s Object Lessons, 97–98; The Desire of Ages, 172, 671, 827; The Ministry of Healing, 514; Testimonies to Ministers, 416

This perfect standard of righteousness developed in His last-generation people will finally demonstrate the power of God, and will culminate in the loud cry of the third angel’s message. The end will come suddenly, unexpectedly. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 989. May God help us now and lift us out of this dead level into which His remnant church has fallen. The same question asked by Pilate two thousand years ago is being asked again today: What is truth? God has answered by His inspired Word. This Word is the truth.

Ron Spear—EDITOR
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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.
Since the beginning of Adventism, the three angels' messages flying in the midst of heaven have exercised an inspiring influence among our people, and have also served as a compass to direct our thoughts toward our prophetic destiny. These messages have provided us with a sense of identity in the proclamation of giving glory to the Creator who made heaven and earth. See Revelation 14:6.

But after the meetings in the 1950s with prominent evangelical leaders, Seventh-day Adventists have been gradually experiencing a loss of identity as a peculiar people. Our prophetic movement is being pulled in all directions, not only on doctrinal matters but also in regard to the praise we ought to render to Jehovah. Our praise services are becoming more and more like those of the fallen churches of Babylon, not just in the form, but what is even worse, in spirit. For historical Adventists, this matter is of great concern.

Therefore it is important that we review the meaning of glorifying the Lord. What does it signify to raise the hands and swing the body from side to side as we listen to the sound of drums in the background, and music that invokes a sickly sentimentalism? I do not mean that we oppose the presence of human emotion in a religious service. No, but we must keep these emotions and feelings in the proper perspective, recognizing that a greater degree of emphasis should be placed on reason.

"We are not left to be guided by the uncertainty of feelings, nor by the deceptive spirit of error. Here is the Word of God. Christ declared, 'Thy word is truth'; and the Spirit that Christ promised to His disciples, was to lead them into all truth."1

"The religion of Christ brings the emotions under the control of reason and disciplines the tongue."2

"If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith and with all the heart. Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices."3

When men attempt to glorify God, they generally follow the example of someone they respect and admire. But should you and I do likewise? Which pattern must we follow?

Our Own?

Should our ideal be one of a subjective nature in which we do whatever we "think" is "proper" and "right"? To take this path would lead us to tremendous spiritual disaster, simply because "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9. This error was Cain's problem. He thought that it was not important how to worship his Creator. He had good intentions, but obviously failed in the end. The Scriptures tell us that God rejected his offering. When God has given plain instructions on how to bring glory to His name, there is no excuse to bring something that He has not approved. Partial obedience is full disobedience in His sight.

Someone Else's Example?

History teaches us that when the Israelites worshiped the golden calf they brought upon them God's displeasure, although they intended to worship the true God, represented in that form.

"Among the objects regarded by the Egyptians as symbols of deity was the ox or calf; and it was at the suggestion of those who had practiced this form of idolatry in Egypt that a calf was now made and worshiped. The people..."
desired some image to represent God, and to go before them in the place of Moses. God had given no manner of similitude of Himself, and He had prohibited any material representation for such a purpose. But instead of obeying their Deliverer, they disobeyed and offered sacrifices "unto Him" by means of this new representation of His person.

But "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22. Human beings, whether laity or leaders, are not a good pattern. Inspiration counsels us: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isaiah 2:22. The Hebrew word chadal used for "cease" also means "leave off, desist, forsake." Yes, dear reader, instead of placing our trust and fixing our eyes on finite man (either in the Conference or in a Supporting Ministry), we should instead be "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:2

Does this verse mean that I should not consult with experienced brethren? Of course not. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us: "State conferences may depend upon the General Conference for light and knowledge and wisdom; but is it safe for them to do this? Battle Creek is not to be the center of God's work. God alone can fill this place. When our people in the different places have their special convocations, teach them, for Christ's sake and for their own soul's sake, not to make flesh their arm. There is no power in men to read the hearts of their fellowmen. The Lord is the only one upon whom we can with safety depend, and He is accessible in every place and to every church in the Union. To place men where God should be placed does not honor or glorify God. Is the president of the General Conference to be the god of the people? Are the men at Battle Creek to be regarded as infinite in wisdom? When the Lord shall work upon human hearts and human intellects, principles and practices different from this will be set before the people. 'Cease ye from man.'" 95 Emphasis supplied in all quotations.

Dear friend, the first angel's message proclaimed a call to glorify God, and if we place man where God should be, we are bringing dishonor unto His name. We are failing to grant Him the glory that He alone deserves, and consequently we are not heeding God's command.

God forbids this to happen unto us, "for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry," and "sorcerers, and idolaters, ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." See 1 Samuel 15:23 and Revelation 21:8. But, thanks be to God that we can avoid being separated for eternity from the presence of our beloved Creator. This goal is possible as we cease following man's ideas or example and learn to imitate the divine pattern of His Son.

Christ's Pattern

Jesus declares: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4. And He also said: "For I have given you an example." John 13:15. See also 1 Peter 2:21. Therefore we must follow His steps in order to bring the proper glory to God's name and so proclaim the first angel's message with might and divine zeal.

Manifestation of God's Glory

But in order to accomplish this purpose, we need, individually, to have a revelation of God's glory that will enable us to comprehend the character of His person. It is our privilege to know God, what He is, what He has done in our behalf and the great calling which glory in order to honor only His name and to vindicate His character in the last battle between good and evil, He will respond just as He did to Elijah and Moses.

When the latter, thirsting for greater tokens of God's favor "made a request that no human being had ever made before, 'I beseech thee, show me thy glory,' God did not rebuke his request as presumptuous; but the gracious words were spoken, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' The unveiled glory of God, no man in this mortal state can look upon and live; but Moses was assured that he should behold as much of the divine glory as he could endure.... This experience—above all else the promise that the divine Presence would attend him—was to Moses an assurance of success in the work before him. ... No earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God's abiding presence." Moses had a "mountain-top experience" that helped him to face the many trials that he would have in the future.

Elijah is another man of God who had an experience similar to that of Moses. He also stood on Mount Horeb, "the mountain of God." Exodus 3:1. On this same mountain God gave the law to His people. Deuteronomy 4:10. Elijah, as well as Moses, was inside a cave on this mountain where God "passed by" before His servant. See 1 Kings 19:11; Exodus 33:22. Could it be that this cave was the same cleft in the rock where Moses stood when God's glory "passed by"? It is possible.

If we place man where God should be, we are bringing dishonor unto His name. We are failing to grant Him the glory that He alone deserves, and consequently we are not heeding God's command.

He has placed before us, nothing less than to reveal His glory. "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isaiah 43:7. Thus, the Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become, and it was His purpose that the human family would "reflect, throughout endless ages, the light of the knowledge of His glory." 96

When we choose and determine with all our heart to obtain a knowledge of His But more important than the location is the fact that God revealed Himself to His servant in order to reorient his thoughts, strengthen his faith, and refocus his energies in the solemn and sacred work of reformation that was in need of completion. Whenever and wherever we seek the Lord earnestly with a spirit of humility and a desire to bring only honor to His name, God's glory and will are going to be revealed unto us.

"Not in mighty manifestations of divine power, but by 'a still small voice,'
did God choose to reveal Himself to His servant. He desired to teach Elijah that it is not always the work that makes the greatest demonstration that is most successful in accomplishing His purpose. While Elijah waited for the revelation of the Lord, a tempest rolled, the lightnings flashed, and a devastating fire swept by; but God was not in all this. Then there came a still, small voice, and the prophet covered his head before the presence of the Lord. His petulance was silenced, his spirit softened and subdued. He now knew that a quiet trust, a firm reliance on God, would ever find for him a present help in time of need. It is not always the most learned presentation of God's truth that convicts and converts the soul. Not by eloquence or logic are men's hearts reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart.78

And as our Redeemer brings His work to completion, by means of the loud cry at the end of this earth's history, "The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit."78

But what about you and me? Do we have to travel to Palestine and start an expedition possibly to find a cave where we can have a new revelation of God's glory? No. If we did find such a place, perhaps by following the traditions of the region, would we have a "mountain-top experience," just as Moses and Elijah did? Not likely.

But of one thing we can be fully certain. That "God who at sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, . . . the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Hebrews 1:1-3

Yes, dear reader, we can save airfare to Palestine, and use that expense for the proclamation of the three angels' messages. Right where you are, you can also behold the glory of the Lord in the person of God's Son. You can also contemplate in Christ God's express image (from the Greek charakter). This same Greek term gives us the word character. Yes, dear friend, Jesus "is the image of the invisible God," "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Colossians 1:15, 19. What fulness? The answer is found in chapter two, verse nine: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

But just as in the times of Elijah, the Lord responded 800 years later by a still, small voice: Jesus, the Word, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory [His character], the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." John 1:14. When God was incarnated, He again revealed Himself through the "still, small voice" of a babe in a manger. He had no physical features that would draw special attention to Himself.

This point is very important in our study of God's glory. You see, "before Christ left heaven and came into the world to die, He was taller than any of the angels. He was majestic and lovely. But when His ministry commenced, He was but little taller than the common size of men then living upon the earth. Had He come among men with His noble, heavenly form, His outward appearance would have attracted the minds of the people to Himself, and He would have been received without the exercise of faith. It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man, that He might be made perfect through suffering, and himself endure the strength of Satan's fierce temptations, that He might understand how to succor those who should be tempted. The faith of men in Christ as the Messiah was not to rest on the evidences of sight, and they believe on Him because of His personal attractions, but because of the excellence of character found in Him, which never had been found, neither could be, in another."79 "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. We can behold His glory in the excellence of character found in His beloved and begotten Son.

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6

Therefore, when Philip said unto Christ, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." John 14:8-9, 11. He also declared: "I and my Father are one." John 10:30

"Philip's doubt was answered with words of reproof. He wished Christ to reveal the Father in bodily form; but in Christ God had already revealed Him-

Not by eloquence or logic are men's hearts reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character.

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those who return to their loyalty and keep the law of God. This is their only hope. Christ says definitely, I came not to destroy the law. It is a transcript of God's character, and I came to carry out its every specification. I came to vindicate it by living it in human nature, giving an example of perfect obedience.12

Unfortunately, while our mighty Redeemer is opening the way in order that you and I may behold his glory, "Satan is seeking to veil Jesus from our sight, to eclipse His light, for when we get even a glimpse of His glory we are attracted to Him. Sin hides from our view the matchless charms of Jesus; prejudice, selfishness, self-righteousness, and passion blind our eyes, so that we do not discern the Saviour. Oh, if we would by faith draw nigh to God, He would reveal to us His glory, which is His character, and the praise of God would flow forth from human hearts, and be sounded by human voices. Then we would forever cease to give glory to Satan by sinning against God and talking doubt and unbelief. We would no longer stumble along stumbling, and mourning, and covering the altar of God with our tears. If we would behold Jesus, believing His words, we would reflect the image of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and what a wave of glory would flow back from earth to heaven!"13

Thus, in the light of these statements, we may perfectly echo Sister White's appeal with her own words: "We now call upon you to give yourselves to the service of God. Too long have you given your powers to the service of Satan, and have been slaves to his will. God calls upon you to behold the glory of His character, that by beholding, you may become changed into His image."16

Beholding God's Glory

Inspiration places great emphasis on beholding the glory of God, which is Christ's character. But what does it mean to behold Christ?

"Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being."

"Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God's law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency."18

"God has made abundant provision that the soul may make continual progress in the divine life. He has placed on every hand agencies to aid our development in knowledge and virtue; and yet, how little these agencies are appreciated or enjoyed! How often the mind is given to the contemplation of that which is earthly, sensual, and base! We give our time and thought to the trivial and commonplace things of the world, and neglect the great interests that pertain to eternal life. The noble powers of the mind are dwarfed and enfeebled by lack of exercise on themes that are worthy of their concentration."19

"Let every one who desires to be a partaker of the divine nature appreciate the fact that he must escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. There must be a constant, earnest struggling of the soul against the evil imaginings of the mind. There must be a steadfast resistance of temptation to sin in thought or act. The soul must be kept from every stain, through faith in Him who is able to keep you from falling. We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and you will have a daily, living experience in the willingness and power of Christ to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."20

"It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ's own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to our-

Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ

“The glory of this light, which is the very glory of the character of Christ, is to be manifested in the individual Christian, in the family, in the church, in the ministry of the Word, and in every institution established by God's people. The Lord designs that all these shall be agencies in the fulfillment of His great purpose for the human race."14

“Then can we be surprised that the enemy should put forth every effort in his power to create dissension, alienation, and strife in the church of God, that they may not reveal to the world the glory, the character, of Christ?”15
IN chapter eleven of the Gospel of John there is recorded the touching story of Lazarus. It is a story of both tragedy and final victory over man’s two enemies, death and the grave. We are still subject to death, but God’s Word promises that one day it will be completely destroyed: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Corinthians 15:26. Lazarus’ story is also about love, both human and divine. In this story are the famous words, “Jesus wept” (verse 35), that paint a picture of Jesus’ sympathy for suffering humanity and His heart-rending sorrow over the hard, stubborn resistance of men’s hearts to accept God’s love and salvation. Jesus wept, for “many of those now mourning for Lazarus would soon plan the death of Him who was the resurrection and the life.” The Desire of Ages, 533

The story of Lazarus is also rich with meaning for Christians today. In it we can find both reasons for and answers to the Laodicean condition of God’s people. But God is at work today reviving and revitalizing many who are willing to surrender to Him, to accept His will, and to co-operate with Him in the great work of salvation. As we consider Lazarus’ story we will see that it is also our story, and perhaps we will begin to understand why Jesus wept and still weeps today as He pleads His precious blood in our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.

The story begins with Lazarus in sickness (verse 1). Sickness is often caused by one’s bad habits or failing to properly maintain God-given health. Many have made themselves sick by failing to exercise, eat, rest, or use water properly. And then when we are sick we want to get well immediately; just take a pill and keep right on doing what made us sick to begin with. It is the same in the spiritual realm. When we fail to exercise faith, eat the bread of life, rest and trust in Jesus, or drink of the water of life, which is Jesus, we get spiritually sick. Then we expect a sudden cure, a fast remedy, some instant religion, but it does not work that way. There is no fast cure for spiritual sickness. Jesus is the only remedy. He is the Great Physician. For anyone to ignore the cause of sickness is foolish, but we often do so. We focus on the symptoms rather than on the root of the problem. But all spiritual sickness results to some extent from a lack of vital connection with the source of health, Jesus Christ. Some symptoms of spiritual sickness are the coldness of lovelessness, the high fever of a quick temper, the swollen tongue of gossip and slander, bad breath of unclean language, heart palpitations of worldliness, lethargy, no energy for active labor for Christ or the truth, an inflated head of pride, laryngitis (loss of voice) for daily prayer and sharing one’s faith, and itching ears when straight truth comes our way. We are all infected with the virus of sin, and if left untreated it leads to eternal death (Romans 3:23, 6:23), just as Lazarus’ sickness led to his death.

In verse three Lazarus’ sisters sent word of his sickness to Christ. Here too is a lesson for us. When we see the sickness or faults of our Christian brothers and sisters we can do one of three things:

1. We can try to treat it ourselves, but it is a very dangerous solution since none of us are qualified spiritual doctors.
2. We can tell many others how sick Brother or Sister So-and-so is.
3. We can tell it to Jesus. Only in this way do we get help and healing.

The church is a hospital for sin-sick souls who need God’s remedy. By telling the need to Jesus we are learning to

Mark Duarte

Pastor Mark Duarte writes from Yokohama, Japan.
bear one another’s burdens, as the Bible says. See Galatians 6:2. Pray for each other. Lift up the sick and the erring one before God’s throne of grace. Tell God, “He whom Thou lovest is sick. Help him, Lord! And help me to be an instrument of Your grace.” Christ loves each one of us, no matter what our condition, whether healthy or sick. He knows our desperate need and longs to help. He makes house calls, too. Revelation 3:20 says He stands at the door knocking. Will we let Him in?

Verses four to six tell us that when Christ had heard about Lazarus’ sickness He stayed where He was for two more days. What a strange act! If He had left right away, Lazarus would not have died. But God is not on the same time schedule as we are. What often seems like a delay is God’s way of working out the salvation of as many people as possible using the same event. 2 Peter 3:9. Through Lazarus’ experience Christ was trying to reach all those involved, the sisters, the mourners and even the curious crowd. Christ allowed Satan to think he had the victory by killing Lazarus, but our Lord is the source of life and resurrection. Ellen White says Christ “suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe.” The Desire of Ages, 528. Lazarus and his sisters came through this ordeal with increased faith and love for Christ. When we learn to patiently trust Christ, our faith and love will also increase. Now let us move to the events immediately surrounding Lazarus’ death and resurrection.

When Jesus finally arrived on the scene (verse 17), Lazarus was not only dead, but had also been in the tomb for four days. It seemed as though all hope was lost. Both sisters said, “Lord, if you had been here, he would not have died.” Was Jesus too late? No! Even death cannot stop Him who is life and resurrection personified. “I am the resurrection and the life,” Jesus said; “he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Verse 25. Many of our churches today have gone from being hospitals for the spiritually sick to being funeral homes for the spiritually dead. Many are full of corruption and dead men’s bones, as Jesus said in Matthew 23:27. Ellen White says, “I saw great iniquity and wileness in the churches; yet their members profess to be Christians. Their profession, their prayers, their exhortations are an abomination in the sight of God . . . The cloak of religion covers the greatest crime and iniquity.” Early Writings, 274-275. In other words, Christians are called by Christ’s name, a living name, and yet many are dead or dying. This covering up of sin was the same problem with the church of Sardis. “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” Revelation 3:1. One does not have to be a murderer, a thief, a dope dealer, an adulterer or a criminal to die spiritually. Just sit back, relax, do nothing and you will die. Sins of commission are not any worse than sins of omission. If we do not do the bad, but fail to do the good it is all the same. But the good news is that Jesus is still the resurrection and the life, and even though we may be spiritually dead, yet shall we live.

We can experience this new life by, first of all, co-operating with Christ and admitting our dead condition. Jesus asked Lazarus’ sisters, “Where have ye laid him?” And they answered, “Come and see.” Verse 34. Our attitude must be the same. “The dead body is right here, Lord. Help me!”

What Jesus did next is very important. He came to the mouth of the grave and said, “Take ye away the stone!” Verse 39. This stone can be anything or anyone who stands between us and Christ; between us and a vital Christian life; between us and growth in love and unity; between us and the truth; between us and full surrender or conversion. See Galatians 6:2. Pray for each other. Lift up the sick and the erring one before God’s throne of grace. Tell God, “He whom Thou lovest is sick. Help him, Lord! And help me to be an instrument of Your grace.” Christ loves each one of us, no matter what our condition, whether healthy or sick. He knows our desperate need and longs to help. He makes house calls, too. Revelation 3:20 says He stands at the door knocking. Will we let Him in?

What is it that is keeping us in our spiritual grave? Is it some person? Is it some sour attitude, some pet sin? Is it pride, selfishness, worldliness, laziness, or stubbornness?

What is it that is keeping us in our spiritual grave? Is it some person? Is it some sour attitude, some pet sin? Is it pride, selfishness, worldliness, laziness, or stubbornness? Whatever it is, Jesus speaks to us at this moment saying, “Roll away the stone!” Open yourself up to Him so that He can go to work. He provides the power. We can do all things through Him, the Bible says, (Philippians 4:13). “But, Lord, by this time there is a bad odor.” Verse 39. “I’ve been dead a long time, Lord. Is there any hope for me?” Don’t let our doubts or what seems
Preparing for Heaven

We have been listening to pointed truths pressed home to the heart by the Spirit of God. Some professed followers of Christ may be inclined to say, as did the disciples at a certain time as they listened to the earnest truths which fell from the lips of the divine Teacher, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" John 6:60. Many may think that the way is made too straight; when we talk of self-denial, and sacrifice for Christ's sake, they think we dwell too much on these points. You would prefer to hear us speak of the Christian's reward. We know that those who are faithful will inherit all things; but the great question with us should be, "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" Malachi 3:2. Who shall be counted worthy to receive the exceeding great and precious reward that shall be given to the overcomers? Those who shall be partakers of Christ's sufferings, will be sharers with Him of His glory.

Without holiness, the Word of God tells us, no man can see the Lord. Without purity of life it is impossible for us to be fitted and prepared to dwell with the holy and sinless angels in a pure and holy heaven. No sin can be there. No impurity can enter the pearly gates of the golden city of God. And the question for us to settle is, whether we will turn from all sin and comply with the conditions God has given us, that we may become His sons and daughters. Separation from the world He requires of us in order to become members of the royal family.

The light has been given us showing us the path plain and distinct that we might not err therein, if we will only study the chart which points out the way. But while many of us profess to be Christians, we fail to make the Word of God the man of our counsel; we fail to make it our guide; we do not study its pages and acquaint ourselves with the principles contained in its sacred record.

If we would only study the truths of God's Word, and do His will, we should know of the doctrine; we should not be ignorant of the important truths for this time. We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon to come; and believing this we feel a necessity upon us to plead with men and women to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man. We do not want that any of you should be of that number who shall call for rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. We want you rather to be of that number who shall enter in through the gates into the city, who shall have an abundant entrance, and shall have right to the tree of life, and shall eat of its immortal fruit and pluck of its healing leaves. We want you to be of that company that shall bow before the throne of God crying, "Worthy, worthy, worthy, is the Lamb that was slain for us." We want you to be praising God with immortal tongues, and be saved with an everlasting salvation; and, therefore, we warn you to flee from the wrath to come. We plead with you to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. It is perfection that is required; and nothing short of perfection will enable you to see the King in His beauty.

When you are all ready, having overcome your sins, having put away all your iniquity from you, you are in a condition to receive the finishing touch of immortality. Many are waiting and expecting that a more favorable opportunity than the present time will come when they can put away sin more easily than now; and when it will not require so great humility and sacrifice on their part, and they will not have to make the effort they are required to make at the present time to perfect holiness in the fear of
God. I fear that while they are thus waiting for the better time, their probation may close and they be found in their sins. For the sentence is to go forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This may be spoken in heaven in your case, and the work for you will have been done, and you lost, eternally lost.

It will not be safe for you to wait for a better time to come. It is while it is called today. If any man will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. It is to listen today to the invitation of mercy. It is to yield your pride, your folly, your vanity, and make an entire surrender of your heart to God. Come to Him with your talents and all the influence you have, and lay all these without reserve at the feet of Him who died on Calvary's cross to redeem you. He has wore the crown of thorns; and they were pressed into His sacred temples, and sent the blood trickling down His face and beard. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He was smitten and afflicted, and it was for you and me He thus suffered.

And while you stand without moral courage to take your position, and to gird the armor of righteousness about you, you are manifesting cowardice which should make you ashamed. He has made provision whereby you can stand amid the perils of this age.

