The End-Time Church

God's Plan for Our Words and Our Deportment

Harmony with Apostasy?

Our Words

Show Me Thy Glory

UNVEILING GOD'S CHARACTER

Part 1

Unveiling God's Character, see page 8
DEAR Fellow Believers in the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour, As we survey what has been taking place in our world in the last two years, the rapidity of prophetic events being fulfilled almost daily, and then we turn to survey our beloved church, we tragically observe its worldliness, its tendency to celebrate instead of to weep for our sins and the apostasy among us. We seem to be satisfied that we are God's church, His remnant.

But are we increased in goods and do we have no need for a careful, prayerful, spiritual walk with Jesus each day? Does the Laodicean condition fit us now? Are we really wretched and miserable, poor and spiritually blind, aware of our fatal condition? May I ask, Do we really believe that the end is very, very near and probation is about to close for the world and for God's remnant church? Do we really believe that Ellen G. White was an inspired prophet of God, and that the gift of prophecy is God's sign of His true remnant? Are we ready to bring our lives into total harmony with what God has told us through this marvelous gift? Will conference leaders, our church pastors, and lay leaders now turn to God's inspired testimony and study carefully His plans for the finishing of His work? And then be willingly obedient to His plans in the medical missionary work, in education, in publishing and in evangelism? Or will we stubbornly proceed in our rebellion? Let us not forget that Christ wept over the church in His day and was forced to say, Your house is left unto you desolate. Are we following the same paths as did the Jews in their rebellion? Let us ask God's prophet to answer this question for us. How does He appraise the Seventh-day Adventist Church today?

"The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them." Testimonies, vol. 5, 94

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

"Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people." Ibid., 160

"The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time." The Great Controversy, 343

"There is great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel." Testimonies, vol. 4, 27; see also Ibid., vol. 5, 217; Testimonies to Ministers, 265–266; The Great Controversy, 444.

These are very powerful statements from God through His prophet to us now in 1992. Will the church respond to God's call for true repentance, or will we stubbornly pursue our own way? The Seventh-day Adventist Church will go through, shaken but purified. But only a very few will survive the final test.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little child, that they may enter the kingdom of heaven.

"Few receive the grace of Christ with self-abasement, with a deep and permanent sense of their unworthiness. They cannot bear the manifestations of the power of God, for this would encourage in them self-esteem, pride, and envy. This is why the Lord can do so little for us now. God would have you individually seek for the perfection of love and humility in your own hearts. Bestow your chief care upon yourselves, cultivate those excellencies of character which will fit you for the society of the pure and the holy.

"You all need the converting power of God. You need to seek Him for yourselves. For your soul's sake neglect this work no longer. All your trouble grows out of your separation from God. Your disunion and dissension are the fruit of an unchristian character.

"I had thought to remain silent and let you go on until you should see and abhor the sinfulness of your course; but backsliding from God produces hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and there is less and less perception of the true condition, until the grace of God is finally withdrawn, as from the Jewish nation." Testimonies, vol. 5, 50–51

Let us never forget that the prophets spoke for God to the church in their day, but more specifically their prophetic refutations and rebukes were for the end time, our day. Now is the time to weep between the porch and the altar, to pray earnestly for the leaders and laity of our church.

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

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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.
During the 1970s and the early 1980s the Seventh-day Adventist Church was split asunder by doctrinal conflict. The issues, while not new, certainly had been festering by the compromises worked out with the evangelical leaders, Donald Barnhouse and Walter Martin, in the 1950s. Nor indeed were the issues new to the Christian church. The issues included: What is the gospel? the human nature of Jesus Christ; the nature of man; What is sin? and the sanctuary message. But they all were central issues of salvation. Unfortunately the issues were polemized, and often those on the right side of the issue were just as un-Christlike as those on the wrong side. Yet the truth is not only to be believed, it is also to be lived. These are important lessons for those of us who are on the right side of truth to learn—otherwise we fall into the category of unwise virgins.

Now another issue confronts us as a people: What is the church? This question has a predictable consequence with the deepening apostasy and worldliness in the church, and the perception by many that most pastors are either not deeply concerned about this situation or are actually encouraging the trend. Thus many are asking questions such as Will the Seventh-day Adventist Church become part of Babylon? Should we separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

There are three main views currently being canvassed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One, the church is the structure, the organization, or the leadership. Two, the church is the body of believers, faithful and unfaithful, loyal and disloyal; in other words, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though defective, is still God's church. Three, the church is the true and faithful of all ages.

In this study we are not addressing the church as a building in which people worship or even the body of believers in a specific location. While both of these appropriately refer to the "church," for this discussion we are looking at the corporate church—the church around the world.

Those accepting definition number one, that the church is only the structure, the organization or the leadership, rarely will admit to this identification. But the usage of the word "church" identifies many as belonging to this group. Many have drifted towards a concept of the church that identifies it as the conference (or the General Conference) and especially its leadership. Thus when they say, "The church says," or, "The church's position is" or "The church decided," they usually mean the denominational leadership. Such members see little problem with leadership controlling the members, and have come to accommodate church pastors who rule (using veto if necessary) the local congregation. The more compliant of this group will actually support all the pastor does or suggests on the grounds that he is "the Lord's anointed." They will even defend poor judgment, actions or even error to uphold the pastor's authority. Naturally such members are regarded highly by the pastors as loyal and trustworthy persons, suitable for high office in the local church. Not infrequently pastors will exercise their authority, securing influential positions for them. Such members are not necessarily apostate in their beliefs, but they have probably unwittingly developed an ecclesiology (concept of the church) built upon the implication that the authority of the church supersedes the authority of the Word of God. Of course, no one admits to this concept, but their actions attest to it. Such compliant members will assure this same loyalty to faithful ministers, and some times will even prefer them, but they have no deep, settled convictions of their own.

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There are other members in this category who have accepted apostate doctrines. Their loyalty to an apostate pastor (though his apostate views may vary significantly from those of the pastor) is inevitably positive. Somehow they find in an apostate pastor security for their own apostasy. There is a general, though not infallible, rule to discern an apostate from the true believer. An apostate is able to live with a wide spectrum of error (other than his own), while at the same time vehemently opposing truth. A true believer accepts one belief system alone and opposes all others. It is commonly those who hold the truth who are perceived as dogmatic and inflexible, while those holding to error seem tolerant and accommodating. Those who are themselves apostates rarely feel any burden to support a faithful pastor, and may strongly oppose him.

There is a third subgroup in this category who define (or act as if they define) the church as (only) the denominational organization. These are usually older members who, in their early years, had no reason to question the integrity of the pastor, and they find it difficult to believe that the pastor could be wrong or that the brethren in leadership could be tracking a wrong course. These members are often good people, who have a reasonable knowledge of the message. They often long for the "good old preaching" of their youth, and see a level of worldliness and apostasy that grieves them, but they see no God-given responsibility to work to redress the situation. They believe that God will set everything straight, not recognizing that God uses men and women as His agencies. They may speak to others about their concerns, but they are usually viewed as those who simply have a hankering, as most older people do, for the "good old days" of a former generation. They see the church as the organization and that it will go through no matter what may be its present condition. Of course, they cherish it when a faithful pastor is appointed to their church, and hope that the next one will be much the same. When they hear the Advent truth preached with power, they are stirred mightily by it and respond enthusiastically. This third segment represents a major subgroup in the present-day Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Those usually accepting definition number two—that the church comprises all the members, both faithful and unfaithful, are usually quick to reject that only the conference or the denominational leadership is the church. They recognize that the conference leaders and denominational workers (whether faithful or unfaithful) are part of the church, but they are not the church. These members are alarmed by what they see as a rising hierarchy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They cannot accept that the church leaders have the right to legislate, control, or dominate the laity; but rather, they believe in the priesthood of all believers. They believe that the conference is ordained of God to serve the local church, and not the local churches to serve the conferences.

However, usually such members see themselves as powerless, either in the decisions of the local church or in shaping the direction of the conference. They perceive politicking at all levels of church organization, and they are alarmed by it. They usually realize that their understanding of the church represents a minority view in their congregation, and all efforts to have the laity unite to redress the increasing exercise of kingly power in the church, or the torrent of apostasy and worldliness, is seen as disloyalty to "the church."

They recognize that the conference leaders and denominational workers (whether faithful or unfaithful) are part of the church, but they are not the church.

Such people usually become deeply burdened by the level of apostasy in the church and exercise deep perplexity when all efforts fail to redress the issue. They find regularly that conference leaders will support pastors irrespective of whether they are faithful or unfaithful.

Should their local church move deeper to apostasy, they have varying responses. Some determine to stay and attend no matter what, as it is "God's church," defective and apostate though it is. Others, especially those with children and teenagers believe they can no longer attend because of the influence upon their children (and also themselves), and if possible, seek another congregation where authentic Adventism is proclaimed. If they fall to find such a congregation, they seek fellowship with others of like precious faith often in home fellowships. However, these members never contemplate withdrawing their church membership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They may withdraw financial support from their local church, sending it to another part of the field where they believe truth is upheld. They may send their financial support to a mission field they believe they can conscientiously support, or they may support one or a number of self-supporting ministries they believe are upholding God's truth. They look forward to the immediate future, when the shaking will purify the church and bring all God's faithful people into harmony.

The third group, who believe that the church comprises only the true and faithful of all ages, share the alarm and anguish of the second group, but they see only faithful people as authentic members of God's church. They realize that only God can make the final decision. However, they recognize that some "members" are so blatant in their apostasy or worldliness that they are clearly not part of the "church of Christ."

Though not all who believe this concept of the church are separationists, some move in this direction. Those who separate, asking for their membership to be withdrawn from the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, have usually come to the conclusion that the organized body is so corrupt that they can no longer conscientiously align themselves with it without being disloyal to God. Some now are convinced that the leadership is in almost total apostasy, and the
Seventh-day Adventist Church, like the fallen churches of Protestantism, is now joined to Babylon.

Those who separate believe that they are part of the authentic Seventh-day Adventist Church, and that others are counterfeits. They see no future in God's plans for the organization. Even some who are not separationist reject the concept that you have to stay in the organization to be a member of the church, and that you have to attend a church which is affiliated with the conference or mission.

It is expected that those holding any of these views see support in inspiration for their position. Those holding to position number one refer to such evidence as the Laodicean church being the last church.

"The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall." Selected Messages, book 2, 380

"The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ besiows His supreme regard." Testimonies to Ministers, 49

Those supporting position two use these same statements, and refer to Paul's reference to the church in Corinth which proved to contain such wickedness as "is not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 5:1) was wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Ephesians 5:25-32

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." 1 Corinthians 6:15-17

"The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work."

