Lessons from the Apostolic Church

An Appeal to Church Leadership

Jeremiah Reproves Israel

How to Deal With Wrongs in the Church

Separation and Unity

Unveiling God's Character, see page 4
Editorial

We ask the question, “Why has there been so long a delay in the coming of our Lord?” We are told by our prophet, Ellen White, that we could have been in the kingdom shortly after 1844 if we had received the experience of the third angel’s message. See Selected Messages, book 1, 68; Testimonies, vol. 6, 450

Let us search and come to the understanding of what the experience of these angels is. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Revelation 14:6-7. Again, we turn to Inspiration for our answer. “The three angels of Revelation 14 are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels’ messages...” Testimonies, vol. 6, 17-18

These angels are only symbols of the remnant people of God in their experience of victory over sin in the last moments of time, yes, the final generation who will give the loud cry to the world in its closing hour of probation. We are told that these messages, when experienced in the righteousness of Christ and by His faith, will bring an intense opposition from the religious world. Satan will use every cunning deception to keep the people of God from understanding their importance in relationship to their salvation. We are told that the third angel’s message is righteousness by faith. See Evangelism, 190. It is the everlasting gospel, a call to complete obedience to the perfect law of God. See Psalm 19:7

It is to be experienced day by day, yes, with a great desire to be like Jesus, and to be filled with His spirit. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” I John 3:2-3. See also Philippians 2:5-6. Adam and Eve sinned when they lost trust in what God said and believed what the devil said. Man’s restoration to righteousness must begin where righteousness was lost, for he must be restored in the faith of Jesus. See Revelation 14:1-2

When we surrender our will unreservedly to Him, He sanctifies our will and sends it back to us to use, and then He gives us His greatest gift, His faith. Then He can clothe us again with His righteousness. See Steps to Christ, 47; Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 52; Christ’s Object Lessons, 312. The 1888 message was to again put the faith of Jesus, with the perfect law into our hearts, to make a complete gospel message; a full experience of victory over every hereditary and cultivated weakness to sin. See Selected Messages, vol. 3, 168, 172, 184; The Desire of Ages 670-671. This message and this experience were rejected in 1888; and that rejection has continued to this very day.

The third angel’s message prepares a people to stand through the time of trouble. “If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner.” Review and Herald, vol. 2, 615

The experience of these angels’ messages will make a demonstration of what God can do in fallen human beings when they are willing to be made willing to daily make that full surrender of their will. “The theme of greatest importance is the third angel’s message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation.” Evangelism, 196. See Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings, 142-143. Satan has prevented our people from fully understanding these grand messages, for he knows that when they are experienced by God’s faithful, obedient people His power will be broken and then the loud cry to the world will be given with Pentecostal power as the fourth angel must come again to join the third angel’s message. See Gospel Workers, 161-162; Selected Messages, vol. 2, 387. The third angel’s message is the greatest warning to the world and to the church ever recorded in Scripture.

The solemnity of our time must bring us now to an intensive study of the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy, to desire and search for this wonderful experience of full victory over ourselves. “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

Ron Spear—EDITOR

Many people have expressed a desire to know where Hope International stands in certain areas, such as What is the Church? What is its authority and purposes? and How are we to relate to it in these trying times? We solicit your patience during the next few months as we develop in Our Firm Foundation what we believe to be the answers to these timely questions.—THE EDITORS
Table of Contents

Volume 7 Number 9

Articles

Unveiling God’s Character  
The reason for the church’s existence  
Kenneth Hodges 4

Lessons from the Apostolic Church  
The beginning of a new church  
Vernon Sparks 8

Show Me Thy Glory, Part 3  
To reflect God’s glory—what does it mean?  
Preston Monterrey 12

An Appeal to Church Leadership  
Evolution in our schoolbooks?  
Chokchhuang Chutinaton 18

Jeremiah Reproves Israel  
God has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of His people  
Ellen G. White 20

How to Deal with Wrongs in the Church  
Straight testimony or criticism?  
Ellen G. White 25

Separation and Unity  
Decisive events in the end of time  
Lloyd Rosenvold 28

Departments

Editorial 2 Letters 16

Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (2200–3600 words) manuscripts for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 3½- or 5½-inch floppy disk in IBM ASCII format or neatly typed, using double-spacing. If you desire notice of a decision in regard to your article, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Address all correspondence to Editors, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328
Note from the author: The reader will find it helpful to know that this series of articles, which is intended to offer a basis of understanding regarding the relationship of individuals with the corporate church, is being developed on the premise of a when-then concept. It is the intent of the author to establish that in a corporate, denominated sense, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is and will remain God's true church on earth (even though it now consists of both wheat and tares) until such time as a development of truth occurs from its oracles resulting in the mark of the beast, the seal-of-God test for the entire world. The key to co-operating intelligently with God in relationship to His church is understanding what He intends to do with His church and when this will have been accomplished. As we shall see, God's purpose and goal for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and His purpose and goal for the universe are inseparable subjects.

The first two articles in this series, are devoted to identifying the need for truth and why the sword of truth is the weapon God chose for doing combat with the devil and his angels. We will then analyze the Jewish church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church to see how, in a denominated sense, both were entrusted with oracles of truth that, upon maturity, not only address issues in the great controversy, but also cause polarization and judgment. We will note how such polarization will occur in our church by truth bringing both the wheat and the tares to maturity, thus not only making both identifiable, but also preparing both for the harvest. According to Early Writings, page 118, and Revelation 14:9-20 this polarization or harvest does not occur in the Seventh-day Adventist Church until the third angel's message has finished its work. The when-then principle is this: "When" the oracles of truth that were entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church by the first and second angels' messages mature in the full-blown proclamation of the third angel's message with a loud voice, "then" the tares will be separated from the wheat, first in the church and then in the world. Understanding how to relate to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God's present-day denominated depository of truth, during this maturing process, and how such a relationship in and of itself speaks to the issues of the great controversy is the quest of this series.

Last month we began a multipart series dealing with God's purpose and plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are studying how this plan relates to God's ultimate purpose of setting the universe on a permanent foundation of security, which purpose will be accomplished only when the universe more fully understands God's character. In order to understand God's purpose for this church, we stated that we must first become familiar with the issues of the great controversy which deal with the concepts and principles forming the core of life itself. Rather than the church existing simply to meet the social and/or "felt needs" of society, the truths offered by, and found uniquely in, the Seventh-day Adventist Church speak to the very essence of life. Doctrinal debates would often become mute issues if there were a correct understanding of these underlying principles. This understanding would also result in a well-defined statement of mission and purpose for every member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yes, the significance of a correct understanding of these issues cannot be overemphasized, for such an understanding is a requisite to any discussion of Adventism.

In this article we will continue looking at the questions raised at the entrance of

Kenneth Hodges
sin—questions that must be answered before sin can be eradicated and the universe placed on an eternal basis of security. With these questions in mind, and the issues before us which God must address in answering them, we will look first at how He intended to answer these questions before they were ever asked. This awareness would have secured the universe from the entrance of sin. Next we will consider how God is now answering these questions, following the entrance of sin, by the unfolding of the plan of salvation as seen in His church. These answers will ultimately result in placing the universe on an eternal basis of security.

Our discussion must begin with a review of what God intends to accomplish universally through His earthly church. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the fact that, as members of God’s church, we can honor Him only as we “have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accord with them.” The Great Controversy, 593. What then is God’s goal for the universe? God’s messenger tells us that “it was God’s purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security.” The Desire of Ages, 759.

In what sense was the universe not on an “eternal basis of security”? If God is the Author and Source of all life, then in what sense was life itself not secure? Was there a danger that the “river of life” which flows from His eternal throne might one day run dry? Could He not continue to supply life under any and all circumstances? What is involved in sustaining life that goes beyond authoring it? And how does the answer to this question tie in with God’s stated goal of placing the universe on an eternal basis of security?

No one can deny that the universe is not on an eternal basis of security, even if he does not accept the source just quoted as being inspired. To the extent that sin and death are real, and Satan and his followers are not destroyed, the universe is not secure. Yet, if Satan and his sympathizers were destroyed tomorrow, would it place things on an eternal basis of security? If so, then why has not God already destroyed Satan? Is it because He lacks the power to do so? If He could, why has He not long since done so? Is something beyond the destruction of sin and Satan required to place the universe on an eternal basis of security?

These are but a sampling of the questions demanding answers in the mind of every intelligent human being. Humanity, trying to cope in a world that has gone mad, desperately wants answers that make sense. Does God’s church have such answers? If not, who does?

In considering these questions I would once again refer to a statement in our last discussion, in The Desire of Ages, 759. “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. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.” Emphasis supplied in all quotations.

Satan’s power rests in His ability to deceive. God’s power rests in the unveiling of His “goodness, mercy, and love.” In order for both Satan and Satan’s influence to be destroyed, God must remove Satan’s ability to deceive. And to the extent that God’s love and truth are not comprehended by the universe, to that same extent Satan has power to deceive.

In addition, the universe cannot be placed on an eternal basis of security until such time as the conditions of life are understood. Satan has been very successful in causing us to confuse the always been God’s goal to reveal His love and truth. But it was never His goal for sin to enter, necessitating this revelation through the plan of salvation.

God, in other words, was not dependent on the entrance of sin or the fall of Satan in order to place the universe on an eternal basis of security. Every act of Creation teaches us something about the mind of God. And it was through His Creation that God intended to reveal His glory, to make Known His character. This revelation, climaxing in the creation of humanity, would have placed the universe on an eternal basis of security.

“God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 264. “When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. ‘God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that ‘the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise; glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge’ (Job 37:16)—invited man’s study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart, communion with his Maker

If Satan and his sympathizers were destroyed tomorrow, would it place things on an eternal basis of security? If so, then why has not God already destroyed Satan?

gift of life with the conditions of life. We cannot deny that our physical life is a gift. We have done nothing to earn it. But many feel that since God gave life He can arbitrarily sustain life under any and all conditions should He so choose.