Your grasp should be fastened upon the eternal, and you realize that you have the strength that is mighty to cling to, which will be to you a stronghold and fortress in the day of trouble, affliction, and peril. But will that better time and that more favorable opportunity ever come to those who would say to the Spirit of God, as did Felix, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee? Is the opportunity ever to come when we can leave sin any more easily than at the present moment? Is the time coming when we can take hold of the truth any more easily than now? Satan has come down with great power, and is working with great activity to weave his net around unguarded souls and thereby take them captive in his snares, that they may not be partakers of the glories that are to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Are we willing that Satan should carry out his purposes? Many yield themselves willingly to his influence, and by their course of action tempt the devil to tempt them.

Are we willing that Satan should carry out his purposes? Many yield themselves willingly to his influence, and by their course of action tempt the devil to tempt them. It is for us to make an effort to turn from iniquity, to the living God. In Christ's sermon on the mount, in the lesson He there gave His disciples, He says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. Perfection in our position is what the Son of God requires. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matthew 6:25. The life He speaks of here, is that life which measures with the life of God, the life that is to be eternal, a life forevermore in the kingdom of glory, without sorrow, without pain, without sickness, without distress, and without death.

As He thus presents eternal life to His followers, is it not of more consequence to them than the life of this world? Your attention should not be turned in the direction of anxiety, fear, and solicitude, in regard to your meat and drink, and the clothing you are to put upon these bodies. Is not the better life to be sought after with far greater carefulness, and we engage in the work with greater earnestness than we should in making unnecessary preparations for the treasures of this life, therefore you may be as calm and moderate in religious things as you choose, and while you are thus doing you will be gaining everlasting life, I should be telling you things not written in this Book.

I want to exhort you to pray always. There is no resting spot here; there is no period when you can relax your efforts, no period when you can safely cease striving, agonizing, to enter in at the strait gate. It is positively dangerous to fasten your affections upon the things of this world, and devote your time to your own sinful gratification. You idolize self, and make this world your God.
There is no period when you can do this with safety. While you are thus engaged disease may be feeling after your heartstrings, and death may be on your track. Your probation may close and you be unsaved. Do you think when the Lord shall come in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of His Father, with the holy retinue of angels, that He will give to you probation, that you may have another opportunity to form your characters for heaven? Is it to give you time to obtain moral fitness to enter the kingdom of glory? No opportunity is granted you then. It is then too late. No atoning blood then pleads in your behalf to wash away the stain of sin. Just as you then are, you will remain. Just as you fall, so you must come up in the resurrection. And if you are living when the Son of man is revealed, just as you are then found when He shall appear, if unready, so you must remain. The impure cannot then obtain perfection of Christian character. No work of purification can then be performed.

Opportunity is now given you to improve and become perfect this side of the judgment. You must obtain a moral fitness here to meet your God. You should be right, just right, if you wish to obtain an entrance in through the gates of the holy city of God. Should your probation close today and you be brought just as you are this moment to the gate of the city, and it should open before you, and the rays of light that emanate from the throne of God should beam forth upon you, could you endure it? Could you bear it, in your sins and in your iniquity and imperfection? Could you enjoy that sacred and divine light? Not for a moment. You would drop as powerless as the Roman guard, who watched around the sepulcher of Jesus Christ, when the angels there descended to resurrect the Son of God. As that light fell upon the Roman guard, they became as dead men. They fell to the earth. They could not endure the light from heaven, which was reflected from one mighty angel. Neither can you unless you have a fitness for it here. Could you be brought through the gates into the Holy City, your probation closed and sins upon you, pride, folly, envy, evil surmisings, lustful passions, covetousness and these evil things, and gaze upon sinless angels, who never have fallen, never been in disobedience and transgression, and behold in every countenance the light of the glory of God as it shineth in the face of Jesus Christ, and see the redeemed saints that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, how would you feel? You hear a voice inquire, Who are these? And the answer is given, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14

You look around and see those that have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. You then behold yourself. Im-purity is upon you. Your garments are defiled with pollution of the world. Sin has left its disgusting impress upon your countenance. You cannot endure the glory and light. And you would say, seem to many like idle tales; nevertheless they are true, and without preparation, without readiness, without moral fitness, you can have no place in the kingdom of glory.

We see beauty, and loveliness, and glory in Jesus. We behold in Him matchless charms. He was the Majesty of heaven. He filled all heaven with splendor. Angels bowed in adoration before Him, and readily obeyed His commands. Our Saviour gave up all. He laid aside His glory, His majesty, and splendor, and came down to this earth and died for a race of rebels, who were transgressors against His Father’s commandments. Christ condescended to humble Himself that He might save the fallen race; He

The truths of God’s word must be brought to bear upon us, and we must lay hold upon them. If we do this, they will have a sanctifying influence upon our lives

Anywhere but here to be pained with this glory and beauty and loveliness. You could not endure it. You were not worthy. No, you were not ready for it, and you could not dwell there. You would rather be anywhere else. You would prefer that rocks and mountains should fall upon you and hide you from the unbearable glory that you behold everywhere.

Says Christ, Agonize to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. It requires an effort; and while we may talk, and plead, and entreat men and women, some may feel as amused as though it was a mere idle tale. They may feel as did those to whom Noah preached warning them that the Flood was coming upon the earth. They could laugh and ridicule. They would say, How can God destroy this world that He has made so beautiful? We do not believe it. Nevertheless the waters of the Flood came, notwithstanding their unbelief, and they were washed away, and the world was cleansed of its moral pollution.

Now, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed. These things will drank the cup of suffering, and in its place offers us the cup of blessing; yes, that cup was drained for us; and although many know all this, yet they choose to go on in sin and folly; and still Jesus invites them. He says, “Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17. Provision is made that those who have been faithful may be crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality; that they may dwell in His presence, and never know sorrow and sighing more. He has engaged to crown you with glory, and yet you turn away from His offers of mercy!

What ingratitude is manifest for all His matchless love. He invites all to come to Him. Will you come?

The truths of God’s Word must be brought to bear upon us, and we must lay hold upon them. If we do this, they will have a sanctifying influence upon our lives; they will fit us that we may have a preparation for the kingdom of glory; that when our probation shall close, we may see the King in His beauty, and dwell in His presence forevermore.

And now the question is, Are we willing to make the sacrifice? “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Who said this? Thus said God, the Crea-
tor of the heavens and the earth, He who lends you life and breath; He speaks to you, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

What a promise is this!
And do you think that by embracing the truth of God you are degrading yourself? that you are lowering yourself by embracing the truth of heavenly origin? The truth elevates the receiver every time. It sanctifies his taste, it refines his judgment, it elevates him, and by enabling him to perfect holiness, it brings him nearer to the character of the heavenly angels. It brings purity of character and purity of life, and gives a fitness that we may join the heavenly company in the kingdom of glory. Without this fitness, we can never see the heavenly abode. And yet many say of the truth, that it takes from them everything that they desire to keep. Let me say, It takes from you nothing that it is best for you to retain.

What does the Lord require? He requires the whole heart. He says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thine mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.” Luke 10:27.

What chance does this give you to love separation from the love of the world that is required; and what is given you in its place? “I will be a Father unto you.” Do you have to separate in your affections from friends? Does the truth require you to stand alone in your position to serve God, because others around you are not willing to yield to the claims that Christ has upon them? Does it require a separation in feeling from them? Yes; and this is the cross which you must bear, which leads many to say, I cannot yield to the claims of the truth. But says Christ, If any man love father, or mother, or brother, or sister, more than me, he is not worthy of me. Whosoever will come after me, and will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me. Here is the cross of self-denial and sacrifice; to separate in your affections here from those who will not yield to the claims of truth. Is this too great a sacrifice to make for Him who sacrificed all for you? Here are the conditions specified by God. If we comply, He says to us, I will be a Father unto you, and will receive you, and ye shall be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King, and heirs of an immortal inheritance that is incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. What a relationship is this? Do you call this degrading? Do you call this a position that shall lower you or detract from your dignity and bring you down to a low level in life? Do you call this humiliation? Do you call this a great sacrifice, to become members of the royal family and children of the heavenly King, elevated by the truths of God, fitted up for the society of heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory? What is this, in truth? Is it true exaltation. It is that which will ennoble every time. The truth of God is ennobling, it is elevating, it is refining, it is sanctifying. Tell me not of any exaltation out of Jesus Christ.

When man was plunged in hopeless misery, when death was his portion, Christ left the majesty, splendor, and glory, of the heavenly kingdom, and humbled Himself to a life of unexampled suffering and humiliation, and an ignominious death, that He might become a steppingstone for man, that he might climb up upon His merits, and by virtue of His blood become enabled so to serve God, that He could accept his efforts to keep His broken law, and through obedience, man could thus be brought back again and reinstated in Eden, and share again in the glory that was at first given to the holy pair as they stood in the perfection of beauty, and in their holy innocence, in the Garden of Eden. This was to be given back to Adam and his faithful children, who through the merits of the blood of Christ should be washed and sanctified and made worthy to be brought back to eat of the immortal fruit of the tree of life that Adam and Eve forfeited all right to by disobedience. If we then refuse to accept of Christ as our Saviour, are we in an exalted position? No, indeed; we are just where Adam and Eve were after their transgression, degraded, fallen, and without a Saviour; just where they would have remained had they not accepted Jesus Christ as their Redeemer.

Sinners, without God you are in this helpless condition, without hope in the world, in sin, in the bonds of iniquity and wretchedness and corruption; and yet your words imply that you consider it a great condensation to grasp the chain of truth that is let down from heaven to earth, that you may take hold upon it and be brought nearer to heaven and Jesus Christ. Do you call this condensation? Do you call this a humiliation? There are no other means of true exaltation. There is no provision made for man only through Jesus Christ whereby he may be exalted. You may talk of the honors of this world. But look at Moses. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Here he had the privilege of living in kings' houses. He was a mighty warrior, and went forth with the armies of the Egyptians to battle; and when they returned from their successful conquest, they everywhere sung of his praise and his victories. The highest honors of the world were within his grasp; but he chose rather to suffer affliction with the

We are to obtain a fitness here to join the society of sinless angels. Do you expect that when Christ comes He will give you that fitness? Not at all
people of God than to enjoy these honors and the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. He could look right through the cloud of affliction, persecution, and trials, and see the ransomed people of God, by faith, crowned with glory, honor, and everlasting life. He chose in this present life to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the riches of the coming kingdom of glory greater than the riches of Egypt.

In like manner we have fixed our minds upon the exceeding great and precious reward; and, in order to obtain it, we must have a perfect character. The angels of God are watching the development of character. Angels of God are weighing moral worth; and we are to obtain a fitness here to join the society of sinless angels. Do you expect that when Christ comes He will give you that fitness? Not at all. You must be found of Him without spot, without blemish, or wrinkle, or anything like it. Now is the watching and trying time. Now it is the time to obtain a preparation to abide the day of His coming, and to stand when He appeareth. Do you say that you cannot do it because around you are so much sin and iniquity and corruption? I refer you to Enoch. He lived just previous to the world’s being washed from its moral pollution by a flood. He was on the earth at the time when corruption was teeming on every hand; and yet he bore the impress of the divine. He walked with God three hundred years; and he was not, for God took him, that is, translated him to heaven. The flaming chariots of God were sent for this holy man, and he was borne to heaven. Enoch had the witness that he pleased God. And this witness we can have.

Enoch represents those who shall remain upon the earth and be translated to heaven without seeing death. He represents that company that are to live amid the perils of the last days, and withstand all the corruption, vileness, sin, and iniquity, and yet be unsullied by it all. We can stand as did Enoch. There has been provision made for us. Help has been laid upon One that is mighty; and we all can take hold upon His mighty strength. Angels of God, that excel in strength, are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. These angels, when they see that we are doing the very utmost on our part to be overcomers, will do their part, and their light will shine around about us, and sway back the influence of the evil angels that are around us, and will make a fortification around us as a wall of fire. Ample provisions have been made for us when we are burdened, weary, and cast down, and in distress.