God has always had a church on earth to which he has entrusted the oracles of truth and salvation. That church was a perfect church only at the beginning of time

still addressed as "the church of God which is at Corinth." 1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 1:1

The third position is supported by statements as follows:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their

God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people." Acts of the Apostles, 11

How do we resolve these apparently conflicting statements of Inspiration? God has always had a church on earth to which he has entrusted the oracles of truth and salvation. That church was a perfect church only at the beginning of time. It will be perfect before the close of human probation, but it has been imperfect down through the ages. After the Fall, God established the patriarchal church, from which many departed and to which others proved unfaithful. At the Flood, God not only cleansed the world, He cleansed His church.

The patriarchal church continued defective from the Flood to the Egyptian captivity. After the Exodus God established the Israelite church as the depository of His truth. But it too proved woefully defective, though God ministered long and patiently with His rebellious people. After the division of the kingdom, God continued to woo both Israel and Judah.

Even when they went into captivity, God did not forsake them, and for over five hundred years the Jews were still His church, though His Son was crucified by them. For three and a half patient years after the death of Jesus the Jews were still God's chosen church.

The early Christian church quickly became defective, yet it was fifteen centuries before God raised up the Protestant Reformation. However, God did have a faithful church in the wilderness during those long years of apostasy. Three hundred years later the Seventh-day Adventist Church was raised up to be the depository of God's truth, and there is no evidence that another will arise. God in His wisdom knows that to continue to raise up new churches will only lead to further apostasies, and there would need to be a continuing "coming out" ad infinitum. Thus God has chosen another way. He will purge and cleanse the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church." Testimonies, vol. 5, 81

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the
third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition.” The Great Controversy, 608

“There will be a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. It is the very time when the genuine will be the strongest. There will be a separating from us of those who have not appreciated the light nor walked it.” Letter 46, 1887, 6

“The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat.” Selected Messages, book 2, 380

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.” Amos 9:9

The perfect, purified, spotless church does not appear until the close of the church’s probation, when all that can be shaken will be shaken. The sinners in Zion (the church) will have failed the test of loyalty, while the faithful have been sealed by the living God because they have become fully settled into the truth and cannot be moved.

The concept that the church is only the conference and/or its leadership is woefully remiss. The leaders of the denominational work are part of the church, just as the leaders of self-supporting work are part of the church. And the laity are part of the church. But none is the church. And none has a divine mandate to act as the church. It seems that almost imperceivably most of us have been unwittingly led to believe that the conference or the leaders are the church. I was noticing recently the marked contrast between the 1909 General Conference Recommendation Concerning Self-Supporting Work, and the 1991 North American Division Recommendation on Self-Supporting Work. The contrast on content that was so marked was not the only contrast. The framers of the 1909 document dared not refer to the conference as the church; rather, it was referred to as the conference work or the organized work. By contrast, the 1991 document always used the word “church” when referring to the conference or denominational work. The danger of such a designation can be perceived fully only by those who realize its parallel with papal practice and belief. The ministry just as well as the laity have drifted into this false usage, but once established, we interpret all counsels in the light of the false understanding of the church.

The church will be organized until the end of time (Testimonies, vol. 9, 257–259). However, when the persecution comes, it is evident that the organization will be simple, and the leadership will change dramatically (Testimonies, vol. 5, 80). Humble, earnest men will be placed in positions of trust to lead God’s flock.

It is not consistent with Inspiration to assume that the church presently on earth is only the true and faithful. Such an assumption ignores the inspired concept of the church militant. The church militant is always the church defective. The church triumphant, which will be revealed on earth only after the thorough separation of the wheat and the tares by the angels at the close of the church’s probation is the church purified. No one can study the parable of the tares without coming to this conclusion. But Sister White makes clear the role of the church militant.

The leaders of the denominational work are part of the church, just as the leaders of self-supporting work are part of the church. And the laity are part of the church. But none is the church.

“Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. We are sorry that there are defective members.” The Faith I Live By, 305

“The church upon the earth is not perfect. The church militant is not the church triumphant. Earth is not heaven. The church is composed of erring men and women who will need patient, painstaking effort, that they may be educated, trained, and disciplined by precept and example, to do their work with acceptance here in this life, and to be crowned with glory and immortality in the future life.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, 154

Sister White frequently talks of the utter apostasy of sin in the church just prior to the close of probation. She says apostasy increases until the end of time.

“Confederacies will increase in number and power as we draw nearer to the end of time. These confederacies will create opposing influences to the truth, forming new parties of professed believers who will act out their own delusive theories. The apostasy will increase. ‘Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils’ (1 Timothy 4:1). Men and women have confederated to oppose the Lord God of heaven, and the church is only half awake to the situation. There needs to be much more of prayer, much more of earnest effort, among professed believers.

‘Satanic agencies in human form will take part in this last great conflict to oppose the building up of the kingdom of God. And heavenly angels in human guise will be on the field of action. The two opposing parties will continue to exist till the closing up of the last great chapter in this world’s history.” Selected Messages, book 2, 383

She gives many poignant descriptions of apostasy, including the following, but never does she ever hint about separating from the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God’s honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop

Continued on 24
praying that our motives for doing so will be understood. We fervently desire to see the church unified. We are equally fervent in not wanting to react in an unsanctified way to any issue. Such reactions, we know, could only result in unnecessary confusion and division.

We are also painfully aware that Satan seems bent on distracting us from our mission by luring us into unnecessary debates in which only he can win. Please understand that this article, along with other articles on what constitutes the church, and on what God intends to do through the church, is not written as an argument or a rebuttal to someone else's position. Rather, in this series, we will be seeking to edify the church and uplift the cause of Christ by dwelling on what we do believe, not by dwelling on what we do not believe. — EDITORS

THE major premise underlying nearly every issue facing the church today, including the issue of ordination, is a concept of the church itself. Defining what the church is and understanding what God intends to do with and through the church is the prerequisite for knowing how to relate to the church.

We believe a correct understanding of this subject is the key to working in co-operation with Heaven in finishing God's work on earth. For this reason only, we address this issue. If the subject of ordination results in our being forced to think about the church in a new way; if it causes us to come to grips with the question of what is God's plan and purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, then the study of this subject will prove a blessing. God must in some practical way get our attention and cause us to think more carefully about some seemingly superficial matters, about concepts we have for years taken for granted, assuming we understood them in their entirety.

In this first article we will attempt to identify God's purpose and plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Having done so, we will be better able to define...
the church itself. And having defined what the church is, we will see better how to relate to it and what the proper place for church authority and other similar issues are.

In attempting to understand God’s purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church we must come to an understanding of what His objectives are for the universe as well as for humanity. For it is only as we have “right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them” that we can bring honor to His cause. The Great Controversy, 593

In The Desire of Ages, 759, Ellen White states God’s objective as follows: “It was God’s purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government.” If more time were needed for Satan to develop his system of government, then clearly his accusations were not understood to be false from the outset. This fact is also evidenced by one third of the angels being deceived by Satan’s accusations.

What was the nature of the accusations Satan leveled at God and His government? Why was God vulnerable to these accusations? Why, in other words, was the universe not on an eternal basis of security?

The answer to these questions, the key to understanding how God intends to place the universe on an eternal basis of security, has everything to do with understanding the purpose for His church. One key principle obvious at this point is that Satan’s power is not so much physical, but is rather in his ability to deceive. On the same page of The Desire of Ages it is this statement: “God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used.”

For God to take away Satan’s power, He must take away His ability to deceive. And the “presentation of these principles is the means to be used” to strip Satan of this power. By what means will God make this “presentation”? As we progress we will see that it is in His church that the presentation is made. But first let us see specifically in what areas God was vulnerable to Satan’s accusations. In what area did Satan possess the power to deceive?

In The Great Controversy, 498, we are reminded again that the only weapons God can employ are those of righteousness and truth in stripping away Satan’s power. “In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God’s government was just, His law perfect.” Emphasis supplied in all quotations.

Again the question arises, Where and in what environment will the demonstration referred to take place? I would again suggest that it will take place in His church. But before substantiating that, I would like to draw your attention to the answers to the questions posed in a preceding paragraph, why Satan was able to successfully misrepresent the character and the law of God.

He was the Author of life by virtue of being the Creator, but His creation was for the sole purpose of “getting,” for His law required that all creation should worship Him. Even this act of supposed giving could be misconstrued to be the result of a selfish motive.

In summation, this first accusation made by Satan was that God was a God of justice, but not a God of mercy. Now back to the question of how God deals with this deception and what part the church plays in His response. We have already seen that God chose as His weapons the “demonstration” and “revelation” of His rectitude rather than the use of physical power to combat Satan’s deceptions. His answer or response would not come in mere words, but in the revelation of Himself as He demonstrated who and what He really was before the entire universe. The weapon then that He chose was the sword of truth. To accomplish His stated purpose of placing the universe on an eternal basis of security, He must find a way to reveal Himself. And not until this purpose has been accomplished can it be said that Satan’s power has been broken.

Ellen White, looking prophetically through the conditions of the universe at the close of the great controversy, says in The Desire of Ages, 764: “But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of...

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God chose as His weapons the “demonstration” and “revelation” of His rectitude rather than the use of physical power to combat Satan’s deceptions

We know of course that God’s character and law are synonymous. But Satan was trying to suggest that God’s character was inconsistent with His law. He was requiring things of others that He Himself did not do. He required others to obey His law and worship Him, but whom was He requiring worshiping? While He was requiring others to give, He was only getting. His justice and His mercy were stated to be incompatible. See The Desire of Ages, 761. It was obvious that He was a God of justice, but where was His professed mercy? Whom was He giving to? Sure, God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. . . Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God’s love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will and in whose heart is His law.”

This last part is clearly a reference to the new-covenant promise found in Hebrews 8:8–11 and in Jeremiah 31:31–34: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with
God’s purpose for His church is to provide both the truths and the environment in which He can reveal Himself to the world and the universe

in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Emphasis supplied in all quotations

Notice that in both the scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy quotations, the summation of the issues of the great controversy leaves the universe with a knowledge and revelation of God which places the universe on an eternal basis of security, allowing Satan and all the wicked to be destroyed and the sins of Jacob to be blotted out and remembered no more. It is also significant to note in answer to the above stated question pertaining to the chosen channel by which God will reveal Himself that the new covenant promises were made exclusively to Judah and the house of Israel.

His promise then is that the house of Israel (or His church) is the environment in which the revelation of His character will be demonstrated. In Testimonies, vol. 5, 454, in the chapter entitled “The Church the Light of the World,” we read: “The Lord called out His people Israel and separated them from the world that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He made them the depositaries of His law, and He designed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself.”

Also in The Desire of Ages, 189, Ellen White in commenting on Christ’s conversation with the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well says, “While referring to the fact that the faith of the Samaritans was corrupted with idolatry, He declared that the great truths of redemption had been committed to the Jews, and that from among them the Messiah was to appear. In the sacred writings they had a clear presentation of the character of God and the principles of His government. Jesus classed Himself with the Jews as those to whom God had given a knowledge of Himself.”