As we consider the sin problem and what is involved in placing the universe on an eternal basis of security, it would be well to note the difference between God’s original plan for placing the universe on an eternal basis of security and His plan now to accomplish this goal through the plan of salvation. I suggest that it has

was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator’s glory.” Education, 15

While God was still in the process of planning the creation of man, the creature through which He would more fully
reveal His love and truth, Satan became jealous of the Son of God and began insinuating untruths about Him. "But when God said to His Son, 'Let us make man in our image,' Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred. He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God." Early Writings, 145

Knowing that man was made to be only "a little while [see margin] lower than the angels," (Hebrews 2:7) Satan became all the more jealous and he determined to thwart the divine plan in man's creation. "It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man." Steps to Christ, 17. Satan hoped to cause the very means God intended to employ in more fully revealing His mercy, goodness, love and truth, thus placing the universe on an eternal basis of security, to backfire and become the very means he himself could use to take control of the universe.

To the extent that men and angels misunderstand the conditions of life, the universe was, and is, vulnerable to just such a plot. For this misunderstanding creates an opening for Satan's deceptions. He could "excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint" (The Great Controversy, 495) only to the extent that they were not understood as describing the exclusive environment for sustaining life itself.

This fact does not excuse or justify sin's entrance, however, for all intelligent beings knew enough about God's goodness and love to have had sufficient reason to trust Him. Still, it is true that at the point when Satan plotted against God's government, the universe had not yet obtained the knowledge of God that He was in the process of revealing through Creation. This knowledge would have eventually secured all from the threat of deception. God's created beings did not at that point understand the conditions of life well enough for His law to have become part of their own judgment. Instead the law of God was to them supplied information, information they needed because of a void in their own understanding.

Because this concept is so vital to an understanding of God's purpose for His church, I want to illustrate it in two different ways before moving on. My wife and I have a five-year-old son who, at times, questions our laws. One such law is that he must look both ways before he crosses the street. It is obvious to my wife and me that this "supplied information," or law, is both reasonable, and in fact essential for his well-being. His very existence is dependent upon his obeying this law. It is also obvious to both of us that this law is necessary because of a lack, or void, in his understanding with regard to this matter. It is our hope and expectation that this law will become a part of his judgment and that one day he will love and appreciate taste—for I am sure that I could still enjoy eating a bowl of Captain Crunch—but is rather based on understanding. This is not to say that I do not now enjoy eating oatmeal, but it is rather to say that I eat oatmeal for a much better reason than simply that I like it. I now do so for the very reason that my parents do, and that reason is, I now understand why it is good for me. A void in my understanding has been filled. The information and requirements that my parents at one time had to supply because of the lack in my own understanding have now become a part of my judgment.

It is important to note that the basis for the transition when someone else's law becomes part of my value system is not a mere change in desires. Desires fluctuate.

The bottom line, the fundamental question with which we must each come to grips is—What part does God want me to play in this task of placing the universe on an eternal basis of security?

us more for requiring it of him, though at this point in his life he sometimes rests what he perceives as a needless restriction on his activities.

Another personal experience that helps me to understand this new-covenant concept is eating oatmeal. As a child I found this rather bland cereal in front of me at the breakfast table far more often than I liked. At the time, "chokemaw" seemed a far more fitting name for it than oatmeal. Sugary sweet Captain Crunch was my cereal of choice, but unfortunately, or so it seemed at the time, this cereal did not grace our table nearly often enough. As I reflected on this childhood memory a year or two ago, it suddenly occurred to me that I frequently find myself as an adult eating good old-fashioned oatmeal for breakfast. And what startled me most about it was the fact that I could not remember a single instance in my adult life in which I had purchased any Captain Crunch cereal.

As I analyzed the reasons for this, it became apparent to me that my decision to eat oatmeal instead of Captain Crunch, even though I can now eat whatever I choose for breakfast, was not based on It is much more permanent than that. It is a change in understanding. I referred two paragraphs previous to this as a new-covenant concept and I did so for the following reason. Many people believe that the new-covenant promise of a new heart (Jeremiah 31:31–34) refers merely to a change of desires and feelings. But when God promises in verse 33 to put His "law in their inward parts," He does so in the context of verse 34, which says: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, 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."

The new covenant is not based on our feelings being changed. The new covenant is based rather on God's filling the void in our understanding, which void makes us vulnerable to sin. The new covenant, in other words, is based on God's law (His character) becoming part of our judgment (being placed in our inward parts). This transformation happens as a result of His unveiling Himself to us more fully through His church. To simply alter man's desires, then place him into heaven's society would be to leave the universe as ince-
cure and vulnerable to the entrance of sin as it was before the fall of Lucifer. God desires that we shall relate to the laws of life in the same way that He does. His purpose is that these laws of life will become a part of our judgment, just as they are a part of His.

Satan evidently was the first of God's created beings to identify a lack of understanding in regard to God's law and government on the part of all created intelligences. In planning his strategy to secure the allegiance of humanity we are told he decided "he must insinuate against God's truthfulness and create doubt whether God did mean just what He said; next, he must excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God—the very sin of which Satan had been guilty—and reason as to the cause of His restrictions in regard to the tree of knowledge." Early Writings, 147

Both to the angels and to humanity Satan posed questions that had never before been asked. He brought to the attention of both a void in their understanding that had not been identified until that time—a void that God was in the process of filling. Next, recognizing the vulnerability of God and the universe, he immediately tried to fill the void with his lies.

"Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence." The Great Controversy, 495

We bring these concepts and statements into a discussion of God's plan and purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to make this point: Satan could successfully deceive the universe and promote his own selfish agenda only to the extent that he could accurately identify a lack of complete understanding on the part of created intelligent beings and then fill this void with lies. And just as long as this void still exists, just as long as the questions posed earlier in this article are not clearly answered in the minds of every intelligent being in the universe, just so long a void still exists that must be filled by a revelation of God's goodness, mercy, love and truth. The devil is more active than ever in seeking to fill this void with varying forms of his same old lies, lies that have for centuries now been echoing throughout the corridors of the universe.

Has the Seventh-day Adventist Church been entrusted with truths that speak to the questions created by this void in our understanding? And if so, do the answers fill the void so completely as to render the universe eternally secure? I offer these questions for you to use in measuring your present understanding of Adventism, as well as to give direction for the rest of this series. If Adventism is not speaking to these issues, then what other reason can we give for its existence?

Satan unfortunately prevented God from carrying out His purpose to, through humanity, place the universe on an eternal basis of security before sin should enter to mar eternal bliss. Sin reared its ugly head. Hate, fear, pain, and death followed in its wake. Satan hoped to frustrate the divine plan for man's creation and to prevent God's goal from ever being realized. Did he succeed? What was God's response to man's fall? How, through the plan of salvation, will God reach His goal in spite of the entrance of sin?

In our next article we will begin looking at God's second method for placing the universe on an eternal basis of security as we conduct a careful study of God's purposes for the Jewish church. We will also be seeking to identify a system of truth relevant to the issues we have been here considering. This identification will prepare us for a close analysis of God's purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as our series continues.

The bottom line, the fundamental question with which we must each come to grips is—What part does God want me to play in this task of placing the universe on an eternal basis of security? As we noted earlier, God created man with the intention of unveiling His character through him. But "it was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation." Steps to Christ, 17.

Now that man has sinned, has he forfeited this opportunity and privilege?

In The Desire of Ages, 25, is found one of the most inspiring, encouraging statements in all of Inspiration: "By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen."

What matchless love is here depicted, love that offers humanity a closer relationship to God than it could have had if Adam had never sinned! We will discuss the ramifications of this statement further in our next article as we consider how, from the foundation of the world, the plan of salvation was devised as insurance that should sin enter the universe it would not jeopardize God's goal of placing the universe on an eternal basis of security through a full expression of His love and truth to the far reaches of the universe.

"For 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. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3

"Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man's creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne." The Great Controversy, 484

In conclusion we see that it has ever been God's plan that His universe be eternally secure from the ravages of sin. And we see that sin is any deviation from the confines of life-sustaining law. God planned to so fully reveal His love, goodness, truth and mercy through mankind that His life-sustaining laws would become part of the judgment of all created intelligences. Having these laws written in the minds of all would prevent the possibility of sin's entrance, thus insuring universal and eternal security. When sin did enter the picture before God's first plan was complete, He immediately put into action His alternate plan, which we know as the plan of salvation. The unfolding of this plan in God's church through the ages, and humanity's part in this plan, will be the continuing focus of this series. To be continued.
Lessons From the Apostolic Church

The foundational text for church organization is Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Unfortunately a large segment of purported Christians misinterpret these words to mean that Peter, or man, is the head of Christ's church on earth rather than Christ Himself. Greek dictionaries are clear that the word Peter or petros refers to a small rolling stone, while the word Rock in the verse is petra, a mass of rock. The Spirit of Prophecy in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1095, says that it is Christ the Rock upon whom the Christian church is founded. "The word 'Peter' signifies a loose stone. Christ did not refer to Peter as being the rock upon which He would found His church. His expression 'this rock,' applied to Himself as the foundation of the Christian church." The Bible itself is clear that Christ and not man is head of the church. See Ephesians 5:23, 4:15, 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Misunderstandings regarding proper church organization and authority have been one of the greatest causes of fragmentation and false representation of Christ's church since its foundation. If we do not truly understand God's plan for organization and authority in His church today, we also are in great danger of fragmentation and false representation of His church.

God's administration of heaven and the universe is done in an orderly organized manner. Four orders of angels—angel, archangel, cherubim, and seraphim—are described as being in heaven. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7A, 476, 485. They are organized into companies each with a commanding angel with Christ as Commander over all. See Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, 17, vol. 3, 37. Each angel has his special work assigned him (See Signs of the Times, vol. 1, 79) and it is the duty of the commanding angels to see that not their will but the will and plans of God are carried out. This order is illustrated by the action of the commanding angels among those beholding Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. "With strong cries and weeping, Jesus prayed, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. The Son of God prayed in agony. Large drops of sweat like blood came out of his face, and fell upon the ground. Angels were hovering over the place, witnessing the scene, while only one was commissioned to go and strengthen the Son of God in His agony. The angels in heaven cast their crowns and harps from them, and with the deepest interest silently watched Jesus. There was no joy in heaven. They wished to surround the Son of God, but the commanding angels suffered them not, lest, as they should behold His betrayal, they would deliver Him; for the plan was laid out, and it must be fulfilled." Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, 47.

