A. T. Jones and the Church

Purposes and Scope of Church Organization

How to Meet Temptations

A Look at the Bible and Its Interpretation

Children for the Heavenly King

Be Still and Know, See page 8
AFTER months of preaching almost every weekend, the Lord has allowed some cancellations, for it was time to come apart and rest awhile. Betty and I are resting and writing at our travel trailer in Florida.

I must share with you some great concerns that I see developing among our people. Many of those who call themselves historic Seventh-day Adventists are not studying to show themselves approved unto God. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15. Many are accepting the words of men instead of "Thus saith the Lord." They are cognizant of the problems in the church, and are appalled at the Celebration movement and the downgrading of Ellen White as our last prophetic guide to the remnant church. Many times they listen to sermons that do not ring true to the great messages given to us, God's remnant people. Yet they are so busy with life that they have no time to study for themselves, and they go and listen to those who supposedly are preaching historic Adventism. One week they hear it one way and they are impressed. The next week they listen to someone else, and again they are impressed. But many times what they hear is the very opposite of what they heard the week before, and still they are impressed.

Supposedly, historic Adventists are now being blown about by every wind of doctrine. Listen to these scriptures:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:14

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." 1 Timothy 4:1-2

We cannot be satisfied with just listening and surface reading. We must sink the shaft down deep into the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy and bring our lives into harmony with all truth. God speaks through His prophet:

"Take your Bible and present yourself before your heavenly Father, saying, 'Enlighten me; teach me what is truth.' The Lord will regard your prayer and the Holy Spirit will impress the truth upon your soul." Our High Calling, 37

"So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unprepared.

"When God sends men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image (Revelation 14:9-11), should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it. But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth and are turned unto fables. The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days: 'The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.' 2 Timothy 4:3. That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

"But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.

"Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to the bishops, to the pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will." The Great Controversy, 594-595

"It is sometimes the case that men of intellectual ability, improved by education and culture, fail to comprehend certain passages of Scripture, while others who are uneducated, whose understanding seems weak and whose minds are undisciplined, will grasp the meaning, finding strength and comfort in that which the former declare to be mysterious or pass by as unimportant. Why is this? It has been explained to me that the latter class do not rely upon their own understanding. They go to the Source of light, the One who has inspired the Scriptures, and with humility of heart ask God for wisdom, and they receive it. There are mines of truth yet to be discovered by the earnest seeker. Christ represented the truth as treasure hid in a field. It does

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

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Moving?
If you are moving to a new location, or if your address is changing for any other reason, please remember to let us know. A simple postcard with both old and new addresses is sufficient and will ensure that your copies of Our Firm Foundation will continue to come right to your door. Prompt notice is especially important for subscriptions in the United States, since the post office will not forward materials mailed bulk rate.

Editors’ Note: Kenneth Hodges’ series entitled “Unveiling God’s Character” will continue next month.
IN 1888 God sent the Seventh-day Adventist Church a very special message through Elders Jones and Waggoner. The three angels' messages sounded clear and distinct—righteousness by faith, the warnings against the coalition of church and state, as well as reforms in church organization.

But the rejection and the persecution from the leading brethren against these men, as well as against Ellen White, were severe. As the church faced one of its greatest crises, the Kellogg apostasy, A. T. Jones allied himself with Dr. Kellogg and by 1906 was involved in an open war with church leadership. At this time he started propagating teachings in regard to church organization that took him away from the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and his belief in the Spirit of Prophecy. The question must be asked, "Why?"

In 1906 he started publishing a series of pamphlets, the first three being stenographically recorded from talks given at the monthly meetings of the sanitarium family in the sanitarium chapel at Battle Creek. The first was January 2, 1906, Elder A.T. Jones at the Tabernacle; the second was February 4, 1906, Religious Liberty; the third, March 4, 1906, Some History, Some Experience, and Some Facts. The last contained a letter Jones had written two months earlier to A. G. Daniells over the issue of church organization and the General Conference presidency. These pamphlets were in strong defense of Dr. Kellogg and the control of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

The contents of these pamphlets are defensive in nature, justifying the position Jones had taken in the sanitarium/denomination confrontation. In this defense it is clear to see that Jones was trying to draw sympathy for himself, going to great lengths to expose how he was mistreated by the "czardom," "centralized despotism," and "hierarchical papal powers" of church leadership. These terms started becoming common in his vocabulary as the battle between the sanitarium and the denomination deepened.

Shortly after Jones' pamphlet Some History, Some Experience, and Some Facts appeared, the General Conference issued a rebuttal in a pamphlet entitled A Statement Refuting Charges Made by A.T. Jones Against the Spirit of Prophecy and the Plan of Organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination. Elder Jones then made one more reply in the pamphlet The Final Word and a Confession.

Just a few days after Jones gave his talk at the sanitarium chapel on March 4, later recorded in the pamphlet Some History, Some Experience, and Some Facts, Ellen White wrote a letter to Brother and Sister Farnsworth who were at the Battle Creek Sanitarium:

"You may be surprised to hear words that you have heard from [A. T. Jones], but I am not at all surprised. This is the development of the man when the spirit that is counter to the Spirit of God comes..."
upon him. . . The Lord accepts no such demonstrations of bitterness. . . When men refuse the counsels of God, and walk directly contrary to them, they make very strange speeches, but do not be the least concerned or surprised." *The Paulson Collection*, 123; emphasis supplied in all quotations

Two months later in May 1906 she penned the following:

"I am sorry for A. T. Jones, who has been warned over and over again. Notwithstanding these warnings, he has allowed the enemy to fill his mind with thoughts of self-importance. Heed not his words, for he has rejected the plainest light and has chosen darkness instead. The Holy One hath given us messages clear and distinct, but some poor souls have been blinded by the falsehoods and the deceptive influences of satanic agencies, and have turned from truth and righteousness to follow these fallacies of satanic origin." Quoted in *Thirteen Crisis Years*, 317 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1981), May 1, 1906

These are strong words to a man whom she spent many years defending. She had traveled with Elder Jones, preached with him, and still loved him dearly. Why was she not willing to stand behind him now? Why was the Lord directing her to write such strong words? As one looks back on the developments between 1903 and 1907 it all becomes evident. Dr. Kellogg used organizational manipulation to steal the whole Battle Creek Sanitarium away from the denomination, taking with him some of the most influential men of Adventism. Jones’ views on church organization served his cause well. For this reason Ellen White penned the following testimony the next month, June 1906:

"Dr. Kellogg controls the voice of Elder A. T. Jones, and will use him as his mouthpiece. My prayer is, O God, open Thou the blind eyes, that they may see; and the ears of the deaf that they may hear, and become humble." Quoted in ibid., 317 (June 15, 1906)

The controversies over control, management, and theology were widening, and in September 1906 the same underhanded movements that were used to gain control of the Battle Creek Sanitarium by the medical missionary brethren were being used in an attempt to gain control of the denomination’s largest church building—the Dime Tabernacle. A testimony came to G.W. Amadon, a General Conference officer and an elder of the Tabernacle, on the nineteenth of that month, stating:

"I wish to say to you and to the leading men in the church: and to the trustees of the Tabernacle, that light has been given to me very distinctly that Elder A. T. Jones has taken a position that divorces him from the privileges of the use of the Tabernacle. He does not know what spirit is leading him. Efforts are being made in an underhand way to get possession of the Tabernacle.” *The Paulson Collection*, 330 (September 19, 1906)

In a letter to Elder Jones dated in January 1894 Ellen White expressed how she had hoped that the extreme positions taken by Jones and Waggoner in regard to church organization had been settled years before when the church entered into the process of organization:

"Elder Waggoner has entertained ideas and, without waiting to bring his ideas before a council of brethren, has agitated strange theories. He has brought before some of the people ideas in regard to organization that ought never to have had expression. I supposed that the question of organization was settled forever with those who believed the testimonies given through Sister White. Now, if they believe the testimonies why do they work contrary to them? Why should not my brethren be prudent enough to place these matters before me, or at least to inquire if I had any light upon these subjects? Why is it that these things start up at this time when we have canvassed the matter in our previous history, and God has spoken up these subjects? Should not that be enough?" *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, 202

Since the turn of the century Ellen White had been pleading with Elder Jones, Dr. Kellogg, and the others connected with the medical missionary work to see the direction they were heading and to humble their hearts before God. Their greatest successes in the past had come through a humble submission to the guidance of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The Lord finally directed her in the latter part of 1903 to write the testimony "Decided Action to Be Taken Now." The crisis was to be met head-on by the Conference. It was at this point the warfare came out in the open and was to continue for the next several years. It is interesting to note, now that we have laid down some of the historical background, how this same testimony addressed the question of church organization. You are familiar with it, I am sure.

"Few can discern the result of entertaining the sophistries advocated by some at this time. But the Lord has lifted the curtain, and has shown me the result that would follow. . . .

"The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. . . . The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. . . .

"Who has authority to begin such a movement?" *Selected Messages*, book 1, 203–205 (October 1903)

We must remember the primary, historical application of this testimony is dealing, not only with the spiritualistic sentiments of Dr. Kellogg, but also, in a prophetic sense, with the results of the reformation (in which the issue of organization was a key factor) that Kellogg, Jones, and others were hoping to achieve. In the subsequent history of these men and the fruits of their plan of
organization we can see the prophetic insight of this testimony. But what was the teaching on church organization being propagated by Jones and his allies?

As the crisis was coming to a head in 1906, the sanitarium brethren decided it was time to come out in the open in regard to their position of church organization. In October A.T. Jones started a series of articles in Kellogg's paper The Medical Missionary, defining "the church." The position taken by them makes sense, especially considering the critical situation that had arisen between them and the denomination. Jones' examination of the Bible, and his thorough knowledge of the history of the Protestant Reformation, turned his focus to the priesthood of all believers—Christ being the head of the church in which the true believers are the "living stones" built upon the Chief Cornerstone—each being accountable to God alone.

In his articles in The Medical Missionary Jones took the view he had shared at the 1903 General Conference about "What It Means to Be a Church were "wrong," they themselves were "the church." And since they were the church, they did not need to take counsel from anyone, especially from those who "professed" to be the church. Why did they not need to take counsel?—Because, Jones believed, they were being directed by Christ who is the Head of the church. The controversy was coming down to one central issue, who or what is "the church"? It was as simple as that—or was it?

One problem Jones and his associates had to face was an elderly little lady by the name of Ellen G. White. If they were right, why did she not back them up? It was clear that she was not blind to the problems in the church. Her testimonies to the Conference brethren at this time, as well as those to the church, were very strong in pointing out their backsliding and apostasy. Some who were rapidly becoming disaffected from the denomination no doubt believed these testimonies justified their course action.

Then why did Sister White side with the "corrupt," "apostate," "centralized despotism" of the denomination, not to

Since Jones, Kellogg, and their associates were, in their own eyes, "right" in the positions they had taken, and the brethren from the Conference were "wrong," they themselves were "the church."