Without a question then we can see that God’s purpose for His church is to provide both the truths and the environment in which He can reveal Himself to the world and the universe. Having now established what God’s need and purpose for the church is, we will look in our next issue at how specifically He used the Jewish church to answer this first accusation made against Him, as well as what Satan’s response to that was. By identifying Satan’s response and the second accusation he made against God, we will better understand God’s purpose for His church today. The key then to understanding how we are to relate to the church and what God intends for us to do as individual members of His church, is in understanding how, through the Jewish church, God was able to answer the first issue in the great controversy.

The very fact that Satan has not been destroyed and that God has not blotted out the sins of Jacob is evidence of the fact that God still has need for a further revelation of Himself through His church. The book of Revelation, which is a book uniquely for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, promises just such a revelation. May God help us to better understand the purpose and mission of this church that we may realize the new-covenant experience promised to those who make up the house of Israel.

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23–24

To be continued

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.
As members of the remnant church we are individually commissioned to participate in the giving of the three angels' messages to the whole world. Every facet of our lives is to be focused on the sharing of present truth with those about us. Our deportment and conversation are to reflect that we ourselves have been transformed by the very truths which we bear.

"Our faith, our dress, and our deportment must be in harmony with the character of our work, the presentation of the most solemn message ever given to the world. Our work is to win men to belief of the truth, to win by preaching and by example, also by living godly lives. The truth in all its bearings is to be acted, showing the consistency of faith with practice. The value of our faith will be shown by its fruit. The Lord can and will impress men by our intense earnestness. Our dress, our deportment, our conversation and the depth of a growing experience in spiritual lines, all are to show that the great principles of truth we are handling are a reality to us. Thus the truth is to be made impressive as a great whole and command the intellect. Truth, Bible truth, is to become the authority for the conscience and the love and life of the soul." Manuscript Releases, vol. 10, 315

Our words and deportment have an immeasurable constantly spreading influence upon others. How important that the example of our speech and behavior at all times and in all ways have a positive, uplifting influence upon those around us!

"This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed." Christ's Object Lessons, 339–340

Many of the social and the moral problems of today are the results of too great familiarity between men and women. How important it is that our example reveal a better and nobler way!

"I feel impelled by the Spirit of the Lord to urge my sisters who profess godliness to cherish modesty of deportment and a becoming reserve, with shamefacedness and sobriety. The liberties taken in this age of corruption should be no criterion for Christ's followers. These fashionable exhibitions of familiarity should not exist among Christians fitting for immortality. If lasciviousness, pollution, adultery, crime, and murder are the order of the day among those who know not the truth and who refuse to be controlled by the principles of God's Word, how important that the class professing to be followers of Christ, closely allied to God and angels, should show them a better and nobler way! How important that by their chastity and virtue they stand in marked contrast to that class who are controlled by brute passions!" Counsels on Health, 613
The lips and hands should not convey even the appearance of familiarity.

"The man who stands in a position of responsibility in any of our schools cannot be too careful of his words and his acts. Never should he allow the least approach to familiarity in his relations to the students, such as placing his hand on the arm or shoulder of a girl student. He should in no case give the impression that commonness and familiarity are allowable. His lips and his hands are to express nothing that anyone could take advantage of." Counselors to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 256–257

The least encouragement of undue familiarity is indication that self has not been crucified.

"The slightest insinuations, from whatever source they may come, inviting you to indulge in sin or to allow the least unwarrantable liberty with your persons, should be resented as the worst of insults to your dignified womanhood. The kiss upon your cheek, at an improper time and place, should lead you to repel the emissary of Satan with disgust. If it is from one in high places, who is dealing in sacred things, the sin is of tenfold greater magnitude and should lead a God-fearing woman or youth to recoil with horror, not only from the sin he would have you commit, but from the hypocrisy and villany of one whom the people respect and honor as God's servant. He is handling sacred things, yet hiding his baseness of heart under a ministerial cloak. Be afraid of anything like this familiarity. Be sure that the least approach to it is evidence of a lascivious mind and a lustful eye. If the least encouragement is given in this direction, if any of the liberties mentioned are tolerated, no better evidence can be given that your mind is not pure and chaste as it should be, and that sin and crime have charms for you. You lower the standard of your dignified, virtuous womanhood and give unmistakable evidence that a low, brutal, common passion and lust has been suffered to remain alive in your heart and has never been crucified." Counselors on Health, 612

Flirting during religious meetings is especially to be avoided.

"I have been laboring in Healdsburg for the last four weeks. I have spoken fourteen times. I have had a sharp, pointed testimony for the youth, and I am pained to the heart to see the little modesty and real, good, decent behavior in the young. [There are] young girls so forward as to make advances to young men; so destitute of Christlike humility and elevation of character. The young girls [are] flirting with young men, sitting in meeting and exchanging notes with them at the very time I am presenting a message from God to the people." Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, 218–219

Religious leaders and those long in the truth who encourage or participate in improper familiarity should be dismissed from their responsibilities without a second trial.

"If men placed at the head of a mission have not firmness of principle that will preserve them from every vestige of commonness, and unbecoming familiarity with young girls and women, after the light which has been so plainly given, let them be discharged without a second trial. There is a depravity of the soul which leads to these careless habits and practices, and which will far overweight all the good such persons can do. We are living in an age of moral debasement; the world is as a second Sodom. Those who look for the coming of the Son of man, those who know that they are right upon the borders of the eternal world, should set an example in harmony with their faith. Those who do not maintain purity and holiness are not accepted of God. The true children of God have deep-rooted principles which will not be moved by temptations, because Christ is abiding in their hearts by the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach." Testimonies, vol. 2, 306

Undue attention of men and women is a moral wrong, confirming others in flirtation.

"All frivolity, all undue attention of men and women, must be condemned and discontinued. Some, even married men, who have indulged in this trifling familiarity, have endeavored to excuse themselves, and escape censure by claiming that they have done no moral wrong. Was it no moral wrong to jest, joke, and pay flattering attentions to young women? Are you not starting in their minds a train of thought which it is impossible for you to change? Do you not by your levity and coquetry, sanction such conduct? You who hold positions of trust, and claim to be Christians, do you not give countenance to a familiarity which leads to sin? What record is made in the books of heaven by the divine Watcher? Was there no moral wrong done to the souls of those with whom you were so familiar? Indeed

The only way for us to become truly courteous, without affectation, without undue familiarity, is to drink in the spirit of Christ, to heed the injunction, "Be ye holy; for I am holy"
"Kindness and courtesy should be manifested; but the common, cheap talk which is so customary even among some who claim to be Christians, should not be heard in our institutions. The only way for us to become truly courteous, without affectation, without undue familiarity, is to drink in the spirit of Christ, to heed the injunction, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy.' If we act upon the principles laid down in the Word of God, we shall have no inclination to indulge in undue familiarity." Pamphlets in the Concordance, vol. 66, 38

Flattery springs from and is enjoyed by the heart of those who love human praise and approbation and is to be pitied.

"You love approbation. If you gain this in an honorable way, it is not so sinful; but you are in danger of deceiving yourself and others; you need to be guarded on this point and see that you earn all the approval you receive. If you are approved because of your sound principles and moral worth, this is your gain. But if you are petted and courted and flattered because you can make bright speeches and apt remarks, and because you are cheerful, lively, and witty, and not because of intellectual and moral worth, you will be looked upon by sensible, godly men and women as an object of pity rather than envy. You should be guarded against flattery. Whoever is foolish enough to flatter you cannot be your true friend. Your true friends will caution, entreat, and warn you, and reprove your faults." Testimonies, vol. 3, 225-226

Those in error desire praise and flattery the most.

"There is nothing which will please the people better than to be praised and flattered when they are in darkness and wrong, and deserve reproof." Ibid., 345

Flattery is poison to children.

"Children inherit inclinations to wrong, but they also have many lovely traits of character. These should be strengthened and developed, while the tendencies to evil should be carefully guarded against and repressed. Children should never be flattered, for flattery is poison to them; but parents should show a sanctified, tender regard for them, thus gaining their confidence and love." Review and Herald, vol. 5, 309

Satan desires our Christian experience to be largely dependent upon flattery and human appreciation.

"The world is the chief enemy of religion. The satanic forces are constantly at work through the world, and those who are professed Christians, yet associated with the world in close fellowship, are so much one in spirit, aims, and principles of working, that they cannot discern between him who serves God and him who serves the world. . . . Words of praise and flattery from worklings are received as sweet morsels, but the judgment of those who love this sort of food is in accordance with the weakness which they show in this direction. Their spiritual life is composed of just the kind of material they feed upon. Their Christian experience is largely dependent on flattery and human appreciation. The fear and love of God are not interwoven in their experience. How pitiful and sad to see men who have known something of the Spirit of God, fall so completely into the arms of the world, as to be swayed and influenced by its voice, and depend upon its favors for strength and success!" Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 6, 8-9

Reproof is to be prized more than flattery.

"All flattery should be put away, for it is Satan's work to flatter. Poor, weak, fallen men generally think enough of themselves and need no help in this direction. Flattering your ministers is out of place. It perverts the mind and does not lead to meekness and humility; yet men and women love to be praised, and it is too frequently the case that ministers love it. Their vanity is gratified by it, but it has proved a curse to many. Reproof is more to be prized than flattery." The Voice in Speech and Song, 152

Commendation, like flattery, is praise, but it is truthful rather than exaggerated and it is appreciated by the young and old alike.

"Praise the children when they do well, for judicious commendation is as great a help to them as it is to those older in years and understanding. Never be cross-grained in the sanctuary of the home. Be kind and tenderhearted, show-upon and extolled for a few of his efforts which appear successful. The commendation of apparent friends is more dangerous than reproach." The Voice in Speech and Song, 153

Our conversation reveals our character.

"Our words index the state of our heart; and whether men talk much or little, their words express the character of their thoughts. A man's character may be quite accurately estimated by the nature of his conversation. Sound, truthful words have the right ring in them." Sons and Daughters of God, 180

Too often our conversation ignores Christ, our Companion.

"Suppose a friend were with us, and we should meet an acquaintance on the way and direct our whole attention to our new-found acquaintance, ignoring the presence of our friend, what opinion would men have of our loyalty to our friend, of our degree of respect to him? And yet this is the way we treat Jesus. We forget that He is our Companion. We engage in conversation, and never mention His name. . . . We talk of worldly business matters, and where it does not bruise the soul, where it is essential, we do not dishonor Jesus, but we do dishonor Him when we fail to mention Him in our intercourse with our friends and associates. He is our best Friend, and we should seek for opportunities to speak of Him. . . . We should ever keep Him in
view. Our conversation should be of a character that would be of no offense to God." Our High Calling, 55

Those who indulge in jesting, joking, and trifling conversation are placing themselves where Satan gains access to them.