Help has been laid upon One who is mighty. The great Burden Bearer, who took our nature that He might understand how to sympathize with our frailty, and with our temptations, knows how to succor those that are tempted. And does He say, Carry your burdens yourself? No; but, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28–30. But you say, It is this yoke that I have dreaded to wear, and this burden I have endeavored to shun. But Christ says the yoke He has prepared for you to wear is easy if you submit your neck to it, and the burden is light if you cheerfully and resolutely lift it. “Come unto me,” says Christ, “and I will give you rest.” How much lighter than the burden of sin and iniquity that you take along! How much lighter than the conscience which is constantly stinging and reproaching you! A violated conscience is hard to be endured. How much easier is the yoke of Christ than all this!

The trouble is, the meekness is lacking; the lowliness is not there. We are not willing to come right down to the simplicity of the gospel. We want honor one of another. We are not willing to suffer affliction with the people of God, as was Moses. We are not willing to have our names cast out as evil. And although all Heaven is inviting us to break away from the influence of earth, and fix our eye upon things of immortal worth, yet we keep them fixed upon the bubbles of earth. We are unwilling to have our affections elevated. We are like a prostrate vine, its tendrils clinging to worthless stubble. Let your tendrils entwine around the throne of God. You are unwilling that the soul should be uplifted to God. You allow your mind to be diverted with the things right around you here; and while you are doing this, the heavenly glory is eclipsed, it is lost sight of.

The Majesty of Heaven is standing before the Father, pleading. My blood, My blood; spare the sinner a little longer for My sake. What are you doing for Him while He is pleading? Seeking your pleasure, following in the ways of folly, Christ says the yoke He has prepared for you to wear is easy if you submit your neck to it, and the burden is light if you cheerfully and resolutely lift it.
cate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and you say, Here I come to thee, Father, with my burden of anxiety, and will lay it at thy feet. You come to God in prayer, and you say, Here Lord, my anguish is so great I cannot form my prayer into words, but, Lord, Thou understandest it all, and I lay my burden upon Thee, the Burden Bearer. I will lay it on Thee, and Thou hast promised to take it. Take my burden of cares, I cannot carry it any longer; now, Lord, bear it for me. Now since you have thus carried your burden to the Lord, leave it there; do not take it away with you. Many come to the Lord in this way, and they never really lay their burden upon Him; for they gather it all up again, and carry it away with them. You are not to do this. Leave your burden there, leave it with the Burden Bearer, He has promised to take it. Then come away and say, I will not gather my burden up again, but when I have left it with Jesus, I will not begin to worry about it again. And then let the anguish of your soul be exchanged for rejoicing in the Lord. You are not to go with your heads bowed down in darkness, and crying. Oh, my troubles and perplexities! No; there is something better for you to dwell upon. It is the immortal treasure, the exceeding great reward; it is to talk of the matchless charms of the loving Saviour, and His undying love for sinners. Think of this, and you will not consider that you have had any trials worth speaking of. Go to Calvary, and behold the agony of the Son of God upon the cross, and your little trials will sink into insignificance.

May the Lord help you. I will detain you no longer, but would say, We invite you to come to Christ. We invite you to lay your burden upon the Burden Bearer. We want you to get your eye fixed upon the immortal charms of the heavenly land, and when your eye is fastened upon these, you will be willing to make any sacrifice, and count all things else but loss. You can then say with Paul, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6:14. Bear cheerfully the cross of Christ, instead of shunning every cross you can. Try to imitate His life of self-denial and sacrifice, and do good to others that are around you, that at last you may be partakers of His glory, and have a crown placed upon your brow; and you will cast your crowns at His feet, and bow in adoration before Him, and fill heaven with rich music and songs to the Lamb.

Do not talk to me of the honors and treasures of this life. I have my eye fixed upon the eternal substance, the immortal inheritance. I must see the King in His beauty. I love my Lord and Saviour, and it is my life to honor and glorify Him upon the earth. Take His smiles away, and everything is dark and gloomy to me. But let me have His smiles, and everything would be a heaven to me. The darkest place on earth would be a paradise. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” Luke 2:14. Sinners, we long for you to be saved and join the songs of victory in the kingdom of glory. We love you. Think you, if we did not, we should be entertaining and begging you to come to Christ and be saved in God’s appointed way? We hope to meet you in the judgment with your names recorded in the Lamb’s book of life, there to remain as long as God shall exist, and enjoy the blessings of everlasting life throughout eternal ages.

“Practical remarks at the grove meeting in Johnstown, Michigan, June 1869,” Review and Herald, vol. 1, 92–95 (April 12, 19, 1870)

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An Appeal to Silent Faithful Ministers

I am still persuaded that, contrary to appearances, there are a significant number of ministers in the Western world who in their hearts are faithful to God and to His truth. But for various reasons, most of these faithful ministers are presently silent. If you are one of these, it is to you I specifically address this article.

Having been a minister for many years, both in denominational and in self-supporting ministry, I am not unmindful of the enormous cost that is required today not only to be a faithful minister in your heart, but also to respond to the crisis hour in which we live. Is this the reason that there is a deafening silence from the faithful ministry?

Surely you recognize that we are now in a time of unparalleled apostasy and wickedness within our church. You realize that on every hand there are myriads who are willing, not only to participate in these evils, but also to promote them and to teach others to follow in their destructive pathway. You are aware that many of the pastors in your Conference no longer truly believe the Seventh-day Adventist message in all its pointed beauty. You realize that many pastors are indolent, self-seeking, and ruthless in their efforts to decry those who are faithful servants of the Lord. You realize that even among your own church members there are many who, should probation close today, would be lost for eternity. But, generally speaking, you have continued to remain silent and neutral in this crisis hour. How much longer dare you remain in such silence while myriads of precious souls are moving headlong into eternal oblivion?

Fellow ministers, we must face the terrible reality that the judgment of the living begins with us. I wonder if that judgment has already begun and if some of our fellow ministers have not already closed their eternal probation by their consistent rebellion against God? The prophet Ezekiel warns that the destroying angels begin with the ancient men that are before the temple. See Ezekiel 9:6

For some years now the Lord, in His mercy to His people, has raised up many self-supporting ministers to give the trumpet a certain sound; to warn, not only a perishing world, but also, in many instances, a languishing church. The impending doom is inevitable unless we are revived by repentance and reformation. These self-supporting ministers have been chosen of God when the voices of an overwhelming number of leaders and pastors alike have been silent, or even supportive of the great apostasy everywhere abounding. These faithful self-supporting workers have been greatly maligned, their reputation terribly besmirched, their characters brought into deep question. But they cannot remain silent while the majority of our members are moving headlong to eternal destruction. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 136

We in the self-supporting work cannot carry the burden alone. I want to call upon those of you who are faithful to break the shackles of your timidity, your neglect, your silence, to join in the final effort to bring the members of our church to the realization of the solemn times in which we live, and to offer the grace and power of Jesus to restore and to redeem His people.

I have reflected upon many conversations with fellow ministers and sought to evaluate why those who themselves know and are appalled by the lost condition of the majority in our church, have not yet moved forward to play the role that God would surely have them play for the salvation of His people.

My burden is that this article may be used by the Holy Spirit to prick your conscience and to stir you to repentance for your inactivity in the past and to

Colin Standish is president of Hartland Institute in Rapidan, Virginia.
encourage you to make a solemn commitment to the Lord.

“For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” Isaiah 62:1

History repeats itself; humanity today is little different from humanity in ancient times. I am convinced that the same reason that kept many faithful priests from acknowledging Jesus during His ministry is keeping many faithful pastors today from a clear testimony to both their fellow pastors and to their congregations. The issues were very clear in the time of Christ.

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

There may be an immediate desire to say “That does not refer to me.” But in reality are we afraid that we might bring upon ourselves the displeasure of our fellow pastors; the displeasure of our Conference leadership if we stand up for truth “though the heavens fall”? By the way, among this group were men such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; men who realized that Jesus was the Messiah, but who did not have the courage to publicly declare it. However, the time came when their fellow leaders had so prostituted their calling and had crucified the very Redeemer of whom they were supposedly representatives, that these two men came out and declared their true allegiance. I appeal to you faithful ministers to do the same. Has not the time come for you to declare your true allegiance? Irrespective of the consequences, counting not the costs, for surely the day of the Lord is upon us. If we are at the very end of the end of time, how can we protect ourselves in a cloak of silence? Such silence gives assent and support to the apostasy and the unfaithfulness among God’s people.

I am almost certain that these words will be read by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea of this day. I am encouraged by the scripture which tells us that after the day of Pentecost “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7. But what might have been done had these same priests had the courage to come out strongly during the ministry of Jesus? Could it be that they could have saved the Jewish leaders from rejecting Christ? Every moment you, as a faithful minister, delay in declaring openly and boldly your allegiance to Christ, to His truth, to the great message that God has entrusted to us today, every moment you delay in pointing out the sin and the apostasy in the church, and the divine remedy through Jesus Christ, is a moment when souls become further hardened in their apostasy and sin, and maybe, dare we say it? move into an irreversible allegiance to Satan.

I believe many faithful ministers are consoling themselves with the thought that their silence and careful statements show great control and discretion in this time of polemics, but indeed, it is much more likely that it is evidence of cowardice and timidity. To such men I say, “Courage, brethren,” courage that we can obtain only on our knees with the Lord because of our deep and unwavering love for those who are in a lost condition in the church.

The example of the prophet Jeremiah is one that all of us must follow. Read carefully Jeremiah 26. The Lord had commanded him to speak the words of condemnation against the people while standing in the court of the temple. His words enraged the priests, the prophets, and through them, the people and they began to shout, “Thou shalt surely die.”

Every moment you delay in pointing out the sin and the apostasy in the church, and the divine remedy through Jesus Christ, is a moment when souls become further hardened in their apostasy and sin

Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak these words in your ears.” Jeremiah 26:12-15

It was this courage that saved the life of Jeremiah, and led the princes to turn away from the plea of the priests and the prophets against the true prophet.

“Had the prophet been intimidated by the threatening attitude of those high in authority, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life; but the courage with which he delivered the solemn warning commanded the respect of the people and turned the princes of Israel in his favor.” Prophets and Kings, 418

The courage of Jeremiah, who Sister White says was “naturally of a timid and shrinking disposition” (ibid., 419) is in marked contrast to his contemporary prophet Urijah. Urijah preached the same message as Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 26:8. In the meantime, word had reached the secular leaders—the princes, and when they arrived they were quickly urged to support the condemnation.

“They spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.” Jeremiah 26:11

In spite of these death threats, in no wise did Jeremiah soften his message.

“They spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The
of reform to the people, but a search of history does not confirm this belief. Always they have been men of courage, forthright for truth and righteousness, who have not wavered in the greatest tests and circumstances. One has to think only of the Elijahs and the Daniels and the John the Baptists and the Luthers to understand the courage that God’s faithful servants will need in these last days. We as ministers have to ask ourselves the question, “Who are those who will give a straighter message than John the Baptist? Who are these ministers who will stand though the heavens fall, who will be as true to principle as the needle is to the pole, ministers who cannot be bought or bribed or flattered or threatened away from God’s truth?”