As Christ's workers and representatives in heaven are organized, just so are to be His followers on earth. Christ personally ordained the twelve apostles as the first step in the organization of His New Testament church. "The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to be His representative on earth." The Desire of Ages, 291. When called to be the visible leaders of His church they all had serious faults. Although they were not always faithful and true, Christ called them to the most important office to which human beings had ever been called. They were to be second only to Christ Himself. See Ephesians 2:19-20; The Desire of Ages, 280-297.

When one of the apostles, Judas, failed to be victorious over his character defects and closed his probation by betraying Christ (See The Desire of Ages, 654-655), his successor was chosen by the then divinely guided system of the casting of lots. See Acts 1:15-26; The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 131. "They sought the Lord in prayer to ascertain which of the two men..."
was more suitable for the important position of trust, as an apostle of Christ. The Spirit of God selected Matthias for the office.” *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, 264. Thus all of the original apostles were directly chosen by divine guidance.

The next development in the organization of Christ’s church on earth was the formation of the office of deacon. The need for this position arose when it was perceived that the “daily ministrations” of the church were not shared equally by all of the widows. This “serving of tables” was turned over to seven men chosen by the church members. They were officially authorized to carry on their duties by the laying on of hands by the previously ordained apostles within Christ’s organized church.

The public ordination of Paul and Barnabas to the gospel ministry gives us further example of Christ’s plan for order and authority in His church on earth. And soon after his conversion, Paul was commissioned by the Lord Himself to be His chosen vessel primarily to the Gentiles.

“At the time of Paul’s conversion, the Lord had declared that he was to be made a minister to the Gentiles. . . . He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” Acts 9:15. And Paul himself, later in his Christian experience, while praying in the temple at Jerusalem, had been visited by an angel from heaven, who bade him, ‘Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.’ Acts 22:21. Thus the Lord had given Paul his commission to enter the broad missionary field of the Gentile world.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 159

Both Paul and Barnabas labored for a year at Antioch teaching the truth as ministers of Christ but without formal ordination. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, 160. Because of their special calling to extend full benefits of the gospel to the Gentiles, the Lord desired that they should have every advantage possible. To protect them from having their authority and credentials challenged as ministers of the gospel, and from the charge of heresy, they were to be invested with unquestionable authority from God’s established church. “The apostles, in this their special work, were to be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. As a natural consequence of their departure from the exclusiveness of the Jews, their doctrine and views would be subject to the charge of heresy; and their credentials as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw all these difficulties which His servants would undergo, and, in His wise providence, caused them to be invested with unquestionable authority from the established church of God, that their work should be above challenge.” *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, 43

God’s desire to have Paul and Barnabas publicly ordained was divinely communicated to devout prophets and teachers at Antioch. “God communicated with the devout prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. ‘As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’ Acts 13:2.” Ibid., 42

Both men had previously received their commission directly from God and this laying on of hands added no further qualifications. See ibid., 44. This formal ordination by God’s visible church invested them with full ecclesiastical authority to baptize persons and to form them into churches. The brethren in Jerusalem were also fully acquainted with the particulars of this new phase in church organization. See ibid., 43. Thus it would be clear that those to be baptized and the churches to be organized by Paul and Barnabas were not to be recognized only by the local brethren in Antioch, but were also to be accepted as additions to Christ’s worldwide organized church. “They were now authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to baptize, and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority.” Ibid., 42

Those to be baptized and the churches to be organized by Paul and Barnabas were not to be recognized only by the local brethren in Antioch, but were also to be accepted as additions to Christ’s worldwide organized church.

Rather than being chosen by the church members as were the deacons, future ministers were to be selected by the previously ordained ministry. The sacred trust of truth was to be committed to men who would be faithful in communicating it to each succeeding generation. “Paul gave a solemn charge to Timothy that has the same importance in this day as it did when given. He said, ‘And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.’ This injunction we must cherish, as did Timothy, as a sacred trust from the apostle. . . . Timothy was to train up others to succeed him in the ministry of the gospel. He was not to think that his work was done in merely teaching the truth to unbelievers; he was to impart the knowledge he had received, to repeat the precious instruction he had heard from the lips of Paul, and to record the things which he himself had witnessed, that the light of truth might be passed along to others who were faithful, and who should be ordained to the ministry. These, in their turn, were to realize their responsibility, and teach others also, and thus the sacred truth of the gospel would be communicated from one to another throughout the ages.” *Signs of the Times*, vol. 2, 374.

As were Paul and Barnabas, each generation of ministers was to first demonstrate by the fruit of their labors the spiritual authority of the Lord’s calling them and ordaining them to the gospel ministry. They were then to be recognized by the previously ordained ministry. The purpose of the ordination by Christ’s visible church was not to add any further spiritual authority or spiritual effectiveness but only to add the ecclesiastical authority of the organization to baptize members and to raise up churches into the fellowship of the visible organized church. The purpose of formal ordination is to indicate to the members that the teachings of the ordained ministers are in harmony with the teachings of the
"heresy" and the "formation of a new movement" being associated with the minister's work. Proper ordination of ministers will help maintain peace and harmony within the church and not cause disharmony and confusion. See The Acts of the Apostles, 161 and Sketches From the Life of Paul, 43. "The circumstances connected with the separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit to a definite line of service show clearly that the Lord works through appointed agencies in His organized church." The Acts of the Apostles, 162

Faithful ministers of today have received their authority in an unbroken line from the first teachers of the faith. "What a responsibility rests upon the chosen men of God for this time; for they, too, are to train up others to succeed them in the ministry, and they are also to see to it that self does not mingle with their work!

"The work of the ministry is no common work. Christ is withdrawn only from the eye of sense, but He is as truly present by His Spirit as when He was visibly present on earth. The time that has elapsed since His ascension has brought no interruption in the fulfillment of His parting promise—'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' God has provided light and truth for the world by having placed it in the keeping of faithful men, who in succession have committed it to others through all generations up to the present time. These men have derived their authority in an unbroken line from the first teachers of the faith. Christ remains the true minister of His church, but He delegates His power to His undershepherds, to His chosen ministers, who have the treasure of His grace in earthen vessels. God superintends the affairs of His servants, and they are placed in His work by divine appointment." Ibid. The Waldensian experience shows that this is not always through the apparent denomination or organization.

When Christ ascended into heaven He gave gifts unto men. See Ephesians 4:8-11. Christ gives certain talents to enable specific persons to serve in special positions within His organized church. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments [administrators, RSV], diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28. These divinely capacitated leaders are to work in harmony with the lay people, each assisting and supplementing the deficiencies of the other in making up the complete body of Christ. There is to be no drawing apart of one portion from the other, for it requires the union of them all to form the visible church and to capacitiate it for its outreach to the world around it. See 1 Corinthians 12:13-26; Romans 12:4-8

From this instruction we can understand that those in positions of trust are just as essential in forming Christ's church on earth as are the regular members. One portion separated from the other does not make a complete church. We also can better understand how in these last days God has called forth one visible church. Christ is head of only one body, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6

What a responsibility rests upon the chosen men of God for this time; for they, too, are to train up others to succeed them in the ministry, and they are also to see to it that self does not mingle with their work!

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

As pointed out earlier, deacons were chosen to take charge of the "business" of a local church. The position of elder or bishop was designated to be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the local congregation. Individuals for these two positions were to be selected by the local congregation and then ordained to that position by the ordained minister. Other positions in the church were directly chosen ("given gifts") by the Lord, and then the organized church was to acknowledge their divine calling by their formal ordination. "From the reading of the New Testament we see that those occupying leading positions in the church were of two classes: those receiving their call and appointment directly from the Lord, and those recognized, or directly appointed by the church. Among the former are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. While the church may by its voice recognize these as of divine appointment, it appears to be left to the churches, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to select and set apart elders and deacons, and to provide such other officers as may be found necessary for the management of the church in its various lines of work." J. N. Loughborough, The Church and Its Organization, 67

After Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey the organized church had opportunity to demonstrate its Holy Spirit-led ability to make decisions as a body. Some of the believers from Jerusalem, in visiting the churches in and around Antioch, stated that the new believers must be circumcised according to the laws of Moses. This requirement was contrary to what Paul and Barnabas had been teaching that circumcision of the flesh was to be replaced by the
it was generally accepted by the scattered churches as God's method of settling such issues, for the Jerusalem council as it was formulated and as it operated was Christ's "highest authority upon the earth." The Acts of the Apostles, 196

We are told that the newly organized church of God followed high standards in the selection of leaders. "In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. They maintained that he who is called to stand in a position of leading responsibility in the church 'must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' Titus 1:7-9." Ibid., 95

By accepting Christ's plan for their organization, the early Christian church went forward as a well-disciplined army. "The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another." Ibid., 95-96. Some have likened Christ's early church to the conquering rider on the white horse of Revelation 6:2: 

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

The early church took seriously Christ's commission to them to teach all nations "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matthew 28:20. They did not add to nor subtract from the message Christ had given them. They said what Christ said about sin and righteousness. By accepting Christ's system of organization and by obeying His authority in how to live and work and what to say for Him they were blessed with Holy Spirit power and success. In a comparatively short time they carried the gospel to all of the then known world. Could it be that like organization and like submission to Christ's authority today would give the same results? In future articles we will study Christ's plan for church organization and authority for our day. ■

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Show Me Thy Glory, III

A few years ago I had the opportunity to listen to a sermon from one of the most prominent advocates of the Celebration movement in this country. This occasion was followed by an unscheduled interview with the speaker, who kindly asked me, after learning of my association with Our Firm Foundation, what I thought of his sermon.

His message was essentially focused on God’s unceasing forgiveness and acceptance—an overemphasised subject which Celebration preachers often dwell upon. Perhaps they do so because the presentation of such a theme is unlikely to cause discontent and controversy among their constituents.