"Those who jest and joke and indulge in cheap conversation place themselves upon a level where Satan can gain access to them. . . . When you associate together, you may be a help and a blessing one to another if you surround yourselves with an influence that is divine. But there are those who have grave defects, which are gaining a deeper hold upon them and which if not overcome will drive the Spirit of God out of the heart. . . . Jesting and joking may please a class of cheap minds, and yet the influence of this kind of conduct is destructive to spirituality. I speak to you . . . as individuals: Guard your words. Let sobriety and sound common sense characterize your conversation. Do not trifle with the purity and nobility of your souls by condescending to indulgence in stale jokes, and in cultivating habits of trifling conversation." Ibid., 292

Gossip should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ.

"Difficulties are often caused by the vendors of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying: 'Report, . . . and we will report it.' This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church." Testimonies, vol. 5, 241–242

Angels are making crowns for those who value frankness and honesty above personal gain.

"Some will be honest when it costs nothing, but when policy will pay best, honesty is forgotten. . . . When the Lord makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be looked upon with pleasure. Angels are employed in making crowns for such ones, and upon these star-gemmed crowns will be reflected, with splendor, the light which radiates from the throne of God." Pamphlets in the Concordance, vol. 117, 82

A tongue that runs at random in jesting and joking is evidence that the heart needs cleansing.

"Where the heart is purified and refined, and made fit for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the tongue will be sanctified to the glory of God. . . . You can surround souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden. Open your heart to the Lord Jesus. Guard your tongue. Let not your tongue run at random in jesting and joking. These are signs that your heart needs to be cleansed from its defilement." Sons and Daughters of God, 180

Lightness and joking are the result of valuing more the approbation of man than that of God.

"Those who profess to believe the third angel's message often wound the cause of God by lightness, joking, and trifling. I was shown that this evil was all through our ranks. There should be a humbling before the Lord; the Israel of God should rend the heart, and not the garment. Childlike simplicity is rarely seen; the approbation of man is more thought of than the displeasure of God." Testimonies, vol. 1, 133

Christ is our example in all things. He avoided at all times the spirit of jesting and joking.

"This spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is a stumbling block to sinners and a worse stumbling block to those who give way to the inclination of the unsanctified heart. The fact that some have allowed this trait to develop and strengthen until jesting is as natural as their breath, does not lessen its evil effects. When anyone can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in His character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate His example. A Christian is the highest type of man, a representative of Christ." Evangelism, 641

All words spoken from the pulpit to create a laugh are condemned by the Word of God.

"What can the minister do without Jesus? Verily, nothing. Then if he is a frivolous, joking man, he is not prepared to perform the duty laid upon him by the Lord. 'Without me,' says Christ, 'ye can do nothing.' The flippancy that falls from his lips, the trifling anecdotes, the words spoken to create a laugh, are all condemned by the Word of God and are entirely out of place in the sacred desk." Testimonies to Ministers, 142–143

The religion of Christ is cheerful and elevating in influence while avoiding foolish jesting and joking.

"Jesting, joking, and worldly conversation belong to the world. Christians who have the peace of God in their hearts, will be cheerful and happy without indulging in lightness or frivolity. . . . When watching unto prayer, they will have a serenity and peace which will elevate them above all superfluities." Gospel Workers, 129

Ellen White did not understand the above counsels to condemn the humor elicited by the innocent happenings of life.

"If I should relate to you the experiences I have had in regard to money matters since I returned home, you would laugh, I know. I can laugh now, but I assure you in the pinch it was no laughing matter." Manuscript Releases, vol. 5, 175

The words and demeanor of the Christian will make his influence almost irresistible.

"Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. This is a way to gain respect, and extend the sphere of usefulness, which costs but little. It is the religion of Christ in the heart that causes the words issuing therefrom to be gentle and the demeanor condescending, even
to those in the humblest walks of life. A blustering, faultfinding, overbearing man is not a Christian; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike.” Our High Calling, 238

Truth transforms the entire man internally and externally. The ministry of such a person is the most powerful ministry that a church can have.

“The truth is designed to sanctify the receiver, to fashion and mold the entire man, externally as well as internally, by abasing pride and disposing his heart to be kind and amiable and condescending. Yes, the religion of Christ is a system of the truest politeness, and its triumphs are complete when a world may look on a people professing godliness with a united front, believers showing habitual tenderness of feeling and kindness of deportment and sincere regard for the reputation of each other. We may not look for the approval of God unless we work to the point of habitual kindness, acting upon the principles of the gospel. Tender mercy is to soften whatever is harsh in the disposition and to smooth, refine, and elevate whatever is coarse and rough in deportment. Love and faith carried out in our words and actions bear a testimony to the world that they cannot resist. It is the most powerful ministry that a church can have.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 15, 128–129

True reverence for God is to be manifested in our demeanor.

“Another precious grace that should be carefully cherished is reverence. True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen heart of every child should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer and the services of public worship the child should be taught to regard as sacred because God is there. And as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that inspires it will be deepened.” Education, 242–243

We should consider the place of meeting for worship as the gate of heaven.

“Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:30

“God is high and holy; and to the humble, believing soul, His house on earth, the place where His people meet for worship, is as the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the words spoken by Christ’s ministers, are God’s appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship.

“When the worshippers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. . . . Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshippers. . . .

“Practice reverence until it becomes a part of yourself.” My Life Today, 286

Never should we speak God’s name lightly or thoughtlessly.

“Teach your children reverence for God and the hour of prayer. The Lord our God is holy, and His name is to be treated with great reverence. Angels are displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which the name of God, the great Jehovah, is sometimes used in prayer. They mention that name with the greatest awe, even veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; the name of Christ also is sacred, and is spoken with the greatest reverence. And those who in their prayers use the name of God in a common and flippant manner, have no sense of the exalted character of God, of Christ, or of heavenly things.” Signs of the Times, vol. 2, 73

True reverence for God will be manifested by obedience to that which He has spoken.

“Let children be shown that true reverence is revealed by obedience. God has commanded nothing that is unessential, and there is no other way of manifesting reverence so pleasing to Him as by obedience to that which He has spoken.” Child Guidance, 100

We show reverence to God by reverencing parents, teachers and ministers who are His representatives.

“And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” 2 Chronicles 36:15–16

“Reverence should be shown for God’s representatives—for ministers, teachers, and parents who are called to speak and act in His stead. In the respect shown to them He is honored.” My Life Today, 285

Christ always maintained the proper balance between being highly social and avoiding undue familiarity.

“Christ carried out in His life His own divine teachings. His zeal never led Him to become passionate. He manifested consistency without obstinacy, benevolence without weakness, tenderness and sympathy without sentimentalism. He was highly social; yet He possessed a reserved dignity that did not encourage undue familiarity. His temperament never led to bigotry or austerity. He was not conformed to this world; yet He was not indifferent to the wants of the least among men. He was awake to the needs of all.” Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 1, 184

Those who partake of the spirit of Christ will manifest it in their words and deportment under all circumstances.

“He who drinks in the spirit of Christ will let it flow forth in kind words, and be expressed in courteous deportment. The plan of salvation is to soften whatever is harsh and rough in the temper, and to smooth off whatever is rugged or sharp in the manners. External change will testify of an internal change. The truth is the sanctifier, the refiner. Received into the heart, it works with hidden power, transforming the receiver. But those who profess the truth and at the same time are rough, and sour, and unkind in words and deportment, have not learned of Jesus; all these manifestations show that they are yet servants of the wicked one. No man can be a Christian without having the spirit of Christ, manifesting meekness, gentleness, and refinement of manners.” Our High Calling, 238

It is Christ’s desire that each one of us become more and more like Him in every aspect of our behavior.

“The Saviour of the world would have His co-laborers represent Him; and the more closely a man walks with God, the more faultless will be his manner of address, his deportment, his attitude, and his gestures. Coarse and uncouth manners were never seen in our Pattern, Christ Jesus. He was a representative of Heaven, and His followers must be like Him. We are to make daily improvement; our ways and manners are to become more like the ways and manners of the holy angels. Every uncouth gesture and coarse and uncultivated expression, should be put far away. Every imperfection may be overcome if we learn of Jesus and closely follow His example.” Review and Herald, vol. 1, 217
GOD has made provision in Jesus Christ that we shall keep the commandments of God. In this age of the world the powers of apostasy are seeking in every way to entice men into disobedience. The very work that Satan did in Eden he is doing today. He persuaded Adam and Eve that God had withheld some great good from them, and, while insinuating that God had not their welfare at heart, he pretended to have a deep interest in their advancement. Satan’s falsehood prevailed; he succeeded in winning their confidence through promising them a greater breadth of knowledge than they had yet attained, even declaring that they should be as gods. God had placed upon them a very slight test. They were simply prohibited from partaking of one tree in the midst of the garden. Yet a violation of this one slight prohibition resulted in the fall of the human race. Though the action might be accounted small, yet it was disobedience and transgression; and, when weighed in God’s balances, it was seen to be a most heinous sin. Adam’s disobedience to God was the result of unbelief and ingratitude, and led him to take his position on the side of the great apostate, in giving credence to Satan’s statements rather than to the Word of God.

The history of Adam’s transgression is before the human family, and is written for our admonition and warning, that we may realize how terrible is the sin of violating the least commandment of God.

We have full light upon the fact of how the Lord regarded Adam’s transgression, and yet men presume to violate the fourth commandment. After the Lord created the world in six days, He rested on the seventh day, and sanctified the day of His rest, and bade men observe the day of rest throughout all generations. And yet men are repeating Adam’s transgression, and are entering into a confederacy with Satan to war against God, in trampling upon the Sabbath institution. The church and the world are choosing Satan for their god and sovereign, and setting aside the God that made heaven and earth and all things that are therein.

Man lost his righteousness through transgression, and “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Through the righteousness of Christ, our substitute and surety, our obedience to God’s commandments is made acceptable. Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, and endured the test upon the point of appetite, ambition, and love of the world, thus making it possible for man to keep the commandments of God through His imputed righteousness. Through faith in Christ, man becomes partaker of the divine nature, and is complete in Him, as long as he walks in the light. But when light has come to a soul that has been in darkness in regard to the binding claims of the law of God, and the transgressor refuses to walk in the light, he is guilty before God, and is charged with apostasy. He chooses that sin shall have dominion over him, and therefore the penalty of the law is upon him. By his continued transgression he reveals the fact that he is at enmity with God, that his heart is carnal, and not subject to the law of God. He repeats the transgression of Adam, accepts the insinuations of the fallen foe, takes his place on the side of the man of sin, and exalts Satan above God. In refusing the light, he becomes one with the ranks of apostasy, and chooses to act with the confederacy of Satan.