I have been greatly moved by the tearful statement that Ellen White made about 1890:

“The patience of God has an object, but you are defeating it. He is allowing a state of things to come that you would fain see counteracted by and by, and it will be too late. God commanded Elijah to anoint the cruel and deceitful Hazael king over Syria, that he might be a scourge to idolatrous Israel. Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, ‘Peace, peace’ when the Lord has not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that creolong all prophesyings among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 77

Pastor, you may be the last voice of hope and invitation to God’s people at this time. To fail to lovingly warn God’s people is to join the ranks of the enemy.

“No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office, will preserve men from sacrificing principle when left to their own deceitful hearts. Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God’s mercies. Their wicked course He will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy.” Ibid., 212; emphasis supplied

Here are some questions that I have had to ask myself from time to time and which have provided a focus in asking the Lord to strengthen me so that I can fulfill the call of the Lord.

“The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.” Ibid., 187

The following checklist may be of help to you:

1. Are you afraid to preach present truth because it may bring division to your church? If so, read Early Writings, Remember the words of Ezekiel, “If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquities; but his blood will I require at thy hand.” Ezekiel 33:8

8. Are you justifying your delerium of duty by saying that those who are giving the trumpet a certain sound are not doing it the right way? That they are too critical? Then read Isaiah 1; indeed, read the whole of the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah and Zephaniah. Read the words of John the Baptist; indeed, the words of Christ in Matthew 23.

9. Are you willing to accept a multitude of accusations against faithful messengers in the absence of one demonstrable fact? If so, then remember

Are you afraid that you will be despised and ostracized by your fellow ministers?
Remember that Jesus was despised and rejected of men

63. You will notice that if you preach even precious truth, but ignore present truth, Satan may still gain an advantage over you and over the flock.

2. Are you willing to follow the directions of men even when they conflict with the duty that God has placed upon you? Then remember the words of Peter, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29

3. Are you afraid that you may lose your credibility and your reputation? If so, remember that Jesus made Himself of no reputation that He might save each of us for eternity. See Philippians 2:7

4. Are you fearful of losing your ministerial credentials? If so, you are not worthy of those credentials.

5. Are you afraid that you will be despised and ostracized by your fellow ministers? Remember that Jesus was despised and rejected of men. See Isaiah 53:3

6. Are you willing to see myriads of church members moving headlong toward eternal destruction? Then remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah, “I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:2

7. Are you content to say God will make all things right in His own time? that a thousand accusations do not equal one fact.

10. Are you privately saying, What has happened to our church papers? while publicly supporting them to your church members? Then remember the words of the servant of the Lord, “Let every article that is printed in the Review and Herald be of a character that will reflect light amid the moral darkness of this world. Every column is to be filled with the precious truth.” Counsels to Writers and Editors, 105

11. Have you been guilty of joining with pastors who you know are worldly and apostate to oppose the faithful messengers who have a true burden for souls? Referring to God’s ministers who have not stood in the final crisis, the servant of the Lord says, “They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 212

My plea to you, my fellow pastor, is that you will count not the cost, but that you will become a faithful sentinel on the walls of Zion. Pray that you will have “the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs.” Ibid., 187
Show Me Thy Glory
Continued from 7

selves we are changed day by day from our own ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image. 21

“The Holy Spirit has been prevented from coming in to mold and fashion heart and mind, because men suppose that they understand best how to form their own characters. And they think that they may safely form their characters after their own model. But there is only one model after which human character is to be formed—the character of Christ. Those who behold the Saviour are changed from glory to greater glory. When men will consent to submit to Christ’s will, to be partakers of the divine nature, their crooked, human peculiarities will disappear. When they decide that they will retain their own peculiarities and disagreeable traits of character, Satan takes them and places his yoke on them, using them to do his service. He uses their talents for selfish purposes, causing them to set an example so disagreeable, so un-Christlike, that they become a reproach to the cause of God.” 22

We must no longer bring more reproach to God’s cause. The time has come when we can and must vindicate His character to the whole universe. Christ is waiting for us, and ready to reveal unto us the riches of His kingdom. Let us now approach the throne of grace with humility and holy boldness just as Moses did. Let us ask our heavenly Father: “I beseech thee, show me Thy glory.”  

Just a note to express appreciation for Our Firm Foundation, which I read cover to cover, and sometimes pass it on to interested church members. Your ministry is always remembered in my prayers.

—MH, New Mexico

I just finished reading your wonderful and inspiring article in the March 1992 issue of Our Firm Foundation entitled “The Impregnable Shield.” Let me say that I found it to be very encouraging to me and just what I needed at this time. I have found, without fail, every single issue to be most encouraging and right on target. I look forward to every single issue and I would not want to miss a single one.

I praise the Lord every day for the truth that is presented through your organization and magazine. Your emphasis on the nature of Christ is exactly the very thing that our people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church need to understand in order to spend eternity with Jesus. I’m really looking forward to that day and we know that it is very, very soon.

—RH, Illinois

I have enjoyed reading Our Firm Foundation so very much. The solid, truth-based articles written by your fundamental authors are invaluable among the clamor of confusion we encounter today.

It is good to know that there are still strong, solid, firm Seventh-day Adventist believers still out in this world who are not afraid to speak or write our message. Praise the Lord for this. We all should speak out boldly, as you do. We keep praying that more leaders will stand up for our message today.

—CY, California

Please keep sending me Our Firm Foundation magazine and also the tapes. I’m so excited about the tapes.

With the horrible things that are happening in California, riots and earth-quakes, it looks as if things are folding up in this old world fast.

It is so good to know that there are real Adventists out there yet that care about getting us ready for heaven.

—IB, Oregon

I have been receiving Our Firm Foundation for several years now and have enjoyed it immensely. It is a clarion for all true Christians everywhere, and is especially applicable (and needed) for Adventists and God’s people everywhere. All of us are proud and thankful for our Seventh-day Adventist Church and heritage, but, like Martin Luther, when she displays certain trends, traits, bents, leanings, stragglings, worldliness, Pentecostalism, journalistic tirades against “independent ministries,” et cetera, it is time for someone (and God has called you to this ministry) to cry out an alarm as God has so explicitly decreed and detailed in Ezekiel 33. The Adventist church is not the same church I came into many years ago from the Church of the Nazarene where I was a minister. Do not disagree with me when I say that our church has strayed from what and where she was, and it has broken my heart. Thank God for you people and your response to God’s call to hold the line. Never slack off, let up, or be discouraged. You have been called to do an unpleasant task (at times), so hang in there and never give up until you see the eastern sky light up with the glory of His power, millions of His angels, and the magnificent brilliance of His coming for us. And I guarantee, His coming is very imminent.

Many sermons and thousands of Bible studies (especially on the humanity and divinity of Christ) have been based on articles in your work of ministry, Our Firm Foundation. There will be countless people in heaven because of your faithful ministry. Many will have eternal life because of you and your faithfulness.

—CM, Texas
God's Plan for Our Recreation

God's remnant people are to be a peculiar people. He has given us instructions regarding every facet of our lives. This includes instructions on how we will best be benefited by the use of our leisure time. Satan also has plans for our leisure time. Thus it is essential that we be able to distinguish between the two. Thus we need to know which forms of recreation really live up to their name. Leisure time activities that build us up or re-create us are true recreation. Other free-time activities are mere amusements.

There is a distinction between recreation and amusement. Recreation, when true to its name, re-creation, tends to strengthen and build up. Calling us aside from our ordinary cares and occupations, it affords refreshment for mind and body, and thus enables us to return with new vigor to the earnest work of life. Amusement, on the other hand, is sought for the sake of pleasure, and is often carried to excess; it absorbs the energies that are required for useful work, and thus proves a hindrance to life's true success.” *Messages to Young People*, 362

Christ's counsels and "presence" will enable us to distinguish between lawful and unlawful pleasures.

"Let us never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is a wellspring of joy. He does not delight in the misery of human beings, but loves to see them happy. Christians have many sources of happiness at their command, and they may tell with unerring accuracy what pleasures are lawful and right. They may enjoy such recreations as will not dissipate the mind or debase the soul, such as will not disappoint, and leave a sad after influence to destroy self-respect or bar the way to usefulness. If they can take Jesus with them, and maintain a prayerful spirit, they are perfectly safe." *Review and Herald*, vol. 1, 453

We all need periods of rest and recreation.

"I was shown that Sabbathkeepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor and is still more essential for those whose labor is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 514

Satan uses games to cultivate passion for supremacy, for which there is no place in God's kingdom.

"Is the eye single to the glory of God in these games? I know that this is not so. There is a losing sight of God's way and His purpose. The employment of intelligent beings, in probationary time, is superseding God's revealed will and substituting for it the speculations and inventions of the human agent, with Satan by his side to imbue with his spirit. . . . The Lord God of heaven protests against the burning passion cultivated for supremacy in the games that are so engrossing." *The Adventist Home*, 500

"When James and John made their request for preeminence, He [Jesus] had said, 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.' Matthew 20:26. In My kingdom the principle of preference and supremacy has no place. The only greatness is the greatness of humility. The only distinction is found in devotion to the service of others." *The Faith I Live By*, 297

Satan works to keep our minds diverted from eternal realities.

"All the powers of Satan are set in operation to hold the attention to frivolous amusements, and he is gaining his object. He is interposing his devisings between God and the soul. He will manufacture diversions to keep men from thinking about God. The world, filled with sport and pleasure loving, is always thirsting for some new interest; but how little time and thought are given to the Creator of the heavens and the earth!" *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 456

Vernon Sparks
Wrong pastimes diminish our spiritual strength thus endangering our survival through the trials before us.

"When the Lord gave to Battle Creek the riches of His grace, were there those in responsibility who could have directed these souls as to how to improve upon the endowment given, in doing good, useful work that would give a change from their studies, other than the excitement and emotions caused by their games? This kind of pastime is not improving mind or spirit or manners for the preparation for the scenes of trial that they must soon enter." Selected Messages, book 1, 132-133

Some amusements have an exciting influence which opens the door to greater evils.

"There are amusements, such as dancing, card playing, chess, checkers, etc., which we cannot approve, because Heaven condemns them. These amusements open the door for great evil. They are not beneficial in their tendency, but have an exciting influence, producing in some minds a passion for those plays which lead to gambling and dissipation. All such plays should be condemned by Christians, and something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place." Testimonies, vol. 1, 514

Holy angels do not accompany us when we needlessly choose companionship with sinners in their pastimes.

"You could live among the most corrupt, and remain unainted, unsullied, if God in His providence thus directed you. But it is dangerous for those who wish to honor God to find their pleasure and entertainment with companions who fear Him not. Satan ever surrounds such with great darkness; and if those who profess Christ go unbidden into this darkness, they tempt the devil to tempt them. . . . If we seek the company of sinners, and are pleased with their coarse jests, and entertained and amused with their stories, sports, and ribaldry, the pure and holy angels remove their protection and leave us to the darkness we have chosen." Ibid., vol. 2, 222

Participation with the world in their frivolous entertainments disqualifies us to do the Lord's work.

"If your wife were converted to God, she would be a great blessing in humbly denying herself. But her past experience is misleading. Unless she changes and determines to make a business of serving the Lord, she is not qualified to act as a medical missionary for the Lord in any place. She has not led the nurses away from selfishness and the attractions of the world. . . Can we mingle in entertainments, amusements, parties and suppers with those who have no thought of God or heaven, without slighting God? Is not His Spirit grieved by the worldly, frivolous entertainments to which Christ cannot be invited, to which He would not go unless it were to seek and save the lost?" Manuscript Releases, vol. 18, 265

Worldly recreation consumes funds needed in the Lord's treasury.