I must also say that after listening to the exposition of the subject, I was disappointed in his failure to present the uniqueness of our historical Adventist message dealing with topics of this nature. The message presented on Sabbath morning in this Adventist congregation could easily have been preached by Robert Schuller in the Crystal Cathedral, or by any evangelical exponent of a mutilated gospel—a gospel that, in contrast with the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14, holds its believers in a false security.

And so, having to give a response to the pastor, and a bit reluctant to enter into a debate or controversy, I told him that I appreciated his presentation on God’s forgiveness and acceptance, but I wished that he had done so in the context of the close of probation, a closing that is fast approaching upon mankind.

“The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God’s visitation has about come. Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily.”

The Close of Probation

The Word of the Lord solemnly tells us: “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.” Isaiah 55:6–7; Psalm 32:6. Unless indicated otherwise, emphasis has been supplied in all quotations.

We must seek the Lord while He may be found. The day is very near when He will cease to intercede in man’s behalf and mercy will no longer be available. Then our heavenly High Priest will cast down His censer and pronounce the awful sentence, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Revelation 22:11. This decree without doubt will soon be followed by the “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” when the wrath of God, will be poured out without mixture of mercy upon every soul who has rejected His last call of mercy and reconciliation. They have joined the ranks of the enemy and must pay the price of their treason. See Revelation 14:9–11

With the aid of humanism, Satan, its author and a master in deception and sophistry, has shifted his distorted view of God’s character as a tyrant and dictator, and he has gone to the other extreme in portraying the Lord as a weak God, a very sweet being, not capable of executing judgment upon His creatures, nor bringing utter destruction upon the unrepentant sinner. But “God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy... In God’s plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other... Another deception was now to be brought...
forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice." 2

Consequently, a new way of thinking has invaded mainstream modern Christianity with a gospel that leads its followers into the experience of "sin and confess," "sin and confess"—a never-ending cycle that fosters a life of transgression of God’s requirements.

To rationalize this failure and minimize the depression following it, the proponents of this handicapped theology turn to the Calvinistic perspective of the nature of sin, which in the words of John Calvin states: "All are originally depraved... Guilt is from nature... Even infants bringing their condemnation with them from their mother’s womb suffer... for their own defect. Men are born vicious. We are all sinners by nature." 3

Thus with this false teaching large audiences are "sheltered" in the so-called hope that Christ’s return will somehow cause a magical change in their lives. "But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed." 4

"When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us." 5

People and nations have had their "hours of probation." Because of the lack of space here we mention only a few examples of special probationary time:

1. Antediluvian world: 120 years— Genesis 6:3. "Noah preached to the people of his time that God would give them one hundred and twenty years in which to repent of their sins and find refuge in the ark, but they refused the gracious invitation. Abundant time was given them to turn from their sins, overcome their bad habits, and develop righteous characters. But inclination to sin, though weak at first with many, strengthened through repeated indulgence and hurried them on to irretrievable ruin. The merciful warning of God was rejected with sneers, with mockery and derision; and they were left in darkness to follow the course that their sinful hearts had chosen. But their unbelief did not hinder the predicted event. It came, and great was the wrath of God which was seen in the general ruin." 6

2. The Amorites: 400 years— Genesis 15:13, 16. "Of the Amorites the Lord said: ‘In the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.’ Although this nation was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption, it had not yet filled up the cup of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be left without excuse. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then, if no change was seen for the better, His judgments were to fall upon them. With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount, later an extended probationary period of 490 years to determine their remnant status as the trustees of God’s oracles. See Daniel 9:24

"What a lesson is this to men holding positions of responsibility today in the church of God! What a solemn warning to deal faithfully with wrongs that bring dishonor to the cause of truth! Let none who claim to be the depositaries of God’s law flatter themselves that the regard they may outwardly show toward the commandments will preserve them from the exercise of divine justice. Let none refuse to be reproved for evil, nor charge the servants of God with being too zealous in endeavoring to cleanse the camp from evil-doing. A sin-hating God calls upon those who claim to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. A neglect to repent and to render willing obedience will bring upon men and women today as serious consequences as came upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which the judgments of Jehovah can no longer be delayed. The desolation of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah is a solemn warning to modern Israel, that the counsels and admonitions given them through chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity." 7

"His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go

There are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate His own honor

which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf." 8

3. Nineveh had a 40-day probationary period. Though in the case of Nineveh, their people hearkened to God’s admonition and an extended probation was granted before the divine judgment destroyed their city. See Jonah 3:4

4. Israel had some time for reforms prior to their captivity in Babylon, and

forth and He will destroy without remedy... No earthly wisdom can secure wrongdoers against the judgments of Heaven." 9

"Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary to put on garments of vengeance and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them. ‘Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.’ Ecclesiastes 8:11. Instead of being softened by the
patience and long forbearance that the Lord has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But there are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate His own honor.”

Justice Vindicated

“God will soon vindicate His justice before the universe. His justice requires that sin shall be punished; His mercy grants that sin shall be pardoned through repentance and confession. Pardon can come only through His only begotten Son; Christ alone can expiate sin—and then only when sin is repented of and forsaken. Man has severed his connection with God, and his soul has become palsied and strengthless by the deadly poison of sin. But there was a time when the proclamation sounded through the heavenly courts, I have found a ransom! A divine life is given as man’s ransom; One equal with the Father has become man’s substitute.”

“As Jesus looked upon the world, He saw such misapprehension of the character of God, such darkness covering the earth, and gross darkness the people, that His heart was drawn out in compassion for mankind. ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Jesus came to plant the cross between heaven and earth, between divinity and humanity. There He offered Himself to God as a Lamb without blemish, a spotless sacrifice for the sins of men. What means it that the divine Victim hangs there in dying agony?—It means that not one jot or tittle of the law could be set aside to save the transgressor of law, for whom Christ became Substitute and Surety. Christ consented to become man’s sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, and in Him divine justice and mercy met together, so that God could pardon the transgressor, and vindicate His justice, and uphold His throne in righteousness.”

“The claims of God’s government had been misapprehended through the deceptive words and works of Satan, and the necessity of a mediator was seen and felt by the Father and the Son... In surrendering His spotless soul a living sacrifice, Jesus was bearing the sin of the world; He was enduring the curse of the law; He was vindicating the JUSTICE of God. Separation from His Father, the punishment for transgression, was to fall upon Him, in order to magnify God’s law and testify to its immutability. And this was forever to settle the controversy between Satan and the Prince of heaven in regard to the changeless character of that law.”

Then, after the punishment for transgression, and the vindication of God’s justice has been made, “Christ says: Father, it is finished. I have done thy will, O my God. I have completed the work of redemption. If thy justice is satisfied, ‘I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.’ John 17:24.

Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is satisfied to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King

And the voice of God is heard: Justice is satisfied; Satan is vanquished. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Psalm 85:10. The arms of the Father encircle the Son, and His voice is heard, saying, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ Hebrews 1:6”

God’s Balanced Character

And as angels bow down to worship the Redeemer of mankind, a rainbow encircles God’s throne. See Revelation 4:3. According to Inspiration this rainbow has a special meaning:

“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world’s Redeemer, and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great.’ Psalm 18:35. We know that the gospel is a perfect and complete system, revealing the immutability of the law of God. It inspires the heart with hope, and with love to God. Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is satisfied to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. If we were defective in character, we could not pass the gates that mercy has opened to the obedient; for justice stands at the entrance, and demands holiness in all who would see God. Were justice extinct, and were it possible for divine mercy to open the gates to the whole race, irrespective of character, there would be a worse condition of disaffection and rebellion in heaven than before Satan was expelled. The peace, happiness, and harmony of heaven would be broken. The change from earth to heaven will not change men’s character; the happiness of the redeemed in heaven results from the character formed in this life after the image of Christ. The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth.”

“The One who has stood as our Intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the symbol of grace and love, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly sanctuary. Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne, and justice will take their place.”

Therefore in the light of this quotation, let us always keep in mind that although Christ Jesus is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, the Bible also depicts before us the terror that the wicked will encounter when the “wrath of the Lamb” will be manifested. See Revelation 6:16. Yes, Jesus Christ is the Lamb for the repentant sinner, but He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah for the stubborn transgres-
sor of His law, because He has always "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," Hebrews 1:9

The Greek word here translated "iniquity" is anomia, which means "illegality, lawlessness, wickedness, violation or transgression of the law." Compare with Matthew 7:21-23. This word, along with anomia (a=without; nomos=law) is also used in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9. This passage for centuries before and after the Reformation was applied to the Papacy, thus describing it as the antichrist of Bible prophecy. This same power (little horn) would "think to change times and laws." Daniel 7:25. And it will be the same power with the help of the lamblike beast that will press upon the inhabitants of the earth on their foreheads and in their right hands the mark of the beast. See Revelation 13 and 14. This mark is an open defiance of God's law and divine seal, the seventh-day Sabbath. See Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Exodus 31:16-17

Show Me Thy Glory

"God has given to men a declaration of His character [as He did to Moses], 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." 17

"In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. . . . It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace than they are now, or many backsliders will carry a tame, pointless message, which tulls people to sleep. Every discourse should be given under a sense of the awful judgments soon to fall on the world. The message of truth is to be proclaimed by lips touched with a live coal from the divine altar." 18

How to Avoid God's Wrath

It is possible, dear reader, that all these statements from Inspiration may sound a little depressing for our struggling Christian pilgrimage, but please let me assure you on the authority of God's eternal Word that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." How may I know whether I am in Christ Jesus? If I "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1. Yes, dear reader, Jesus is the only One who delivers us "from the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:10. Through Him, being justified by His blood, "we shall be saved from wrath." Romans 5:9. And as we "are made free from sin [that is, justified], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness [sanctification], and the end everlasting life [glorification]." Romans 6:22. For "God hath . . . called us . . . unto holiness," "without which no man shall see the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 12:14

We must also believe in the Lord Jesus. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36

This believing is more than an intellectual acknowledgment of God's existence, attributes and claims, because "the devils also believe, and tremble." James 2:19. It is a dynamic trust and energetic commitment to do His will by the power of the Holy Spirit, demonstrating accordingly our faith by our works. James 2:18. This is the "faith which worketh by love." Galatians 5:6

Let us daily behold our Redeemer in order that we may be transformed into His likeness. See 2 Corinthians 3:18. And let us surrender ourselves to His control and resist the devil that he may flee from us. James 4:7. However, "no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in
spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.