It was necessary that Christ should take upon Him our nature, in order to prove the falsity of Satan’s statements. The apostate cast contempt upon the law of God, and declared that it was impossible for men to keep God’s commandments, which had been preordained in the councils of heaven. Therefore Christ became man’s representative and surety, thus demonstrating to heavenly intelligences, to unfallen worlds, and to the human race, that, through co-operation with divine agencies, humanity could be pure and holy. By partaking of the divine nature they could meet the demand of a perfect and holy law. Of Christ it is written: “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he everliveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Hebrews 7:25–26

Adam failed to obey the commandments of God. Shall the sons and daughters of Adam continue in transgression, and also fail to obey? No one can enter into life who persists in disloyalty, since Christ was given to our world that He might save His people from their sins. When the young man came to Christ, saying, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” See Matthew 19:16–17. It was not possible for the young man, or for anyone, to keep the commandments of God except through the merit of Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of the blood of Christ there could be no remission of sin, no imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner. Christ endured the

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penalty of sin in His own body on the cross, and fulfilled all righteousness. The merit of the righteousness of Christ is the only ground upon which the sinner may hope for a title to eternal life; for Christ hath given Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God, as a sweet-smelling savour. An infinite price was paid for man's redemption, not that he might be saved in his sins, not to make void the law of God. Paul says: "Do we then make void the law of God through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. For though "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," (Romans 3:20) yet the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

How strange it is that the church and the world are joined together in a confederacy to do a work that God has especially prohibited! They disobey the commandments of God with impunity. The prohibition of God in the Garden of Eden was disregarded by Adam and Eve, and the most terrible consequences resulted. The Lord is placing the same test upon the human family today, and proving them by bringing to their attention the Sabbath, which is a memorial of God's creative power. In this memorial God testifies to the world and to heavenly intelligences that He made the world in six days, and rested—on the first day?—No, but on the seventh day. The same instruction comes to us today as when the Lord spoke to the children of Israel, saying, "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations." Exodus 31:13

The Lord sends messengers of truth to the people; but when He brings words of stern truth to bear upon their consciences, there are many who are in no way pleased or grateful. The message of truth disturbs them in their ease-loving service of God, and they do not like the rugged, thorny path that is pointed out to them. They do not wish to separate from the world, to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice, and to attain unto the likeness of Christ. They desire to live at peace, and glorify self, and do not wish to identify their interest with that of Jesus Christ. They count that separation from the pleasures of the world, separation from the world's careless neglect of piety and devotion, is too heavy a cross for them to bear.

In rejection of light the hearts of men are hardened, and they finally unite with the agencies of apostasy in a work of compelling the conscience of those who do not agree with them, in persecuting and putting to death those who love God and keep His commandments. But the Lord says to His chosen people: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. . . . And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. . . . Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10:16-22, 28, 32 against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:5-8. The remnant church of God are to give the warning of the third angel to the world: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Revelation 14:9-10

The church of God, despised and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of afflictions. For Jesus' sake they endure opposition, hatred, calumny. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial, and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the

Adam failed to obey the commandments of God. Shall the sons and daughters of Adam continue in transgression, and also fail to obey?

The remnant people of God are to endure persecutions. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:7. They are to give the warning message against the power represented by "the beast." The prophet says of this power, which represents the Papacy: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy triumph of the people of God. He says: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Revelation 15:2-3

The Signs of the Times, vol. 3, 125-126
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 conclude his series.—THE EDITORS

In the first eight verses of the first chapter of first Corinthians, we find what we may call a dedication of the epistle to several classes of people. It was, first, "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints"; then also to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." So we might say this epistle is dedicated to everybody that has a love for the truth. But I read further: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So then the epistle is also dedicated to us.

He says, "In every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." Then what is it that prepares the way and acts a prominent part in fitting up a people in all things to be ready to meet Christ?—It is the testimony of Christ.

You find it mentioned again in Revelation 12:17, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Also Revelation 19:10, where the apostle John saw an angel and was about to worship him, and was told, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Here is given in inspired definition showing just what the expression means; and the remnant church is to have this "Spirit of Prophecy," and it will be confirmed in them, that is, manifested, and understood, and its workings demonstrated as the genuine work of God.

God began to manifest this gift in the first message, before the time passed, as early as 1842. William Foy, of Boston, was given three visions, showing the pathway of the Advent people; and he went from place to place relating them. He saw the people being brought on to three different platforms, one following another. Some dropped through the first and went out of sight, and the others went on to the second one. Some dropped through this and disappeared, and the remainder went to the third. Still others disappeared through this, and then the remainder went on to the city of God. In another vision he saw a mighty angel come down from heaven, and a voice cried and said, "This angel has yet three steps to take." He didn't understand anything about it; but is there any one here today who doesn't know what that meant? He lived to hear Sister Harmon relate her first vision, and to testify that the two were identical.

In 1844, just before the time passed, a young man living at Poland, Maine, (Mr. Hazen Foss) was given a vision showing the journey of the Advent people to the city of God, with their dangers. He was also given some messages of warning to deliver, and was shown the trials and persecutions that would follow if he was faithful in relat-
ing what was shown him. He refused to
give the reproofs and was given another
vision, in which he was told that if he did
not tell them, the work would be placed
on another person, the weakest of the
weak. He still refused, and then another
vision was given him and he was told
that he had been released. This aroused
him, and he said that he would relate
what had been shown him. So he gave
out an appointment and the people
gathered to hear, and he began to tell his
experience, and how he had refused to
relate what had been shown him, and he
came to the point of relating the vision,
when lo, he was as silent as a statue, and
there he stood, not able to remember a
single word! Then he exclaimed in great
anguish, "God has fulfilled His word;
He has taken the vision from me!" He
lost hope and went into despair. After-
ward he heard Sister Harmon relate the
vision that had been given her, and he
said it was as near like what had been
shown him as two persons could tell the
same thing.

I referred yesterday to some testi-
monials of physicians concerning Sister
White's condition while in vision. Some
who oppose her work have told about a
testimonial from a Dr. Russell. I have yet
to learn about any such doctor ever
treating Sister White. "Doctor" Russell
may have been some one about as near
to being a doctor as a bath hand, or
something of that sort, but he never saw
Sister White in vision. And it is a point to
be noticed, that none of our opponents
ever saw her in vision. D. M. Canright
testified before a large audience that he
ever saw her in vision.

When going into vision, she gives
distinct shouts of "Glory!" at inter-
vals of a few seconds, each more
thrilling, though fainter, than the one
preceding. The first one seems to come
from the height of the ceiling of
the room; the next seems much farther
off, and the third seems to be far up and
away in the distance. I will read some
testimonials from physicians who have
seen her in vision and who gave her at
the time a careful examination.

The first is from M. G. Kellogg, M. D.,
who refers to the first vision
given in Michigan, May 29, 1853, at a
meeting held in the barn of Wm. Daw-
son, in Tyrone, Livingston County. He
says:

"Sister White was in vision about
twenty minutes or half an hour. As she
grew into vision, every one present

The second testimonial relates to a
vision given to Mrs. White, in Hillsdale,
Mich., February, 1857:

"We were present when (in February,
1857) Sister E. G. White had a vision in
Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. Dr. Lord made
an examination, and said, 'Her heart
beats, but there is no breath. There is
life, but no action of the lungs; I cannot
account for this condition.' Signed,
"A. F. Fowler, Mrs. A. F. Fowler,
Hillsdale, Mich., Jan. 1, 1891."

Here is given another statement con-
cerning the same vision:

"I was present when Sister White
had the above named vision in Wal-
дрон's Hall, Hillsdale. In addition to the
above statement, I heard the doctor say
that Sister White's condition in vision
was 'beyond his knowledge.' He also
said, 'There is something supernatural
about that.' Signed, "C. S. Glover,
Battle Creek, Mich., Jan. 19, 1891."

Here is a third statement on the same
case:

"This is to certify that we were pre-

cent in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale, Mich.,
in February, 1857, when Mrs. E. G.
White had a vision and while in that
condition was examined by Dr. Lord,
and we heard his public statement re-
specting the case, as given above by
Brother and Sister Fowler." Signed,
"W. R. Carpenter, Eliza Carpenter, No-
blesville, Ind., Aug. 30, 1891."

A lighted candle was held close to her eyes,
which were wide open; not a muscle of the eye
moved. He then examined her in regard to her
pulse and also in regard to her breathing, and
there was no respiration

The following statement is from an
individual who witnessed a medical ex-
amination of Mrs. White while in vision
at Stowe, Vermont, in the summer of
1853. He says:

"A physician was present, and made
such examination of her as his wisdom
and learning dictated, to find the cause
of the manifestation. A lighted candle
was held close to her eyes, which were wide
open; not a muscle of the eye moved. He
then examined her in regard to her pulse
and also in regard to her breathing, and
there was no respiration. The result was
that he was satisfied that it could not be accounted for on natural or scientific principles." Signed, "F. C. Castle."

Here is a description of a test applied while Mrs. White was in vision at Buck's Bridge, St. Lawrence County, N. Y.:

"June 28, 1857, I saw Sister Ellen G. White in vision for the first time. I was an unbeliever in the visions; but one circumstance among others that I might mention convinced me that her visions were of God. To satisfy my mind as to whether she breathed or not, I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heaving of the lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse. I then took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes, long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances; she was not in the least affected by this ordeal. Since witnessing this wonderful phenomenon, I have not once been inclined to doubt the divine origin of her vision." Signed, "D. T. Bourdeau, Battle Creek, Feb. 4, 1891."

I will mention another medical examination that I witnessed at Parkville, St. Joseph County, Mich., Jan. 12, 1861.

At the close of an exorcism given by Sister White to a large congregation that had assembled at the Adventist meeting-house, the blessing of God rested upon her in a remarkable degree, and she was taken off in vision while seated in her chair. There was present a Doctor Brown, a hale, strong man physically, a spirit medium. He had said that her visions were the same as spirit mediumship, and that if she had one where he was, he could bring her out of it in one minute. An invitation was given for any who wished to do so to come forward, and by examination satisfy themselves as to her condition while in vision. The Doctor came forward, but before he had half completed his examination, he turned deathly pale, and shook like an aspen leaf. Elder White said, "Will the Doctor report her condition?" He replied, "She does not breathe," and rapidly made his way to the door. Those at the door who knew of his boasting said, "Go back, and do as you said you would; bring that woman out of the vision." In great agitation he grasped the knob of the door, but was not permitted to open it until inquiry was made by those near the door, "Doctor, what is it?" He replied, "God only knows; let me out of this house!"

It was evident that the spirit that influenced him as a medium was no more at rest in the presence of the power that controlled Sister White in vision, than were the demons in the days of the Saviour, who inquired, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

I want now to call before you a living witness here in this house. Brother Lampson, will you please step forward and relate to the audience what you saw during one of Sister White's visions where you were present?