Elder Jones was simply overreacting to the pressures brought to bear on him—a grave mistake indeed, and a weakness he seemed exceptionally susceptible to, just as many of us do when brought face to face with the same type of problems. Jones was overlooking the balance that is seen, not only in the Spirit of Prophecy, but also in the Bible in regard to church organization. God's remnant church of the last days was to remain a visible, denominated "church" until the Sunday-law test, shaking, and final transition into apostolic order guided by the moving of the Holy Spirit during the time of the "loud cry." It is then that the idealistic concepts that Jones put forth in regard to church organization would become a living reality, and not until then. His message, as well as that of those today who are propagating the same concepts, are premature in their prophetic timing.

Jones came to the point where he viewed any type of organization as one of the greatest evils to "the church," rather than understanding that the problem was with unconverted men controlling organization. In fact, he came to believe that as soon as a "church" started to organize, it was becoming part of the great system of Babylon. It was just such ideas as these that the early Advent movement had to wrestle with as it was going through its growing pains toward organization. In fact, George Storrs' views on organization were almost identical to those of Elder Jones.

In 1907 Elder J. N. Loughborough, an old pioneer of the work, wrote a booklet to refute Jones' ideas on church organization. It was entitled The Church, Its Organization, Order, and Discipline. It was becoming clear that a spirit of disorganization and congregationalism was in the air and that the end result would be destructive to the prophetic movement that God had established.

At the height of the conflict between the two opposing factions a testimony, "Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity," now found in Testimonies to Ministers, 485—505, was sent out. It reads in part:

"The spirit of pulling away from our fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe... We want to hold the lines even, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor."

"Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every

Member" to new and bold heights, emphasizing beautiful texts from the Bible (such as Colossians 1:18, 23–24; Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 5:30; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:4–5; 1 Timothy 3:14–15; Hebrews 3:6 and others) which speak of the spiritual, mystical body of Christ. It was becoming apparent that this was now to be Jones' exclusive view of "the church." It must be added that this view served its purpose well, for it was the answer needed in dealing with the problems that he and others connected with Kellogg were encountering with the leaders of the denomination.

The next conclusion was logical and simple. Since Jones, Kellogg, and their associates were, in their own eyes, "right" in the positions they had taken, and the brethren from the Conference mentioned the "president" of the General Conference, A.G.Daniells? Sister White went so far as to say that Elder Daniells was the "right man in the right place," and that "he has stood nobly for the truth, and has earned earnestly to deal in a right way with the controversies arising regarding the relation of the medical work to the evangelical work." She went on to say in the same letter that "Brother A.T. Jones... struck an inharmonious note—a note that was not inspired of God. The impulsive disposition of Brother Jones has led him many times to make wrong movements, which have called for correction and reproof." Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, 41–42 (July 25, 1904)
child of God will act independently of any religious organization." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 488–489 (January 16, 1907)

Jones and his ideas were playing well into the hands of Dr. Kellogg. It is interesting to note that Kellogg was pushing to get Jones elected as the next General Conference president in 1903, most likely to serve his own purposes. Kellogg did not make an issue out of the church’s having a president until it became clear that A. G. Daniels was to take the next term.

There are people today who are still playing into the hands of Dr. Kellogg by propagating the idea that the central issue in 1903 was that of having a General Conference president, when in reality the issues were much deeper than that. The 1901 General Conference had, to a large degree, dealt with decentralizing church government, diffusing control, so that it was no longer controlled by one man, or by a small handful of men. The battle in 1903 was between Kellogg’s attempt to gain control over the denomination versus God’s call for the leadership to repent and be truly converted so that the spirit to exercise papal power in the church would be broken. God’s messenger was pleading for a unity of the faith and a spirit of co-operation that could come only through the righteousness of Christ. This, you will find, was Jones’ appeal in 1901 if you read his sermon on organization given at the General Conference session.9 Two years before at the 1899 General Conference Elder Jones mentioned, “The present organization is the Lord’s own, and He will preserve it.” *1899 General Conference Bulletin*, 929

After Jones’ break with the church, his main concept of church government was congregational. The early pioneers had battled against congregationalism because of the practice of buying and selling ministers under that system of church government. Furthermore, under congregationalism self-proclaimed ministers who were simply out to say what the people wanted to hear for the purpose of reaping financial benefits also flourished. Neither were there any checks and balances to keep the churches working together, nor means to unite in the support of mission work.

Today, with the current crisis in Adventism, some are encouraging home churches. I believe there is a place for this if the local situation is irreconcilable. I do not believe people should encourage a mass exodus from the Adventist Church to start a loose-knit congregational-church movement, for by doing so they will encounter the same problems that our early pioneers tried to avoid.

Toward the end of 1907 Ellen White wrote to Brother and Sister Starr:

“A. T. Jones has come to the place where he voices the mind and faith of Dr. Kellogg. They have now taken a decided stand against the truth, and special efforts will be made to lead souls away.” Quoted in *Thirteen Crisis Years*, 317 (October 1, 1907)

November 11, 1908, Ellen White wrote:

The 1901 General Conference had, to a large degree, dealt with decentralizing church government, diffusing control, so that it was no longer controlled by one man, or by a small handful of men

“I must warn our people against laboring in any line in connection with A. T. Jones. He is one who has departed from the faith, and has given heed to seducing spirits. He knows not what manner of spirit he is of." Ibid.

In mid-1907 Jones’ ministerial credentials were withdrawn. In 1909 he was removed from church membership. Before that happened, Jones requested a hearing. At the General Conference on May 27, 1909, he was allowed to make an appeal in his own behalf. In his appeal he discussed at great length the concepts of evangelical Christianity and church organization. This talk was later published in a little booklet titled “An Appeal for Evangelical Christianity.”

Three days after his presentation, on the thirtieth of May, Ellen White had a manuscript read before the delegates to try to counterbalance Jones’ positions. This manuscript was later published in volume nine of the *Testimonies*, 257–261.10

In 1914 Jones spent time traveling and preaching with such men as A. F. Ballenger (who denied the teaching on the heavenly sanctuary and was seeking to reapply the 2300-day prophecy in a future time setting), G. G. Rupert (an ex-Adventist pastor who also was seeking to reapply time prophecies, especially the 2300 days, and the “Eastern question”) and E. E. Franke (an influential ex-Adventist evangelist who believed that Christ was crucified on Wednesday and resurrected on Sabbath). Considering the divergent views these men had, it seems the only cord that bound them together was their disaffection toward the Adventist Church and its “apostate” form of church organization.

Jones’ apostasy consisted of 1) sowing seed of disaffection among the church members, 2) then advocating separation from the systems of Babylon (any church organization, including the Adventist Church), and 3) encouraging congregationalism. It is no wonder that people who have been hurt by or disaffected from the church hold very strongly to Jones’ later writings.

Jones was also instrumental in causing the People’s Seventh-day Adventist Church to split from the denomination in 1916.11 Several years later this church dissolved and ceased to exist. Why would a church dissolve if it was operating on Jones’ ideological concepts of church organization? The answer may be self-evident. As long as the church has imperfect people in it, organization and order must be maintained. Such extreme views as Jones had, ideological as they may seem, will not work unless every church member is under the direct, constant, and complete control of the power of the Holy Spirit; short of that the only possible result is anarchy.

In 1908 Ellen White encouraged the reprinting of Jones’ 1893 and 1897 sermons because they were of the Holy Spirit’s framing. She stated she was “shown that many would be helped by these articles, and especially those newly come to the faith who have not been made acquainted with our history as a people." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, 278 (July 25, Continued on 24
Be Still... and Know

MY wife, my two sons, and I are committed to the fact that all of us must have a living, vital, ongoing connection with God through faith in a present Saviour, who is able and ready to save us to the uttermost. That as we go about our daily tasks we must never, even for a moment, sever our union and communion with the One mighty to save.

Christ said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John 15:4. Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, wherever we are, whatever we are doing. This receiving must be an active ongoing process throughout our entire day. As long as this abiding experience is maintained, in which all our thoughts, words and actions are centered in Him, then the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in our daily life. See Galatians 5:22-23. But if for one moment we choose to let go of our union and communion with the Source of life and strength, then the works of the flesh will be manifested in our life. See Galatians 5:19-21

One of the greatest hindrances that diverts our attention from our Saviour, and thus severs our connection with the Source of our strength, is a hurried, overstressed, overworked day. As we allow the pressures of the day to consume and overtake us, we invariably let go of Christ and run in our own strength, which is always insufficient for the keeping of our souls. We have been rightly cautioned that “Overwork sometimes causes a loss of self-control. But the Lord never compels hurried, complicated movements. Many gather to themselves burdens that the merciful heavenly Father did not place on them. Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly. God desires us to realize that we do not glorify His name when we take so many burdens that we are overtaxed and become heart-weary and brain-weary, chafe and fret and scold. We are to bear only the responsibilities that the Lord gives us, trusting in Him, and thus keeping our hearts pure and sweet and sympathetic.” Review and Herald, vol. 5, 368; emphasis supplied in all quotations.

Have you, like us, risen early, spent time in prayer and study? Then went off into the business of the day and lost hold of “him that is able to keep you from falling”? Jude 24. Is there a simple solution to this daily menace we all easily fall into? We believe there is, and here is what we find works for us.

Commit the keeping of your soul to Christ, make a pact with Him to remind you whenever you begin to veer. Then rest in Him. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. When you are tempted to become hurried, to take too much upon yourself, it is then that “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Isaiah 30:21

I am sure most of you to some degree or another have heard the quiet promptings of the Holy Spirit. But have you, by a firm faith and an immediate surrender of your will, resolved to co-operate with the Mighty Counselor? Oh, how many fail and continue to fail in their own restoration from a life of hurriedness because they do not commit the keeping of their souls to Christ and then co-operate at the very time of Spirit-led conviction.

The still, small voice invariably convicts us to “be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10. Such a remedy for such a universal problem. You ask, How does it work? Simply by applying it. When you find yourself becoming hurried or stressed out, whether at home, work, play or socializing, simply be...

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prepared in mind, ahead of time, to take time out. This commitment you need to make with Christ, at the beginning of every day. He will then be faithful to remind you, and when He does, immediately submit yourself to Him, and by His grace resist the hurriedness and take a few minutes to “be still and know that I am God.”

This respite can easily be accomplished wherever you are. If at the supper table, lay down your knife and fork, sit back and relax, talk with the Master. When hurried at home, find a comfortable chair and let your body unwind, as you share your burdens with your heavenly Father. If at your place of employment, retreat to the bathroom and there pour out your heart to the Lord until you again have a quiet confidence in your Saviour. When you are at social gatherings, a simple walk outside in the fresh air, while talking to the One mighty to save, will do wonders for that hurried spirit.

Keep in mind that this simple solution may have to be carried out several times a day, and day after day, for there is a tendency for our flesh to return to its hereditary and cultivated habit patterns. But if we are faithful to submit ourselves, as many times as necessary, we will gain the victory at last. Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess a quiet, restful, unhurried spirit. In fact he was spoken of as one of the “sons of thunder.” Mark 3:17. But day by day he submitted his life to Christ, until he lost sight of self. His hurried, ambitious spirit was finally conquered through faith in the power of a present Saviour. This experience too may be ours.

The steps of action are simple and are well illustrated in Psalm 143:8–12:

“Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name’s sake: for thy righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.”

First, God never slumbers and is always faithful to cause us to hear His lovingkindness in the morning. It is here we must not slumber; we must rise and gain our trust and commit the keeping of our souls to the One mighty to save.

