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Special Editorial

Issues: God’s Word or Man’s Creed?

DEAR reader, What are the real issues facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church today? Assuming that you are a Seventh-day Adventist, we are certain that this question is of concern to you. The signs of the times alert us to the fact that we are living in the last days, and we need to know as never before the God-given answers to the following questions:

• What is the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
• What makes this movement unique, differing from every other religious movement?
• What is the nature of human obedience?
• What significance does the human nature of Christ as He lived upon this earth have for Christians today?
• What does it mean to enter by faith into the Most Holy Place in heaven?
• What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? Does it involve us in any way?

Friends, the questions listed above are just a sampling of some of the very real and vital questions facing every Seventh-day Adventist, and the good news is that God has not left us to wander in the dark. In His abundant mercy God has blessed the Seventh-day Adventist Church with great light, and where shall we go to find this light? Must you become a “follower” of Hope International to find it? Is truth to be found only in the pages of Our Firm Foundation?

No, brothers and sisters, contrary to the accusation leveled against Hope International by the leaders of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Hope International does not believe that one must become a “follower of Our Firm Foundation” in order to be “purified.” See insert in the November 5, 1992, Adventist Review entitled “Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Organizations.”

Hope International has never claimed infallibility; rather, we have always encouraged God’s people to study for themselves and to compare with the Word of God what they hear or read from Hope International.

Hope International is not a church. We are part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and, again contrary to the accusations found in the above-mentioned booklet, we have never established a non-Seventh-day Adventist Church anywhere. In fact, Hope International does not even conduct Sabbath worship services for their own staff. Staff members go to various local Seventh-day Adventist Churches—not to try to take control of the church, (another false accusation found in the N.A.D. booklet), but simply to worship with fellow Seventh-day Adventists.

Again we ask, Where shall we go to find the answers to the many questions that face us as Seventh-day Adventists? Ultimately we must each go to God, praying for spiritual discernment that we may rightly understand His Word. The answers to all of the above questions are in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. And God has not left these crucial questions unanswered or unanswerable. He has not left us to flounder about in the confusion of human speculation.

Because of literally thousands upon thousands of pages of inspired counsel written by our prophet, it used to be a laborious task to research and compile all the counsel given on a particular subject, but, thanks to the efforts of the Ellen G. White Estate, we now have virtually all of the published Spirit of Prophecy writings on CD-Rom. Now searches can be made quickly, and God’s counsel can be easily examined concerning the important “issues” facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

There remains no reason why Seventh-day Adventists cannot know what the will of the Lord is. Of course, there are some areas that are not spelled out in black and white, allowing for some difference of opinion. But there are other areas of belief and doctrine that are spelled out in such a definite, direct manner that to misunderstand or misinterpret the will of God concerning that doctrine would be nearly impossible—that is, of course, assuming that the one doing the investigating is sincerely trying to understand and accept God’s will, and that he accepts as authoritative the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

If Hope International were dealing with doctrines that were vague and speculative and the evidence produced to support such doctrines were equally vague and speculative, well might we dismiss the ideas as being unimportant and the urging of them as being not only unnecessary but also potentially divisive and dangerous to the body of Christ. But such is not the case with the questions listed at the start of this writing. Clear and decisive evidence from both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy exists to give a powerful God-inspired answer to those very important questions.

On pages seven and eight of the booklet, “Issues,” we read:

“Seventh-day Adventists have never ‘formally’ adopted a position on the question of just how Jesus’ nature compared with Adam’s and with ours. Neither has the Church ever ‘formally’ adopted a position on perfection and the precise nature of human obedience.” Page 7

“Under the umbrella of commitment to the basic doctrines of the faith, ministers and members hold a variety of views on such issues as the human nature of Christ and the relation of justification.”
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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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.
Unveiling God’s Character
Part 3: God’s Church—How Long?

This article concludes a three-part series. Parts 1 and 2 were printed in Our Firm Foundation, vol. 7, numbers 8 and 9, respectively.

As the sun arose that Passover morning A.D. 31, a nation awoke to rendezvous with its prophetic destiny. The sand in God’s prophetic hourglass has run out for the Jews, declaring this the Passover to end all Passovers, the one to which all others have pointed. On this day, according to prophetic promise, God would further unveil His mercy and eternally silence Satan’s claim that He is a God of justice but not a God of love. And with the utterance of the words “It is finished,” the demonstration of love is complete. God is vindicated; Satan condemned.

Because it rejected the fulfillment of its symbols, at the end of this Passover day, Israel is doomed. Yet, despite its apostasy, it has fulfilled God’s purpose. For within the confines of its economy these events have just occurred, events through which God has further unveiled His character of love to all intelligent beings throughout the universe. “Satan’s charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love.” The Desire of Ages, 762; emphasis supplied in all quotations.

Certainly it was not God’s will, nor was it needful, that Israel apostatize in order for God to effectively speak to Satan’s charges. God’s original purpose was to make His demonstration with their help and co-operation. The point is, however, that Satan’s best efforts to use God’s people to prevent the demonstration in no way diminished its effectiveness. They only magnified it.

“At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of His rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown.” Ibid., 57

But while the Passover of A.D. 31 was a day of universal enlightenment regarding the character of God, a day in which the understanding of truth reached a new stage of maturity, it was also a day of polarization and judgment. For Satan and his followers, Israel included, this day was a day of reckoning. There were those among Israel, however, who sought to co-operate with God’s purpose for their nation. These recognized and accepted Christ as the fulfillment of their symbols. And while they were initially disappointed, they were later blessed by the events of this day. In contrast, however, those who rejected the fulfillment of their symbols were left in darkness to continue performing ceremonies which were now meaningless.

Christ came to bring a sword, not peace, to the earth. He did so in His very person, for He Himself was truth. “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” John 14:6–7. Jesus was saying that He had come to...
unveil the character of God. And to war against this revelation of truth was to war against the reality of life itself.

In the first article of this series we identified the issues in the great controversy. In the second article we established the purpose of and need for truth. We are now prepared to apply these understandings to God’s plan and purpose for His church.

The basic premise on which this present article is founded is that God created within the Israelite/Jewish church an environment in which He could unveil truth. The truths God unveiled within this church settled the first issue in the great controversy by bringing a clearer understanding of truth to bear on that issue. It deepened universal understandings of both God and Satan, good and evil, causing men to become more like one or the other, depending on which side of truth they were found.

This premise is the key to understanding how God, within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has once again created an environment in which the understanding of truth will reach a new level of maturity. This revelation of truth through the Seventh-day Adventist Church will forever settle the second issue of the great controversy. This issue centers around Satan’s claim that God’s mercy and love, as demonstrated by Christ’s sacrifice on that Passover afternoon of A.D. 31, has destroyed His justice and therefore His law. See The Desire of Ages, 762.

It was for the understanding and promulgation of light and truth that God chose the nation of Israel and eventually its remnant, the Jewish church. To them He gave the unconditional promise of a Messiah. See The Desire of Ages, 189; Daniel 9. To them were entrusted the oracles and symbols that were to reveal the character of God to man. “The Lord called out His people Israel and separated them from the world that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He made them the depositories of His law, and He designed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 454; see also ibid., 468.

On the next page of this first reference, Ellen White further compares the heritage of the Jews with that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositories of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world.” Ibid., 455.

In Testimonies, vol. 8, 115–116, the rise of the Advent movement in 1844 is compared to Israel’s exodus from Egypt when they were entrusted with oracles of truth designed to reveal God more fully. “In this age God has set His hand to gather unto Himself a people from every nation, kindred, and tongue. In the Advent movement He has wrought for His heritage, bringing them into a sacred nearness to Himself.” Ibid., vol. 5, 455.

This statement has profound implications for our present-day church. When we view the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the spiritual Jews of our day, Scriptures that would otherwise be mainly interesting history take on new meaning. Now they apply to us as well as to ancient Israel.

This concept does not suggest a fanatical extreme in which one finds every particular of the Jewish church duplicated by our church. Instead, we see offered in the writings of Ellen White a balanced comparison in which the characteristics of the Seventh-day Adventist Church resemble those of the Jewish church more than they do the characteristics of any other group. We consequently find the prophet for our church making such statements as the one in Testimonies, vol. 8, 115, which says, “The record of Israel’s forgetfulness has been preserved for our enlightenment.” We can benefit from Israel’s experience and become enlightened as God’s modern Israel, only to the extent that we understand the nature of our similarities to ancient Israel.

What lessons are we to learn from Israel as it relates to God’s purpose for us, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to the unveiling of His character as He deals with the issues of the great controversy? In what sense and for what reasons are both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Jewish church entrusted with oracles of truth? Just as Bible prophecy predicts and depicts both a first and a second coming of the Saviour, and just as God prescribed both a daily and a yearly sanctuary service relative to these two Advents, so He entrusted two specific, denominated bodies or churches with oracles of truth related to these two services of the sanctuary. Both services together make up a complete system of truth.

In The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 268, we read, “The subject of the sanctuary

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was the key which unlocked the mystery of the Disappointment, showing that God had led His people in the great Advent movement. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, and revealed present duty as it brought to light the position and work of God's people." Just as the children of Israel were entrusted with a sanctuary message that revealed to them what God wanted and expected them to do after they were called out from Egypt, so at the rise of the Advent movement, God's remnant church was entrusted with a sanctuary message that "revealed present duty."