In Miles Grant's book, and H. E. Carver's and D. M. Canright's books the claim is made that miracles are always given in the Bible as a test by which to know a true prophet. But I never found any such rule laid down in the Bible, and the fact is, there is no such rule given. Let us look at two or three scriptures bearing on this point. Matthew 11:9-12, where Christ speaks of John the Baptist: "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. . . Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Mr. Canright has said himself that when a person lets go of the testimonies he goes right into infidelity, and here you see it, for he refuses to believe the Bible

[Brother Lampson.] "It was in 1854, at the home of Brother White in Rochester. I was then seventeen years old. It seems to me I can almost hear yet those three thrilling shouts of 'G-l-o-r-y!' which she uttered. Then she sank back to the floor, not falling, but sinking back gently, and was supported in the arms of an attendant. Two physicians came in, an old man and a young man. Brother White was anxious that they should examine Sister White closely, which they did. A small looking-glass was brought, and one of them held it over her mouth when she talked; but very soon they gave this up and said, She doesn't breathe. Then they closely examined her sides to try to find some evidence of deep breathing, but they did not find it. When the examination was over, she rose to her feet, and then had a view of some things connected with the seven last plagues. She put her hands up to her hair, and Brother White and Brother Andrews tried with all their might to keep her hands down, but they could not move them, nor keep her fingers from opening and closing, and she tore out locks of her hair. Then she saw the triumph of the saints, and her shouts of triumph I can seem to hear even now."

Luke 7:26, "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet." John 10:41, "And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."

And what did Mr. Canright say to this argument when he was compelled to meet it? He said, Oh, it is well known that John wasn't a prophet(!) So, at the debate out in California where this happened Brother Healey said, Mr. Canright has said himself that when a person lets go of the testimonies he goes right into infidelity, and here you see it, for he refuses to believe the Bible.

January 12, 1861, just three months to a day before the first gun was fired on Fort Sumpter, the Seventh-day Adventist meeting-house in Parkville, Mich., was dedicated. At the close of a discourse by Elder White, Sister White gave a stirring exhortation, after which she took her seat in a chair. In this position she was taken off in vision. The house was crowded with people, and it was a most solemn place to be in. After coming out of the vision, she arose, and looking about the house she said:

"There is not a person in this house who has even dreamed of the trouble that is coming upon this land. People are
making sport of the secession ordinance of South Carolina, but I have just been shown that a large number of States are going to join that State, and there will be a most terrible war. In this vision I have seen large armies of both sides gathered on the field of battle. I heard the booming of the cannon, and saw the dead and dying on every hand. Then I saw them rushing up engaged in hand-to-hand fighting [bayoneting one another]. Then I saw the field after the battle, all covered with the dead and dying. Then I was carried to prison, and saw the suffering of those in want, who were wasting away. Then I was taken to the homes of those who had lost husbands, sons, or brothers in the war. I saw there distress and anguish."

Then looking slowly around the house she said:

"There are those in this house who will lose sons in that war."

Many of the leading journals of the North at that time, particularly Horace Greeley's paper, the New York Tribune, made sport of the idea of there being any war, and said that "If a few old women with broomsticks should go down to South Carolina, they could quickly quell all the rebellion there is there." But how was it? Just one year from that time I was preaching in that same house, and there sat before me in the audience two men who were present at the dedication, of the dedication who afterward lost sons in the war.

Now turn to the forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, and we will see how God works in the case of a true prophet. Verses 3-7: "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. . . I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them."

The Lord tells something that is going to come to pass suddenly, which the people don’t know and don’t expect. That was just the way it was with what Sister White was shown about the war. It is one of God’s signs, that you may know when He has spoken. I thank God that the God of heaven deigns to speak to His people. Some persons may be glad they are not associated with people that have this manifestation amongst them, but from the depths of my heart I am glad that I am associated with people that have such a gift.

Ephesians 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

From this text we see some of the features of true gifts. While they are not a revelation to take the place of the Bible, the church is edified by the light given from the Scriptures from this source. We have seen this abundantly illustrated in the lessons already given by different speakers during this institute. We have made a comparison of the gift, as manifested among this people, with that of the ancient prophets.

There is another feature to which I wish to call your attention today, which I will introduce by quoting from 2 Kings 8:8-11: "And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels’ burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept." Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he said, For the mischief that you will do, for the Lord has shown me that you are to be king over Syria.

We see in this case that as he had a view of this man’s countenance it brought to view what he had seen concerning him before. I could refer in the experience of Sister White to hundreds of cases where she has delineated the character of persons whom we knew she had never seen before, only as she had seen them in vision.

The first case I will refer to is a vision which was given to her in Tyrone, Michigan, in May, 1853, the first meeting she ever held here in this state, and which was the first time she had ever been west of Buffalo, N. Y. In this vision she had a view of all the Sabbathkeepers in the State, which comprised five or six companies, numbering in all about 150 persons. This vision she wrote out in Jackson, June 2nd. I had been laboring three weeks in the western part of the State, and met Brother and Sister White at Jackson that evening, and obtained a copy of the vision, which consisted of eight pages of foolscap. In the vision was described a woman who made great pretensions to holiness, but who at the same time was shown to her as living in adultery with a young man with whom she was traveling. The vision stated just what the woman would say when she would reprove her, namely, "The Lord knows my heart."

In company with Brother and Sister White I held meetings in Jackson, Battle Creek, and Bedford. Next we came to
Vergennes, Kent County, which proved to be the place where the said woman lived. The meetings were held in a new barn. This woman came into the meeting fifteen minutes after it commenced, from three miles in an opposite direction from which we reached the place. Her husband, and the young man with whom she was traveling, came in at the same time. Sister White, as her husband was speaking at one end of the stand, whispered to me, as I was sitting next to her on the rostrum, calling my attention to the woman and the men, and said, "That is the woman I saw in the vision." She also told me that as soon as Brother White got through speaking she would relate the vision, adding, "We then will see whether she is the one or not."

After a short discourse, Brother White gave liberty for others to speak. Sister White arose, and commenced by speaking of the deportment of persons preaching, how careful they should be to shun every appearance of evil. She said that if God called women to preach they should not travel around the country with some other man than their husband, and adding, "What I am speaking of is right here in your midst; that tall woman who just sat down near the door is traveling around the country with this young man who is seated on the front seat, and this old gentleman who sits by her side, God pity him, is toiling at home to raise the means to support them in their iniquity." She added, "I am ashamed of my sex. For all this woman’s pretensions to holiness, God has shown me that she and this young man are guilty of violating the seventh commandment."

As Sister White sat down every eye in the barn was turned toward the woman, expecting of course if she was guilty she would deny the charge, and if she was not guilty she would certainly deny it. I confess my heart was filled with anxiety to see what the woman would say, for I had in my pocket a writing written nearly three weeks before, which I knew was written more than a hundred miles from that place by a person that never had seen the woman with her natural eyes, telling just what she would say. The woman slowly arose to her feet, and in a very sanctimonious manner, said "The Lord knows my heart." She did not utter another word, but took her seat.

Among many other instances I might mention, I refer to a case where Sister White bore testimony in Greenville, Mich. Coming into a room where Brother John Byington and myself were organizing a church, she noticed that there were other persons present. She knew the name of but one of the persons in the room aside from Brother Byington and myself, never having seen them before. She said they must excuse her if she pointed them out by describing their persons. "I will first speak," she said, "of that man in the corner of the room, the one with one eye." Someone spoke his name—Pratt. "Well," says she, "I will call him Mr. Pratt. Don’t ever take that man into your church unless you want trouble, for he never has been converted; he doesn’t live up to his agreements; he makes promises to his neighbors that he doesn’t fulfill, spends most of his time around the stores and shops arguing on the truth, sitting around on the dry goods boxes, talking theology, while his wife is at home cultivating the garden, digging potatoes, or providing the man’s dinner for him when he gets home, or perhaps pulling brush out of the snow to cut up for firewood. His talking the truth merely disgusts the people. They think he would better be at home engaged in some honest labor to pay his debts."

Turning to another, an old gentleman, who sat nearer to her, she said, "This aged brother,"—here some one spoke and said, "Brother Barr." "Yes," said she, "Brother Barr, your trouble has been that you could not think the Lord could be merciful enough to you to forgive your sins. You have confessed to the Lord many times all the sins you knew of, and the Lord told me to say to you that He had forgiven your sins thirty-five years ago if you had only believed it." This poor old man, on whose countenance had been a look of great sadness, when this expression was made, said with a smile, "Has He?" "Yes," said Sister White, "Your sins are forgiven, come along and go with the church." The brother cried out, "I will." We had been trying for half an hour to get him to even give his name for the church, but he thought he was not worthy. Sister White said, "This man’s case was presented before me in contrast with

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Other cases were delineated in the same meeting; a man and his wife, between whom there had been some variance, were reconciled by the testimony that was brought in. At the close of the meeting this Mr. Pratt, who had been seated on the wood-box in the corner of the room, jumped down on the floor, and with great vehemence said, "I will tell you what it is, there is no kind of use in going with this people and trying to play hypocrite: you cannot do it."

Another feature of our text is the expression that these gifts are for the work of the ministry. There is not a minister among our ranks, who has carefully read the Testimonies, but who must acknowledge the benefit derived in many directions in his work from what is pointed out through this gift. (Here the speaker said, holding up a copy of the book, Gospel Workers.) Here is a volume filled with instruction of this character, not giving us a new Bible, but bringing to us the instructions of Scripture, and showing us how we can be more efficient laborers for God. Even taking the one point of how to care for our health, how to use our voices to preserve strength, it is invaluable.
Scores, who are now sleeping in their graves might be with us today had they given heed to instruction of this character.

I humbly acknowledge benefits received from this source in entering upon new missions. As I went to California with Elder Bourdeau, via Central America, in 1868, the Lord gave Sister White instruction concerning our work, which being sent overland we received on arriving at San Francisco. This gave us instructions concerning the habits of the people, how to labor to reach them, holding it up in contrast with the New England field in which I had been laboring more or less, showing that what might be called economy in New England would be considered penny-wise dealing in California, "that the people must be met with the liberal spirit they possessed, yet not in a spendthrift manner."

We saw the result of heeding this admonition in our very first meeting. When the people were questioning how we would sell penny tracts and five-cent books when there was no change made in the country less than a ten-cent piece we were led to make calculations, and so commenced on this liberal plan, and gave them away by scores. The people shortly met us by saying, "This isn't like the preachers that have been coming across the plains to this country." They rushed up to buy our books, and favored us in every way they could, and in that one tent-meeting the people bought over three hundred dollars' worth of books, and a lumberman, who before we commenced the meeting, refused to trust us with a dollar's worth of lumber on the ground that he had no confidence whatever in preachers, said, "Sir, I will lend you 36,000 feet of lumber, if you want it, without any security whatever." If Sister White had lived in that country five years, she could not have given better counsel than was given in that testimony, which was simply the result of what the Lord had shown in her in vision.