"It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely." 23

God is more than eager to reveal His glory (character), to each of us. He is waiting to reflect Himself in the lives of His children. Let us surrender to His control and co-operate with Him in the solemn work of vindicating the character and holiness of Jehovah. For "the nations will know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes." Ezekiel 36:23 (RSV). And as the following verses 24–28 point out, let us vindicate Him by a cleansed, obedient and victorious life.

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Numbers 6:24–26 □

Concluded

1 Testimonies, vol 5, 209
2 The Desire of Ages, 762
3 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book II, chapter 1, #5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 27
4 Maranatha, 227
5 Ibid., 221
6 Lift Him Up, 365
7 Testimonies, vol 5, 208
8 Prophets and Kings, 416–417
9 The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 946
10 Testimonies, vol 5, 207–208
11 The Upward Look, 49
12 Review and Herald, vol. 2, 597
13 Signs of the Times, vol. 3, 436
14 The Youth's Instructor, August 11, 1898, 358
15 Review and Herald, vol. 2, 621–622
16 Review and Herald, vol. 2, 275
17 The Great Controversy, 541
18 Ibid., 543
19 The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol 1, 1091
20 Testimonies, vol 8, 37
21 Evangelism, 120
22 Testimonies, vol 8, 36–37
23 Christ's Object Lessons, 159–160
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An Appeal to Church Leadership

Dear Leaders,

Please do consider these matters that are of vital importance to our church in Asia and the world.

I share with you the same firm belief that this church under your wise leadership is the last remnant church of God. These are my concerns and proposals.

1. Evolution in Our Church School Textbooks

Presently, our church schools and academies in Asia and even in America are using worldly textbooks that have a great deal of evolution in them. The theory of evolution is found throughout our science textbooks and even in our social sciences and history textbooks written by worldly authors inspired by another power.

Some Seventh-day Adventist educators argue that our students need to know the other side of the story (evolution), which is a debatable point. However, if our students really need to know about evolution, we should not go to worldly textbooks as a source, or expose our younger students to this theory at too early an age.

Let our own true Christian authors write and introduce creationism versus evolutionism to our children at the appropriate age and the appropriate time according to God's true perspective.

Nowhere in the Bible does God ever tell us to study error in order to learn truth. Eve wanted to know more about the other side of the story of "good and evil" and she went to get it from the devil at the "tree." We all know what happened next.

Some argue that it is very expensive to produce a new Seventh-day Adventist science textbook. Well, we have done it before, about thirty to ninety years ago when we were much poorer, and had fewer scholars and smaller membership. I cannot believe that we cannot do it now when we are in a much more advantageous position, with six to seven million members, and with God's help.

It is very shameful and a great disgrace to God that we claim to have the best God-given educational system in the world, and yet we have to go to the world to get her textbooks and drink from her polluted fountains.

The Spirit of Prophecy counsels us, "Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous." Counsels to Writers and Editors, 47

Proposal One

(1) Set up a committee to study into this serious problem.

(2) Write new Seventh-day Adventist science textbooks.

(3) The Institute for Creation Science Research (Dr. Henry Morris) at El Cajon near San Diego has many excellent creation-science textbooks which can be modified for our purposes, if we can get permission.

2. Secularism in Our History and Social Science Textbooks

Worldly history textbooks used in our schools have made light of our great heritage of religious freedom. For instance, the American forefathers' flight (the Puritans and others) to America in their search for religious liberty due to persecution in Europe in the seventeenth century, is written in such a secular way that the precious lessons to be learned from their trying search for religious liberty have been nearly forgotten. Secular historians made it almost sound as if these God-fearing forefathers arrived on the American shores by accident without much hardship. The terrible sacrifices and horrible ordeals these Pilgrim Fathers had to endure before arriving on the shores of religious freedom are hardly mentioned. Our great heroes of the Reformation are not mentioned, or just mentioned briefly. Ungodly men are cheered as great heroes of history. The important question for us as Christians is: Do we want our children to learn history written by such secular authors?

Proposal Two

(1) Write good Christian history textbooks.

(2) If we cannot write our own, check with Beka Book Publication of Pensacola Christian College in Florida. They may have some good history books, but we may have to modify their theology.

(3) The Great Controversy by E. G. White is the greatest history book ever written, next to the Bible. No students should ever graduate from our academies or colleges without reading it and learning from it the great facts and events of history.

3. The Greatest Apostasy in Adventist Education Outside of America

What is this great apostasy in education outside of America? The answer is simple. It is the emphasizing of mission schools to the neglect of church schools. We keep on building mission schools for the heathen and nonmembers and forget to start church schools for our new converts' children. They should definitely have top priority for Christian education. Instead we direct our best energies, best talents and funds into mission schools and neglect our own new and old Seventh-day Adventist youth who are classed together with nonmembers in mission schools. The Adventist youth are definitely influenced by their worldly ways, and consequently become adult Christians not strong in faith and character.

After 85 years of Seventh-day Adventist labor in Thailand, we still do not have one single Thai church school, although there are five to six mission schools in Thailand. There are also no local church schools in Malaysia and in Singapore, the headquarters of the Far Eastern Division. If the information has not changed recently, Hongkong after 100 years of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism has just a tiny, barely surviving church school. Sadly, many other countries in Asia, Europe and other parts of the world outside America have no church schools, or have very weak church-school systems.

Dr. Chutinaton, an Adventist layman and pediatrician, writes from Bangkok, Thailand.

Chokchuang Chutinaton, M.D.
Countries that have strong church-school systems are consequentliy stronger in faith, leadership, and in membership, and are producing missionaries. "Show me a country that has a good church-school system and I will show you that this country is strong in the Lord's work." Similarly, show me a country that has no church schools and I will show you that this country is weak in the Lord's work, and its members are typical, dying Laodiceans.

Counsels From the Spirit of Prophecy

"In these countries, in localities where there is a church, schools should be established, if there are no more than six children to attend. Work as if you were working for your life to save the children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of the world." Child Guidance, 308–309; emphasis supplied

Seventh-day Adventist mission policy handbooks (section 1482 or 120–122) state clearly the following policies for mission schools and church schools:

1. Mission schools shall not compete with existing church schools or serve as substitutes for church schools.
2. Plans shall be laid for all mission schools to become church schools or act as feeders for church schools.
3. In areas where there are only mission schools, and where there are at least six Adventist children, church schools should be established in addition to the mission schools so that Seventh-day Adventist children will be removed from constant contact with non-Adventist associates. Emphasis supplied

Sadly, and unfortunately, we are not following the above mission policies. In fact, we often violate them and act in total disregard of the light given by the Spirit of Prophecy stating clearly that even if we have only six Adventist children, we should start a church school for them. Tragically, we have used mission schools to serve as substitutes for church schools with consequent appalling results in Christian training. This policy has led to almost a whole generation lost to Satan or becoming weak Laodiceans because of the worldly influences from non-Seventh-day Adventist students in mission schools.

Proposal Three

1. Set up a committee to study this neglect of church schools in light of inspired counsels prevalent around the world and then take the necessary prompt actions.
2. Do research to find out how many countries have no church schools or have very weak church-school systems. Do research on what happens when we substitute mission schools for church schools.

Thank you very much for considering these concerns and proposals. I firmly believe there is really a great deviation from the Lord’s will in our Adventist educational system today. May God richly guide and bless you as you take the necessary courageous steps and prompt actions to reform our educational system, for, as you know, without a true educational system patterned after the blueprint given by God through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, our cause is greatly weakened, and our young people and our next generation will be sitting and learning at the feet of Satan instead of our Lord, Jesus Christ. 

1 Mission school is a school for non-Seventh-day Adventist children and youth. It is an evangelizing agency of the church for non-Seventh-day Adventist students.
2 Church school is a school mainly for Seventh-day Adventist children and youth. The majority of the students in a church school are from Adventist homes. (Non-Seventh-day Adventists are allowed, but the percentage should not be more than 15–25%). Above definitions obtained from mission policy handbook.

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It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Jeremiah 36:3

Jeremiah Reproves Israel

The Lord gave Jeremiah a message of reproof to bear to His people, charging them with the continual rejection of God's counsel: "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers." Jeremiah 35:14-15

God pleaded with them not to provoke Him to anger with the work of their hands and their hearts, "but they hearkened not." Jeremiah then predicted the captivity of the Jews as their punishment for not heeding the word of the Lord. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise His disobedient people. Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence and to the warnings they had despised. God had long delayed His judgments because of His unwillingness to humiliate His chosen people, but now He would visit His displeasure upon them as a last effort to check them in their evil course.

In these days He has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of His people. As of old, He entreats the erring ones who profess His name to repent and turn from their evil ways. Now, as then, by the mouth of His chosen servants He predicts the dangers before them. He sounds the note of warning and reproves sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah. But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel as had ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given His servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, He will not always stay His hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment... The Lord commanded Jeremiah to say to the people: "Thus saith the Lord; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." Jeremiah 26:4-6. They understood this reference to Shiloh and the
time when the Philistines overcame Israel and the ark of God was taken. The sin of Eli was in passing lightly over the iniquity of his sons, who were occupying sacred offices. The neglect of the father to reprove and restrain his sons brought upon Israel a fearful calamity. The sons of Eli were slain, Eli himself lost his life, the ark of God was taken from Israel, and thirty thousand of the people were slain. All this was because sin was lightly regarded and allowed to remain among them. What a lesson is this to men holding responsible positions in the church of God! It adjures them faithfully to remove the wrongs that dishonor the cause of truth.

In the days of Samuel, Israel thought that the presence of the ark containing the commandments of God would gain them the victory over the Philistines, whether or not they repented of their wicked works. Just so, in Jeremiah's time, the Jews believed that the strict observance of the divinely appointed services of the temple would preserve them from the just punishment of their evil course.