Second, God reminds us or causes us to know the way wherein we should walk. In other words, He is faithful to impress upon our minds that which is needed each moment of each day. As He does so, we must lift up our souls unto Him, which is the third step, consisting of not only trust, but also surrender. As we co-operate with Him in this divine-human relationship, He delivers us from our enemies, the biggest of which is self. He teaches us how to do His will, leads us into righteousness, revives us, keeps our souls out of trouble (sin), cuts off our enemies, and puts to naught those who would destroy our soul. All because we have adopted the attitude, which is a continuous attitude, of being His servant. If He is truly our Lord, (then pray we), let us truly take our rightful position as servant.

This morning when you arose from your night’s rest, did you in living faith bring before God your cares, perplexities and plans? Did you inquire of Him, the all-knowing One, what in your day was safe to perform and what was best laid down? Did you inquire of Him what His expectations were of you for that day? “Christ, in His life on earth, made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will.” The Ministry of Healing, 479

Think again of when you arose this morning. Did you lay your plans at the feet of infinite wisdom? This is the place where we must begin, this is where we receive the strength and wisdom and direction for the day, each day, every day for the rest of our life. “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” Mark 1:35

This prayer-life is the example of the One made flesh. He came and fought the battle as we must fight it. He depended only upon His Father’s strength and power. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. Only as we in like manner realize that we can of ourselves do nothing, shall we begin to seek for that strength and guidance, which is alone found in union and communion with Christ.

But how many of us, in our seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessings of real communion with God? Here also, we are in too great a haste. With hurried steps we press through the circle of Christ’s loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. We have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With our burdens, we return to our work.

With this kind of attitude we will never find deliverance from our hurried lives. We must learn the secret of strength. We must allow ourselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God. Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need.

This morning when you arose from your night’s rest, did you in living faith bring before God your cares, perplexities and plans?
may entice us to choose the hurried pace of the world, for we are always free to do so. Let us adopt the attitude of Christ when He said, “I do always those things that please him.” John 8:29

Martin Luther in a letter to Melanchthon wrote: “I hate with exceeding hatred those extreme cares which consume you. If the cause is unjust, abandon it.” The Great Controversy, 210. What wonderful counsel to us today, “If the cause is unjust, abandon it!” Friends, how many of the tasks we busy ourselves with amount to no saving good?

That is our rule; that is our guideline. If it amounts to no saving good, abandon it. Abandon the intruders and defend the priorities. Defend those early morning hours with God. Defend that time with your spouse and children. Defend all that is wholesome and good and rid yourself of all that is robbing you of the real priorities in life. Then resist the constant temptation to add more pleasures, more hobbies, more social entanglements, more obligations. We must draw the line, eliminating the intruders and defending the top priorities. We must choose this day whom we will serve.

An intensity as never before is taking possession of this world. In amusement, in moneymaking, in the contest for power, in the very struggle for existence, there is a terrible force engrossing our bodies, our minds and our souls. In the midst of this maddening rush, God is speaking. He bids us come apart and commune with Him. “Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

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Food for Thought

We are forming characters for heaven. No character can be complete without trial and suffering. We must be tested, we must be tried. Christ bore the test of character in our behalf that we might bear this test in our own behalf through the divine strength He has brought to us. Christ is our example in patience, in forbearance, in meekness and lowliness of mind. He was at variance and at war with the whole ungodly world, yet He did not give way to passion and violence manifested in words and actions, although receiving shameful abuse in return for good works. He was afflicted, He was rejected and despitefully treated, yet He retaliated not. He possessed self-control, dignity, and majesty. He suffered with calmness, and for abuse gave only compassion, pity, and love.

Imitate your Redeemer in these things. Do not get excited when things go wrong. Do not let self arise, and lose your self-control because you fancy things are not as they should be. Because others are wrong is no excuse for you to do wrong. Two wrongs will not make one right. You have victories to gain in order to overcome as Christ overcame.

Christ never murmured, never uttered discontent, displeasure, or resentment. He was never disheartened, discouraged, ruffled, or fretted. He was patient, calm, and self-possessed under the most exciting and trying circumstances. All His works were performed with a quiet dignity and ease, whatever commotion was around Him. Applause did not elate Him. He feared not the threats of His enemies. He moved amid the world of excitement, of violence and crime, as the sun moves above the clouds. Human passions and commotions and trials were beneath Him. He sailed like the sun above them all. Yet He was not indifferent to the woes of men. His heart was ever touched with the sufferings and necessities of His brethren, as though He Himself was the one afflicted. He had a calm inward joy, a peace which was serene. His will was ever swallowed up in the will of His Father. Not My will but Thine be done, was heard from His pale and quivering lips.—Ellen G. White, This Day With God, 263
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What a blessing we received from attending the Brooks, Maine, camp meeting! We learned so much on helping us with our daily walk with the Lord. May the Lord continue to bless you. We hope you come back next year.
—WG, Massachusetts

Thank you for everything you have done for me. I have learned so much in Our Firm Foundation. God is leading you and I am so thankful. Keep writing as you have been so we will know the real truth.
—BB, California

We praise the Lord that you are preaching the word and the straight testimony of Jesus, in spite of the opposition you are receiving. May God continue to bless you as you seek to do His will—presenting Christ, our Righteousness. The messages that are presented in Our Firm Foundation have helped me to realize it is possible with “Christ within” to overcome sin. Not one small sin will enter heaven, for God has declared “sin will not rise up a second time.” If Jesus gave Himself for my sin, then when He points out my sin, should I not give it up and take Him? May our prayer be “Have thine own way, Lord!”
—UB, California

Use this donation in His work. Be faithful, and remain noble stewards, as you have heretofore been with His treasury. May the Holy Spirit continue to lead you in sharing Christ’s message. My prayers are with you.
—ER, Idaho

Just a short note to say thank you for all the effort each one of you puts forth to help make the Hope International camp meeting, such a blessing! It was our first time in attendance, and we praise God for you all. Please continue to fight the good fight of faith and lift up our Saviour to all mankind.
—BB, Oregon

My heart aches and I have feelings of helplessness, knowing souls will be lost reading and believing those articles and hearing messages by our leading men that are leading precious souls from truth. We need to hurry all the more and get the work done. I pray to God that all will commit their energies, life and time to reaching the perishing. Let us ask God to give us a vision individually; and then give us the wisdom and power to do what He asks of us. God bless you all at Hope International.
—SW, Maryland

I must take this moment to express my appreciation for the staff at Hope International, for the service they continue to provide through Our Firm Foundation. This magazine has been a continued blessing to me. May God continue to lead, guide, and protect you all as you continue to press onward and upward.
—KB, Missouri

The Bible reveals that Independent Ministries existed very early. Noah had an Independent Ministry. How about Abraham? How about Jesus? How about our own beginning as the Seventh-day Adventist Church? How about the Voice of Prophecy? I worked for the “Voice” for three years when it was at least semi-independent in Glendale.

May I mention the “Quiet Hour”? It is independent. In fact, in many respects, It Is Written, the Voice of Prophecy, and other Media Center ministries conduct funding similar to those that are termed Independent Ministries, as well as non-Adventist agencies such as Feed the Children and the Salvation Army.

Let me suggest two things that are main problems in the Seventh-day Adventist church. One is theological and is called to our attention by Elder Enoch de Oliviera in the spring issue 1991 of the Adventist Theological Society Journal, titled, “A Trojan Horse Within the Church!” Notice this is within the church—not the independent ministries. I am very much aware that this exists. Satan’s error in many different ways is subtly being taught by Adventist ministers that are accepted as faithful shepherds.

The other problem is called “covetousness.” Ellen White calls it the worst sin of the church! Very little is being said about it. Turn to your indexes. Read what she says about it. A hundred years ago this problem existed. To help meet it at that time, six sermons on “money” were included in the 1883 General Conference Bulletin. I think it would be appropriate for our people to see them in print again.

Ellen White, in Testimonies, vol. 6, 448, says “our capacity for receiving is increased by giving.” Two instances in my ministry prove these statements. One man debated with me for several months about paying tithe, then decided to do it. He was faithful and honest. In three months his income was tripled. He believed that God was responsible for the increase. Another man was a salesman of products to farmers. There was one farmer he called on regularly but he had never made a sale. One Sabbath after listening to my sermon which emphasized Malachi 3 and Testimonies, vol. 6, 448, he said to his wife and son that on the following Sabbath they would double their Sabbath school offering. On Sunday, before he had given anything, this farmer called him, gave him an order, the profit of which was more than the increased giving would be for a whole year!

I believe most of the Independent Ministries are doing more good than harm. I agree with Elder Enoch de Oliviera more harm to the church is coming from within the church, not the ministries that are independent. Brethren, let God punish the false ministries. He knows who they are and He is able to defend His name. God will bless the Independent Ministries that are correctly representing His name even if they are chastised by others. As watchmen on the wall, read Ezekiel 3 and 33. Investigate the 1992 Trojan horse in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Using words of Ellen White, educate, educate, educate; agitate, agitate, agitate, the joy and peace that comes from proper Sabbath observance and the deceitful destructive results of covetousness. . . . Let God be the judge of Independent Ministries. The people that they encourage to believe the Bible promises and partake of the divine nature will be accepted in heaven even though some Seventh-day Adventist churches don’t accept them into fellowship.
—FK, California
In our first article we studied the principles of church order as revealed by Scripture in the organization and administrative function of the early Christian church. In our second article we reviewed the “grand success” of the system of organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during its first forty years (1863-1903). The system of organization has varied little since those formative years; thus we turn our attention to a fuller understanding of the reasons for organization in God’s remnant movement.

In Ephesians 4:8-13 the apostle Paul states that the gifts of the Spirit are to be present in the church for the “perfecting of the saints,” and “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” These spiritual benefits of church ministry and fellowship are to continue until all of the body of Christ are brought into the “unity of the faith,” “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Thus the primary purpose of the church is to gather within its boundaries all who are desirous of achieving that perfection in Christ. The overriding function of the church is to provide a protective, supportive atmosphere for sin-weary souls, that they may be nurtured into the “fulness of Christ.”

For the church to fully accomplish its purpose it is essential that it be organized. The Spirit of Prophecy lists five major purposes of organization, all necessary to enable it to accomplish its primary purpose of nurturing the body of Christ.

“As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.” Testimonies to Ministers, 26

For Support of the Ministry

Just as blessings have followed the adoption of gospel order, so has the Lord blessed His people as they have followed Christ’s system of supporting the ministry.

“All should remember that God’s claims upon us underlie every other claim. He gives to us bountifully, and the contract which He has made with man is that a tenth of his possessions shall be returned to God. The Lord graciously entrusts to His stewards His treasures, but of the tenth He says: This is Mine. Just in proportion as God has given His property to man, so man is to return to God a faithful tithe of all his substance. This distinct arrangement was made by Jesus Christ Himself.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 384

A tenth of our increase is to be used to sustain the ministry of the gospel.

“I have had special instruction from the Lord that the tithe is for a special purpose, consecrated to God to sustain those who minister in the sacred work, as the Lord’s chosen to do His work not only in sermonizing, but in ministering. They should understand all that this comprehends. There is to be meat in the house of God, who believe the truth, to give a faithful tithe to the Lord, and ministers should be encouraged and sustained by that tithe.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, 187

The counsel of the Lord is clear that “ministry” involves more than the work of the ordained minister. Thus tithe is also to be used to support the medical missionaries. (see Medical Ministry,

An essential function of organization is the equitable distribution of worker remuneration around the world. Tithe funds not needed in the support of the above-mentioned ministers are to be sent to support workers and work elsewhere.