In 1878, when it was decided that I should go to Old England, and enter upon a mission there, as I was laboring in Reno, Nevada, I received another testimony from Sister White, stating that I could not labor in the same manner as in California, calling attention to the habits of the people, and giving most valuable instructions, which I found a great aid in entering upon that mission. But, while we speak of what might be called temporal blessings from this source, we would especially emphasize those instructions through this gift that pointed the laborer to Christ as the only source of help and strength in the work.

In concluding this last of the series of lessons appointed to me on this subject, I will state that during the last six months, since receiving notice, I have prayed much over the line that I should pursue. My attention would invariably be called, even while praying, to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and with it the impression, "Compare what is said there of the work of the true manifestation of the gifts, with what has been manifested in connection with this gift for the last forty years and over, and it will show a complete fulfillment in every particular." So, I will say today, as my subject was to be "The Study of the Gifts," Study them, their connection with this work, the manner of their manifestation, what has been accomplished by them in bringing a people to the unity of the faith, and what they are accomplishing, by the grace of God, in what is allotted for this time; and we can but acknowledge that the gift of prophecy, manifested in connection with the third angel's message, is the work of God.

Concluded
The End-Time Church
Continued from 7

the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the mandate to do so. They still regard themselves as Seventh-day Adventists, though they may be forced to worship outside a recognized Seventh-day Adventist Church. But in faith they trust the promises of the Word.

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.” Isaiah 1:26

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:3–4

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” Ezekiel 34:12

“I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.” Zephaniah 3:18–19

When all tares have been shaken out of the body of believers by the end-time persecution, God promises that He will restore these faithful ones into one fold with any faithful who have lost their membership in the earthly church. All form one perfect church. To these will be added the tribes that have accepted the everlasting gospel as proclaimed under the power of the latter rain. The church now is purged of all its dross and is that perfect church containing victorious saints. The church triumphant has been established. This church will pass, without the failure of one member, the greatest test to which any mortal being could ever be subjected during the time of Jacob’s trouble.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church never becomes Babylon, though multitudes will leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church to join Babylon. Though there have been tragic similarities between apostate Israel and Babylon, never is apostate Israel called Babylon. The Seventh-day Adventist Church contains the depository of God’s truth for the end time, and though under much attack, no other church has the right to such claims. The pathway to salvation can still be found in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It cannot be found in the Roman Catholic Church. All who ultimately are joined to Babylon will be lost, and all who are ultimately joined to the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be saved.

Some feel free to declare that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is no longer God’s church. If that were true, then probation would have already closed for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

truth made of none effect.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 210–211

However, that does not mean that many faithful members will not be driven out of the church by unfaithful pastors. This fact is clearly prophesied in Scripture.

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:1–2

“My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; as I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock.” Ezekiel 34:6–8

“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth thee will think that he doeth God service.” John 16:2

But such faithful people will not form a new denomination, for there is no I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 23:3–4

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Some feel free to declare that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is no longer God’s church. If that were true, then probation would have already closed for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. How can humans be confident of this? When probation does close, no one will know. This decision is God’s, not man’s. Even in abject apostasy, God did not forsake Judah.

“For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.” Jeremiah 51:5

Neither has He forsaken the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though many within the church have no doubt forsaken Him.

God is calling for each of us to be faithful church members, so hid in Christ that His life will become our life, and His will our will. Then we can be assured of His strength to carry us through the shaking and the time of Jacob’s trouble. This is the time to make God and His Word supreme so that the church will be perfected and fulfill the purposes that God has declared.

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:26–27

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The right use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work; it enters into life, and into all our intercourse with one another. We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure, correct language, and words that are kind and courteous. Sweet, kindly words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. The Scripture says of Christ that grace was poured into His lips that He might know "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Isaiah 50:4. And the Lord bids us, "Let your speech be alway with grace," "that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29.

In seeking to correct or reform others, we should be very careful of our words. They will be either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. In giving reproof or counsel, many indulge in sharp, severe speech, uttering words that are not adapted to heal the wounded soul. By these ill-advised expressions, the spirit is chafed, and often the erring ones are stirred to rebellion. All who would advocate the principles of truth need to receive the heavenly oil of love. Under all circumstances reproof should be spoken in love. Then our words will reform, but not exasperate Christ by His Holy Spirit will supply the force and the power. This is His work.

**Corrupt Speech**

Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestions, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Ephesians 4:29. A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure, undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin.

Upon every family, upon every individual Christian, is laid the duty of barring the way against corrupt speech. When in the company of those who indulge in foolish talk, it is our duty to change the subject of conversation if possible. By the help of God we should quietly drop words or introduce a subject that will turn the conversation into profitable channels.

**The Work of Parents**

It is the work of parents to train their children to proper habits of speech. The very best school for this culture is the home life. From the earliest years the children should be taught to speak respectfully and lovingly to their parents and to one another. They should be taught that only words of gentleness, truth, and purity must pass their lips. Let the parents themselves be daily learners in the school of Christ. Then by precept and example they can teach their children the use of sound speech, that can not be condemned. This is one of the greatest and most responsible of their duties.

**Followers of Christ**

As followers of Christ we should make our words such as to be a help and an encouragement to one another in the Christian life. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. We should speak of the mercy and lovingkindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. Our words should be words of praise and thanksgiving. If the mind and heart are full of the love of God, this will be revealed in the conversation. It will not be a difficult matter to impart that which enters into our spiritual life. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will bear fruit in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure. When Christ
is thus revealed in our speech, we shall have power in winning souls to Him.

The chief requisite of language is that it be pure and kind and true—"the outward expression of an inward grace." God says: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8. And if such are the thoughts, such will be the expression.

All are to a great extent under the influence of their own words. They act out the sentiments expressed in their words. Thus the government of the tongue is closely bound up with personal religion. Many are by their own words led to believe that a wrong course is right. Thoughts are expressed in words, and the words react upon the thoughts, and produce other words. The influence is felt, not only upon oneself, but upon others. The Lord God alone can undo the mischievous result of unwise words. Often an opinion or decision, having been once expressed, will be acted upon, though it may lead to an entirely wrong course. The iron will changes not, because it would be too humiliating to acknowledge oneself in error. The words hastily spoken, to give vent to strong feelings, produce their evil results in hurting, wounding and bruising souls for whom Christ died. Satan is pleased, God is dishonored, and many souls are ruined by hastily spoken words.

Speak gently. Speak words of kindness and uplifting; for this is the fruit borne on the Christian tree. Overcome all harshness. Rash speeches do much harm to the souls of those who utter them and to the souls of those who hear. Eternity alone will reveal how greatly those who made these speeches needed to humble their hearts and make confession to God.

Gossip reveals a lack of true culture and refinement, and of true goodness of heart; it unfits one both for the society of the truly cultured and refined in this world, and for association with the holy ones of heaven.

We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21

In the Scriptures, backbiters are classed with the haters of God, with "inventors of evil things," with those who are "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful," "full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity." It is "the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." Proverbs 1:30–31, 29, 32. He whom God accounts a citizen of Zion is he that "speaketh the truth in his heart"; "that backbiteth not with his tongue," "nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." Psalm 15:2–3

God's Word condemns also the use of those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. It condemns the deceptive compliments, the evasions of truth, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. "Let your speech be, Yeas, yeas; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." Matthew 5:37, RV

"As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor; and saith, Am not I in sport?" Proverbs 26:18–19

Closely allied to gossip is the covert insinuation, the sly innuendo, by which the unclean in heart seek to insinuate the evil they dare not openly express. Every approach of these practices the youth should be taught to shun as we would shun the leprosy.

In the use of language there is perhaps no error that old and young are more ready to pass over lightly in themselves than hasty, impatient speech. They think it a sufficient excuse to plead, "I was off my guard, and did not really mean what I said." But God's Word does not treat it lightly. The scripture says:

"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him." Proverbs 29:20

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." Proverbs 25:28

In one moment, by the hasty, passionate, careless tongue, may be wrought evil that a whole lifetime's repentance can not undo. Oh, the hearts that are broken, the friends estranged, the lives wrecked, by the harsh, hasty words of those who might have brought help and healing!

Is your conversation free from levity, pride, malice, deceit, and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power

"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health." Proverbs 12:18

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." James 3:13.

My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride, malice, deceit, and impurity? Are you without guile before God?

Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we can not control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.

Wherever there is purity of heart and nobleness of character, it will be revealed in purity and nobility of action and speech.

"He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." Proverbs 22:11

Signs of the Times, vol. 4, 374–376, (February 22, March 1, 1905)
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Show Me Thy Glory, II

POLICIES, guidelines, regulations, and laws, are common to mankind. We could easily trace them as far back as the Code of Hammurabi, which contained 282 laws to rule its ancient society; and as each civilization has passed into history it is obvious that its rulers have increased their regulations to govern their subjects.

The same could be said about many religions of the world, not only in ancient times but also today. “Why so many regulations?” “Do we need them all?” “Can we change them, improve them or perhaps abolish them?” These are questions that people have asked through the centuries, not only in the political, social and economic fields but even in their religious life.

Contrary to the Code of Hammurabi, with its 282 laws written on stone, the Lord gave only ten laws, which are a reflection of His character, to rule the moral life of the children of Israel.

Sad to say, “The minds of the people, blinded and debased by slavery and heathenism, were not prepared to appreciate fully the far-reaching principles of God’s ten precepts. That the obligations of the Decalogue might be more fully understood and enforced, additional precepts were given, illustrating and applying the principles of the Ten Commandments...” Unlike the Ten Commandments, they were delivered privately to Moses, who was to communicate them to the people.

Truly, the Scriptures do not encourage anarchy but rather command us: “Let all things be done decently and in order.” For God is not the author of confusion.” 1 Corinthians 14:40, 33. It is also truth that firmly condemns any human attempt to impose man-made regulations (like traditions) that add a burden to the spiritual life of God’s people. See Matthew 15:1-20. Furthermore, when the Jerusalem council took place, the apostle Peter rose up to say: “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Acts 15:10.

And so it has been all through the ages. Men have added false and unnecessary regulations one after another as did the Pharisees, supposedly to please the Lord. The enemy of our souls, as always, also has brought distortion to the true significance of God’s laws and requirements (as in the sacrificial system), making Him look like a tyrant and a bloodthirsty god. And what is worse, the people who were chosen to reflect God’s character to heathen nations became representatives of Satan. “The very priests who ministered in the temple had lost sight of the significance of the service they performed. They had ceased to look beyond the symbol to the thing signified. In presenting the sacrificial offerings they were as actors in a play.”