As every student of historic Adventism knows, Christ did not begin His Most Holy Place ministry until 1844. The sanctuary truths relative to the Most Holy Place ministry were not to be fulfilled, or for that matter, completely understood, until after that date. For had they been understood, there would never have been a disappointment. And the Disappointment was necessary to try the faith of the believers, thus causing them to either renounce their experience in the Advent movement or to search further the meaning of those words which had become the foundation of their faith: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14

Further investigation into this scripture revealed truths so new and startling that it was depicted in prophecy as an "open door." "But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question. Now was seen the application of those words of Christ in the Revelation, addressed to the church at this very time: 'These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.' Revelation 3:7-8. Here an open as well as a shut door is brought to view. At the termination of the 2300 prophetic days in 1844, Christ changed His ministration from the holy to the Most Holy Place." The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 268-269

Ellen White quotes this same verse of Scripture a second time on the same page, and then makes the following comment:

"Those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement, receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf; but those who reject the light that brings to view this work of ministration, are not benefited thereby. The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ's first advent, and refused to believe in Him as the Saviour of the world, could not receive pardon through Him. When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness, to continue their useless sacrifices and offering. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased. That door by which men had formerly found access to God, was no longer open. The Jews had refused to seek Him in the only way whereby He could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in Heaven. Therefore they found no communion with God. To them the door was shut. They had no knowledge of Christ as the true sacrifice and the only mediator before God, hence they could not receive the benefits of His mediation." Ibid., 269-270

This passage is most important, as it pertains to a proper understanding of Adventism. Here another comparison is made of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the Jewish church. The transition from a holy place ministry to a Most Holy Place ministry which occurred in 1844 is compared to the transition which occurred in A.D. 31 from an earthly ministry (outer court) to a heavenly ministry (holiest place). Both transitions are depicted as an open door and a shut door with a clear explanation given that these doors represent a transition, or, we could say, judgment. At the time Christ began His holy place ministry in the heavenly sanctuary those who did not accept His sacrifice made in the outer court (earth) were left with "useless sacrifices and offerings," for "that door by which men had formerly found access to God was no longer open." They were, consequently, left in darkness.

This explanation, when analyzed, helps us to better understand how it was that Christ not only silenced the devil's accusation by a further unveiling of truth, but also how, as a consequence of this increased understanding of truth, judgment occurred. A door shut, and a door opened. And depending on which side of the door a person was, he was either in the truth, or he was out of the truth—in the light, or in darkness. At that point he no longer had a choice. In A.D. 31 the extent to which one was, by virtue of being a Jew, exposed to the increased light of truth as type met antitype, and a transition occurred from earthly ministry to

Jesus would of necessity bring polarization and judgment to those with whom He came in contact. They had but two choices. Fall on the rock and be broken, or be ground to powder by the rock falling upon them

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Heavenly ministry, to that extent he either accepted this light and grew in understanding in proportion to this additional revelation of truth, or he resisted the light, warped against it and became blind.

Jesus knew that a climactic display of truth was just before the Jewish church. He knew that should they continue warring against this inevitable, uncontrollable, development of truth, they could but self-destruct. That is why he asked, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Matthew 21:42-44

Since Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, He would of necessity bring polarization and judgment to those with whom He came in contact. They had but two choices. Fall on the rock and be broken, or be ground to powder by the rock falling upon them. "He said, 'For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind.' John 9:39. Christ had come to open the blind eyes, to give light to them that sit in darkness. He had declared Himself to be the light of the world, and the miracle just performed was in attestation of His mission. The people who beheld the Saviour
at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.” The Desire of Ages, 475

“In the time of John the Baptist, Christ was about to appear as the revealer of the character of God. His very presence would make manifest to men their sin. Only as they were willing to be purified from sin could they enter into fellowship with Him. Only the pure in heart could abide in His presence.” Ibid., 108

Something long overlooked and little understood in our Seventh-day Adventist Church is that there is only one thing in the entire universe that is capable of bringing judgment, and that one thing is truth. Should readers of this article comprehend nothing else here written, it is my prayer they will understand this one concept. Biblical judgment is not merely an execution of punishment and giving of reward as we have generally thought. Instead it is a process of magnified perception, of increased understanding whereby every intelligent mind is forced into alignment with reality.

The Jews’ rejection of the truth that Christ embodied, we might add, was the ultimate, and climactic result of unchecked apostasy

Truth is the standard of the universe. It is the never-changing yardstick that measures reality. Truth was never born and will never die. Therefore no one can successfully war against it. Neither does it need support from any quarter. It is self-existent and eternal. The same comprehension of truth that vindicates and sets free those who are in harmony with it, will condemn and destroy those who endeavor to war against it. Thus an expanded comprehension of truth forces one to align with reality.

If someone were to ask you what closed probation for the Jewish church, how would you answer? Was it apostasy? As I have considered the history of the Jewish church I have been forced to conclude it was in apostasy for at least 90 percent of its existence. Apparently then, it is not apostasy alone that closes a church’s probation.

Would you say that choosing a wrong form of church organization would close a church’s probation? In other words, would a hierarchical, dictatorial form of church government bring judgment to that church? Did that happen to the Jewish church? Could it happen to ours? In looking at these two churches we see that both have operated under more than one type of organizational system with seemingly no correlation between a given system and the close of probation for these churches. This is not to say that God has no interest in His church’s organizational system. However, we do not find any statement in which God declares a church’s probation will close or did close when a certain form of church government was put in place.

There are numerous other factors that are sometimes thought to have a bearing on the close of a church’s probation, but space does not here permit considering them. Suffice it to say, Inspiration gives but one cause for the close of the Jews’ probation. That one cause was their rejection of the Messiah—not just their rejection of His person; but their rejection of His instruc-

Continued on 26
It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Psalm 119:126-127

There was a time during David's reign over the kingdom of Israel, when he saw that special contempt was shown for the law of God. But what influence did this have upon him? Did it have the effect to sweep him into the current, so that he shared the same distrust in the law of Jehovah, and manifested the contempt that was revealed by those around him?—It had an entirely different influence. He saw that the disregard of the law of Jehovah brought moral desolation instead of increased piety, devotion, and love for God. God seemed to be put out of their minds; and the picture presented was not a pleasant one to the king and prophet of God. He beheld the influences that resulted from the transgression of the law of God, and it quickened his zeal, earnestness, and devotion, so that he felt urged to elevate the standard of righteousness, and hold it high amid the people, instead of uniting with them in transgression.

If David thus marked the depravity of his time, and attributed it to the neglect of keeping the law of God, may we not interpret the increasing depravity, and the prevalence of iniquity in our world today, to the universal scorn shown for God's law? From generation to generation, from age to age, there has been a growing disrespect and contempt for the law of Jehovah. And when we come to our time, as we near the close of this world's history, there is a depravity existing everywhere, which reveals the fact that the law of God is made void, and that there is not in the minds and hearts of the people a yearning desire that God should reveal Himself. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law."

What should be the attitude of the people of God at the present time? We see this growing contempt for the law of God revealed everywhere; and the outlook for the future is perilous for those who love that law, for they stand in marked contrast to those who are showing it such contempt. The secular and the Christian world seem to have joined hands in this matter, and all are trampling under foot the law of Jehovah. Why is it that today, as we look around us, we see so few youth whose moral sensibilities can be aroused? We are forced to admit that it is next to impossible to get them to appreciate the claims that high Heaven has upon them. How difficult it is for them to see the sinfulness of sin, and to realize that God has made an infinite sacrifice in giving His Son to come into our world, that man might have another trial, notwithstanding his transgression of the law. God was, in the beginning, disdained by the holy pair in Eden, because they held the word of Satan above the Word of God. This is the difficulty with the people today. If they would take God's Word just as it reads, and have reverence for it, and receive the sacred oracles of God as His voice, there would be a growing regard for the law of Jehovah.

God has a law which governs the intellects of all the holy beings in His universe, and this law is designed to govern the inhabitants of this world. Christ died that the human family might be brought back to their allegiance to...
strict the consciences of men, it must surely come; and that if we make an effort to preserve our liberty, we shall be acting the part of unfaithful servants, and thus come under the condemnation of God.

This peril now threatens the people of God; and what are we going to do? Can we not assist in lifting the standard, and in calling to the front those who have a regard for their religious rights observes this memorial, the mind will be directed to the living God, who created the heavens and the earth. If man had always remembered to keep holy the Sabbath, there would never have been an atheist or an infidel in our world; but Satan has made an effort to keep God out of the mind, and has worked his plans so as to accomplish this; and having banished God from the memory of man, he puts himself, if possible, in

It is fast coming to that point when we shall see the power of the oppressive hand brought against our religious liberty, and have our right disputed to keep the day that God has blessed

and privileges? God calls upon us to awake. We know the end is near. We know that the prophecies are fast fulfilling which show that we are living in the close of this world's history.

John was shown the last work for this time (Revelation 14:9-12), and he saw a people of whom he says, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus". John tells us what was opened to him in vision: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Revelation 11:19. This vision represents a people whose attention was called to the sanctuary in heaven. There John saw the ark of God, containing the tables of stone whereon was engraven the law of God; and this people have been seeking to be in harmony with Heaven by keeping all God's commandments. There has been great opposition because they have respected the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, which by the secular and religious world has been ignored.

Now God speaks to us from Sinai's mount: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:8-10. It is the only commandment which is prefixed with a "remember," as though God had said, "Do not forget it." He has given to man the Sabbath as a memorial of Creation. Man is to obey His command, and as he the place of God, and even goes so far as to exalt himself above God, in compelling the consciences of men, which God has never done.