"More and more we must come to realize that the means that come into the conference in the tithes and gifts of our people should be used for the support of the work not only in the American cities, but also in foreign fields. Let the means so zealously collected be unselfishly distributed. Those who realize the needs of mission fields will not be tempted to use the tithe for that which is not necessary." Ibid., 192

For Carrying the Work Into New Fields

With a commission to carry the three angels messages to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people," Christ’s followers of necessity must be organized and co-ordinated. To be most effective the salt of the earth must be as evenly scattered as possible. Prerequisite to this is the keeping of records, the identifying of uncentered territories and the mobilization of men and means.

Christ has given instruction to the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding the types of programs, ministries and institutions that are needed to properly represent Him upon the earth. Volumes of detailed instructions have been given us as to how to establish and operate publishing, educational and medical missionary endeavors. The locations, sizes, number and type of staffing of a wide variety of institutions have been defined by the Head of the church.

An important instruction from the Lord is that the cities are to be worked from outpost centers.

"The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, 'Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.' " Evangelism, 77

There are to be houses of worship, (see Selected Messages, book 2, 358), and missionary centers within the cities. The missionary centers are to consist of "hygienic" restaurants, health food stores, treatment rooms and lecture halls for programs such as cooking schools. See Testimonies, vol. 7, 55, 234; Counsels on Health, 481.

These city institutions are to be operated by workers living at the outpost centers where the publishing houses, the schools and the sanitariums are to be located. See Selected Messages, book 2, 358; Fundamentals of Christian Education, 492.

These detailed instructions were all given to the visible remnant church and it was Christ’s plan that these institutions were to be denominationally sponsored, owned and operated. They were also to be staffed with denominational employees. See Medical Ministry, 45, 47–48, 252; Testimonies, vol. 8, 164. Christ’s commission and authorization to the organized church, to raise up and operate such institutions included the authority to raise and distribute the financial means that such work requires.

"We shall see the medical missionary work broadening and deepening at every point of its progress, because of the inflowing of hundreds and thousands of streams, until the whole earth is covered as the waters cover the sea." Medical Ministry, 317

For Protection From Unworthy Members

The tares and wheat growing together in the church are not fully developed and thus are unidentifiable and inseparable until the harvest. In spite of this, tares and thorns are not knowingly to be planted in the church. The candidate for church membership is to be properly indoctrinated and to manifest acceptance of its foundational principles prior to baptism. The soil is to be first be prepared by the removal of the weeds.

"So the sowers have something to do that the seed may not be choked with thorns or perish because of shallowness of soil. At the very outset of the Christian life every believer should be taught its foundation principles. He should be taught that he is not merely to be saved by Christ’s sacrifice, but that he is to make the life of Christ his life and the character of Christ his character. Let all be taught that they are to bear burdens and to deny natural inclination. Let them learn the blessedness of working for Christ, following Him in self-denial, and enduring hardness as good soldiers. Let them learn to trust His love and to cast on Him their cares. Let them taste the joy of winning souls for Him. In their love and interest for the lost, they will lose sight of self. The pleasures of the world will lose their power to attract and its burdens to dishearten. The plowshare of truth will do its work. It will break up the fallow ground. It will not merely cut off the tops of the thorns, but will take them with a commission to carry the three angels messages to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people," Christ’s followers of necessity must be organized and co-ordinated.
out by the roots.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 57-58

When asked, “How do you manage members who use tea, coffee, tobacco, and wear hoops, and some who do not believe in Sister White’s visions?” Elder J. N. Loughborough in the Review and Herald of November 5, 1861, replied; “We do not take in any who use tobacco, and reject the gifts of the Spirit of God, if we know it. One of the very objects to be accomplished by church organization is to lop off these things, and only have those come together who stand in the light. To take in those who are holding on to their sins and wrongs would be to encourage the things we are seeking to remedy.” Arthur White, Ellen G. White: The Early Years, 457

For a sinner to be saved eternally Mark 16:16 tells us that belief in Christ and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost when physically possible are required. The purpose of baptism is to gain entrance into Christ’s spiritual kingdom.

“Christ made baptism the entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism thereby make a public declaration that they have renounced the world, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1075

The commission to preach and baptize is given to everyone who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour.

“The gospel commission as recorded in Matthew was given not only to the disciples of Christ who were then living, but to all who should afterward receive Him. Upon every one who accepts Him as [their] personal Saviour is placed the burden of proclaiming the gospel message. Will the church today refuse to recognize its obligation to do the work so plainly outlined in the words: ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ Matthew 28:19-20.” Spalding-Magan’s Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 342

The rite of baptism itself does not automatically give one entrance into Christ’s visible church on earth. Membership is given by the vote of a local church group. To examine candidates for their preparation for baptism and to baptize them is the spiritual “right” of every follower of Christ. In general practice, however, the officiating at a baptism is usually done by the ordained ministry and occasionally by an elder especially authorized to do so by conference leadership. To baptize someone for salvation purposes is not actually a function of the organized visible church. When necessarily performed by one unauthorized to do so by the Seventh-day Adventist organization the baptized person, who is properly indoctrinated and surrendered, is still given entrance into Christ’s spiritual kingdom

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rendered, is still given entrance into Christ’s spiritual kingdom. Such baptisms of themselves are not the starting up of or the building up of another movement or organization.

The voting in or out of church membership and the ordination of ministers add no specific or absolutely essential spiritual virtue to the spiritual lives of the believers. Thus they are not matters of salvation as is baptism. They are also different from baptism in that they are exclusively matters of the authority of the organized church to define and protect its spiritual and physical boundaries. The voting into church membership and the ordination of ministers are clearly functions of church organization. To perform such activities without the authorization of or the approval of the organized visible church is to begin and maintain a separate organization or movement.

Although the church is working for the world, it is to be strictly guarded from the world coming into the church.

“The Lord Jesus is looking upon every soul with intense interest. He has declared that the spiritual character of His church is to be carefully maintained. The church is in the world, and is to do a work for the world, but the doors of the church are not to be opened to worldliness. ‘Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.’ Matthew 15:13. The church must be strictly guarded. Its sacred character must be demonstrated to the world.” This Day With God, 269

The presently indistinguishable wheat and tares will both at times reveal spiritual weaknesses and character faults and defects. When such defects are brought to their attention in the proper Christlike spirit and methods they will both tend to acknowledge the problems and seek God’s grace to overcome their faults. All those who are thus fleeing to Christ in search of victory in their daily lives are to “grow together until the harvest.” When members reveal their unwillingness to acknowledge their faults and they persist in open rebellion to clear counsels of the Lord then the church as a body is to remove the apparent weed from its fellowship.

“Let none speak lightly of the duty of the church to administer censure and rebuke; neither let them criticize the action of the church when this painful task becomes necessary. Christ has given plain instruction regarding the duty of the church toward those who, while professing to be loyal members, are bringing dishonor to the cause of God by their course of action. ‘Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted,’ he says, ‘shall be rooted up.’ God has commanded that those who prove themselves unworthy of church-fellowship shall be separated from His body. Those who speak against the exercise of this authority, speak against the authority of Christ.” Review and Herald, vol. 5, 402

As we learned in the study of ordination in the early Christian church, the selection, training and ordination of new ministers is the task of the organ-
ized ministry. The call of those to be ordained is actually initiated by Christ Himself and it is not a function of the local church or its members. See "God's Plan for Church Organization and Authority," Part 1, Our Firm Foundation, Vol. 7, No. 9.

Hands are not to be laid suddenly on any man.

"Those who are about to enter upon the sacred work of teaching Bible truth to the world, should be carefully examined by faithful, experienced persons. After they have had some experience, there is still another work to be done for them: they should be presented before the Lord in earnest prayer, that He may indicate by His Holy Spirit whether they are acceptable to Him. The apostle says, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.' 1 Timothy 5:22. In the days of the apostles, the ministers of God did not dare to rely upon their own judgment in selecting or accepting men to take the solemn and sacred position of mouthpiece for God. They chose the men whom their judgment accepted, and then placed them before the Lord to see if He would accept them to go forth as His representatives. No less than this should be done now." Gospel Workers, 438

The discipline of unfaithful ministers would also be the responsibility of the organized ministry. We are told that only those who obey implicitly the commands of Christ, the Head of the church, are to be retained in His service.

"Throughout the ages, God has been particular as to the design and the accomplishment of His work. In this age, He has given His people much light and instruction in regard to how His work is to be carried forward—in an elevated, refined, conscientious manner; and He is pleased with those who in their service carry out His design. Only those who, feeling their own inefficiency, obey implicitly the Lord's commands, can be retained in His service." Review and Herald, vol. 5, 167

Ministers who are unfaithful to the Word of God are to be deprived of their credentials.

"Those who do not walk by the rule laid down by the Word of God should be faithfully admonished, and if they fail to reform, should be deprived of their license or credentials. Otherwise the Conference that has sanctioned the labors of these men will share their guilt. It is a mercy to the unfaithful laborer himself to remove him from his position, for the rebuke of God is upon him. It is a duty enjoined by Heaven, that souls may not be contaminated by the unholy spiritual atmosphere which surrounds him. You should not cast him off as a reprobate, but let your dealing with him show him that he has mistaken His calling. The Lord has laid no such burden upon him, or if he has, the man has never taken it." Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 1b, 23

The Undershepherds

The psalmist David depicted the good Shepherd's care for His sheep in the well-known Psalm 23. Christ when on earth identified Himself as the Good Shepherd of His followers. His visible church on earth was represented by the sheepfold with a surrounding protective wall and controlled access. See John 10:1–16.

The hedge, or wall, about the sheepfold is the Ten Commandments and all of God's revealed will, including the Spirit of Prophecy. Obedience to all of God's will protects the flock from harm.

"What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care, and He has built a hedge—the Ten Commandments—about His subjects, to preserve them from transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. He teaches them that the perfection of character He requires can only be attained by becoming familiar with His Word. The psalmist declares, 'The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.' Psalm 119:130." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, 1143

"Whenever men choose their own way, they place themselves in controversy with God. They will have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they are at war with the very principles of Heaven. In disregarding the will of God, they are placing themselves on the side of Satan, the enemy of God and man. Not by one word, not by many words, but by every word that God has spoken, shall man live. We cannot disregard one word, however trifling it may seem to us, and be safe. There is not a commandment of the law that is not for the good and happiness of man, both in this life and in the life to come. In obedience to God's law, man is surrounded as with a hedge and kept from the evil. He who breaks down this divinely erected barrier at one point has destroyed its power to protect him; for he has opened a way

We are told that only those who obey implicitly the commands of Christ, the Head of the church, are to be retained in His service.

by which the enemy can enter to waste and ruin." Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 52

Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has delegated His duties on earth to His undershepherds, the ordained ministry of His visible church.