The same danger exists today among the people who profess to be the depositories of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments will preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved for evil, and charge God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey His Word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which He will no longer delay His judgments. The desolation of Jerusalem stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel, that the corrections given through His chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity.

When the priests and the people heard the message that Jeremiah delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they were very angry and declared that he should die. They were boisterous in their denunciations of him, crying: "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord." Jeremiah 26:9. Thus was the message of God despised and the servant with whom He entrusted it threatened with death. The priests, the unfaithful prophets, and all the people turned in wrath upon him who would not speak to them smooth things and prophesy deceit.

The unfaithful servants of God have usually suffered the bitterest persecution from false teachers of religion. But the true prophets will ever prefer reproach, and even death, rather than unfaithfulness to God. The Infinite Eye is upon the instruments of divine reproof, and they bear a heavy responsibility. But God regards the injury done to them through misrepresentation, falsehood, or abuse as though it were done unto Himself, and will punish accordingly. . . .

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threats of those in high authority and the clamoring of the rabble, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life. But the courage with which he discharged his painful duty commanded the respect of the people and turned the princes of Israel in his favor. Thus God raised up defenders for His servant. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures which they advocated. . . .

But Israel remained unrepentant, and the Lord saw that they must be punished for their sin; so He instructed Jeremiah to make yokes and bonds and place them upon his neck, and to send them to the kings of Edom, of Moab, of the Ammonites, and of Tyrus and Zidon, commanding the messengers to say that God had given all these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that all these nations should serve him and his descendants for a certain time, till God should deliver them. They were to declare that if these nations refused to serve the king of Babylon, they should be punished with famine, with the sword, and with pestilence, till they should be consumed. "Therefore," said the Lord, "hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein." Jeremiah 27:9–11

Jeremiah declared that they were to wear the yoke of servitude for seventy years; and the captives that were already in the hands of the king of Babylon, and the vessels of the Lord's house which had been taken, were also to remain in Babylon till that time had elapsed. But at the end of the seventy years God would deliver them from their captivity and would punish their oppressors and bring into subjection the proud king of Babylon.

Ambassadors came from the various nations named to consult with the king of Judah as to the matter of engaging in battle with the king of Babylon. But the prophet of God, bearing the symbols of subjection, delivered the message of the Lord to these nations, commanding

What a lesson is this to men holding responsible positions in the church of God! It adjures them faithfully to remove the wrongs that dishonor the cause of truth.

Vol. 7, No. 9 Our Firm Foundation 21
of the false prophets against whom God had warned His people through Jeremiah, lifted up his voice in opposition to the prophecy declared. Wishing to gain the favor of the king and his court, he affirmed that God had given him words of encouragement for the Jews. Said he: "Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon." ... Jeremiah 29:3-4

"And the prophet Jeremiah went his way." Verse 11. He had done his work; he had warned the people of their danger; he had pointed out the only course by which they could regain the favor of God. But though his only crime was that he had faithfully delivered the message of God to an unbelieving people, they had mocked his words, and men in responsible positions had denounced him and tried to arouse the people to put him to death...

"Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie." Verse 15 ... This false prophet had strengthened the unbelief of the people in Jeremiah and his message. He had wickedly declared himself to be the Lord's messenger, and he suffered death in consequence of his fearful crime. In the fifth month Jeremiah prophesied the death of Hananiah, and in the seventh month his death proved the words of the prophet true...

It was far more agreeable to the people to receive the message of the false prophet, who predicted prosperity; therefore it was received. It wounded their pride to have their sins brought continually before their eyes; they would much rather put them out of sight. They were in such moral darkness that they did not realize the enormity of their guilt nor appreciate the messages of reproof and warning given them of God.

There were two other false prophets, Ahab and Zebedeia, who prophesied lies in the name of the Lord. These men professed to be holy teachers; but their lives were corrupt, and they were slaves to the pleasures of sin. The prophet of God had condemned the evil course of these men and warned them of their danger; but, instead of repenting and reforming, they were angry with the faithful reprove of their sins and sought to thwart his work by stirring up the people to disbelieve his words and act contrary to the counsel of God in the matter of subjecting themselves to the king of Babylon. The Lord testified through Jeremiah that these false prophets should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon and slain before his eyes, and in good time this prediction was fulfilled.

Instead of repenting and reforming, they were angry with the faithful reprove of their sins and sought to thwart his work by stirring up the people to disbelieve his words and act contrary to the counsel of God.

Other false prophets arose to sow confusion among the people by turning them away from obeying the divine commands given through Jeremiah, but God's judgments were pronounced against them in consequence of their grievous sin of bringing rebellion against Him.

Just such men arise in these days and breed confusion and rebellion among the people who profess to obey the law of God. But just as certainly as divine judgment was visited upon the false prophets, just so surely will these evil workers receive their full measure of retribution; for the Lord has not changed. Those who prophesy lies encourage men to look upon sin as a small matter. When the terrible results of their crimes are made manifest, they seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes.

Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as in the case of Ahab and Zebedeia. These false prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet, who delivered the simple message of the Lord.

God commanded Jeremiah to gather the Rechabites into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and set wine before them and invite them to drink. Jeremiah did as the Lord commanded him. "But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever." Jeremiah 35:5-6

"Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment." Verses 12-14...

If the directions of a good and wise father, who took the best and most effectual means to secure his posterity against the evil of intemperance, were to be so strictly obeyed, God's authority should be held in as much greater reverence as He is holier than man. He is our Creator and Commander, infinite in power and terrible in judgment. In mercy He employs a variety of means to bring men to see and repent of their sins. If they will continue to disregard the reproofs He sends them, and act contrary to His declared will, ruin must follow; for God's people are kept in prosperity only by His mercy, through the care of His heavenly messengers. He will not uphold and guard a people who disregard His counsel and despise His reproofs.

Jeremiah was already deprived of his liberty because he would obey God and give to the king and others occupying responsible positions in Israel the words of warning which he had received from

22 Our Firm Foundation Vol. 7, No. 9
the judgments of God. The Israelites would not accept these reproofs nor allow their course to be questioned. They had manifested great anger and contempt at the words of rebuke and at the judgments which were predicted to come upon them if they continued in rebellion against the Lord. Although Israel would not hear the word of divine counsel, it did not make that word of less effect, neither did God cease to reprove and to threaten with His displeasure and His judgments those who refused to obey His requirements.

The Lord directed Jeremiah, saying: “Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” Jeremiah 36:2–3

Here is shown the Lord’s reluctance to give up His sinning people. And lest Israel had so far neglected His reproofs and warnings as to let them pass from their memory, He delays His judgments upon them and gives them a full rehearsal of their disobedience and aggravating sins from the days of Josiah down to their own time, and of the judgments He had pronounced in consequence of their transgressions. Thus they had another opportunity to see their iniquity and repent. In this we see that God does not delight in afflicting His people; but with a care that surpasses that of a pitying father for a wayward child, He entreats His wandering people to return to their allegiance.

The prophet Jeremiah, in obedience to the commands of God, dictated the words that the Lord gave him to Baruch, his scribe, who wrote them upon a roll. See Jeremiah 36:4. This message was a reproof of the many sins of Israel and a warning of the consequences that would follow a continuance of their evil course. It was an earnest appeal for them to renounce their sins. After it was written, Jeremiah, who was a prisoner, sent his scribe to read the roll to all the people who had assembled “in the Lord’s house upon the fasting day.” Said the prophet: “It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return everyone from his evil way; for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people.” Verse 7

The scribe obeyed the prophet, and the roll was read before all the people of Judah. But this was not all; he was summoned to read it before the princes. They listened with great interest, and fear was stamped upon their faces as they questioned Baruch concerning the mysterious writing. They promised to tell the king all they had heard in regard to him and his people, but counseled the scribe to hide himself, as they feared that the king would reject the testimony God had given through Jeremiah, and seek to slay not only the prophet, but his scribe.

When the king was told by the princes of what Baruch had read, he immediately ordered the roll brought and read to him. But instead of heeding its warnings and trembling at the danger that hung over himself and his people, in a frenzy of rage he flung it into the fire, notwithstanding certain ones who were high in his confidence had begged him not to burn it. Then the wrath of this wicked monarch rose against Jeremiah and his scribe, and he forthwith sent for them to be taken; “but the Lord hid them.” After the king had burned the sacred roll, the word of God came to Jeremiah, saying: “Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?” Verses 28–29

A merciful God had graciously warned the people for their good. “It may be, said the compassionate Creator, “that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” Verse 3. God pities the blindness and perversity of man; He sends light to their darkened understanding in reproofs and threatenings which are designed to make the most exalted feel their ignorance and deplore their errors. He would cause the self-complacent to feel dissatisfied with their attainments and seek greater blessings by closer connection with heaven.

God’s plan is not to send messengers who will please and flatter sinners; He delivers no messages of peace to dull the unsanctified into carnal security. But He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces his soul with sharp arrows of conviction. The ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God, to deepen the sense of his great need and prompt the agonizing cry: “What shall I do to be saved?” The very hand that humbles to the dust, rebukes sin, puts pride and ambition to shame, lifts up the penitent, stricken one, and inquires with deepest sympathy: “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?”

When man has sinned against a holy and merciful God, he can pursue no course so noble as to sincerely repent and confess his errors in tears and bitterness of soul. This God requires of him; He will accept of nothing less than a broken heart and a contrite spirit. But the king and his lords, in their arrogance and pride, refused the invitation of God to return; they would not heed this warning and repent. This gracious opportunity was their last. God had declared that if they refused to hear His voice, He would inflict upon them fearful retribution. They did refuse to hear, and He pronounced His judgments upon Israel; He visited with special wrath the man who had proudly lifted himself up against the Almighty.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day...
to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not." Verses 30-31

The burning of the roll was not the end of the matter. The written words bring certain ruin upon the offender. Indignation often kindles in the heart of the sinner against the agent whom God chooses to deliver His reproofs. It has ever been thus, and the same spirit exists today that persecuted and imprisoned Jeremiah for obeying the word of the Lord.