We are now keeping the seventh day—the very day God has told us to keep—and are here assembled on it for religious worship. The Papacy has brought in another day, a common working day, and established it in opposition to the Sabbath of the Lord. This he has done so that men shall not see or understand what are the sacred claims of God resting upon them. Well, what are we to do about it? Are we going to let the enemy make us captives, so that we shall not pay respect and reverence to God's holy day? Notwithstanding the fact that nearly the whole Protestant world have taken this child of the Papacy, and cradled and nursed it, and given it prominence, it is our privilege and duty to keep holy the Sabbath of Jehovah.

Prophecy tells us that the man of sin, the Papacy, was to change times and laws; and because we are not, with the whole world, accepting a spurious Sabbath for the genuine, persecution will be poured out upon us. And it is fast coming to that point when we shall see the power of the oppressive hand brought against our religious liberty, and have our right disputed to keep the day that God has blessed, and given to the world as a memorial of His creative work. Shall we therefore honor a day which has no foundation in God's
Word, an institution of the Papacy, and trample on the holy day that Jehovah has blessed, and set apart for man? John, looking down to the close of this world's history, saw a class who kept the commandments of God, and had the faith of Jesus. I want to be among that number; I want to be on God's side of the question.

We see that efforts are being made to restrict our religious liberties. The Sunday question is now assuming large proportions. An amendment to our Constitution is being urged in Congress, and when it is obtained, oppression must follow. I want to ask, Are you awake to this matter? and do you realize that the night cometh, when no man can work? Have you had that intensity of zeal, and that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when oppression is brought upon you? It does not seem possible to us now that any should have to stand alone; but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate. We must critically search the living oracles of Jehovah.

The means we are devoting to our comfort here, the time that we allow to go to waste, ought to be devoted to the charge that God has given us: "Search the scriptures"; (John 5:39) and much time should be spent in prayer to God, that our garments, the robes of character, the inmost adornment, may be washed in the blood of the Lamb. But this cannot be, unless we keep the commandments of God in verity and truth; and unless we are awake to the times in which we are living, we shall be unfaithful servants. Obedience to the law of God will give protection from His wrath. We need now to pray for strength from heaven, to press back this movement that is being made in our country, and we should do everything on our part to preserve our liberties, and our right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Has the Protestant world stopped to look back at the suffering caused by popery in attempting to bind men's reason, so that they should not worship God as seemed right to them? Can they not see how the Roman Church has exercised her revengeful and cruel power? Those who would not bow to her mandates had to endure the prison and the stake, torture and death. And when those were swept away who would not bow their conscience to any but the God of heaven, others would spring up to fill the ranks, and lift the standard of religious liberty and right.

God help us to arouse from the stupor that has hung over us for years! There are more souls to be saved, and a far greater work to be done in warning our world, than has yet been accomplished.

And now this nation—the greatest nation of earth—under whose government we are blessed with every religious and temporal advantage; which has been the recipient of unriplied mercies; which Providence has watched over and shielded; by which the standard of liberty and religious freedom has been lifted—will it follow the course of the Papacy, and make void God's law? And shall we sit with folded hands, and do nothing in this crisis? Shall we let this Religious Amendment movement come in, and shut us away from our privileges and rights, because we keep the commandments of God? God help us to arouse from the stupor that has hung over us for years! There are more souls to be saved, and a far greater work to be done in warning our world, than has yet been accomplished. We should seek God, especially that His grace and His power may be revealed in behalf of His people. We believe that God lives. We do not think the time specified in prophecy, when our liberties should be restricted, has fully come.

Revelation 7:1 says, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." It seems that the breaking loose of the four winds is about to take place. Verses 2-3: "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

Here was a work to be done before the angels should let go the four winds; and if we shall awake to what is transpiring right around us, we must admit that we are not ready for the contest and the perplexities which are to be brought upon us, after the
human beings to separate the sacred from the common—the divine from the human—notwithstanding discerning power is in our midst.

God is working for His people, that they may not be left in darkness. He would have us anoint our eyes with eyesalve, that we may discern between the workings of the powers of darkness and the movements of the Spirit of God. We must not give our attention to unimportant things; we need to become acquainted with the Scriptures as we have never done before. They are the rock upon which we are to stand, for everything that is revealed is for us and for our children. We can study the Bible, and understand the fulfillment of prophecy, and everything that has to do with the law of God, and Christ’s sacrifice in connection with the law of God; and we can, as did Paul, go from house to house, teaching repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Why repentance toward God?—Because the sinner has broken God’s law, and he must repent and come back to obedience of it. He is to show to the world that there is a moral law which is the great standard of righteousness, and that Satan would break it down, if possible, and have man erect a standard of his own. God’s Word is sure standing fast forever; and as we look into that mirror, we see the every one of us. If God should speak to you, He would say as He did to Elijah, “What doest thou here?” 1 Kings 19:9. God did not tell you to leave your small churches, to come and settle down in this large church, where your gift is swallowed up. I ask, “Is there no missionary work for you to engage in?” May the God of heaven stir up your minds and hearts. This work does not rest alone with the ministers; but every man is to search the Scriptures for himself, that he may give a reason of the hope that is within him with meekness and fear. Even though you have no great breadth of intellect, you can tell the simple story of the cross. There is a field before you in the home, in the neighborhood, in the city, and in the church; and it is this very work that God wants you to do. The people of God should arise and put on the armor. When all do this, we shall not see such congregations as we see here to day. There are scores of you who could take your Bibles, and, without inquiring if it will be easy, bear reproaches for His name, that you may obtain eternal life. When the Lord shall come and ask, “What improvement have you made of your talent? have you put it out to usury that it might increase more and more?” what will you answer the Master, if you have sat at ease, and done nothing to win souls to Christ?

Even though you have no great breadth of intellect, you can tell the simple story of the cross. There is a field before you in the home, in the neighborhood, in the city, and in the church; and it is this very work that God wants you to do

defects of our characters. Will any stand before God’s mirror, and because it shows them their defects, say that it is not true? We should not, as soon as our defects are pointed out, go away and forget what manner of persons we are; we must plead the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour by living faith, that pardon may be written opposite our names. We must wash our robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

When Christ went away, He gave to every man his work. This rests upon we each have a duty to perform. The light of Heaven has revealed to us that every one who would take upon himself this work, would have the blessing of God, and thus the light of truth be reflected across the pathway of others. “What doest thou here, Elijah?” Who sent you here, that you might come into this large church, to be a burden instead of a shining light, as you should be? A living church is a working church. Here you sit under the light of Heaven, and give out no rays of light to those who are in darkness; and yet you seem to be content, and do not appreciate your blessings, because you are not awake.

We need not go to foreign lands to become missionaries. All around us are fields white already to the harvest. Do not be inactive now. God calls upon you to Battle Creek who are dying of spiritual sloth, to go out into the highways and hedges, and labor so earnestly and interestedly that you will compel men to come to the light of truth. Let there be a moving out of Battle Creek, even though it be at a sacrifice. Go where you may be a blessing to others. Go where you can be a help in some weak church. Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your powers to save perishing souls; and the heavenly benediction will fall upon you; and you will finally hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew 25:21

You do not appreciate or practice the truth of God. When you go to work for the Master in earnest, we shall not hear so many complaining, “Oh, I wish I knew whether I were a Christian or not.” When you do the works of a Christian, you will have the witness that your ways please God. You must not be dependent upon a happy flight of feeling in your service to God. That is not the evidence that decides whether you are a Christian or not. The religion of Jesus Christ is a living principle within us, and every power and every faculty must be in subjection to the will of God. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. Christ says we are laborers together with God. But how many souls are you laboring to bring to the Master? There is a great and important work to be done to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord; and may God help us to do this work to His acceptance.

We read in Isaiah 8:12-13: “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.” What is the burden of the work required of the people of God at this time? Is there nothing for you to do? Has the Master given you no part to act in His vineyard?—Yes, all have a work to do. “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” Verse 16. This is the work to
be done by the people of God. "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me [converts to the truth] are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ; and he does not come to man in a hideous form, as he is sometimes represented, but as an angel of light. He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?—Tell them that Christ has warned us against just such a foe, who is man's worst enemy, yet who claims to be God; and that Christ shall make His appearance, it will be with power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands of thousands; and that when He shall come, we shall know His voice.

If you are walking humbly with God, you will understand the truth, and the preparation necessary to be made for this time. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." Deuteronomy 29:29. If you believe this, and walk out by faith, you will be saved in the kingdom of glory. We should not try to know the "whys" and "wherefores" of everything, but be content to know the simplicity of godliness. Jesus Christ has laid the plan of salvation, and opened the way before us, clear and distinct, that even the simplest who desire the truth, may find it. Special forces of darkness are at work to encircle us, and to take away our liberty of conscience. The mouths of those who have not kept pace with the work are closed, and they do not know what to say; but we who have been waiting and watching for the appearing of our Saviour, are not taken by surprise.