"I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone. I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for self-pleasing, which lead on step by step to self-glorying, and the educating in these games for pleasure, produce a love and passion for such things that is not favorable to the perfection of Christian character." Selected Messages, book 2, 322

Satan uses professed Christians and their gatherings for pleasure as decoys to draw away from the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"Satan has been multiplying his snares in——; and professed Christians who are superficial in character and religious experience are used by the tempter as his decoys. This class are always ready for the gatherings for pleasure or sport, and their influence attracts others. Young men and women who have tried to be Bible Christians are persuaded to join the party, and they . . . do not discern that these entertainments are really Satan's banquet, prepared to keep souls from accepting the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb; they prevent them from receiving the white robe of character, which is the righteousness of Christ." Ellen G. White Pamphlets in the Concordance, No. 145, 14-15

Satan uses many of the amusements of even so-called Christians to destroy souls.

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewitching music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul." The Adventist Home, 515

There is innocent recreation that leads in paths of pleasantness.

"There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit." Ibid., 496

Christians will desire that all their recreation will provide them with new strength, courage and power.

"We want to seek the elevated and lovely. We want to direct the mind away from those things that are superficial, and of no importance, that have no solidarity. What we desire is, to be gathering new strength from all that we engage in. From all these gatherings for the purpose of recreation, from all these pleasant associations, we want to be gathering new strength to become better men and women. From every source possible we want to gather new courage, new strength, new power, that we may elevate our lives to purity and holiness, and not come down upon the low level of this world." Testimonies, vol. 2, 587

When considering the locations of our homes and institutions we need to consider the impact on the leisure time of family members and employees.

"With the question of recreation the surroundings of the home and the school have much to do. . . . Those with whom mental and physical well-being is of greater moment than money or the claims and customs of society should seek for their children the benefit of nature's teaching, and recreation amidst her surroundings. It would be a great aid in educational work could every school be so situated as to afford the pupils land for cultivation and access to the fields and woods." Counsels on Health, 190-191

Parents often indulge the youth to their harm.

"Many parents seek to promote the happiness of their children by gratifying their love of amusement. They allow them to engage in sports, and to attend parties of pleasure, and provide them with money..."
to use freely in display and self-gratification. The more the desire for pleasure is indulged, the stronger it becomes. The interest of these youth is more and more absorbed in amusement, until they come to look upon it as the great object of life. They form habits of idleness and self-indulgence that make it almost impossible for them ever to become steadfast Christians." Christ's Object Lessons, 154

Youth especially need to operate on the honor system in the use of their leisure time.

"The youth must be impressed with the idea that they are trusted. They have a sense of honor, and they want to be respected, and it is their right. If pupils receive the impression that they cannot go out or come in, sit at the table, or be anywhere, even in their rooms, except they are watched, a critical eye is upon them to criticize and report, it will have the influence to demoralize, and pastime will have no pleasure in it. This knowledge of a continual oversight is more than a parental guardianship, and far worse; for wise parents can, through tact, often discern beneath the surface and see the working of the restless mind under the longings of youth, or under the forces of temptations, and set their plans to work to counteract evils. But this constant watchfulness is not natural, and produces evils that it is seeking to avoid." Child Guidance, 225–226

Useful labor is generally preferable to exercise in a gymnasium.

"The manual training connected with our schools, if rightly conducted, will largely take the place of the gymnasium." Testimonies, vol.5, 523; see also Counsels on Health, 189

The best recreation is that which is useful.

"As a rule, the exercise most beneficial to the youth will be found in useful employment. The little child finds both diversion and development in play; and his sports should be such as to promote not only physical, but mental and spiritual growth. As he gains strength and intelligence, the best recreation will be found in some line of effort that is useful. That which trains the hand to helpfulness, and teaches the young to bear their share of life’s burdens, is most effective in promoting the growth of mind and character." Education, 215

Medical missionary work is Christlike recreation.

"Those who went out to work for the neighbors were instructed to report any case of sickness they might find; and those who had had training in giving treatment to the sick were encouraged to use their knowledge in a practical way. To work for the Master came to be regarded as Christlike recreation." Ibid., 550

The study of nature is a preferred form of recreation and is accompanied by angels who will guard us from satanic deception.

"Satan will manufacture his diversions that men may not think about God. The world, filled with sport and pleasure-loving, is always thirsting for some new interest. And how little time and thought are given to the Creator of the heavens and the earth! God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handwork. The heavenly bodies are worthy of contemplation. God has made them selfish and cheerful labor." Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, 78–79

Pleasure gatherings like the theater and circus are to be shunned.

"Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals. . . . There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life, than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes

How little time and thought are given to the Creator of the heavens and the earth! God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handwork

for the benefit of man, and as we study His works, angels of God will be by our side to enlighten our minds, and guard them from satanic deception." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1145

There is a blessing for those who join together in useful "recreation hours" above and beyond their regular work.

"Many suppose that they must have holidays and recreation; but if the time thus spent were devoted specially to doing good, making use of the faculties to advance the cause of God in the world, either in planting crops for Him, in building chapels or school houses, or any institution that the Lord is in need of to carry on His work, these things would not cost so heavily. If there were a company formed, who were devoted to the service of God, who would donate extra time above the eight hours, and call it the recreation hour, I know that they would receive a blessing. Many do this conscientiously. They will not be restricted in their movements, or bound about by precise hours when they are engaged in the King’s business. The work which the Lord designs shall be done in preparing facilities calls for un-

increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement." Counsels on Health, 198

Drama plays and theatrical performances which are intended to amuse the audience are not of the Lord.

"Can you glorify God by being educated to represent characters in plays, and to amuse an audience with fables? Has not the Lord given you intellect to be used to His name’s glory in proclaiming the gospel of Christ? If you desire a public career, there is a work that you may do. Help the class you represent in plays. Come to the reality. Give your sympathy where it is needed by actually lifting up the bowed down. Satan’s ruling passion is to pervert the intellect and cause men to long for shows and theatrical performances. The experience and character of all who engage in this work will be in accordance with the food given to the mind." Manuscript Releases, vol. 2, 246–247

We must be very cautious also regarding our reading materials.

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"There are those who profess to be brethren who do not take the Review, Signs, Instructor, or Good Health, but take one or more secular papers. Their children are deeply interested in reading the fictitious tales and love stories which are found in these papers, and which their father can afford to pay for, although claiming that he cannot afford to pay for our periodicals and publications on present truth. Thus parents are educating the taste of their children to greedily devour the sickly, sensational stories found in newspaper columns. All such reading is poisonous; it leaves a stain upon the soul, and encourages a love for cheap reading which will degrade the morals and ruin the mind." Review and Herald, vol. 1, 210

Too many Adventists waste precious time with unchristian music. "Young men and women . . . have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired . . . . Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse. It excites, but does not impart that strength and courage which the Christian can find only at the throne of grace. . . . Satan is leading the young captive. . . . He is a skillful charmer, luring them on to perdition." The Faith I Live By, 242

Nothing is so demoralizing or intoxicating, particularly to the young, as the acquisition of money or property without labor

Lotteries and games of chance are games of the devil. "Governor Washburn of Wisconsin in his annual message, January 9, 1873, declared: 'Some law seems to be required to break up the schools where gamblers are made. These are everywhere. Even the church (unwittingly, no doubt) is sometimes found doing the work of the devil. Gift concerts, gift enterprises and raffles, sometimes in aid of religious or charitable objects, but often for less worthy purposes, lotteries, prize packages, etc., are all devices to obtain money without value received. Nothing is so demoralizing or intoxicating, particularly to the young, as the acquisition of money or property without labor. Respectable people engaging in these chance enterprises, and easing their consciences with the reflection that the money is to go to a good object, it is not strange that the youth of the state should so often fall into the habits which the excitement of games of hazard is almost certain to engender.'" The Great Controversy, 387

A practice of our early church that would be worthwhile to adopt, is that of prayer and testimony meetings referred to as social hours. Certainly such activities can recreate us mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

"I spoke again to the people assembled in conference from Malachi 3:16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,' etc. I dwelt upon the importance of making our social meetings interesting; that one man wasn't to do all the talking, but everyone should bear his testimony. . . . It is the duty of everyone who loves God and the truth to speak to one another words of experience and of comfort, and to tell of God's goodness, His love, and His great mercy in giving His Son Jesus Christ to die for us while we were enemies to God." Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, 94-95

Ellen White avoided participation in simple plays and amusements.

"Shall we understand by what you have said in your testimonies in favor of recreation, that you approve such vain amusements as chess, checkers, charades, backgammon, hunt-the-whistle, and blind-man's buff? "Since I professed to be a follower of Christ at the age of twelve years, I have never engaged in any such simple plays and amusements as named above. Neither have I at any time given my influence in their favor. I do not know how to play at checkers, chess, backgammon, fox-and-geese, or any thing of the kind." Review and Herald, vol. 1, 74

Ellen White did recognize the recreational need of a change in routine. "I am feeling at times great weariness. I have carried heavy burdens. I have had to bear very plain testimonies to others. I have written many private testimonies to different ones, then to keep my writings up has been no little tax to me. Were you here now I would feel it duty to take some recreation—go to Yosemite and camp out, or go to some retired place and write and rest. Time seems very short to me, and I do not want to shirk responsibilities one whit. If I know what duty is, I will do it." Manuscript Releases, vol. 16, 151

Ellen White encouraged gardening for her employees as their recreation.

"The garden is the exercise ground for my workers. Early and late the girls are at work in the garden when they are off duty. It is better for them, and more satisfactory than any exercise they can have. . . . This garden of flowers is a great blessing to my girls, and they are working with the tomato raising, planting and caring for the tomatoes." The Australian Years, 271

Christ is to be our example in all things. His use of leisure time and recreation are indeed worthy of emulation.

"The character of Christ was one of unexampled excellence, embracing everything pure, true, lovely, and of good report. We have no knowledge of His ever visiting a party of pleasure or a dance hall, and yet He was the perfection of grace and courtly bearing. Christ was no novice; He was distinguished for the high intellectual powers He possessed even in the morning of His life. His youth was not wasted in indolence, neither was it wasted in sensual pleasure, self-indulgence, or frittered away in things of no profit. Not one of His hours from childhood to manhood was misspent, none were misappropriated." Manuscript Releases, vol. 4, 235-236

To Christ all activities were for the revelation of the Father for the uplifting of mankind.

"To Him nothing was without purpose. The sports of the child, the toils of the man, life's pleasures and cares and
pains, all were means to the one end—the revelation of God for the uplifting of humanity." *Lift Him Up*, 177

We need to spend our leisure time in studying the Bible in order for us to have room in our foreheads for the seal of God.

"The Lord has shown me the danger of letting our minds be filled with worldly thoughts and cares. I saw that some minds are led away from present truth and a love of the Holy Bible by reading other exciting books; others are filled with perplexity and care for what they shall eat, drink, and wear. Some are looking too far off for the coming of the Lord. Time has continued a few years longer than they expected; therefore they think it may continue a few years more, and in this way their minds are being led from present truth, out after the world. In these things I saw great danger; for if the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God. I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the Most Holy Place was nearly finished and that time can last but a very little longer. What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day." *Early Writings*, 58

In all our activities we need to remain aware that there are holy observers.

"In this speck of a world the whole heavenly universe manifests the greatest interest, for Christ has paid an infinite price for the souls of its inhabitants. The world’s Redeemer has bound earth to heaven by ties of intelligence, for the redeemed of the Lord are here. Heavenly beings still visit the earth as in the days when they walked and talked with Abraham and with Moses. Amid the busy activity of our great cities, amid the multitudes that crowd the thoroughfares and fill the marts of trade where from morning till evening the people act as if business and sport and pleasure were all there is to life, where there are so few to contemplate unseen realities—even here heaven has still its watchers and its holy ones. There are invisible agencies observing every word and deed of human beings. In every assembly for business or pleasure, in every gathering for worship, there are more listeners than can be seen with the natural sight." *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 176

There is to always be a marked contrast between recreational gatherings of Christians and those of the world.