While men will not heed repeated warnings, they are pleased with false teachers who flatter their vanity and strengthen their iniquity, but who will fail to help them in the day of trouble. God's chosen servants should meet with courage and patience whatever trials and sufferings befall them through reproach, neglect, or misrepresentations because they faithfully discharge the duty that God has given them to do. They should remember that the prophets of old and the Saviour of the world also endured abuse and persecution for the word's sake. They must expect to meet just such opposition as was manifested by the burning of the roll that was written by the dictate of God.

The Lord is fitting a people for heaven. The defects of character, the stubborn will, the selfish idolatry, the indulgence of faultfinding, hatred, and contention, provoke the wrath of God and must be put away from His command-keeping people. Those living in these sins are deceived and blinded by the wiles of Satan. They think that they are in the light when they are groping in darkness. There are murmurers among us now, even as there were murmurers among ancient Israel. Those who by unwise sympathy encourage men in rebellion when their self-love is smarting beneath merited reproof are not the friends of God, the great Reprover. God will send reproof and warning to His people as long as they continue upon earth.

Those who valiantly take their position on the right side, who encourage submission to God's revealed will and strengthen others in their efforts to put away their wrongdoings, are the true friends of the Lord, who in love is trying to correct the errors of His people, that He may wash them and, cleansing them from every defilement, fit them for His holy kingdom. . . .

There are many false prophets in these days, to whom sin does not appear specially repellent. They claim that the peace of the people is unnecessarily disturbed by the reproofs and warnings of God's messengers. As for them, they fill the souls of sinners into a fatal ease by their smooth and deceitful teachings. Ancient Israel was thus charmed by the flattering messages of the corrupt priests. Their prediction of prosperity was more pleasing than the message of the true prophet, who counseled repentance and submission.

The servants of God should manifest a tender, compassionate spirit and show to all that they are not actuated by any personal motives in their dealings with the people, and that they do not take delight in giving messages of wrath in the name of the Lord. But they must never flinch from pointing out the sins that are corrupting the professed people of God, nor cease striving to influence them to turn from their errors and obey the Lord.

Those who seek to cloak sin and make it appear less aggravating to the mind of the offender are doing the work of the false prophets and may expect the retributive wrath of God to follow such a course. The Lord will never accommodate His ways to the wishes of corrupt men. The false prophet condemned Jeremiah for afflicting the people with his severe denunciations, and he sought to reassure them by promising them prosperity, thinking that the poor people should not be continually reminded of their sins and threatened with punishment. This course strengthened the people to resist the true prophet's counsel and intensified their enmity toward him.

God has no sympathy with the evildoer. He gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of His people, nor to cry, "Peace, peace," when He has declared that there shall be no peace for the wicked. Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver His messages are rebelling against the word of the Lord. □

Testimonies, vol. 4, 164-185
How to Deal With Wrongs in the Church

A few months ago, it was quite publicly stated (Adventist Review, April 16, 1992), and was reprinted in several Union papers, that the church's failures do not justify their being pointed out by independent ministries. It was also stated that in doing this work, the independent ministries "too often ignored or forgot Jesus' divine plan to resolve differences as described in Matthew 18:15-17." The article went on to admonish that we "follow Jesus's plan in dealing with wrong." We need to recall that Christ while on earth gave the example of giving the message of revival and reformation directly to the people. His communication to and about self-willed leadership was quite open and public. That the church has serious failures was acknowledged worldwide by the 1973/1974 Annual Councils. "As church leaders at this Annual Council we have faced honestly the fact that there are inconsistencies between the church's preaching and its practices, and to allow these inconsistencies to continue will automatically delay the completion of the church's mission and the coming of Christ... In the words of God's servant: 'We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel.' Evangelism, 696. . . . As the Annual Council has reviewed these and other aspects of the lives of God's people and the institutions of the church, it has raised the question as to whether much of this represents insubordination to the authority and will of God so clearly expressed through His Word and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Without attempting to pinpoint areas of insubordination, the council pleads with God's people everywhere to respond to the appeal for revival and reformation—to make whatever changes may be necessary to enable the church to represent Christ adequately and fulfill its unique mission." Annual Council 1973/1974 Appeals, Our Firm Foundation, December 1991. Unfortunately, the above acknowledged areas of institutional insubordination have yet to be officially pinpointed and repented of. Thus we are continuing to live in disobedience. The following Spirit of Prophecy references clearly point out that Christ's plan for dealing with this type of wrongs is in harmony with His personal example. Our response in such an hour as this needs to be that of King Josiah who led Judah into a full-scale revival and reformation. See "The Role of Leadership in Revival and Reformation" and "Lessons From Josiah's Reign," Our Firm Foundation, December 1991. May this be our goal and prayer.—Errors

A Straight Testimony Must Be Born to Our Churches and Institutions

"According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God's people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God's people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them. The straight testimony must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him and wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God." Testimonies, vol. 3, 324

"These words were spoken by our Instructor: 'Some are reckless, insensible of the results of sin, heedless of warning. Soon the handwriting on the wall, now unintelligible to them, will be read. But it will then be too late for them to repent.
Like Belshazzar, they seem unable to see their peril. A straight testimony must be borne to our churches and institutions, to arouse the sleeping ones.” *Review and Herald*, vol. 4, 467

“The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins. God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 269

“God calls for men of decided fidelity. He has no use in an emergency for two-sided men. He wants men who will lay their hand upon a wrong work and say, ‘This is not according to the will of God.’” *Selected Messages*, book 2, 153

**Public Wrongs to the Cause of God Must Be Openly Reproved**

“Does anyone suppose that the messages of warning will not come to those whom God reproves? The ones reproved may rise up in indignation and seek to bring the law to bear upon God’s messenger, but in doing this, they are not bringing the law upon the messenger, but upon Christ, who gave the reproof and the warning. When men endanger the work and cause of God by their own wrong course of action, shall they hear no voice of reproof? If the wrongdoer only were concerned, and the work reached no farther than him, he alone should have the words of warning; but when his course of action is doing positive harm to the cause of truth, and souls are imperiled, God requires that the warning be as broad as the injury done. The testimonies will not be hindered. The words of rebuke and warning, the plain ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ will come from God’s appointed agencies; for the words do not originate with the human instrument; they are from God, who appointed them their work. If a suit is instituted in earthly tribunals, and God suffers it to come to trial, it is that His own name may be glorified. But a woe will be upon the man who gives himself to do this work. God reads the motives, whatever they may be.” Ibid., 152–153

“Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 he should not have felt hurt: ‘Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.’

“My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reproved publicly was a warning which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: 1 Timothy 5:20: ‘Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.’” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 15

**Faithful Watchmen Are to Arouse Us to the Dangers**

“The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given to them to see the dangers. Let them blow the trumpet, not in a general way, but so that it may give a certain sound, that other watchmen upon the walls of Zion may hear, and in their turn send forth the warning note.” *Review and Herald*, vol. 2, 266

“We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s people unless we are such entirely. Every weight, every besetting sin, must be laid aside. God’s watchmen will not cry, ‘Peace, peace,’ when God has not spoken peace. The voice of the faithful watchmen will be heard: ‘Go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.’ Isaiah 52:11.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 83

**God Will Use Watchmen of His Own Choosing**

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. But there is a people who will bear the ark of God. Some will go out from among us who will bear the ark no longer. But these cannot make walls to obstruct the truth; for it will go onward and upward to the end. In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands. They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 411

God calls for men of decided fidelity. He has no use in an emergency for two-sided men. He wants men who will lay their hand upon a wrong work and say, “This is not according to the will of God.”
work, when the Lord has other work for these men to do, other places where he wants them to till in as his agents. His plans are not built on any foundation that is laid by man, but as the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, He lays the foundation, and erects the structure, in lofty independence through those who will be worked by Him. The Lord Jesus takes those that He finds will be molded and uses them for His own name's glory, to meet His own spiritual conception. He sees material that others would pass by, and works all who will be worked. Through very simple means a door is opened in heaven, and the simplicity of the human agent is used by God to reveal God to man.” Spalding-Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 65

We Must Be Awakened to Heed the Directions Given in the Spirit of Prophecy

"Perilous times are before us. Every one who has a knowledge of the truth should awake, and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. Wake up, brethren, wake up. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given in the Spirit of Prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse shall we offer?" Ibid., 324

"The Lord is soon coming. The watchmen on the walls of Zion are called upon to awake to their God-given responsibility. Many of them are in the stupor of insensitivity. God calls for watchmen who in the power of the Spirit will give to the world a warning message; who will proclaim the time of night. He calls for watchmen who will arouse men and women from their lethargy, lest they sleep the sleep of death." Ibid., 323

### Scripture Songs

"There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song," Education, 167

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As trials thicken around us both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us.

"Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith. But, on the other hand, when the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice." Testimonies, vol. 6, 400–401

We are living in a day when the above testimony is being fulfilled before our very eyes. We find from many quarters a ground-swell movement to denounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and urge members to deliberately separate from its communion. Fantastic theories, supposedly based on inspiration, are being set forth to try to establish the separationist ideas. Some listeners ask, "Where shall we go? What shall we do? Shall we stop attending church services?" Surely every wind of doctrine is blowing, as Ellen White said would take place. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 80

Readers would do well to note that not only will there be movements toward separation, but there will also be corresponding movements toward effecting greater unity in those that remain in God's last church. In the message of Revelation 3, the True Witness proposes to bring about a separation in His last church by spewing out the unrepentant, while those who have heeded His call to repentance will be eternally redeemed.

The True Witness, while He was yet here on earth, used still another illustration of this separation, namely, the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13) to describe this end-time separation. In this parable Jesus also pinpoints the exact time of separation, and by whom it will be accomplished.