Are there not men and women in this congregation who have a work to do for the Master? Are there not those here who should go into new places and work as missionaries? We need missionaries at home; and we need missionaries who will go out into new fields, and see what they can do. Trad upon your one talent or two talents. Although your talents may be limited, God will accept them. Why bury them in the earth? Go to work, and do your best, and God will give you some fruit for your labor. Oh, I would rather come to the Master with garnered sheaves than to have treasures of gold and of silver. Give me souls as the fruit of my labor; and I will not ask for convenience or ease in this world. Are there not men and women here whom God will call to give an account for the ability he has lent them? There are souls for whom you are to work; there are youth with whom you are to plead. There is work to be done in the temperance line; and here you sit, from Sabbath to Sabbath, listening to the truth, while souls are perishing around you. Why not let the light which God has given you shine on the pathway of others? I beg you to consider this matter seriously.

Get ready for the week of prayer by humbling your hearts before God. Though you have yet no sheaves to bring to the Master, you can go to work even at the eleventh hour, and God will help you. Be in earnest; pray and work, and work and pray; and then act as though success depended upon your efforts. Do to the best of your ability, and God will cooperate with you. You ought to work with all the powers of your being. Awake! awake! I pray you. "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ephesians 5:14. Go out and do your little, and He will increase your capabilities, and you may keep growing in grace, and in the love of the truth. The more you use your talents, the more they will increase. We are drawing near the close of probation. We should put our talents out to the exchangers, that when the Master comes, He may receive our talents as His own; but He will return to us again both principal and interest. May the God of heaven place your feet upon the eternal Rock. I beg of you to be followers of Jesus Christ, and to bring many sheaves to the Master.

Review and Herald, vol. 2, 269–271 (December 18, 1888)
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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IN our previous articles we have studied how gospel order was first developed in the early Christian church. We have also seen how the Lord has led in the development of a similar system of order in His end-time organization, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy Christ has given detailed instructions as to the many branches of work and their various institutions needed for the finishing of His work. Intrinsic with Christ's instructions are the authority and the promised power to carry them out.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been given the gospel commission to be carried to the whole earth. It has been authorized to form the boundaries of Christ's visible church on earth. It has been empowered to protect itself from false brethren and false shepherds. It has been given the law and the Testimonies with which to detect all false doctrines. When the church says what God says on a given issue it is His voice on earth. Operating in this manner what it loose on earth is ratified in heaven. Commissioned with Christ's work and authority on earth the Seventh-day Adventist Church is authorized to receive the financial means of God's people for the carrying out of His work.

Such a God-ordained, commissioned, organized, authorized and empowered organization will have success in its God-given mission, for His Word does not return unto Him void. The early Christian church under similar circumstances accomplished its goal of sharing the gospel with the then-known world in one generation. How long did Christ plan for His remnant church to take to finish its similar task?

Consequences of Insubordination

We are told that the generation of the Great Disappointment of 1844 could have witnessed Christ's second coming. See Selected Messages, book 1, 68

In 1856 the Laodicean message was first acknowledged to be applicable to us as a people. The Spirit of Prophecy intimates that Christ would have come within a few years if the revival started in response to the Laodicean message in 1856 had continued. See Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 186–187. In 1896 Ellen White wrote that the light of the loud cry that was to have lightened the whole earth was resisted and rejected by us in 1888. See Selected Messages, book 1, 234–235

"If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory." Review and Herald, vol. 3, 399 (October 6, 1896)

Clearly there is something or some things that we as a people have been doing or not doing that have prevented Christ from coming "ere this." The more obvious causes for Christ's delay fall into two general categories. For one reason or another we have failed to first let Christ rule as to how His work is to be done on earth. Second, we have failed to experience and share the third angel's message of righteousness by faith.

The prophetess describes the consequence of our ongoing persistent disobedience of Christ's instructions of
how to do His work on earth with the following words:

"His people have been far behind. Human agencies under the divine planning may recover something of what is lost because the people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans. They have lost to their own disadvantage what they might have gained to the advancement of the truth if they had carried out the plans and will of God. Man cannot possibly stretch over that gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the divine Leader. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action." Spalding-Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 202.

Yes, it is sad but true, in many ways we have not been following the divine Leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ongoing insubordination to Christ's directives of how to operate His institutions has delayed His coming "many more years." We have been and are a dissident people, a dissident leadership and a dissident church. We are not dissidents with or dissenting from the world's or man's way of operating "the Lord's work." We are dissidents with or in disagreement with Christ Himself in how to do His work. We have turned to the methods of the world and the wisdom of man for determining the types of institutions to operate and how to operate them. The church as a body through its administrators, boards and committees has not, to a great extent had the faith to work the cities, with city centers, consisting of vegetarian restaurants, lecture rooms, treatment rooms and health food stores, with the workers living in outpost centers containing the schools, printing plants and sanitariums. To willfully disregard these counsels is a demonstration of a lack of faith. Testimonies, vol. 7, 55; Counsels on Health, 481; Selected Messages, book 2, 358; Fundamentals of Christian Education, 492.

Especially in the health work we have failed to promote Christ's directions for the workers to represent His sacrificial ministry by working as an integral part of the organization. See Medical Ministry, 252; Testimonies, vol. 8, 164; Kress Collection, 59.

In our educational institutions we have greatly ignored the Lord's directives to avoid spots (see Education, 210; Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 312), infidels (see Testimonies, vol. 6, 165; Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 401), and theatrical performances (see Fundamentals of Christian Education, 229, 253; Messages to Young People, 213-214). In our publishing work we have too often emphasized story books for our own people as well as for the world. See Counsels to Writers and Editors, 165; Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, 274.

After these many years many nationalities are still thirsting for more Spirit of Prophecy materials in their own languages. See CoIporteur Ministry, 4-5; Testimonies, vol. 9, 34, 62.

Yes, we, as ancient Israel, have been a stubborn, stiff-necked and rebellious people:

"I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruit-

ness of the sheep, but they are also greatly responsible for the organization's following of human plans in the operation of the various institutions and branches of the work. We have been told that "Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom." The Desire of Ages, 826.

When we depart from Christ's instructions to follow our own devisings we are doing the same as worshiping Baal.

To interfere with Christ's will as given in the Spirit of Prophesy or Bible in whatever aspect of the Lord's work, is to usurp His authority and to cause His people to lean on the arm of flesh. Such activity is dangerous business.

"It is dangerous business to exalt man, or to lean upon man, to make flesh our arm. What we want is to lean upon the arm that has been stretched out for us to lean upon, and that is the Lord God of Israel, and in Him we may trust." The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 564

Success a Sign of Divine Approval?

Outward appearance cannot be used to determine whether God is blessing or approving of a certain work or institution.

"A work may apparently bear the features of supreme excellence, but it is
Disobedience to the Lord can lead to such loss of spiritual discernment that spiritual losses are not discerned and worldly prosperity is regarded as tokens of God’s favor
because the harvest is come.' Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ’s Object Lessons, 69

Isolated watchmen have sounded warning trumpet sounds, but rather than being appreciated, they have too often been ignored, ridiculed and even worse. In general the undershepherds have put forth minimal effort to remove the poisonous weeds from the pasture of the flock. Those sheep that have recognized and pointed out the danger have too often been scattered from the flock.

Having the authority of Christ in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to separate all doctrinal error from the truth, many of our leadership have played the role of the watchdogs that will not bark. The servant of the Lord applies chapter nine of Ezekiel to the sealing time of the remnant church. Leadership of that time is described as dumb dogs that would not bark.

"Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus ‘Peace and safety’ is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 211

Fearfully we ask, “Have we come to that hour?”

A book entitled Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991) is presently being widely promoted to our members by our official publications. This book is teaching, promoting and encouraging the historical-critical method of relating to inspiration. With his system of biblical interpretation the individual’s own reason becomes the final arbiter as to what is inspired and thus as to what is God’s will for us today. Issues in Revelation and Inspiration, 43.

(For a more complete review see Issues in Revelation and Inspiration: Adventist Theological Society Publications: Berrien Springs, MI 49103) This method of relating to inspiration by the historical-critical approach has been rejected by us as a denomination. It was most recently officially rejected by a document approved by the Annual Council of 1986. “Even a modified use of this method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable.” (“Methods of Bible Study Report,” Adventist Review; January 22, 1987) ibid., Preface.

This tendency of ours to place man’s wisdom and reason ahead of clear Spirit of Prophecy counsels on how to carry on the Lord’s work . . . is a reflection of Israel’s apostasy in Elijah’s day and the apostasy presently in the world around us.

The book—Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers—on page 143 attempts to protect itself against such complaints by stating: “To a large extent, this book simply describes the approach to Christian living that Adventists have always practiced but simply have been reluctant to admit in print. If anything is unusual, then it is the candor with which the ‘illustrations’ are laid.”

We as Seventh-day Adventists are quick to note and claim that other Christian religions tend to be selective in their use of the Scriptures. We need to recognize that they do so because they are using the historical-critical approach to divine revelation and inspiration. When we as Seventh-day Adventists pick and choose in the Spirit of Prophecy as to those portions of how to operate the branches of the Lord’s work we are also actually using the same method of interpreting divine inspiration as pointed out to us by the above author.

In all reality, the Calvinistic teachings of the New (to Adventism) Theology are an attempt to theologically harmonize our pattern of partial obedience to the Lord’s instructions to us in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The sin and repent, and the inability to overcome all sin or disobedience to God in this life, as well as the historical-critical method of relating to inspiration are all very compatible with the picking and choosing methods of relating to the Spirit of Prophecy. Thus they are all very much descriptive as to how modern Israel lives and “works for Christ.”

This tendency of ours to place man’s wisdom and reason ahead of clear Spirit of Prophecy counsels on how to carry on the Lord’s work, and this desire to place human reason as judge of scriptural inspiration is a reflection of Israel’s apostasy in Elijah’s day and the apostasy presently in the world around us.