"From Christ's ascension to the present day, men ordained of God, deriving their authority from Him, have become teachers of the faith. Christ, the True Shepherd, superintends His work through the instrumentality of these undershepherds. Thus the position of those who labor in word and doctrine becomes very important. In Christ's stead they beseech the people to be reconciled to God." Gospel Workers, 11

Local elders are also undershepherds. The undershepherds are to lead the flock by example rather than to rule over them.

"Addressing the church elders regarding their responsibilities as undershepherds of God's flock, the apostle wrote: 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a
ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' 1 Peter 5:2–3." Review and Herald, vol. 6, 269

The undershepherds, in obedience to the Shepherd's directions, are to "set things in order."

"The great Teacher has His human agents, whom He terms undershepherds; and to these, under His direction, He commits the work of setting things in order. The human agent is to do thorough and earnest work, both in preaching the word and in personal labor, watching for souls as one that must give account." The Youth's Instructor, August 31, 1893

The Key to Authority

The only authority possessed by the undershepherds is a "Thus saith the Lord."

"The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. 'The law and the prophets,' with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom." The Desire of Ages, 826

The keys of the kingdom entrusted to the church are the words and the will of Christ.

"'The keys of the kingdom of heaven' are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven. They declare the conditions upon which men are received or rejected. Thus the work of those who preach God's Word is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Theirs is a mission weighted with eternal results." Ibid., 414

Only that which the church binds or looses on earth that is in harmony with God's Word is ratified in heaven. See Testimonies, vol. 7, 263. When the church says what God says, it speaks with the authority of Christ Himself.

"Deal faithfully with wrongdoing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbathbreaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. 'They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Galatians 5:21. If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God's Word is pronounced upon them in heaven. In choosing to sin, they disown Christ; the church must show that she does not sanction their deeds, the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority." Ibid., vol. 9, 260; emphasis supplied

We understand the above paragraph to refer to decisions that are in harmony with what Christ has previously said in the Bible and in the Testimonies. The General Conference session of 1877 acknowledged the same principle with the following statement:

The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church

or she herself dishonors her Lord. She must say about sin what God says about it. She must deal with it as God directs, and her action is ratified in heaven. He who despises the authority of the church, despises the authority of Christ Himself." Ibid., 805

The highest earthly authority under Christ is a General Conference session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1875 the servant of the Lord stated the following:

"I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered." Testimonies, vol. 3, 492

Ellen White clarified and reaffirmed this statement in 1909.

"At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as "Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the Word of God and the rights of individual conscience." Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1990 revision), 17

"The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church.

"Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the facts, which He has given for our instruction." Testimonies, vol. 3, 432-433

Acknowledging that these statements are God's plans for organization and authority in His remnant church, we will turn our attention in future articles to what is to be our response when the above plans and principles are not followed.
You're pondering a Bible verse when the question comes up, "I wonder what Ellen White said about this?" But the effort of searching out a passage from among the dozens of books in your library would be too great an interruption to your study, and you continue to the next text.

None of us can imagine what personal blessings are missed because we passed by the Spirit of Prophecy's insights into the deep meaning of Scripture.

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The King James Version is bound in quality leather with gold lettering, and it zips closed for extra protection. It took faith, courage, and tens of thousands of dollars to prepare this special Bible with Ellen White's comments and references to her writings.
How to Meet Temptations

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” James 1:2–7

What greater promises could be given us than are found in these verses? A cunning and cruel foe attends our steps, and is working every moment, with all his strength and skill, to turn us from the right way. Ever since he succeeded in overcoming our first parents in their beautiful Eden home, he has been engaged in this work. More than six thousand years of continual practice has greatly increased his skill to deceive and allure. On the other hand, he who once yields to temptation becomes spiritually weak, and yields more readily the second time. Every repetition of sin blinds his eyes, stiles conviction, and weakens his power of resistance. Thus while the power of the human race to resist temptation is continually decreasing, Satan’s skill and power to tempt are continually increasing. This is one great reason why the temptations of the last days will be more severe than those of any other age.

The admonition of the Saviour is, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” Matthew 26:41. If Satan cannot prevent persons from exercising faith, he will try to lead them to presume upon the willingness and power of God, by placing themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation. Presumption is a most common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied. Meditation and prayer would have preserved them from these temptations, by leading them to shun the critical, dangerous position in which they placed themselves.

Although the promises of God are not to be rashly claimed by us when we recklessly rush into danger, violating the laws of nature, and disregarding prudence, and the judgment with which God has endowed us, we should not lose courage when temptations come upon us. If we do not knowingly place ourselves in the way of temptation, it is our privilege to claim the promise of the inspired word: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

Those who have weighty responsibilities to bear in connection with the work of God are the ones that will be beset with the strongest temptations. If Satan can cause them to waver from the right, he not only takes away their own strength, but he destroys their influence for good over others. They lose their confidence in God, and feel that they hardly dare approach Him in prayer, for they are under condemnation. Acting upon the principle that Christ presented in his prayer, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth,” (John 17:19) they should take the position that they will be steadfast to God under every circumstance, that they may exert an influence to make others steadfast.

The temptations of Satan are manifold; but those to which our attention is called in the text are unbelief and impatience. “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Impatience, then, is the result of a lack of
faith. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." If we do not maintain the grace of patience, we shall never reach a state of perfection. Some of us have a nervous temperament, and are naturally as quick as a flash to think and to act; but let no one think that he cannot learn to become patient. Patience is a plant that will make rapid growth if carefully cultivated. By becoming thoroughly acquainted with ourselves, and then combining with the grace of God a firm determination on our part, we may be conquerors, and become perfect in all things, wanting in nothing.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. It is our privilege in our great weakness to take hold of the strength of the Mighty One. If we think to meet and overcome the enemy in our own strength, we shall be disappointed. It may seem at times that when we pray the most and try the hardest to do right, we have the greatest temptations. This is because Satan is perfectly satisfied with our condition when we are clothed with self-righteousness and do not realize our need of divine aid; but when we see our great need of help, and begin to draw near to God, he knows that God will draw near to us; therefore he places every possible obstruction in the way so that we shall not come into close connection with the Source of our strength.

The exhortation of the apostle is, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." James 4:8. It is by engaging in this work, and by exercising living faith in God, that we are to perfect a Christian character. The work of cleansing the soul-temple and preparing for Christ's appearing must be done while we are in this world of temptation. Just as Christ finds us in character when He comes, so we shall remain.

We should make daily advancement in the work of character-building. When we try to separate from us our sinful habits, it may at times seem that we are tearing ourselves all to pieces; but this is the very work that we must do if we would grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, if we would become fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not the will of God that we should remain in feebleness and darkness. He would have us put on the whole armor, and fight valiantly the battle against sin and self. And after we have truly repented of our sins, and done all that we can to overcome them, He would have us manifest a calm, unyielding trust in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour.

If we make an entire surrender to Him, leave our life of sin and passion and pride, and cling to Christ and His merits, He will fulfill to us all that He has promised. He says that He will give liberally to all who ask Him. Cannot we believe it? I have tested Him on this point, and know that He is faithful to fulfill all His promises.

Let not him that wavereth think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. When persons begin to draw nigh to God, Satan is always ready to press in his darkness. As they look back over their past life, he causes every defect to be so exaggerated in their minds that they become discouraged, and begin to doubt the power and willingness of Jesus to save. Their faith wavers, and they say, "I do not believe that Jesus will forgive my sins." Let not such expect to receive anything from the Lord. If they would only exercise true repentance toward God, at the same time possessing a firm faith in Christ, He would cover their sins and pardon their transgressions. But, instead of this, they too often allow themselves to be controlled by impulse and feeling.

When Satan tells you that your sins are such that you need not expect any great victories in God, tell him the Bible teaches that those who love most are those who have been forgiven most. Do not try to lessen your guilt by excusing sin. You cannot come near to God by faith unless you realize your sinfulness. Then you can place yourselves right on the promises, and with unwavering faith can claim a share in the infinite sacrifice that has been made for the human race. Cling closely to Jesus, and His great heart of love will draw you unto Himself.

I am so anxious that those who labor in the cause shall have all the strength, and peace, and joy that Christ has for them. I want them to have the consolation of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul desired that his brethren should be comforted with "the consolation wherewith he was comforted." 2 Corinthians 7:7. The Christian finds constant comfort and strength in Jesus. And when he Jennings of weakness and darkness, he gives good evidence that he has not a close connection with Jesus.

Brethren, let us have an eye single to the glory of God. Let us not allow anything to interpose between us and Him. "If we follow on to know the Lord," we shall know that "his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. If we are partakers of the divine nature, we shall reflect in life and character the image of our divine Lord. We cannot be indolent in seeking this perfection of character. We cannot yield passively to our surroundings, and think that others will do the work for us. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. We must be workers together with God. Life must become to us a humble, earnest working out of salvation with fear and trembling; and then faith, hope, and love will abide in our hearts, giving us an earnest of the reward that awaits the overcomer.

A relentless and determined foe has prepared his wiles for every soul that is not braced for trial, and guarded by constant prayer and living faith. We cannot individually, or as a body, secure ourselves from his constant assaults; but in the strength of Jesus every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted. Remember that "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Therefore "be sober, be vigilant." 1 Peter 5:8

The Signs of the Times, vol. 2, 153-154 (September 29, 1887)
the Books of the Bible

In Genesis the world was made by God's creative hand;
In Exodus the Hebrews marched to gain the Promised Land;
Leviticus contains the law, holy, just and good.
Numbers records the tribes enrolled — all of Abraham's blood.
Moses, in Deuteronomy records God's mighty deeds;
In Judges their rebellion oft provokes the Lord to smite,
But Ruth records the faith of one well pleasing in His sight.
In First and Second Samuel of Jesse's son we read,
Ten Tribes in First and Second Kings revolted from his seed.
The First and Second Chronicles see Judah captive made;
But Ezra leads a remnant back by princely Cyrus's aid.
The city wall of Zion Nehemiah builds again,
While Esther saves her people from plots of wicked men.
In Job we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod,
And David's Psalms are precious songs to every child of God.
The Proverbs like a goodly string of choicest pearls appear,
Ecclesiastes teaches man how vain are all things here.
The mystic Song of Solomon exalts sweet Sharon's Rose;
Whilst Christ, the Saviour and King, the rapt Isaiah shows.
The warning Jeremiah apostate Israel scorns;
His plaintive Lamentations their awful downfall mourns.
Ezekiel tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;
While kings and empires yet to come, Daniel in vision sees.
Of judgment and of mercy, Hosea loves to tell;
Joel describes the blessed days when God with man shall dwell.
Among Tekoa's herdsmen Amos received his call;
While Obadiah prophesies of Edom's final fall.
Jonah enshrines a wondrous type of Christ, our risen Lord.
Micah pronounces Judah lost — lost, but again restored.
Nahum declares on Nineveh just judgment shall be poured,
A view of Chaldea's coming doom Habakkuk's visions give;
Next, Zephaniah warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.
Haggai wrote to those who saw the Temple built again,
And Zechariah prophesied of Christ's triumphant reign.
Malachi was the last who touched the high prophetic chord;
Its final notes sublimely show the coming of the Lord.
Matthew and Mark and Luke and John the holy Gospels wrote,
Describing how the Saviour died — His life and all He taught.
Acts proves how God the apostles owned with signs in every place.
Saint Paul, in Romans, teaches us how man is saved by grace.
The apostle, in Corinthians, instructs, exHORTS, reproves.
Galatians shows that faith in Christ alone the Father loves.
Ephesians and Philippians tell what Christians ought to be;
Colossians bids us live to God and for eternity.
In Thessalonians we are taught the Lord will come from heaven.
In Titus and Philemon the Bishop's rule is given.
Philippians marks a Christian's love, which only Christians know.
Hebrews reveals the gospel prefigured by the law.
James teaches, without holiness faith is but vain and dead.
Sadducees and Pharisees the narrow way in which the saints are led.
John in his three Epistles on love delights to dwell.
Saint Jude gives awful warning of judgment, wrath and hell.
The Revelation prophesies of that tremendous day,
When Christ — and Christ alone — shall be the victor's stay.