Two Parties Will Be Developed

In Matthew 13 and 25, as well as in the Spirit of Prophecy, we are informed that two parties will develop in the church. "A new life is coming from heaven and taking possession of all God's people. But divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest." Selected Messages, book 2, 114

"As character develops, man and woman will take their position; for varied circumstances brought to bear upon them will cause them to reveal the spirit which prompts them to action. Every one will reveal the character of the bundle with which he is binding himself. The wheat is being bound up for the heavenly garner. . . . The true people of God are now pulling apart, and the tares are being bound in bundles to burn. Decided positions will be taken." Letter 13, 1892 (The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 995)

"For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts him-

The Doctors Lloyd and Leola Rosenvold live in Hope, Idaho, where they operate their ministry, Rosenvold Publications.
self; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Isaiah 8:11-16

"Here are plainly represented two distinct parties formed from a company that was once united. The members of one of these parties are in resistance to the will of God. They have taken themselves from the side of the loyal and true, and are now resisting the warnings of the Spirit of God. To the obedient the Lord will be ‘for a sanctuary.’ " Review and Herald, vol. 5, 341

"As we meet the judgment, all will manifest their true character, and it will be made plain to what company they belong." Testimonies, vol. 1, 100

Today we can surely see these predictions being fulfilled. Divisions have come into the church. Two parties are being developed in the church. Decided positions are now being taken. The question that now concerns many is when the false and the true brethren in the church will be separated, one from the other. When will God's church militant be purified through the removal of the tares, and the chaff separated from the precious wheat?

How grateful we can be that Jesus has provided all the answers! It will all take place at the time of the harvest.

When Is the Time of the “Harvest”?

"The harvest is the end of probationary time." (Christ's Object Lessons, 72)

"The harvest is the end of the world." (Matthew 13:39) Obviously the harvest commences at the time of the judgment of the living. Observe how the servant of the Lord associates the harvest and the judgment:

"The lookers-on may discern no difference; but there is One who said that the tares were not to be plucked up by human hands lest the wheat be rooted up also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then the Lord sends forth His reapers to gather out the tares and bind them in bundles to burn while the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner. The time of judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares. . . .

"The tares and wheat are now mingled but then the one hand that alone can separate them will give to everyone his true position. . . .

"The righteous are those who keep the commandments of God, and they will be forever separated from the disobedient and unrighteous who trampled underfoot the law of God. The pure ore and the dross will no longer mingle." Testimonies to Ministers, 234-236

"Finite man is likely to misjudge character, but God does not leave the work of judgment and pronouncing upon character to those who are not fitted for it. We are not to say what constitutes the wheat, and what the tares. The time of the harvest will fully determine the character of the two classes specified under the figure of the tares and the wheat. The work of separation is given to the angels of God, and not committed into the hands of any man." Ibid., 47

Clearly, the investigative judgment of the living marks the time of the harvest, the end of probationary time, when one shall be taken and the other left. At the same time the great final crisis over true Sabbathkeeping and the Sunday-law issue ensues. While some receive the mark of the beast, the true people of God will receive the mark of the living God.

When will God’s church militant be purified through the removal of the tares, and the chaff separated from the precious wheat?

In the passages which follow the servant of the Lord once again identifies the time of separation, when the two classes will no longer mingle, to be the time when the Sunday laws will be trying men's souls, and the mark of the beast will be urged upon us.

"Then will come the times which will try men's souls; for the confederacy of apostasy will demand that the loyal subjects of God shall renounce the law of Jehovah, and repudiate the truth of His Word. Then will the gold be separated from the dross, and it will be made apparent who are the godly, who are loyal and true, and who are the disloyal, the dross and the tinsel. What clouds of chaff will then be borne away by the fan of God! Where now our eyes can discover only rich floors of wheat, chaff will be blown away with the fan of God. Every one who is not centered in Christ will fail to stand the test and ordeal of that day. While those who are clothed with Christ's righteousness will stand firm to truth and duty, those who have trusted in their own righteousness will be ranged under the black banner of the prince of darkness. Then it will be seen whether the choice is for Christ or Belial." Review and Herald, vol. 2, 609

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. In this time, the gold will be separated from the dross in the church." Testimonies, vol. 5, 81

Who Does the Separating?

"True, there are tares with the wheat; but Christ said He would send His angels to first gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into the garner. I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this; there is not the
tires and wheat grow together until the harvest. Then it is the angels that do the work of separation.” Selected Messages, book 2, 68-69

Shall We Separate?

Surely it would be folly for us to consider that because of the deceptions and sins which have crept into the church, that we must now withdraw ourselves and our membership from the church so that we will no longer commingle with the tares in the church. God has specifically designated, not only the time when the separation shall take place, but also by whom the cleavage will be effected. It will not be by you and me making a premature departure from the church, but it will be accomplished only by the one hand that alone can separate the two classes. For us to assume or presume to take on God’s prerogatives would be no better than Uzzah’s trying to steady the ark of God. Our duty at this time is not separation, but rather to heed the many calls from God to repentance, revival and reformation.

Dare any of us to try to designate who is a tare and who is wheat? Surely, though “there are among us wicked men who do not love the truth” (Review and Herald, vol. 3, 239), we must realize that we cannot ourselves pull up the tares, lest we pull up wheat also, nor are any of us qualified to blow away the chaff. Dare we, feeble mortals that we are, run ahead of the Lord? Should we not rather heed the admonition of Jesus to allow the two classes to grow together in the church until the harvest, when separation will be made by other than human hands?

Yet Another Illustration

In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus gave yet another illustration of the final separation to take place in the last church between the righteous and the unrepentant. We find in this parable that once again the separation of the wise and the foolish virgins came near the end of probationary time, when it was too late for the foolish ones to obtain the indwelling Holy Spirit. While they were gone away to search, the wise ones were admitted to the marriage feast (judgment) and the door was shut. When the foolish ones returned, Jesus answered their pleadings with “I know you not.” In effect, they had been spewed out, as was the case with unrepentant Laodiceans. Like chaff, they had been blown away on the wind. However, as with the wheat and the tares, the wise and the foolish had commingled until the time when God made the separating determination at the end of probationary time.

The church, defective as it is, and enfeebled with so much chaff, is the only object on earth upon which He bestows His highest regard

So Much Chaff in God’s Church

“Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 81

“But the church, defective as it is, and enfeebled with so much chaff, is the only object on earth upon which He bestows His highest regard. In His estimation the church in heaven and the church on earth are identical. He has promised to come personally into the midst of His church.” Manuscript 13, 1895

Until the time of separation arrives, that pile of mixed chaff and wheat remains exceedingly precious to the Lord for its wheat content. He will come personally into the midst of His church militant, to cleanse it, for God loves His church militant, (see Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 971) in spite of its failings and so much chaff.

“Come Out From Among Them, and Be Ye Separate” (2 Corinthians 6:17)

In the above command issued by Paul, from what are we admonished to separate? Some would have us apply it to the church. Paul did not. Until the end-time harvest, while the wheat and the tares commingled in the church, the wheat certainly need not, nor will they, volunteer to associate with the tares in their ungodly activities and practices. They need not join them in their worldliness and sins. They need not partake of their wicked characters, nor accept their doctrinal errors—doctrines of devils—which they teach. Rather, the true servants of God will sigh and will cry for all these abominations that will be perpetrated by the tares in the church. And more especially at the time when the 144,000 will be sealed, the faithful will openly declare their position for the truth by obeying the command, through the Holy Spirit, to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1

Pulling Apart From What?

In Letter 13, 1892, the servant of the Lord advised that “the true people of God are now pulling apart, and the tares are being bound in bundles to burn.” The context of this passage does not suggest that God’s true people were at that time “pulling apart” from the church, or that they would in the future, but rather that they will pull apart from errors, sins, and worldliness of the tares. The very next sentence states that “decided positions will be taken” by both parties in the church. Both were developing their characters for the harvest time.

In the testimony, Ellen G. White wrote in the present tense as to “pulling apart.” There is not the slightest shred of evidence that she was in any way leading a movement to pull apart from the church. All through her ministry her message was ever to “press together in unity.”

The Example of Jesus

Our Exemplar was ever separate from “sin and sinners,” yet He dwelt among sinners, taught them to give up sin, ate with them, walked with them and went to church with them on the Sabbath days.

Christ continued to attend church services even though the scribes and the
Pharisees were teaching false, man-made doctrines, even as some do in our day. But He always took a decided personal stand against error and clearly declared Himself on the side of truth. While Christ was ever separated from their false teachings and sins, He still attended worship services with them and tried to give a positive witness for truth. So it should be with us.

Ellen White, Her Example

Although Ellen White often commented on the Bible text to "come out" (quoted earlier) and be separate, she never applied it to indicate that we were to separate ourselves from the church, nor did she ever by her own example separate herself. She remained a loyal and supportive member until her death. But she did urge members to separate themselves from sin and the ways of sinners.

She did comment once on the possibility that men might cast her name out of the church, but did so in the context that it would not lead her to take a stand against Christ. Note: "If my name is cast out as evil, I am in excellent company. Those who would not receive Christ were dead in trespasses and sins." Loma Linda Messages, abridged edition, 232

The Lord's servant did have a pointed comment for those who would use the Pauline text (2 Corinthians 6) to support an exodus from the church, as follows: "Supposing this spurious message is the one everyone must hear for this time, 'Come out of her, my people,' where shall we go to? Where shall we find the purity, goodness, and holiness where we shall be secure? Where is the fold where no wolves will enter?" Review and Herald, vol. 6, 515

Once again we might ask, Should we try to remove tares and chaff from the church, or should we judge ourselves to be pure wheat and decide that we have commingled with tares in the church long enough, and therefore remove ourselves from God's threshing floor?

We believe that any candid person having read these few pages must conclude that it is God who will do the separating that needs to be done in the church, and that when the time for it comes, God is well able to effect the work and does not need our feeble, ineffective and clumsy efforts to do the removing for Him. We find no support whatever for the present agitation by some that we leave the church. If that is what they wish to do, we perhaps cannot help them, but let us not aid, nor abet, any work which is not indited by God.

EDITORS NOTE: The Drs. Rosenvoid have prepared a very thorough study of the Spirit of Prophecy evidence dealing with this matter of willful separation from the fellowship of the church. We have printed here only a small part of this material; for any who may be wrestling with the thought of withdrawing their membership, or who may be working in behalf of someone who has withdrawn, we suggest a careful reading of their book, Separation and Unity. This valuable volume is available from Hope International. Suggested donation is $5, plus 15 per cent for shipping and handling.
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## THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

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