“There are many lessons to be drawn from Elijah’s experience during these days of discouragement and apparent defeat—lessons invaluable to the servants of God in this age, marked as it is by general departure from right. The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet’s day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their heinous influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. It is publicly taught that we have reached a time when human reason should be exalted above the teachings of the Word.” Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, vol. 6, 371

With the full authority of God’s Word and the full ecclesiastical authority of His visible church on earth, Adventist leadership has apparently, in spite of the turmoil and confusion among us, taken a neutral wait-and-see attitude. Rather than giving the straight testimony of what God says on the issues confronting us, leadership seems to be “straddling the fence,” with great dangers to themselves and to the flock. Though such a position may seem expe-
dient to man, God perceives it as a grievous crime.

"Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God." Testimonies, vol. 3, 281

Jesus views the serious spiritual condition of His Laodicean people with their lukewarm tendency to halt between two opinions.

"Are you not halting between two opinions? Are you not neglecting to heed the light which God has given you? Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. You know not the time of your visitation. The great sin of the Jews was that of neglecting and rejecting present opportunities. As Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, pharisaical pride and apostasy." Pamphlet 117, Testimony for the Battle Creek Church, 54

Such strong words are appropriate, for when we try to maintain a neutral position we are actually an ally of the hosts of darkness.

"No one can occupy a neutral position; . . . he who does not give himself wholly to God is under the control of another power, listening to another voice, whose suggestions are of an entirely different character. Half-and-half service places the human agent on the side of the enemy as a successful ally of the hosts of darkness." Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 94

The servant of the Lord refers to a new movement in Adventism that would discard the old truths, publish books of a new order, do a great work in the cities and allow nothing to stand in its way.

"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. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. 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. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure." Selected Messages, book 1, 204. Again we fearfully ask, "Have we come to that hour?" Could it be that the above warnings written at the time of the alpha of apostasy of Dr. J. H. Kellogg and his followers were prophetically of an even greater fulfillment during the prophesied "of a most startling nature" (Selected Messages, book 1,197), Omega of apostasy? See ibid., 193-200

Operating the branches of the Lord's work according to man's wisdom rather than in conformity to the Lord's instruction is clearly insubordination. Failure to define truth in the areas of doctrinal confusion is clearly disobedience to the call to the gospel ministry. Insubordination and disobedience are sin, and willful sin is synonymous with apostasy. We see ourselves reflected in the general condition of the world portrayed in the following quotation:

"The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and His law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible. The enticements and promises of God's Word, its threats against disobedience and idolatry—these seem powerless to melt their hearts." Prophets and Kings, 178

Anything that separates us from following and obeying Christ is apostasy. Disobedience is the sign of disloyalty and apostasy in God's kingdom.

"Those who dishonor God by transgressing His law may talk sanctification, but it is of that value, and just as acceptable, as was the offering of Cain. Obedience to all the commandments of God is the only true sign of sanctification. Disobedience is the sign of disloyalty and apostasy" (MS 41, 1897). The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary: Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 7, 908

When Christ tries to save us from apostasy by sending to us His greatest blessing of revealing to us our true condition, we too often rise up in rejection of the revelation.

"When the chastisement came in reproof, in warning, or by affliction, to save from apostasy and ruin, then there was a turning upon Jesus with a defiant, stubborn, insipid resistance which was fearful. And why, says the proud, perverse spirit, must I be crushed by rebuke? Why must I be humiliated? They forget all the light, all the favors previously given, and feel that they are abused because God takes with them the only course which will bring them to a knowledge of themselves, that they may find peace in Him through submission, penitence for sin, and confiding trust in God. For this reason God sends to the church the greatest blessing He can give for them of their true condition, for the purpose of saving them from apostasy."

If the thought of apostasy is grievous to you, then "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"; and believe in Him who is "able to keep you from falling"
them in a knowledge of themselves. Satan is alluring them to sin that they may be lost; God gives a clear presentation of their sins that they may repent and be saved. The greatest danger of the world is that sin does not appear sinful. This is the greatest evil existing in the church; sin is glossed over with self-complacency. Blessed indeed are they who possess a sensitive conscience; who can weep and mourn over their spiritual poverty and wanderings from God; who are poor in spirit and can receive the reproof God sends them; and who, with confessions and brokenness of heart, will take their places, all penitent, in humiliation at the cross of Christ. God knows it is good for men to tread a hard and humble path, to encounter difficulties, to experience disappointments, and to suffer affliction. Faith strengthens by coming in conflict with doubt, and resisting unbelief through the strength of Jesus." Signs of the Times, vol. 1, p. 35

If we are grieved by the term apostasy being applied to our wayward life and work, then we need to flee to Christ for the faith and strength to follow "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"The indulgence of spiritual pride, of unholy desires, of evil thoughts, of anything that separates us from an intimate and sacred association with Jesus, imperils our souls. . . . We must "fight the good fight of faith," if we would "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12). We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5). If the thought of apostasy is grievous to you, . . . then "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9); and believe in Him who is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24) God's Amazing Grace, 333

In our next article we will delve deeper into the root problems of our persistent insubordination and disobedience. We will study further into the usurpation of Christ's authority in His remnant church in an attempt to better understand the gravity of our situation as a people. Our purpose in doing so is that once recognizing our true condition we will then flee to Christ for repentance, revival and reformation.

(To be continued)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From time to time I have found and read your magazine. I must say that I have believed all that I have read. I am surprised to know that there are others of us that can possibly believe differently. The picture in the current issue does so beautifully show that the way of the cross leads home.

—LW, Mississippi

I've read many wonderful articles in the pages of your magazine. They have inspired, corrected, and encouraged me on in my Christian pathway, but never have I been so touched as when I read Preston Monterrey's personal testimony and confession in "Show Me Thy Glory, Part II."

I thank God for men who are willing to be made that humble. It is only when we realize our need that God can help us. May the Lord bless all of you at Hope International as you continue to feed the Lord's flock.

—JC, New Jersey

The Firm Foundation magazine has been helping me stay on track for seven years. I always check up on your articles in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. So far you have always been on target.

—LA, Nevada

I am receiving my magazine on a regular basis. Very timely as we are in the midst of a lockdown, and I am able to read and study more. There is much to do for God in this prison, and the magazine helps me remember who God is and my purpose. I rejoice over present truth.

—RS, California

Thank you for the wonderful meetings at the Pennsylvania camp meeting. I was so filled with the wonderful sermons and seminars. Our people hunger and thirst after such talks because we are not fed at the churches, and so many of us are looking for excuses to stay in our sins. I am praying as I know you are for all of us. Church has become more of a problem these days than a blessing. I leave jollier instead of at peace.

I am glad to see that you are not advising people to leave or even to start home churches. I know it is difficult at times because I, too, wish I could be with folks of like faith, but what will happen to the churches if we do this? What will our witness be? Will we be helping or hindering the Second Coming? Please continue to try to work with the brethren of the conferences wherever possible. I do wish that you were allowed to speak in the churches, but the wrongs committed against us do not allow us to also commit wrongs.

—AN, Pennsylvania

I read the insert in the last Adventist Review about independent ministries. Too bad it put you and Hartland on the "black list." I don't think all of their accusations were correct.

—PB, Tennessee

The tragedy of the tract and the book on "Issues" is revealed in the statement on page 5 of the tract that a theological rebuttal is not being attempted. But the issues are theological and must be met on that level. It is alleged that Scripture and Ellen G. White support varying viewpoints regarding the nature of Christ, righteousness by faith.

Actually, the historic position on righteousness by faith is affirmed in Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . at least 140 times, and the historic position on the nature of Christ is stated very clearly in the chapter "God the Son." There are many other problems with "Issues," but these are the worst.

—JL, California

After reading the North American Division's production "Issues," I must say that I am shocked about their version of what happened between the Hope International members and the Yelm, Washington, Church. I was a member of that church for many years and observed that Hope people always behaved in an orderly, dignified manner. Never was there any evidence or indication that the members of Hope wanted to "gain control of the church." However, they did not accept the "New Theology" that was delivered from the pulpit regularly.