"Between the associations of the followers of Christ for Christian recreation, and worldly gatherings for pleasure and amusement, will exist a marked contrast. Instead of prayer and the mentioning of Christ and sacred things, will be heard from the lips of worldlylings the silly laugh and the trifling conversation. The idea is to have a general high time. Their amusements commence in folly and end in vanity. Our gatherings should be so conducted, and we should so conduct ourselves, that when we return to our homes we can have a conscience void of offense toward God and man; a consciousness that we have not wounded or injured in any manner those with whom we have been associated, or had an injurious influence over them." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 336–337

The true children of God will seek the joys of the eternal city rather than the transitory pleasures of this world.

"The enemy seeks in many ways to draw our minds from the study of the Word. Many he leads to seek for satisfaction in amusements and pleasures that seem desirable to the carnal heart. But the true children of God are not seeking their happiness in this world; they seek for the lasting joys of a home in the eternal city where Christ dwells, and where the redeemed shall receive the rewards of obedience to the requirements of God. These do not desire the transitory, cheap amusements of this life, but the enduring bliss of heaven." *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, 314

We should be rejoicing over the plan of salvation rather than over the useless games of this earth.

"Shall we not keep holy festivals unto God? Shall we not show that we have some enthusiasm in His service? With the grand, ennobling theme of salvation before us, shall we be as cold as statues of marble? If men can become so excited over a match game of cricket, or a horse race, or over foolish things that bring no good to anyone, shall we be unmoved when the plan of salvation is unfolded before us? Let the school and the church henceforth have festivals of rejoicing unto the Lord." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 371

Those who drink of the living water will thirst no more for the exciting pleasures of this earth.

"Let not these entertainments be placed in the position which the living Fountain should occupy. The hungry, thirsty soul will continue to hunger and thirst as long as it partakes of these unsatisfying pleasures. But those who drink of the living water will thirst no more for frivolous, sensual, exciting amusements. The ennobling principles of religion will strengthen the mental powers and will destroy a taste for these gratifications." *Counsels on Health*, 241

If we cannot conscientiously ask Jesus to participate with us in our amusements, we can know that they are positively dangerous for us.

"No amusement is safe for our youth to indulge in, unless they can bow down and ask God’s blessing upon it before engaging in it. If they cannot take Jesus with them to their scenes of pleasure, they may take it for granted that such amusements are positively dangerous, both to physical and moral health. If you would not be willing to have Jesus come and find you engaged in your chosen amusements, you may know that you cannot engage in them today with safety. If your conscience tells you that you are doing wrong in the pursuit of pleasure, you may know that your amusements are not calculated to make you grow as did Jesus, waxing strong in spirit, to resist the devices of the enemy." *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 27, 1904

May the Lord guide us as we apply these counsels to the multitude of popular entertainments of today, including television, movies, videos, and so on. May our desire be that by God’s grace we will abstain from all that is harmful and be temperate in all that is good.
Out of the Cities!

Considering the recent rioting in Los Angeles and other cities which we have witnessed in the last few months, what has the Lord revealed concerning the future of the cities of the world?

"Light has been given me that the cities will be filled with confusion, violence, and crime, and that these things will increase till the end of this earth’s history." Testimonies, vol. 7, 84

"The record of crime and iniquity in the large cities of the land is appalling. The wickedness of the wicked is almost beyond comprehension. Many cities are becoming a very Sodom in the sight of heaven. The increasing wickedness is such that multitudes are rapidly approaching a point in their personal experience beyond which it will be exceedingly difficult to reach them with a saving knowledge of the third angel’s message. The enemy of souls is working in a masterful manner to gain full control of the human mind; and what God’s servants do to warn and prepare men for the day of judgment, must be done quickly.” Evangelism, 25

Besides an increase in crime and moral corruption, what else has the Lord revealed regarding the cities?

“The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments.” The Adventist Home, 136

“I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression, and sinful in the extreme, will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, by flood. All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God. His unseen agencies will cause destruction, devastation, and death. All the accumulated riches will be as nothingness.” Evangelism, 27

What effect will these conditions have upon my family if I am living in the city?

“The world over, cities are becoming hotbeds of vice. On every hand are the sights and sounds of evil. Everywhere are enticements to sensuality and dissipation. The tide of corruption and crime is continually swelling. Every day brings the record of violence—robberies, murders, suicides, and crimes unnamable.

“Life in the cities is false and artificial. The intense passion for money getting, the whirl of excitement and pleasure seeking, the thirst for display, the luxury and extravagance, all are forces that, with the great masses of mankind, are turning the mind from life’s true purpose. They are opening the door to a thousand evils. Upon the youth they have almost irresistible power.

“One of the most subtle and dangerous temptations that assail the children and youth in the cities is the love of pleasure. Holidays are numerous; games and horse racing draw thousands, and the whirl of excitement and pleasure attracts them away from the sober duties of life. Money that should have been saved for better uses is frizzled away for amusements.” The Ministry of Healing, 363-364

“Men and women living in these cities are rapidly becoming more and still more entangled in their business relations. . . . Their minds are filled with schemes and ambitious devisings.” Evangelism, 27
How should families who are living in the cities respond?

"Parents flock with their families to the cities because they fancy it easier to obtain a livelihood there than in the country. The children, having nothing to do when not in school, obtain a street education. From evil associates they acquire habits of vice and dissipation. The parents see all this; but it will require a sacrifice to correct their error, and they stay where they are until Satan gains full control of their children. Better sacrifice any and every worldly consideration than to imperil the precious souls committed to your care. They will be assailed by temptations, and should be taught to meet them; but it is your duty to cut off every influence, to break up every habit, to sunder every tie, that keeps you from the most free, open, and hearty committal of yourselves and your family to God."

"Instead of the crowded city seek some retired situation where your children will be, so far as possible, shielded from temptation, and there train and educate them for usefulness. . . . All who would escape the doom of Sodom must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city. Testimonies, vol. 5, 232–233"

"Out of the cities, out of the cities!" . . . "This is the message the Lord has been giving me. The earthquakes will come; the floods will come; and we are not to establish ourselves in the wicked cities, where the enemy is served in every way, and where God is so often forgotten. The Lord desires that we shall have clear spiritual eyesight. We must be quick to discern the peril that would attend the establishment of institutions in these wicked cities. We must make wise plans to warn the cities, and at the same time live where we can shield our children and ourselves from the contaminating and demoralizing influences so prevalent in these places." Life Sketches, 409–410

"I could not sleep past two o'clock this morning. 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 thing.' 2 Corinthians 6:17. 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." Selected Messages, book 2, 354

Why is a home in the country more desirable?

"The physical surroundings in the cities are often a peril to health. The constant liability to contact with disease, the prevalence of foul air, impure water, impure food, the crowded, dark, unhealthy dwellings, are some of the many evils to be met.

"It was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements. In the beginning He placed our first parents amidst the beautiful sights and sounds He desires us to rejoice in today. The more nearly we come into harmony with God's original plan, the more favorable will be our position to secure health of body, and mind, and soul." The Ministry of Healing, 365

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 thing"

"It would be well for you to lay by your perplexing cares and find a retreat in the country, where there is not so strong an influence to corrupt the morals of the young.

"True, you would not be entirely free from annoyances and perplexing cares in the country; but you would there avoid many evils, and close the door against a flood of temptations which threaten to overpower the minds of your children. They need employment and variety. The sameness of their home makes them uneasy and restless, and they have fallen into the habit of min-

"How many of these were reared in country homes? They knew little of luxury. They did not spend their youth in amusement. Many were forced to struggle with poverty and hardship. They early learned to work, and their active life in the open air gave vigor and elasticity to all their faculties. Forced to depend upon their own resources, they learned to combat difficulties and to surmount obstacles, and they gained courage and perseverance. They learned the lessons of self-reliance and self-control. Sheltered in a great degree from evil associations, they were satisfied with natural pleasures and
wholesome companionships. They were simple in their tastes and temperate in their habits. They were governed by principle, and they grew up pure and strong and true. When called to their lifework, they brought to it physical and mental power, buoyancy of spirit, ability to plan and execute, and steadfastness in resisting evil, that made them a positive power for good in the world.” The Ministry of Healing, 366

If we are living in the country, how will the cities be evangelized? Don’t we have to live among the people in order to witness to them?

“When iniquity abounds in a nation, there is always to be heard some voice giving warning and instruction, as the voice of Lot was heard in Sodom. Yet the city of Lot could have preserved his family from many evils had he not made his home in this wicked, polluted city. All that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them, even if they had lived in a place some distance away from the city. Enoch walked with God, and yet he did not live in the midst of any city polluted with every kind of violence and wickedness, as did Lot in Sodom.” Evangelism, 78

“He [Enoch] did not make his abode with the wicked. He did not locate in Sodom, thinking to save Sodom. He placed himself and his family where the atmosphere would be as pure as possible. Then at times he went forth to the inhabitants of the world with his God-given message. Every visit he made to the world was painful to him. He saw and understood something of the leprosy of sin. After proclaiming his message, he always took back with him to his place of retirement someone who had received the warning. Some of these became co-workers, and died before the Flood came. But some had lived so long in the corrupting influence of sin that they could not endure righteousness.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1087-1088

It sounds as if every God-fearing Seventh-day Adventist should make plans to move out of the cities. How can we know when and how to leave, and what our duty is until we can move out?

“More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so. Many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way. But until it is possible for them to leave, so long as they remain, they should be most active in doing missionary work, however limited their sphere of influence may be. As they yield their talents and their all to God to be used as He may direct; as they live out their consecration by engaging in practical missionary work wherever opportunity affords, God will bless them with wisdom and discretion, and in His own way and time He will make it possible for them to place themselves where they will not be surrounded constantly with the contaminating influences of modern city life.” Review and Herald, vol. 5, 278

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**1992 Camp Meeting Schedule**

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<td>Toronto, Ont., Canada</td>
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<td>July 16–19</td>
<td>Calistoga, CA</td>
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<td>July 22–26</td>
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<td>(207) 589-4705</td>
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<td>Hendersonville, NC</td>
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<td>Portland, TN</td>
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<td>Hot Springs, AR</td>
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*Note Changes

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The Study of the Testimonies

At the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference of 1893, J. N. Loughborough, church pioneer and historian, reviewed some of the experiences which confirmed the authenticity of the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy through Ellen G. White. His sermons were transcribed and recorded in the General Conference Daily Bulletin. We here continue his series which will be concluded next month.—THE EDITORS

My mind is impressed this morning to read again Ephesians 4:13: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” In my first talk I told something about the work of the gifts in producing unity; but that is not all there is to it, for our text says “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” And here is this little work of Sister White’s, *Steps to Christ*, which Brother Jones has called the “Gospel Primer”—yes, and it’s a whole library—in what direction does it point? Is it not in this very direction of growing up to the full measure of the stature of Christ?

I have here Testimony, No. 1—a vision given November 20, 1855, in the first Seventh-day Adventist meetinghouse ever built in Battle Creek. I read from the third paragraph: “Exaltation has come into the ranks; there must be more humility. There is too much of independence of spirit indulged in among the messengers. This must be laid aside, and there must be a drawing together of the servants of God. There has been too much of a spirit to ask, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ Said the angel: ‘Yea, thou art thy brother’s keeper. Thou shouldst have a watchful care for thy brother, be interested for his welfare, and cherish a kind, loving spirit toward him. Press together, press together.’” There is the very root of order among us, laid right down in that testimony; and in the second meetinghouse that was built definite steps were taken toward organization.