“A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the Word was given. And in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it. All that God's Word commands, we are to obey. All that it promises, we may claim. The life which it enjoineth is the life that, through its power, we are to live. Only as the Bible is thus held, can it be studied effectually.” Deuteronomy, 189

Jesus says, “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently.” Deuteronomy 6:6-7

God has given us the written Word that we may each have the map or plan that will guide us to receive eternal life. It is God's will that all men find salvation. See 1 Timothy 2:1-4. He has done everything possible to bring this salvation to each of us. See Isaiah 5:4. He has left the choice to us. But even then, He works on each of our hearts to make the right choice.

"Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the Word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself." The Desire of Ages, 671

Are we as the remnant people of God really "the people of the Book" as we should be? Do we study its pages as the Lord would have us study them? How well do we comprehend the loving message of instruction that God has given to us through His written Word?

This article is written with the prayer that it will encourage each of you to become "people of the Book." It contains some simple observations in regard to the Bible as well as some principles that you may use in Bible interpretation. It is only a beginning, but my prayer is that it will motivate you to continue the pathway of study and personal commitment which will result at last in your realizing eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The Books of the Bible

If you were asked, How many books are there in the Bible? or How many in the Old or the New Testaments? could you answer that question? Many of our people cannot. If you were asked to name the books of the Bible, could you do it?
Some memory devices are a great aid in helping you to answer these questions in the future. Look at the word “Old Testament.” Count the number of letters in “Old”—three. Then count the number of letters in “Testament”—nine. There are 39 books in the Old Testament. Now look at the word, “New Testament.” There are three letters in “New” and nine letters in “Testament.” Three times nine is twenty-seven. Adding up the two figures, we have sixty-six books in the Bible.

In order to know the names of these books, we need to break the whole into smaller parts for easier memory work. In the Old Testament, we first have the five books of Moses, or the Pentateuch. We can easily memorize the five names in order. Next we have twelve historical books, but some come in pairs of 1 and 2. There are three books before the pairs, then three pairs, and three books after the pairs. Dividing them in this fashion, you can easily memorize them.

In the middle of the Old Testament, we have five poetical books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Then we have five “major” prophets (major referring only to their length) and twelve “minor” prophets. The minor prophets can be more easily memorized if first we memorize the first letter in each of their names—HJ, AOJ, MN, HZ, HZM.

Please note the balance in the division of these Old Testament books: five, twelve, five, twelve, or seventeen history, five poetry, seventeen prophets.

In the New Testament, we have the four gospels, followed by one history book, Acts, followed by fourteen books of Paul, some of which are in pairs, seven other epistles, and a final book of prophecy.

The Plan of the Bible

God, speaking through Ellen White, tells us, “The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God.” Education, 125

If we keep this theme in mind as we come to the Scriptures, either for our own personal study, or in analyzing the writings and statements of others, we might more readily avoid being deceived. We need to always ask ourselves, “Now is this understanding of Scripture leading to the restoration of God’s image or character in my life?”

God created a perfect world without sin, sorrow or death. Again and again in the first chapter of Genesis, the book of beginnings, we are informed that as God looked at each part of His creation, He “saw that it was good,” and when the creation was completed, “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” Verse 31. In chapter 3 of Genesis we soon learn how this beautiful creation was marred through the entry of evil, which brought sin, sorrow and death.

But in turning to the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, chapter 21, the next to the last chapter, we find that God has “a new heaven and a new earth” and that “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Verses 1 and 4.

The pages between Genesis and the Revelation document for us how God returns us to how the world was before sin entered. This return or restoration is brought about through Jesus Christ working in and through mankind, through His own sacrifice, and finally through His life given as an example for each of us. The Bible, therefore, is about Jesus Christ, which fact brings us to our first principle of interpretation.

The Bible, even though written by many different men in different ages, is a unit, having its parts linked together through Jesus Christ, and is its own interpreter.

The Bible, even though written by many different men in different ages, is a unit, having its parts linked together through Jesus Christ, and is its own interpreter.

In John 5:39, Jesus very clearly tells us, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” And He says in verse 46, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

Then, in Luke, chapter 24, we find the account of the two disciples walking to Emmaus after the Crucifixion. They are very dejected because of the events which have recently taken place. Jesus, whom they do not recognize, approaches them, listens to them, and then “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Verse 27; emphasis supplied. Their heart “burned” within them with the excitement of seeing Jesus in all the Scriptures, and His mission to Planet Earth.

It becomes very clear that as we read the Bible, we need to look in depth for the relationship of Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation and restoration in all that we read.

There are other scriptures reinforcing this first principle, as well as suggesting certain corollaries to it. Please read Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Notice especially 2 Corinthians 3:14-16, “But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is taken away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” The blindness of the Jews, as well as our own blindness, will remain as long as we do not recognize Jesus throughout Scripture.

Ellen White reinforces these strong biblical statements by stating, “In every
the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found."

In speaking of the attitude we should have in approaching the Scriptures, God, through the Spirit of Prophecy says, "Those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 20.

And finally, in *Christ's Object Lessons*, a statement of beautiful insight is found in regard to God's Word: "But it is in the written Word that a knowledge of God is most clearly revealed to fallen man. This is the treasure house of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"The Word of God includes the Scriptures of the Old Testament as well as the New. One is not complete without the other. Christ declared that the truths of the Old Testament are as valuable as those of the New. Christ was as much man's Redeemer in the beginning of the world as He is today. Before He clothed His divinity with humanity and came to our world, the gospel message was given by Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah. Abraham in Canaan and Lot in Sodom bore the message, and from generation to generation faithful messengers proclaimed the Coming One. The rites of the Jewish economy were instituted by Christ Himself. He was the foundation of their system of sacrificial offerings, the great antitype of all their religious service. The blood shed as the sacrifices were offered pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. All the typical offerings were fulfilled in Him.

"Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets, is the riches of the Old Testament. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection, Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the Treasure of the New Testament. Our Saviour, the outshining of the Father's glory, is both the Old and the New.... "The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Both present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 126-128

In observing the relationship of Old Testament to New Testament and New Testament to Old Testament, we are brought into our second principle of Bible interpretation.

It is in the written Word that a knowledge of God is most clearly revealed to fallen man. This is the treasure house of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The many restoration promises to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, which had a partial, beginning fulfillment after the Assyrian-Babylonian exile, are finding a present fulfillment in the gathering of believing Jews and Gentiles into the church of Christ, and will find their future fulfillment in the universal gathering of all believing Jews and Gentiles to the visible returning Christ from heaven.

Notice the restoration promises found in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, especially verse 3: "The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee;" Hosea 1:10-11, especially verse 11: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land." Hosea 2:2-23; Amos 9:11-12; Isaiah 11:11-16, particularly verse 11: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people." Isaiah 43:5-7, verse 5: "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west"; Isaiah 49:10-13; Ezekiel 36:24, "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land." Ezekiel 37:21-24; 34:11-23

The initial fulfillment of these restoration or gathering promises of the Old Testament is found in the gathering of believing Jews back to Jerusalem as in Ezra 1 and 7, after the Assyrian and the Babylonian captivities.

The prophet of the Lord speaks of this fulfillment in *Prophets and Kings*, 705:

"By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. After their return, they gave much attention to religious instruction and to the study of that

which had been written in the book of the law and in the prophets concerning the worship of the true God. The restoration of the temple enabled them to carry out fully the ritual services of the sanctuary. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah they repeatedly covenanted to keep all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah. The seasons of prosperity that followed gave ample evidence of God's willingness to accept and forgive, and yet with fatal shortsightedness they turned again and again from their glorious destiny and selfishly appropriated to themselves that which would have brought healing and spiritual life to countless multitudes."

The present fulfillment of these restoration or gathering promises may be found in such scriptures as the following: Matthew 12:30; 18:20; 23:37; John 10:11, 14-16; 11:49-52; 12:32; and Acts 15:13-21. Please read and study these scriptures.

See also *Prophets and Kings*, 374-375, 713-715; *Early Writings*, 74-76

"That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today. He
has 'let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen,' even to His covenant-keeping people, who faithfully render Him the fruits in their seasons. Never has the Lord been without true representatives on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are numbered among the spiritual Israel, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people." 

Prophets and Kings, 713

The future fulfillment of these gathering or restoration promises is seen in such scriptures as Matthew 24:30–31; 25:31–33; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Matthew 8:11–12; and Revelation 7:16–17.

"Then it is [at the Second Coming] that the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance. Thus God's purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul.

As you study the principle above written in regard to the restoration promises to the house of Israel and how they will finally be fulfilled, realize that the majority of the Protestant world today, outside of Seventh-day Adventists, think these promises will be fulfilled to literal Israel, and thus their eyes are focused on Palestine. But as you read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy in regard to these promises, and the principle set forth, you will see they are to be fulfilled to spiritual Israel.

A third principle of Bible interpretation, somewhat related to the second but an extension thereof, may now be set forth.

In applying Israel's covenant promises to the Christian dispensation and the future age, the New Testament extends them to believers in Christ of all races and enlarges the Promised Land to the whole earth, thus removing every ethnic and geographic binding, even when the Hebrew terminology and Middle East imagery are retained.

In Exodus 19:4–6, God speaks of the Israelites becoming "a kingdom of priests." But in 1 Peter 2:9, this promise is extended to Christian believers, and finally in Revelation 5:10, the promise is extended to the redeemed of all ages.

In Jeremiah 31:31–34, God promises that He will write His law on the hearts of those belonging to the house of Israel. In Hebrews 8:8–12, this promise is extended to the Christian church. And in Revelation 22:3–4, God speaks of the redeemed having His name, [which is synonymous with His character], in their foreheads, which is also characterized by the law written within the heart.

In Galatians 3:27–29, God redefines the seed of Abraham to whom His promises have been made, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

In Patriarchs and Prophecets, 170, Ellen White says, "The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan, but the whole earth... The Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ." It may be said that the historical incidents in the Old Testament provide us with word pictures by which God teaches us spiritual truths. In them we are to see things worldwide in scope, with corresponding likenesses in the spiritual realm, which are spiritually discerned. The New Testament, and particularly the Revelation, reveals the principle of spiritually discerning spiritual things in the historical narratives of the Old Testament. The natural eye does not see these spiritual things, and often interprets literally that which should be spiritually discerned.

May the Lord guide and be with you as you look into the Bible principles which have been shared in this article. Perhaps there are other principles He will reveal to you as you study His Word contained in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. May your time be spent in allowing Jesus to become your best Friend in the studies that you pursue. And at last, may you be among those who are translated or resurrected to go home with Jesus in the great day of the Lord.