—BR, Washington

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Apostasy in God’s Church

In recent months there has been much discussion among Seventh-day Adventist leaders and laity regarding whether “apostasy” is an appropriate description of God’s remnant people at the present time. As with any issue, God’s opinion stands above all human emotion and inclination; therefore, we submit the following compilation, which is by no means exhaustive, for the study of our readers.—THE EDITORS

Apostasy Prophesied

The Lord has warned me that there will come a great apostasy. There will come a falling away in spirituality. Many will turn away their ears from hearing the truth, and will accept fables. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 378

Some are acting the part of Aaron, to help on the work of apostasy. They have been weighed in the balances, and have been found wanting. Men are spoiling their record, and are proving that they are not to be trusted, but that they will betray the interests of the cause of God, making them the sport of sinners. The messages of heavenly origin that God has sent to His people, to prepare them to stand in the last days, they have sneered at and scorned. But the evidence we have had for the past fifty years of the presence of the Spirit of God with us as a people, will stand the test of those who are now arraying themselves on the side of the enemy and bracing themselves against the message of God. *The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White*, 139

Confederacies will increase in number and power as we draw nearer to the end of time. These confederacies will create opposing influences to the truth, forming new parties of professed believers who will act out their own delusive theories. The apostasy will increase. “Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” Men and women have confederated to oppose the Lord God of heaven, and the church is only half awake to the situation. There needs to be much more prayer, much more of earnest effort, among professed believers. *Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 532 (August 5, 1909)

“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.” 1 Timothy 4:1. The time of this apostasy is here. Every conceivable effort will be made to throw doubt upon the positions that we have occupied for over half a century. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 195

Now at the present time God designs a new and fresh impetus shall be given to His work. Satan sees this, and he is determined it shall be hindered. He knows that if he can deceive the people who claim to believe present truth, [and make them believe] that the work the Lord designs to do for His people is a removing of the old landmarks, something which they should, with most determined zeal, resist, then he exults over the deception he has led them to believe. The work for this time has certainly been a surprising work of various hindrances, owing to the false setting of matters before the minds of many of our people. That which is food to the churches is regarded as dangerous, and should not be given them. And this slight difference of ideas is allowed to unsettle the faith, to cause apostasy, to break up unity, to sow discord, all because they do not know what they are striving about themselves. Brethren, is it not best to be sensible? Heaven is looking upon us all, and what can they think of recent developments? While in this condition of things, building up barriers, we not only deprive ourselves of great light and...
precious advantages, but just now, when we so much need it, we place ourselves where light cannot be communicated from Heaven that we ought to communicate to others. *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 118-519

**Apostasy Defined**

There are times when apostasy comes into the ranks, when piety is left out of the heart by those who should have kept step with their divine Leader. The people of God separate from the source of their strength, and pride, vanity, extravagance, and display follow. There are idols within and idols without; but God sends the Comforter as a reprover of sin, that His people may be warned of their apostasy and rebuked for their backsliding. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 197

Are you not halting between two opinions? Are you not neglecting to heed the light which God has given you? Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. You know not the time of your visitation. The great sin of the Jews was that of neglecting and rejecting present opportunities. As Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, pharisaical pride and apostasy. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 72

If those who have had great light have not corresponding faith and obedience, they soon become leavened with the prevailing apostasy; another spirit controls them. While they have been exalted to heaven in point of opportunities and privileges, they are in a worse condition than the most zealous advocates of error. *The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 6, 1893, 170-171

Those who dishonor God by transgressing His law may talk sanctification, but it is of that value, and just as acceptable, as was the offering of Cain. Obedience to all the commandments of God is the only true sign of sanctification. Disobedience is the sign of disloyalty and apostasy. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 908

**The Beginnings of Apostasy**

The work of apostasy begins in some secret rebellion of the heart against the requirements of God's law. Unholy desires, unlawful ambitions, are cherished and indulged, and unbelief and darkness separate the soul from God. If we do not overcome these evils, they will overcome us. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 2, 210 (May 8, 1888)

What was the origin of the great apostasy? How did the church first depart from the simplicity of the gospel? By conforming to the practices of paganism, to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity by the heathen. The apostle Paul declared, even in his day, “The mystery of iniquity doth already work.” 2 Thessalonians 2:7. During the lives of the apostles the church remained comparatively pure. But “toward the latter end of the second century most of the churches assumed a new form; the first simplicity disappeared, and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to their graves, their children, along with new converts, ... came forward and new-modeled the cause.”—Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, ch. 6, par. 17, p. 51. To secure converts, the exalted standard of the Christian faith was lowered, and as the result “a pagan-mindedness, and spiritual darkness take possession of the church. We would not give glory to man, but we should be recreant to our sense of duty not to speak in strong and pointed language our views of the importance of these testimonies. The fearful apostasy of those who have slighted and despised them has furnished many sad proofs of the dangerous business of doing despite to the Spirit of grace. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 610

Sad as is the story of Solomon's apostasy, it portrays the result of separation from God. One false step prepares the way for a second and a third, and every additional step is taken more easily than the last. It is our privilege to take heed to the God-given warning of Solomon's life. As followers of Christ, we are to honor our Master by studying and obeying His teachings. We are to manifest our love and fear of God by refusing to conform to the world's standard of right. Let us beware of departing from the simplicity of our faith. The Christian's standard of right must ever be the standard that is given in Holy

**Obedience to all the commandments of God is the only true sign of sanctification. Disobedience is the sign of disloyalty and apostasy**

flood, flowing into the church, carried with it its customs, practices, and idols.”—Gavazzi, *Lectures*, page 278. As the Christian religion secured the favor and support of secular rulers, it was nominally accepted by multitudes; but while in appearance Christians, many “remained in substance pagans, especially worshiping in secret their idols.”—*Ibid.*, page 278. *The Great Controversy*, 384-385

One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the testimonies of God's Spirit. *The Publishing Ministry*, 360

We have learned by painful experience, also, that when these testimonies are silent, or their warning lightly regarded, coldness, backsliding, worldly-Writ. Constantly we are to guard against every worldly influence that would weaken us in moral power. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 160 (August 17, 1905)

The greatest light and blessing that God has bestowed is not a security against transgression and apostasy in these last days. Those whom God has exalted to high positions of trust may turn from Heaven's light to human wisdom. Their light will then become darkness, their God-entrusted capabilities a snare, their character an offense to God. God will not be mocked. A departure from Him has been and always will be followed by its sure results. The commission of acts that displease God will, unless decidedly repented of and forsaken, instead of seeking to justify them, lead the evildoer on step by step in

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deception, till many sins are committed with impunity. *Manuscript Releases, Vol. 7*, 186–187

**Various Faces of Apostasy**

The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of pretended illumination because of a knowledge of the truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. There is a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God and to the testimony of His Spirit. There is a spirit of idolatrous exaltation of mere human reason above the revealed wisdom of God. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 79

Before the last developments of the work of apostasy there will be a confusion of faith. There will not be clear and definite ideas concerning the mystery of God. One truth after another will be corrupted. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16. *Signs of the Times*, vol. 3, 118 (May 28, 1894)

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

The greatest danger of God’s ancient people arose from their inclination to disregard His direct requirements and to follow, instead, their own desires. Such is the sin and danger of His people at the present time. The indolence, backsliding, and degeneracy in our churches may be traced, in a great degree, to the lax sentiments which have been coming in as a result of conformity to the world. The Sabbath is not so scientifically regarded as it should be. Improper marriages, with their train of evils, have dragged down some of the most useful men to apostasy and ruin. *Signs of the Times*, vol. 1, 407 (January 24, 1884)

From this record we may learn how little dependence can be placed in men who trust in men, and do not make God their reliance. Those who are living in these last days are in the greatest danger of placing their confidence in men rather than in the true and living God. The Lord has given instruction that the history of the apostasy of Israel is now to be presented, because men who in the past have had great light have become self-sufficient, and are looking to men, trusting in human leaders, who are themselves practising evil. Men who ought to stand as firm as a rock to principle are treading in the same path that the Israelites followed. “Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Timothy 4:1. This is the snare that has come into our ranks. There are wrong sentiments that have to be met. There are men who are acting the part of Aaron at the very time when every soul should be working to seal the law among God’s disciples. They are building up the very things that God has specified should not be built up. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 493 (February 4, 1900)

Can we then be surprised to hear of ministers falling into temptation and sin, disgracing the cause they were professedly advocating? Can we wonder that there are apostasies when men who urge conversion upon others are not themselves converted; when they commend to others the love of Christ which does not glow in their own souls, preaching repentance which they themselves have not practiced, and faith which they have no experimental knowledge of, telling of a Saviour whom they have never known except by rumor? They are self-deceived men, not far from destruction. Pitiful indeed is their situation. All may seem peaceful to them, because the palsy of death is upon them. We are fully aware that dishonest men, immoral men, who preach the Word, are not always reproved and warned. They are not unmasked. They learn to hold the truth in unrighteousness, and can tamper with it without a trembling of heart and conscience. Oh, that with pen and voice we might lead the people who claim to be the depositories of sacred and eternal truth to feel the necessity of enshrining the Word of God in their heart, and bringing every thought, word, and action into subjection to Jesus Christ. It is a fearful responsibility to be in daily connection with the truth of God, telling others of eternal truth and yet be unsanctified through the truth. *Manuscript Releases, Vol. 11*, 89–90

Disobedience is the sign of disloyalty and apostasy. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” John 14:21. Again, Christ repeated the condition of union with Him. This promise is made to every sincere Christian. Our Saviour speaks so plainly that no one need fail to understand that true love will always produce obedience. Obedience is the sign of true love. Christ and the Father are one, and those who in truth receive Christ will love God as the great center of their adoration, and will also love one another; and in so doing they will keep the law. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 3, 512 (October 26, 1897)

**The Results of Apostasy**

Many will never, never have eternal life unless they see the sinfulness of their course of action, and realize how greatly it has dishonored God who are acting the part of Aaron at the very time when every soul should be working to seal the law among God’s disciples. They are building up the very things that God has specified should not be built up. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 493 (February 4, 1900)

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**The Results of Apostasy**

Many will never, never have eternal life unless they see the sinfulness of their course of action, and realize how greatly it has dishonored God.
Laodicean message applies to your case. Many have become corrupted in faith, corrupted in principle. Many have dishonored God, and sold themselves to sin, and in word and deed have helped others on in the strange paths they have chosen, until they do not know what pure religion is. They have sacrificed faith for worldly favor, and are leavened with that which is opposed to righteousness. At first they felt some compunction of conscience, but they refused to turn back, and now hardness of heart is preparing them for hopeless apostasy, and the judgments of God. The appeals of their Saviour have been resisted, His mercy abused, His provisions of redeeming love, made by infinite sacrifice, rejected. His heart yearns over them, His hand has been outstretched to save, but they turned away, slighting His invitations of mercy. And yet His hand is stretched out still, for our Saviour made provision that all who receive Him shall be given power to become the sons of God. *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, 13–14