I want now to connect with my text another scripture found in the first chapter of first John: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life... That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” “If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Verses 1, 3, 6–7. Then how is it we are to get this true harmony and unity? Why, the text tells us that our fellowship is with Christ and the Father; so if we all have the spirit of Christ in our hearts and have fellowship with Him, there’ll be no trouble about all having the same mind, and all being in unity. You remember the proposition in philosophy that “two things that are like the same thing are like each other,” and it is just so here. Two minds that are like the mind of Christ will be like each other.

I have here a recent special testimony to brethren in responsible positions, and I read on page 11 these words: “Now is the time for God’s people to take up the duties that lie next them. Be faithful in the little things; for on the right performance of these hang great results. Do not leave the work which needs to be done, because it appears to your judgment to be small and inconsiderable. Make up every waste
place, repair the breaches as fast as they occur. . . Let all go to work to help some one who needs help. There is a cause for the great weakness in our churches, and that cause is hard to remove. It is self. Men have none too much will, but they must have it wholly sanctified to God. They need to fall on the Rock and be broken. Self must be crucified in every one who shall enter the gates of the city of God. The fierce spirit which rises up in the hearts of some in the church when anything does not please them, is the spirit of Satan, and not the spirit of Christ.

"Is it not fully time that we return to our first love and be at peace among ourselves? We must show ourselves to be not only Bible readers, but Bible believers. If we are united to Christ, we shall be united to one another. 'A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' John 13:34. 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.' Romans 15:1, 3–5. So then where is the working of the gifts to bring us?—'Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'

I want now to read a few texts which speak more about this fullness. John 1:14, 16: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Ephesians 1:22–23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church; which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Also Ephesians 3:17–19: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." As we behold and contemplate the infinity of God's love to us, and grasp it and take it in, we are filled with all the fullness of God. "And he [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church." Colossians 1:17–18.

Then if we are united to that Head we are filled with his fullness.

This is what the Bible teaches; and now let us see what the Testimonies teach. I thought I had read the Testimonies pretty thoroughly and understood what was in them, but now I begin to see things in them that I had never seen before. True, I had read these things, and thought they were very good, but somehow did not grasp the real point that was in them. This means that God is clothing His Word with power. You can't separate the message from the Testimonies. Just as well try to get along without eyes or nerves or muscles in your body, as try to carry forward the message without them.

I read from Testimony, No. 8, written in 1861: "We must study the life of Christ and learn what it is to confess Him before the world. In order to confess Christ we must have Him to confess. No one can truly confess Christ unless the mind and the Spirit of Christ are in him. If a form of godliness, or an acknowledgment of the truth were also a confession of Christ, we might say: Bread is the way that leadeth unto life, and many there be that find it. We must understand what it is to confess Christ and wherein we deny Him. It is just what we do find. There have been a great many people with broken heads, people who found fault with the Testimonies given to them because their course had been reproved, and they would talk about them and say it was not true, and perhaps before they were through talking you would see from what they said that it was true. Notice what the Lord says in Jeremiah 44:4–5: "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, arising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods." You see it did not say, Oh, you are a good fellow; you are just about right. Oh no, it was "Do not this abominable thing that I hate." There is shown the character of God's messengers.

Now how did the false prophets do their work? I turn to Jeremiah, and read in chapter 23, verses 16–17: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain, they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." Here you see the flattery that was a characteristic of their work.

I thought I had read the Testimonies pretty thoroughly and understood what was in them, but now I begin to see things in them that I had never seen before.

possible with our lips to confess Christ yet in our works deny Him. The fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life are a confession of Him." 1 John 4:1–3: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." I used to believe this meant that these false spirits had got to acknowledge the incarnation of Christ, but I bless God there is greater light coming to us, and now I believe it means to confess that.
Jesus Christ has come in our flesh. That is just how we are to overcome—by Jesus Christ in our flesh, as the text says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us, and he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." 1 John 4:4–6. Here is the contrast. They are of the world, but we are of God, and God is our strength. This is just what we find in the Testimonies all the way through.

At Rocky Hill, Connecticut, a circumstance occurred which brought these two opposite classes right together. A meeting was held at the home of one of our brethren, and there was a blind man there who claimed to have visions. Sister White had a vision in which she was instructed to tell this man and his wife that they should send for their daughter, who was away from home among strangers in New Britain, and have her return home right away, for she was in great danger, and that she had already taken an im prudent course. The blind man said, "Oh no, the daughter would not do anything that was wrong," and he got up in the meeting and ratted off what he called his gift of tongues. There was quite a power went with it, and quite a number sympathized with him. Along about midnight there was a loud rap at Sister White's door, and the word came that the daughter wanted to see Sister White, for she was sick, and was afraid she was going to die. The outcome was that she confessed all that Sister White had said.

The next morning the man who claimed to talk with tongues was seen taking a hasty departure.

But some say, I never had any testimony of reproof sent to me. How is that—never had any reproof? Why, you have all had reproof. Christ said, "If any man hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Just keep your ears open, and you will get the reproof.

We say to ourselves, Oh, that testimony is for Brother J. That hits him. Yes, but quite likely it hits you too, and if it hits you it was given for you also.

closely inspect the trees and see if they were in a flourishing condition. I observed that some were being bent and deformed by the wind, and needed to be supported by stakes. I was carefully removing the dirt from the feeble and dying trees to ascertain the cause of their condition. I discovered worms at the roots of some. Others had not been watered properly, and were dying from drought; the roots of others had been crowded together to their injury. My work was to explain to the workmen the different reasons why these trees did not prosper. This was necessary from the fact that trees in other grounds were liable to be affected as these had been and the cause of their not flourishing, and how they should be cultivated and treated must be made known."

Yet the Lord deals with us gently, and does not wish to expose all our faults to others, to be a hindrance to us. I read now from Testimony No. 15, paragraph 2. It tells of a dream that Sister White had which she thus relates:

"I had dreamed that a person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes and all descriptions of character and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out and hang them up all ready to be made

kind of labor. The person again repeated: 'Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come.' With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me; the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment with comparative ease."

But now comes somebody and says, Oh yes, I guess it was all so, but there is a little something about this that I don't understand. It is about that teaching of Sister White's that after the time passed, there was no more mercy for sinners. Oh, is that it? Well, bless your heart, Sister White didn't teach that. I will tell you how that teaching originated. Joseph Turner was the first one to advocate it, at South Paris, Maine, after the passing of the time; though the same idea had been held by others before the time had passed. I read from Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists, page 118: "Some of these fanatical and exclusive persons took the position that no one could be saved except those who had already identified themselves with the Advent movement. Shortly after the
circumstances above mentioned, Miss Harmon returned to Maine and made a second visit to Paris, where she had a reproof for such extremists. Concerning this visit, I will quote from Mrs. Truesdail, who, as we have before said, then resided in Paris:

"During Miss Harmon’s visit in Paris, Maine, in the summer of 1845, I stated to her the particulars concerning a dear friend of mine, whose father had deprived her of attending our meetings, consequently she had not rejected light. She smilingly replied, ‘God has never shown me that there is no salvation for such persons. It is those only who have had the light of truth presented to them and knowingly rejected it.’"

Elder J. N. Andrews, who resided in Paris, Maine, in 1845, and who is wholly conversant with the people there, and with that [teaching] of Elder Joseph Turner, who taught there was no more mercy for sinners, says of Miss Harmon’s position on the subject at that time, “Instead of the visions leading them to adopt this view, it corrected those upon it who still held to it.” To this I will add a further testimony by Mrs. Truesdail:

“Another occasion worthy of mention was a vision given in 1846, in Paris, Maine. Miss Harmon was shown that when Satan could not prevent the honest hearted from doing their whole duty, he would exert his skill in pushing them beyond duty. One good sister had been telling the churches that God had rejected them because they had rejected the message sent from heaven to save them. Sister Harmon was shown that there was no truth in her message, as there were many in the churches who would yet embrace the truth; that the good angels would leave her (this sister) at the door of the church if she went there upon such an errand.”

Yes, but didn’t she get hold of that idea afterwards? No, that won’t do, for our enemies, who oppose the visions, say that she taught from the very first. The people held to these doctrines, and whenever she would go to them and associate with them and hold meetings, she was charged with advocating their views; and this was how this shut-door objection originated. She gave Joseph Turner a testimony, saying that he was corrupt at heart. Elder Turner had announced his intention of going to Portland, Maine, but this testimony said he had no call to go to Portland, and that his character would there be manifested. Then he turned against Sister White, and made the claim that she taught there was no more mercy for sinners. But at this very time, and later, people were being converted and brought into the light through her labors. Hiram Patch and his wife were converted in Oswego, N. Y., in 1848, by a testimony concerning a man who was conducting a revival. In this testimony Brother Patch was told to wait one month and he would see the true character of this pretended revivalist, and he did see it only about two weeks later.

In 1849 Sister White had a vision about these false shepherds who professed to have a travail of soul for sinners, and yet had rejected the truth, that the time for their salvation was past; and since then people have pointed to this and said that Sister White had claimed there was no more mercy for sinners. But with those who came out into the light, and were converted at that time, you can no more shake their faith in the Testimonies than you can blot out Bunker Hill Monument with a blow of your fist.

To be continued

1 Testimonies, vol. 1, 113–114
2 Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 1, 11–12
3 Testimonies, vol. 1, 303
4 Ibid., 631–632
5 Ibid., vol. 2, 10–12

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Lazarus, Come Forth!

Continued from 9 special target of the devil. Christ’s enemies plotted to kill Lazarus even though they knew he was a walking miracle. (John 12:10–11). “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. “Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world’s standard and therefore awakens no opposition . . . It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the Word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.” The Great Controversy, 48

Each one of us must be honest with God and ourselves about our spiritual condition. Let us roll away the stones that are keeping us in spiritual death and allow nothing to come between us and Jesus. He still is the resurrection and the life. Believe it. Claim it. Experience it. It’s real. It’s free, and it’s yours. Lazarus, come forth! □

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Time is short, and many Adventists have not had the privilege of receiving a sample copy of Our Firm Foundation. During the next year, Hope International is planning to send sample issues of Our Firm Foundation to at least 60,000 people worldwide who have not yet received a copy of the magazine. The cost of mailing to foreign countries is high, but we believe we must all do our part to share the saving truths of historic Adventism with leaders and laity around the world.

Will you help? We urge you to consider making an extra contribution today, marked Our Firm Foundation, to help with this project.
Camp Meeting 1992

is coming soon (August 12-16). Please plan to join us.

If you plan to attend the Eatonville camp meeting, and wish to stay on our grounds, you are more than welcome. We ask that you write or call to make a reservation. We do not expect a shortage of room, but we need to have this information in order to make the best use of our facilities. Water and restrooms will be available at several locations on the grounds. There will be limited shower facilities, but hookups for water, sewer, and electricity are not available. Please plan on a real camp meeting.

As usual, there will be no charge for staying on our campus, but we cannot provide either lodging or food except in very unusual circumstances. Please do not take it for granted that we will be able to provide special services for those who need them.

Instead, please call and let us know what your needs are. We will do our best to accommodate all who desire to attend, but, unfortunately, there are limits to what our staff can undertake during the hustle and bustle of camp meeting.

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

- La Grande Hotel and RV Park—10 miles south of Hope International. Call (206) 832-6643.

First Meeting

Wednesday

7:30 P.M.

Hope International
P.O. Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328

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