Editorial

Continued from 2

not lie right upon the surface; we must dig for it. But our success in finding it does not depend so much on our intellectual ability as on our humility of heart and the faith which will lay hold upon divine aid.

"Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases is a positive injury. When the Word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubt; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct." Testimonies, vol. 5, 704–705

"Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the Word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself." The Desire of Ages, 671

Christ is the Word, and there is power in the Word. John 1:12, 14; Hebrews 4:12

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

If we seek Him with all our heart, we shall find Him in the Word and in the Spirit of Prophecy, daily testing the words of men by God's Word.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11

Preachers are to make disciples to Christ, not to any man. Every sermon should direct us to a closer walk with Jesus. Please, dear friends, study and pray as you have never done before. Probation is about to close for the world and for the church. May God help us now in these final hours.

Ron Spear—EDITOR
A. T. Jones and the Church
Continued from 7
1908). She told Jones it would be a blessing to him to go back and read his arguments again since they strongly supported his belief in the Spirit of Prophecy. In 1911 she wrote another letter to Elder Jones in which she stated: “You have denied the clear light of truth, and have linked up with strange elements. I gave you a correct statement in regard to your position, but you went on doing the very things the Lord had warned you not to do. It has been a strange course for one who has been enlightened by the Lord as you have been, but you have acted very much like a man who has lost his bearings. The question is, Do you think you can still hold your membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and go on hurting the influence of this people by the tracts that you publish? You have done a cruel work.” Quoted in Thirteen Crisis Years, 319–320 (November 10, 1911)

Dear friends, organization is not the problem; it is unconverted men running the organization that makes it bad. Because the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has strayed so far away from its historical platform, many today are reacting as Jones did. We need Independent Ministries, but I want to assure you that the answer to the problem is not in ordaining ministers, setting up new congregational churches, and entering into a new system of organization. It would be just a matter of time before we would repeat the whole history over again. What we need is to look to Christ, and to work toward a revival in our own hearts, so that we may touch those who are true at heart within our current denomination and in the world. Christ wants to prepare people for that time when we will become those small companies with our faces lighted up going forth to proclaim the last message of mercy to a perishing world.

Yes, the time will come when our present church organization will be changed, but that time will come only as this present structure comes face to face with the Sunday-law crisis that separates the chaff from the wheat. In the new system of order then established it will be seen that the Lord is taking the reins into His own hands, and His people will move under the power of the latter rain.

“The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth.” Selected Messages, book 2, 390 (1905)

1 For evidence of this, refer to the pamphlet The Battle Creek Sanitarium—Its Origin, Development, Ownership, and Control, by D. E. Robinson; Light Bearers to the Remnant, R. W. Schwarz, 282–298
2 For example, see Testimonies, vol. 8, 24, 37, 118–119, 249–251, 297; Review and Herald, March 22, 1906
3 This testimony is referring to the Berrien Springs meeting two months earlier, which is commented upon in Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, 25–35.
4 See Testimonies, vol. 9, 19; Counsels to Writers and Editors, 109; The Great Controversy, 604–608; Testimonies, vol. 5, 81, 463; ibid., vol. 6, 400–401; Jeff Reich, The Prophetic Church
6 See The Great Second Advent Movement, J. N. Loughborough, 343–357
7 Letter to G. I. Butler from Dr. Kellogg, February 3, 1903; in files of writer
9 See also J. H. Morrison, Straight Talk to Old Brethren (c. 1915?)
10 See also pages 4–5 in the historical foreword
11 See the pamphlet Experience of the People’s S.D.A. Church

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Lessons From the Church in the Wilderness

We would present before you the difficulties through which the church in the wilderness passed. They did not have faith, and when they were tested, they murmured and rebelled. They were stubborn. While Moses was in the mount, the people who had been brought out of Egypt that they might serve God, were dishonoring Him by worshiping the golden calf. Aaron, who feared to offend them by refusing their request to make for them a god to worship, had permitted this idolatry. Aaron manifested weakness of character in this. He stood in Moses's place, and had charge of the congregation, but he did not guide them. He did not refuse to accede to their demand for an idol. In worshiping the golden calf, Israel sinned greatly, and the Lord punished the people, and 3,000 of the most guilty were slain.

Moses said to Israel, "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Exodus 32:30–33. It will be well to read this history carefully, and take heed to the lessons taught on this particular occasion. (Read the 32d, 33d, and 34th chapters of Exodus.) The Lord did not destroy His people, but those who had sinned were punished. But He revealed Himself to Moses, declaring His character.

In Numbers 12 is the account of Aaron and Miriam's conduct when they spoke against Moses. "And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it." Verse 2. Every envious feeling, every jealousy cherished, is known to the Lord; for He reads the heart, and He hears every word spoken against those upon whom He has laid the burden of the work. How much of evil speaking is done by those who have had but little experience in the work, little knowledge of the things of God, little realization of the holy requirements of His cause. Those who have not drunk deeply at the fountain of truth, and have not obtained an experimental knowledge of holy things, feel at liberty to criticize those whom the Lord is using in a special manner to do His work. Even youth, young men and women, have but a small stock of respect and reverence, and they make flippant remarks in regard to God's chosen messengers, and bring their names into their idle talk and gossip. They dissect their words, and pass judgment upon them while associating together. Do they
We have never had the prophecy concerning Babylon applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or been informed that the “loud cry” consisted in calling God’s people to come out of her mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.” Verses 13–23
Mark the whole tenor of this chapter, and learn the lesson it conveys to modern Israel. These things are written for our enamples upon whom the ends of the world are come. We see the unbelief, and the stout resistance of some who have had great light, and although evidence has been piled upon evidence, they have kept themselves in stubborn resistance. The Lord has sent messages of warning and entreaty, messages of reproof and rebuke, and they have not been in vain. But we have never had a message that the Lord would disorganize the church. We have never had the prophecy concerning Babylon applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or been informed that the “loud cry” consisted in calling God’s people to come out of her; for this is not God’s plan concerning Israel.

In the example of Moses pleading for the children of Israel is represented the position that we should take in regard to the people of God, however erring, or weak, or defective they may be. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the Lord has brought out a people from the quarry of the world, as He brought out of Egypt a people to keep His commandments, and at every step He has shown them that He is leading them in paths of truth and righteousness. He has sent His light and His counsels, instructing them to build institutions of learning, to provide sanitariums and publishing houses, and success has attended the carrying out of these plans. The money of the Seventh-day Adventists has not been hoarded in order that they might live delicately, but self-denial and self-sacrifice have marked their history, and still their work is to make progress, and to be aggressive. The world have a light constantly shining upon them, because this people honor God in keeping His commandments. Now can we expect that a message would be true that would designate as Babylon the people for whom God has done so much? Hell would triumph should such a message be received, and the world would be strengthened in iniquity. All the reproaches which Satan has cast upon the character of God, would appear as truth, and the conclusion would be made that God has no chosen or organized church in the world. Oh, what a triumph would this be to Satan and his confederacy of evil!

God does not work in this way. He does just what He said He would do in the 58th chapter of Isaiah:

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Verses 11–14

Review and Herald, vol. 3, 85–86 (October 3, 1893)

Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Testimonies

ARTHUR W. Spalding and Percy T. Magan, M. D., first put this collection together in 1915–1916. It is a union of their own private collections and those of E. A. Sutherland, David Paulson, M.D., and O. A. Johnson. All of these men were prominent leaders and pioneers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and received numerous personal and general testimonies from the Lord regarding many areas of labor.

In this 500-page volume, you will encounter a wealth of the Lord’s counsels on a broad range of subjects. Stirring, straight messages through Ellen G. White are presented regarding education, finance, church government, the home, health, prophecy, and other topics. These messages contain what is probably the largest collection of guidance as to how the Lord wants us as individuals and as a church to relate to the self-supporting work.

All will be interested in the accounts of Ellen White’s last illness and some of her final messages to us as a people. The reader’s faith will be strengthened by the reports of several of the pioneers regarding their relationship to Ellen White and her messages from the Lord.

This edition is actually the first time it has been typeset in an unabridged, easy-to-read form. Previous editions have been photocopies of typewritten manuscripts. It is a convenient-sized volume (5½ x 8½) and is currently available in a high-quality paperback binding.

You may order the Spalding and Magan Collection from Hope International for a suggested donation of just $10 (U.S. funds). Please add 15% for postage and handling. (Foreign readers please check with your local distributor for price.)
One evening several years ago my husband and I were sitting in our family room. The fire from the fireplace gave a warm and cozy glow to the room as we found ourselves talking about what matters most in life. He asked me the question, “What is the most important goal in your life?”

Reflecting back on the evening, I saw our two little girls, Allison, three years old and Emily, one and a half years old, playing happily beside us in their pink pajamas, with their soft blond hair gently framing their sweet, innocent faces. I recalled the frequent times that evening they would call to us to watch something “important” they had done and remembered all the little tokens of love they would bring us, trusting us to keep them safe until they returned for them. As I sat quietly, the cords of my heart were pulled by “only a mother’s love” placed there by God Himself, and with tears in my eyes I answered the most important question of my life in these words: “I want my girls in heaven. I want to know that they will be saved and forever enjoy the beauties and happiness there. I don’t want them to miss out and have to suffer the fire of damnation and be forever lost. I don’t even care if I don’t make it, but I want them to be in heaven.”

As I spoke these words, awesome and solemn thoughts flooded my mind. “If you don’t make it, will they? How will they know the way to heaven if you don’t? Who else cares and loves them as much as you do? Then who will lead them if you don’t?”

My husband, turning to me with tears in his eyes, said, “How much do we really care? Is this just an emotional experience tonight or are we willing to make practical changes in our lives to accomplish this goal? You see, honey, I want this too, but I’m a realist and know that in a day or two when the emotion is gone, that unless we make a firm commitment to persevere in
this goal, we will fall right back into our old habits and lifestyle, and we will lose time and precious opportunities in meeting our heart’s desire. Are you willing, am I willing, to make this commitment right now?” “Yes!” I responded.

“I am too, so let’s do it now!”

Bowling on our knees before God and one another with tears streaming down our cheeks we confessed and repented of our mistakes and sins in raising our children, and asked the Mighty Counselor to give us wisdom, understanding, discretion, courage and a willingness to raise our precious little girls for the heavenly kingdom.

From that point we have never turned back. It has been, and continues to be, our goal and lifework to raise our children (now three) to be “children for the heavenly King.”

This resolve has meant so many changes for us as a family, as parents, and for me personally as the mother, that it would be impossible to list them all to you, but for the sake of this article I would like to list these three important changes that have been made, and continue to be made, in our lives on a daily basis. These three “important essential principles” as I call them, can be applied in everyone’s life, regardless of your environment, financial status, your educational background or your ethnic upbringing; and in application they cannot be separated. They are as follows:

1. Surrender of my will to Christ, fully and completely. Proverbs 23:26, James 4:7

2. Being consistent in my life, in all areas including that of training my children. James 1:17, Hebrews 13:8

3. Using all my time for the glory of God, taking whatever time is necessary to work diligently for the salvation of my children. Ephesians 5:16, I Corinthians 10:13

In order to prepare my children to be only “children for the heavenly King,” I must first know the King. I do not mean to be well versed in doctrines and Bible truths, but rather to have a personal, abiding experience with Christ, a willingness to know and do His will. To learn how to totally abandon my own will and ways of thinking about things and doing things, and to fully surrender my heart and say, “Not my will, but thine be done,” Luke 22:42. This submission is not a one-time submission, but rather an ongoing, continuous, moment-by-moment yielding of my own selfish plans and desires, and a willingness to give myself entirely to do God’s will. As I am learning how to submit, more and more I have come to know and experience that only in this complete surrender do I find my greatest happiness and peace.