Remember that an example of lukewarmness, carelessness, and indifference, is contagious. It is reproduced in a multitude of ways, and iniquity abounds. Many are bound about with worldliness, and apostasy is concealing the very lifeblood of the soul, because of the coldness of ministers professing to be watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Earnest spirituality, and the quickening influence of the Spirit of God, will set men to work, not lazily, but most earnestly, to warn men to escape the perils which threaten to destroy them. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 1, 385 (December 18, 1883)

It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out. *The Great Controversy*, 458

**Responses to Apostasy**

We need to be constantly on our guard, to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. The indulgence of spiritual pride, of unholy desires, of evil thoughts, of anything that separates us from an intimate and sacred association with Jesus, imperils our souls. We must have living faith in God. We must “fight the good fight of faith,” if we would “lay hold on eternal life.” 2 Timothy 6:12. We are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” 1 Peter 1:5. If the thought of apostasy is grievous to you, and you do not desire to become the enemies of the truth, the accusers of the brethren, then “abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9); and believe in Him who is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 24. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 2, 210 (May 8, 1888)

If all of those who come together for meetings of edification and prayer, could be regarded as true worshipers, then might we hope, though much would still remain to be done for us. But it is in vain to deceive ourselves. Things are far from being what the appearance would indicate. From a distant view much may appear beautiful, which, upon close examination, will be found full of deformities. The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of pretended illumination because of a knowledge of the truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. There is a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God, and to the testimony of His Spirit. "Ellen G. White Pamphlets in the Concordance, No. 117, 61"

In this our day, when many, even among those who claim to be numbered among God’s people, are not fully decided as to the right course, the Lord is calling for men who will move steadfastly in the path that He has marked out, and with unshaken determination carry out His purposes. Those who occupy positions of responsibility should know what saith the Lord. Like Moses of old, they should stand unflinchingly for the right, stemming the current of evil. In the critical times in which we are living, men of determination are needed—men who will stand firmly for the truth at all times and under all circumstances—men who, when they see that others are becoming untrue to principle, will lift their voice in warning against the danger of apostasy. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 496 (February 11, 1909)

We are living in the last days of this earth’s history, and we may be surprised at nothing in the line of apostasies and denials of the truth. Unbelief has now come to be a fine art which men work at to the destruction of their souls through faith and apostasy. *The Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 496 (February 11, 1909)

We are living in the last days of this earth’s history, and we may be surprised at nothing in the line of apostasies and denials of the truth. Unbelief has now come to be a fine art which men work at to the destruction of their souls. There is constant danger of there being shams in pulpit preachers, whose lives contradict the words they speak; but the voice of warning and of admonition will be heard as long as time shall last; and those who are guilty of transactions that should never be entered into, when reproved or counseled through the Lord’s appointed agencies, will resist the message and refuse to be corrected. They will go on as did Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, until the Lord takes away their reason, and their hearts become unimpressible. The Lord’s word will come to them; but if they choose not to hear it, the Lord will make them responsible for their own ruin. *Selected Messages*, book 2, 147

**Prevention of Apostasy**

Shall we give heed to the warning of Solomon’s apostacy, and shun the first approach to those sins that overcame him
who was called the wisest of men? In these days of peril, nothing but obedience will keep man from apostasy. God has bestowed on man great light and many blessings. But unless this light and these blessings are received, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness, and how great is that darkness! Their entrusted capabilities are a snare to them. They become an offense to God. There can be no mockery of God without the sure result. The Review and Herald, vol. 5, 216 (February 22, 1906)

We urge you to consider this danger: That which we have most to fear is nominal Christianity. We have many who profess the truth who will be overcome because they are not acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot distinguish His voice from that of a stranger. There is to be no dread of anyone being borne down even in a widespread apostasy, who has a living experience in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If Jesus be formed within, the hope of glory, the illiterate as well as the educated can bear the testimony of our faith, saying, "I know in whom I have believed." 2 Timothy 1:12. Some will not, in argument, be able to show wherein their adversary is wrong, having never had any advantages that others have had, yet these are not overcome by the apostasy, because they have the evidence in their own heart that they have the truth, and the most subtle reasoning and assaults of Satan cannot move them from their knowledge of the truth, and they have not a doubt or fear that they are themselves in error. Selected Messages, book 3, 399–400

That which Satan has led men to do in the past, he will if possible lead them to do again. The early church was deceived by the enemy of God and man, and apostasy was brought into the ranks of those who professed to love God; and today, unless the people of God awake out of sleep, they will be taken unawares by the devices of Satan. Among those who claim to believe in the near coming of the Saviour, how many have backslidden, how many have lost their first love, and come under the description written of the Laodicean church, denominating them as neither cold nor hot? Satan will do his utmost to keep them in a state of indifference and stupor. May the Lord reveal to the people the perils that are before them, that they may arouse from their spiritual slumber, and trim their lamps, and be found watching for the Bridegroom when He shall return from the wedding. The Review and Herald, vol. 2, 615 (November 22, 1892)

Hope in Spite of Apostasy

When piety is left out of the heart, the people of God separate from the source of their strength, and pride, vanity, extravagance, and display follow. There are idols within and idols without; but God sends the Holy Spirit as the reprover of sin, that His people may be warned of their apostasy, and be rebuked for their backsliding. When men are led to realize that their human wisdom is but foolishness, then it is that they turn to the Lord to seek Him with all the heart, that they may find Him. When the precious manifestations of His love are gratefully acknowledged and appreciated, the Lord pours in the balm of comfort and the oil of joy. North Pacific Union Gleaner, April 21, 1909

Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. . . . The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasies. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, 911

Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Testimonies

This book is a union of the private collections of five men who were prominent leaders and pioneers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and who received numerous personal and general testimonies from the Lord through Ellen G. White 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 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.

This is actually the first time this Spirit of Prophecy collection has been typeset in an unabridged, easy-to-read edition. Previous editions have been photocopies of typewritten manuscripts. This convenient-sized volume (5½ x 8½) 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 $10 plus 15% for postage and handling.
51-Volume Spirit of Prophecy Library
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These books are packed. Each 8\(\times\)11-inch page contains four pages from one of the “little red books.” In nearly every case the regular pagination is preserved intact by photo-reducing each page as a whole, right out of the familiar volumes you are used to. Pictures, section headings, chapter titles—everything is there, just smaller than usual. The typesize ranges from eight point at the smallest (like this) to as large as eleven points (like this). You will be pleased with these books. The high-quality paper is extra thin for convenience and extra white for easy visibility.

This printing (which contains a few minor flaws) is the same edition that Pastor Ron Spear uses: “This set of books has been a tremendous blessing to me. When I travel on speaking appointments I always take along my whole set of Spirit of Prophecy books. For years I carried them in a specially made ‘captain’s case.’ It had to be specially made because with all the books inside it weighed 78 pounds, and the treatment it received on the airlines meant that the original case lasted only about six months. Sheet metal and fiberglass helped hold things together after that. But at nearly 80 pounds it was a terrible strain on my back. More than once I got a really bad twist when I tried to lift it out of a car trunk.

“Now those days are over. I can fit these three volumes and my Bible into a little carry-on bag, and it weighs only about 15 pounds. If you want to carry God’s Word with you, memorize as much as you can—and get a set of these books for the rest.”—Pastor Ron Spear

Abbreviations of books in this 3-volume set: PP, PK, DA, AA, GC, MB, COL, EW, MCP, LS, SC, SL, TM, GW, Ev, ChS, 1T-9T, 1SM, 2SM, 3SM, FE, CT, 1SP-4SP, AH, CG, WM, MH, CH, MM, CDF, Te, MYP, CS, CM, PM, CW, CSW. Also included are the complete Scripture Index to the Spirit of Prophecy writings as found in vol. 1 of the Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White, and the Ellen G. White comments from The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7-A.
Unveiling God’s Character

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The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 269, concerning the open and shut door of A.D. 31 which occurred as a result of a type/antitype transition from earthly to heavenly ministry.

The open and shut doors of A.D. 31 are easy to see. But what about the open and shut doors of 1844? If they represent a significant development of truth that will bring polarization and judgment on a par with what occurred in A.D. 31, what can we say that we understand about the truths that bring this polarization? Do we as Seventh-day Adventists have an understanding of truth significantly different from that of the evangelical churches of our day? Have we a clearer understanding of the revelation of Jesus than we do most in Christianity?

We read in Counsels to Writers and Editors, 29-30 that the prophecies of Revelation are laden with essential truth needful for our time. “Our lesson for the present time is, How may we most clearly comprehend and present the gospel that Christ came in person to present to John on the Isle of Patmos—the gospel that is termed ‘the revelation of Jesus Christ?’ We are to present to our people a clear explanation of Revelation. We are to give them the Word of God just as it is, with as few of our own explanations as possible. No one mind can do this work alone. Although we have in trust the grandest and most important truth ever presented to the world, we are only babes, as far as understanding truth in all of its bearings is concerned. Christ is the great Teacher, and that which He revealed to John, we are to tax our minds to understand and clearly to define. We are facing the most important issues that men have ever been called upon to meet.