Centuries before, the Old Testament prophets, dealing with this perversion and spiritual blindness of church leaders and people as well, had said: “They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.” Hosea 4:8. Instead of teaching and helping the sinners to understand God’s character and how they could stop their evil ways by His power and avoid the slaying of innocent victims, they were setting their heart on their iniquity, in order to eat the meat they were entitled to have by virtue of their office. See Leviticus 6:25-26, 29.

The prophet Isaiah also addressed the same problem of distortion in the sacrificial system:

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. ... Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless,
plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:11, 16-17; emphasis supplied in all quotations
And Micah also joined in the same pleading and exhortation saying: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:7-8
Hosea was also compelled to write: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offering." Hosea 6:6
"To love mercy," "to desire mercy." Why these requirements? Would not it be easier to bring an offering, to pay tithe, to teach the Sabbath school, to sing songs, to write religious articles or make videos, than to love mercy by loving our enemies, doing good to them that hate us, and praying for those that despitefully use us and persecute us? Yes, it would be, but the prophet tells us that to know God is more important. That is not to say that the former is not important. You may ask why. Simply because as we learn to know Him better, by beholding the attributes of His character, and the infinite resources of mercy and righteousness that He has placed within our reach, we will be motivated, inspired and fortified to act upon His commands, which are also enablements. To obtain a saving, personal, and dynamic knowledge of God will also give us the moral strength to defeat Satan and his host, but "whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Therefore let us "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God." 1 John 3:6; 1 Corinthians 15:34
When we desire mercy, we are partaking of one of the attributes of God, "because he delighteth in mercy." Thus through the prophet Ezekiel, He said: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Micah 7:18; Ezekiel 18:23, 32
Mercy was one of God's attributes revealed to Moses on Mount Horeh. "When Moses besought God to show him His glory, the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' It grieves the heart of God, as our Father, to let justice smite. He 'suffereth long and is kind.' While men are hard-hearted, condemnatory, and willing to abandon the one who needs help that his soul may be saved from death, the Father, with heart filled with love for the sinner, opens His arms, and says, 'Child, come back to Me.' If the Lord were not full of mercy and abundant in goodness, we should not be the subjects of His grace and love today. He pardons abundantly. He entreats the sinner to confess his sin, to come to Him and accept forgiveness." 4
Are we condemning our family and church members and trying to be their conscience? Are we forcing them to enter into an experience in which they do not feel convicted as we are, in matters such as health ordress reform? I have made that mistake and have learned much from it. Pretending to have the "perfect family," and seeking its recognition from fellow church members, I brought much stress upon my family. I was usurping the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing conviction to the soul (it was more than just lovingly sharing a serious concern). I also made selfish efforts to mold my loved one by force and guilt to my way of thinking sometimes, as we let the Lord bring correction upon our dear ones, we will be tempted to get impatient and angry, but are we following His footsteps when we get angry because divine judgments do not fall on those we think do not deserve God's mercy? Do we possess the same spirit of James and John in asking the Lord's permission to command fire to fall from heaven and consume those who have rejected the Lord? If we do, certainly our Master will rebuke us: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:55-56. Let us learn from Jonah's experience.
"When Jonah learned of God's purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to rejoice because of God's amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city. The compassion shown by God toward the repentant Ninevites 'displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.' 'Was not this my saying,' he inquired of the Lord, 'when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to

Do we possess the same spirit of James and John in asking the Lord's permission to command fire to fall from heaven and consume those who have rejected the Lord?
heart, without God, and without hope in the world?—No; although every appeal we may make may be slighted and refused, we cannot cease to pray for them and to make tender entreaties for their souls. We must do all we can, through the aid of God's Holy Spirit, to break down the barriers by which they have sought to make themselves impregnable to the light of God's truth. We must seek to open their eyes to their blindness, to lose them from the captivity of Satan. 

Nevertheless, some critics may say, "This last statement about 'we cannot cease to pray for them' is referring to the people in the world, and should not be applied to people involved in apostasy and rebelling against God's plain light." To the first part of this objection I could say, Yes, friend, that's right! I have some reservation, however, accepting without biblical support the idea that it cannot apply also to those in apostasy.

First, when the people of Israel requested a king, God was angry because they demanded one. "He gave them a king in his wrath. Yet he bade Samuel to tell [light is given] the people faithfully the manner of the kings of the nations around them; that they would not be as a judge of difficulties of church and State, to instruct them in the ways of the Lord, like their rulers. . . .

But the people would not receive the advice [light is rejected] of Samuel, and continued to demand a king. . . . Here God granted to rebellious Israel that which would prove a heavy curse to them, because they would not submit to have the Lord rule for them. . . .[And when Israel experienced an exhibition of His displeasure] 'And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.' Samuel sought to encourage the people, that although they had sinned, yet if they from that time followed the Lord, He would not forsake them, for His great name's sake. 'Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.' 1 Samuel 12:23

Our work should be one of interceding and pleading as did Moses and Daniel, in behalf of God's people, regardless of how undeserving they may be of His mercies and infinite love and mercy, that Moses based his wonderful plea for the life of Israel when, on the borders of the Promised Land, they refused to advance in obedience to the command of God. At the height of their rebellion the Lord had declared, 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them;' and He had proposed to make of the descendants of Moses 'a greater nation and mightier than they.' Numbers 14:12. But the prophet pleaded the marvelous providences and promises of God in behalf of the chosen nation. 

Second, to cease praying for someone we think has reached a point at which we feel impressed it is worthless

Our work should be one of interceding and pleading as did Moses and Daniel, in behalf of God's people, regardless of how undeserving they may be of His mercies

boundaries. Things of this nature only the Lord can reveal to one of His prophets.

As I study the ministry of intercession, I am inspired by Moses' intercession.

"Moses desired to understand the character of God, and he prayed, 'I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.'"

"The Lord Himself declares His character that Satan has malignantly set in a false light. He has revealed Himself as 'The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.'" 9

"It was upon his knowledge of the long-sufferance of Jehovah and of His to pray for him is to show a lack of this divine attribute, mercy.

"God has given to men a declaration of His character, and of His method of dealing with sin. 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' Exodus 34:6-7. 'All the wicked will he destroy.' 'The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.' Psalms 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.' 11

Retributive justice and mercy, though opposites, find perfect balance in the wonderful God whom we worship. And for the Christian, "mercy is an attribute that the human agent may share with God, thus co-operating with Him. Mercy is kind, pitiful. Mercy and the love of God purify the soul and beautify the heart, cleansing the life from selfishness." 12

But what about you and me? I admit that "to hate and reprove sin, and at the
same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment." 13 But "While you seek to administer justice, remember that she has a twin sister, which is mercy. The two stand side by side and should not be separated." 14 And "With those who dare to deal without mercy, God will deal as they have dealt with those who besought them for aid." "You would err, if you err at all, on the side of mercy and forbearance than that of intolerance." 15

"We should remember that all make mistakes; even men and women who have had years of experience sometimes err. But God does not cast them off because of their errors; to every erring son and daughter of Adam He gives the privilege of another trial. The true follower of Jesus manifests a Christlike spirit toward his erring brother. Instead of speaking in condemnation, he remembers the words, 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins' (James 5:20).

"In the church militant men will be ever in need of restoration from the results of sin. The one who in some respects is superior to another is in other respects inferior to him. Every human being is subject to temptation and in need of brotherly interest and sympathy. The exercise of mercy in our daily relations with one another is one of the most

pected, give feelings and impressions. These are not safe guides. All should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the evidences of our faith." 17

"The Lord requires His people to use their reason, and not lay it aside for impressions. His work will be intelligible to all His children. His teaching will be such as will commend itself to the understanding of intelligent minds. It is calculated to elevate the mind." 18

Furthermore, "Those who love God and desire with all their hearts to keep His commandments, will be directed by Him. God would not have them depend on any man to be conscience for them. He who accepts all the ideas and impressions of unbalanced minds will become confused and bewildered. It is Satan's object to divert the attention from the third angel's message to side issues, that minds and hearts that should be growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, may be dwarfed and enfeebled, so that God may not be glorified by them." 19

Finally brethren, "We are called to represent to the world the character of God as it was revealed to Moses.... This is the fruit that God desires from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they are to demonstrate that the 'law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' Psalm 19:7." 20

This article may appear in the minds of some friends, and in spite of an honest attempt by the author to avoid it, as an unbalanced presentation, and as bending too much on the side of mercy and love, and thus eclipsing God's justice. But I would kindly and respectfully request from you, dear reader, a little mercy and patience as you wait for the continuation of this important and solemn study.

As we close this section in our study of God's character, let us meditate on the following inspired and timely statements:

"The Lord is waiting to be gracious to His people, to give them an increased knowledge of His paternal character, of His goodness, mercy, and love. He waits to show them His glory; and if they follow on to know the Lord, they shall know that His goings forth are prepared as the morning." 22

"The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace and humility, love and truth. Every member of His church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant." 23

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1 Hammurabi "The man who ruled Babylonia during its golden age (the first half of the 18th century BC). Though not the first written code of laws... is the earliest complete code to have survived." Quest for the Past, page 59. The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. Pleasantville, New York
2 Patriarchs and Prophets, 310
3 The Desire of Ages, 36
4 The Desire of Ages, 36
5 Review and Herald, vol. 2, 500
6 Prophets and Kings, 271
7 Signs of the Times, vol. 3, 52
8 Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4, 67-68
9 The Youth's Instructor, October 17, 1895
10 Testimonies, vol. 5, 633
11 Prophets and Kings, 312-313
12 The Great Controversy, 541
13 That I May Know Him, 46
14 The Acts of the Apostles, 503
15 Child Guidance, 202. See also Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, 1149
16 Welfare Ministry, 242 and Testimonies, vol. 4, 65
17 In Heavenly Places, 290
18 Maranatha, 154
19 Testimonies, vol. 1, 230
20 Selected Messages, book 2, 320
21 Testimonies, vol. 6, 221
22 Manuscript Releases, vol. 15, 161
23 Review and Herald, vol. 3, 69
24 Ibid., vol. 5, 463

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The exercise of mercy in our daily relations with one another is one of the most effective means of attaining perfection of character, for only those who walk with Christ can be truly merciful.

There is a work for us to do. We must begin here to cultivate the meekness of Christ. There are stern battles for us to fight against our traits of character which lead us to err in decisions that will make it hard and unfavorable for others. This is giving advantage to the enemy. We are not commended for a zeal that savors of Pharisaism, for this is not of Christ. We should not go to an extreme in false charity, neither of unbending severity in cases where kindness and mercy and love would have a telling power." 21
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.

Speakers will include

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- Clark Floyd
- Colin Standish
- Ray de Carlo
- Jim Hohnberger
- Dave Harding
- Dwight Hall

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Wednesday
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