One of the first areas God brought me to as I prayed for His will to be done in my life was the time that I was spending on the telephone talking to friends about things of little or no value when weighed against the things of eternal value, my children’s salvation. As I began to be willing to put my own interests aside in this area and to make a choice to use the phone only for a “real need,” and when someone called to take care of the business and not to enter into “chit-chat” conversation, I began to see the hours a day being spent with others, thinking I was spending time with my children because I was home with them. I also saw how I was putting off their needs and ignoring their misbehavior because I was so involved in my conversation that it was inconvenient to deal with them. When I would hang up I had either lost my patience with them, or they had lost their interest in what they were doing that they wanted help with. I was allowing other people and circumstances to take my time from doing the most important work. Now I could understand why God had called me to yield myself in regard to the use of our phone.

Other areas in my life were brought to light as I continued to seek to cooperate with God in the salvation of my children. One of those areas was that of shopping. Not that it is wrong to shop, but rather how much time I spent in the malls and stores without a “real need,” and also the money spent unnecessarily; in this revelation God was asking me to give my will to Him.

I was beginning to understand that God was asking me to redeem the time committed ourselves to give Him the first few hours of our day to seek to know and do His will.

In addition, we began to practically work with our three small children in training them to order their day with God first, and to be thorough in learning how He loved and cared for them and wanted to guide them through their day, just as He did ours. Before they could read, we would put on a simple, a cappella scripture-song tape, and in just a few weeks we were excited and amazed at the numerous Bible passages they had
memorized, and were thrilled to hear them cheerfully sing them as they went about their day. I'll never forget the day I heard our three-year-old son singing, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," (Galatians 2:20) as he was out weeding the garden. It was also helpful to bring out God's Word through the songs they knew as we instructed them through the day.

Then as the girls grew older and could read, I spent time with them morning by morning teaching them how to read God's Word for personal application.

1. What did God want to do for them for their salvation? and
2. What does God want them to do for their salvation?

I remember one time when Allison, then nine, and Emily, seven, and I were studying Joshua 18, telling how the Promised Land was being divided up. Verse 1 tells us God's part: "And the land was subdued before them." Then when we came to verse 8 and we read, "Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me," Allison said, "I see, God wants us to take a close look at ourselves, to see how we really are, and come to Him so He can change us, and give us what He knows is best for us." What an encouragement and joy to my heart! God was actually instilling His characteristics into our little ones.

This sitting at the feet of Jesus is necessary for us and our children to come to "know" who Jesus is and what part He plays in our lives today. These little attentions often are the beginnings of training "up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. Do you not long to see yourself and your child excited about heavenly things?

To be a "child for the heavenly King" we must be like the King, the Lord Jesus, in character. "The Bible presents a perfect standard of character. . . . You can attain to the high standard set before you in the Scriptures, and you must if you would be children of God." Testimonies, vol. 5, 264.

In this way the Lord was asking us to allow Him to put into our lives His very character. It is what our children needed in their lives. It was not enough just to be "good, moral people," but rather to be "Christlike." We then began and continue to study and search His Word to know and understand what His character is like.

It has been exciting to us to see the common and simple stories of the Bible unfold with practical truths and principles as we have been willing to "search the Scriptures" as for "hidden treasures," not for a knowledge alone, but for application to our lives.

In the very first chapter of the Bible are given several attributes of Christ's character. In the simple record of Creation we see God's order, neatness and thoroughness in which His work was done, "that it was good." Genesis 1:10

Was the work of my hands neat, orderly and thorough? How did I keep our home, the floors, counters, furniture, cupboards, drawers and closets? Did they show that I was neat, orderly and thorough? How was our car and garage kept, the yard, and the surroundings? As we saw these character traits of God, we realized that we fell short in some of these areas and began to evaluate all our work according to His standard, and to claim His strength to have these attributes of His character instilled into us. But it did not stop here. We saw the need to have these characteristics instilled into our children's lives also.

It required of us (Tom and me) a surrender of our old habit patterns and a willingness to do everything God's way, not just one time, but consistently choosing to be neat, orderly and thorough. At first I thought I did not have the time, but learning to act from principle by God's power, I saw that in reality I saved time. I would not have to go back and do the "task" over again. It required, and continues to require, a submission on our part, but we can understand and experience now, how our characters are being changed, as it is becoming "more natural" to do our work by "God's standard." In addition, just as we are in our physical and temporal life, so also is our spiritual life.

In order to prepare our children to be "children for the heavenly King," they too must have these attributes of Christ's character instilled into them. They must understand practically how to experience these qualities, and it was our responsibility to train them, knowing that as we were willing to cooperate with Him, He would provide the power to instill neatness, order and thoroughness into them. Philippians 4:13. Our children have thus become a part of the simple and practical everyday duties of our home, for in what better way could these characteristics be taught?

In every new "duty" we give instruction by "example" and "precept!"—"show" and "tell." (In this same way God works with us.) Then we have them repeat the demonstration and evaluate their understanding to know how to better help them. This process will need to be repeated several times according to our child's particular age and understanding, and we as parents must be willing to give of ourselves, our time, consistently to train them in the right way.

I remember when we taught our two-year-old son how to make his own bed. It required a choice on our part to invest time, consistently, morning by morning, having him pull up his sheet first, then the blanket, then the bed-spread each time getting the wrinkles out before going to the next, and showing him how he could keep it straight and even so that the sheet was not hanging out from under the spread, and finally, how to put the pillow on. We did not just discuss with him the task at hand, but also taught him how everything we do should be done our best, as unto Jesus. Colossians 3:23.

We told him that Jesus would be happy when we do our work well, and he too would be happy when he does his work well. In several days the reward came as our son made his bed all alone before we came in to him, and he was so excited that he had done it "all by himself" and that it was done "well." Words cannot express the joy that it brought to our hearts to experience in this simple way the true happiness that comes when we choose to follow after the King and not our own way.

You see, it would have been much easier for us to make our son's bed, and it would have been even better than his best at two years old, but we realized that the counsel given to us as parents to train and educate our children had a deeper value that what may first appear. We are instructed to "Help your children, parents, to do the will of God by being faithful in the performance of the duties which really belong to them as members of the family. This will give them a most valuable experience. It will teach them that they are not to center their thoughts upon themselves, to do their own pleasure, or to amuse themselves. Patience educate them to act
their part in the family circle, to make a success of their efforts to share the burdens of father and mother and brothers and sisters. Thus they will have the satisfaction of knowing that they are really useful.” The Adventist Home, 285–286

Useful occupation not only helps to relieve the day-to-day burdens of father and mother, but also gives us as parents practical opportunities to instruct our little ones in the ways of the King, not only in neatness, order and thoroughness but in all the characteristics of Christ Jesus as well: perseverance, patience, gentleness, honesty, simplicity, integrity, unselfishness, diligence, and many more. In addition, it provides other benefits to our children.

1. Our children are not left to idleness and boredom, which will lead to self-centeredness and indulgence of themselves in their own unguided pursuits.

2. Our children learn to experience the greatest joy and satisfaction that comes from doing for others, and that they have accomplished something worthwhile and useful.

This training can begin right now regardless of the ages of our children. When working with our babies we can teach them to pick up their toys and put them back into the basket before going on to something else. For our toddlers, we can show them how to rinse the dishes without covering themselves and the floor with water. We can have them stand on a stool and clear the shelf or dresser so that it can be dusted. For our school-age children, in addition to all the home duties that can and should be taught, we can use their schoolwork as the tool to teach them the lessons of neatness, orderliness and thoroughness. Are all their letters formed as the “pattern,” to the “best” of their capabilities? Was the entire lesson completed? Was the lesson done according to the instruction given? You might say, “Well, that is the teacher’s responsibility.” But we as parents have been given the responsibility to shape our children’s characters to prepare them to be “children for the heavenly King.” Deuteronomy 6:7–9

So also with our children at any age we can instill the characteristics of the King in having them keep their rooms neat and orderly, everything having a place and being kept in its place. This training brings up another character attribute of Christ, and that is “simplicity.” We are told, “If children would have firm constitutions they must live naturally. The path of obedience is exalted by the Majesty of Heaven coming to the earth, and condescending Himself to become a little child, and living simply and naturally, as children should live, submitting to restraint and privation, giving youth an example of faithful industry, showing them by His own life that body and soul are in harmony with natural laws.” The Youth’s Instructor, 40

Simplifying our lives from so many “things” has helped to redeem our time, as not as much time, money and energy are needed to maintain all our “things.”

Our high calling as parents is to surrender our own unsanctified thoughts, will, and ways to Christ and to co-operate with Him in preparing our precious heritage to be “children for the heavenly King”

So also this lesson will be beneficial to our children, as the care of their rooms will be easier and will not be a temptation to them to become frustrated and discouraged because of “over-clutter.”

As our children watched how we sorted through drawers, closets, cupboards, basement and garage and unburdened our lives of boxes, boxes, and more boxes of needless items, they too wanted to unburden their lives of toys, stuffed animals and clothes that were never being used, but required their time and energy to maintain. In addition to the “cutting away” of things, they had a great deal of fun seeking out a needy child or family to give them to, and experienced the joy of giving of themselves to others.

These are but a handful of the ways that God has and continues to work in our hearts and lives, calling us to a “complete surrender” of all our hearts continually. Our high calling as parents is to surrender our own unsanctified thoughts, will, and ways to Christ and to co-operate with Him in preparing our precious heritage to be “children for the heavenly King.” We must be consistent, not only in our own lives, but consistent in instilling the characteristics of Christ also in our little ones. We must be willing to give of ourselves and our time to this end.

Is it too great a sacrifice to give of ourselves to our children? To answer this question my mind goes back to the night of our discussion that has changed our whole life; I, we, wanted to do all that we could in cooperation with God to prepare our children to be “children for the heavenly King,” to know that they would experience the joys of heaven forever. Oh, yes, there have been difficult areas in our lives to give up; there have been trials to try to get us discouraged; there have been temptations to give up, but we have tasted and continue to taste of the Lord’s goodness.

(Psalm 34:8), power (Isaiah 40:29), and trust in His promise that He will finish the work He has started in us and bring it to completion (Philippians 1:6). As we look ahead, at times it may seem overwhelming, but as we see the changes that He has already wrought in our lives and in the lives of our children as we have been willing to yield our own will and way, we look forward to the new heights and rewards that we will experience here on this earth. It daily requires of us a sacrifice of self. We must be willing to give of ourselves, our time, constantly; but, will it seem like too much when “With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. The days of hope and fear are ended. The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed.” Child Guidance, 569

Fathers and mothers, will you be willing to give of yourselves for your children to hear the words of the King Himself, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21), with your “children for the heavenly King”?
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