“The theme of greatest importance is the third angel’s message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths.”

What does this Most Holy Place understanding of Christ suggest as it relates to the second issue in the great controversy in which God is seeking to show, contrary to Satan’s claims, that He can be and is a God of justice as well as of love, and that His law is a law of love, forever binding and unchangeable? What does the open door into the Most Holy Place have to do with God’s purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, His remnant people? And what does it have to do with the second coming of Christ?

I tremble when I read in Early Writings, 55-56 Mrs. White’s inspired description of those in the holy place who, not realizing that Christ has changed ministration from there to the Most Holy Place, are left worshiping they know not whom. Does the Christ you know, as an Adventist, differ from the one you knew before you joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church? I do not wish to be critical, but I am alarmed beyond description when I read the following in the Adventist Review of March 5, 1992, under the Anchor Points section in the article “Jesus, Center of All Our Hopes: “Do Adventists, then, have any understanding of Jesus that is unique? None that is unique…”

If this statement is true, are we not then in danger of worshiping we know not whom in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary? (“Who shall readeth let him understand.” Matthew 24:15) Have we that revelation of Jesus Christ that was promised and prophesied, or are we but “babes as far as understanding truth (God) in all of its bearing is concerned”?

“I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time.” Counsels to Writers and Editors, 39

It is high time the Seventh-day Adventist Church comes to grips with its prophetic destiny. If we have in fact laid claim to possessing truth, what does it mean? Do we merely have a scoop on tomorrow’s news? If truth and God are synonymous, and in a very real sense they are, then it is time we figure out what we know about God and truth that Babylon does not know.

It is the work of the first angel of Revelation 14 (which angel represents God’s remnant people) to announce to the world another hour of judgment. To the extent that our church does not understand its own oracles, it is unable to prepare a people for this judgment. Until it understands them it will most likely be found promoting an ecumenical message unrelated to the second issue in the great controversy, which issue must be settled before Christ can return.

God granted ancient Israel oracles and symbols and ceremonies that were intended to unveil to the world His character of love, but ancient Israel never understood the meaning of their legacy. They cherished their symbols and crucified their reality. They accepted Satan’s accusations that God is a God of justice but not a God of love and thereby refused to follow Christ into the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

Modern Israel, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has also been granted oracles and symbols. These oracles are designed to address the second issue of the great controversy by showing the compatibility of God’s mercy with His justice. In a denominated sense, even though it is in apostasy, the Seventh-day Adventist Church will remain God’s church on earth until its members accept their own message and receive “Jesus’ new name” on their foreheads (See Early Writings, 15) or they completely reject their own message and receive the mark of the beast.

A group of people stood beside Christ, when at age twelve, He beheld the sanctuary for the first time, and saw there the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. “With most of the people in the days of Christ, the observance of this feast had degenerated into formalism. But what was its significance to the Son of God!… Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.” Desire of Ages, 77-78

Today, two groups of people are also looking at the Lamb—one from the holy place, and the other from the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. For most, their formalistic view of Him is void of practical meaning as it applies to their daily lives. To them as to the Jews of old, the Lamb only serves to quiet a guilty conscience. But from the Most Holy Place comes a unique perspective of the Lamb, the perspective proclaimed by the third angel of Revelation 14, whose message embraces the messages of the first and second angels. To those who receive these messages, the meaning of their existence opens, giving them a “just appreciation of the work for the present time.”

The question before each and every Seventh-day Adventist today is, Have we followed Christ into the Most Holy Place, or will the Christ of the Most Holy Place, the cornerstone of our faith, fall on us and grind us to pieces? The choice, for a brief time at least, is ours. God help us, is my prayer.
Editorial
Continued from 2

sanctification as each attempts to understand and live out his or her personal relationship with God." Page 8

Hope International has no desire to force our "particular views" upon anyone. Force is never to be used by Christians. Everyone is free to accept or reject even our Lord, though it brings pain to His heart. The freedom of choice is to be respected even if the choice proves to be unwise or potentially fatal. But if we truly love an erring brother or sister we will do all within our power to encourage him or her to make the right choice.

Hope International did not invent the doctrine of the fallen nature of Christ or of character perfection. Perfect obedience to God's law is not the invention of Hope International. These doctrines are rooted and grounded in God's Word and as such they are vital "issues" that our Lord and Saviour desires that we understand and through His strength experience.

Dear friend, there is never an excuse for someone who purports to believe these doctrines to try to force them upon you in an un-Christlike, mean-spirited attitude. But please understand that we at Hope International sincerely believe that the doctrines of the fallen human nature of Christ, character perfection and obedience to God's law by faith in Jesus, are of such vital importance that under God we cannot remain silent while false understandings threaten to undermine these vital, precious truths.

The view that Christ had a fallen human nature is a Bible-based doctrine. See Romans 8:3; 1:3; Hebrews 2:11, 14-17; John 1:1-3, 14

In his book The Word was Made Flesh, (available from Hope International), Elder Ralph Larson compiled a total of 1,200 statements by Seventh-day Adventist leaders, all in perfect agreement that our Lord came to this earth in the nature of fallen man. A full one-third of these statements were from the inspired pen of Ellen White.

In his exhaustive research of the 100-year period of 1852-1952, not a single statement was found in support of the view that Christ had come to this earth with an unfallen human nature—not one.

Out of the hundreds of statements made by the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the fallen nature of Christ, here is one clear, decisive statement:

"Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Himself our sinful nature." Signs of the Times, vol. 4, 254

Dear reader, much has been written by our prophet explaining righteousness by faith, justification, and sanctification that it would take literally a very large book to contain it all. Certainly no topic received more attention by the Spirit of Prophecy than righteousness by faith. Here are two statements from the pen of Inspiration that should prove to be a blessing to honest seekers of truth.

"By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness." Christ's Object Lessons, 512

"No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct." The Desire of Ages, 555-556

Not long ago we received a letter from a Seventh-day Adventist pastor which stated that he believed and conceded that the Spirit of Prophecy taught that it was possible to gain the victory over every known sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. However, he said that the Spirit of Prophecy always used the words "may" or "can" showing that although it was possible and obviously preferable to live victoriously, victorious living was not a necessary requirement in order to be saved. In effect, one could remain a true, saved Christian while knowingly committing sin.

Brothers and sisters, this is an example of one of Satan's most dangerous doctrines. Thousands, yes millions will forfeit eternal life because they accepted this hellish doctrine. Sleeping in carnal security, they will satisfy themselves that as long as they believe in Jesus they will retain their justification even while committing known sin. But what saith the Lord concerning this?

"No one can believe with the heart unto righteousness and obtain justification by faith, while continuing the practice of those things which the Word of God forbids, or while neglecting any known duty. . . . It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained." Selected Messages, book 1, 396-397

"No one who truly loves and fears God will continue to transgress the law in any particular. When man transgresses he is under the condemnation of the law, and it becomes to him a yoke of bondage. Whatever his profession may be he is not justified, which means pardoned." My Life Today, 250

Friend, if you are not pardoned you are not saved. Now, while probation lingers, let us forsake those sins that so easily betst us and accept the righteousness of Christ.

One more important quotation from the pen of Inspiration: "Exact obedience is required, and those that say that it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth." Review and Herald, vol. 6, 519

Dear friend, these are just a few of the counsels of the Lord regarding justification by faith. Many, many more statements could be given. And in case someone is tempted to say that we have not used the Bible to teach the doctrine of victory over sin, we include the following references for the reader to study: Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 18:10; Isaiah 50:7-10; 59:19; Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 1:21; 5:48; 7:21-23; Romans 6:2; 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:57; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 12:9-10; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 6:11; Jude 24

Again we want to encourage each true seeker after truth not to place any man, any publication or any organization above the Bible, for it is to be our only creed. Let each one of us be as the noble Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11

Dear reader, we encourage you to obtain Hope International's response to the N.A.D authorized booklet "Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Organizations." Hope International has produced a video presentation entitled "Issues: Confusion or Solutions?" It is available from Hope International on two quality VHS video cassettes for a suggested donation of only $30 plus 15% postage. 

THE EDITORS

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Imperative Necessity of Searching for Truth

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Matthew 13:44

As men seek for earthly treasure, so are they diligently to search for the truth. The truth is to be regarded of higher value than anything else within the reach of man, and the searcher for truth must be willing to purchase it at any sacrifice or cost to himself. The Word of God is the mine of truth, and the Lord would have us individually search the Scriptures, that we may become acquainted with the great plan of redemption, and take in the grand subject as far as it is possible for the human mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God, to understand the purpose of God. He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ’s imputed righteousness.

The only way in which the fallen race could be restored was through the gift of His Son, equal with Himself, possessing the attributes of God. Though so highly exalted, Christ consented to assume human nature, that He might work in behalf of man and reconcile to God His disloyal subject. When man rebelled, Christ pleaded His merit in his behalf, and became man’s Substitute and Surety. He undertook to combat the powers of darkness in man’s behalf, and He prevailed, conquering the enemy of our souls, and presenting to man the cup of salvation.

God has endowed humanity with attributes whereby we may appreciate God; and though man has revolted from God, and has endeavored to supply the place of God with other objects of worship, the true God alone can fill the wants of the soul. Christ said: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” John 12:32. Christ is to be the great center of attraction, the object to which the attention of the world is invited; and the Word of God so portrays Him. The Lord has intrusted to His children His written Word, in order that they might search the Scriptures, and understand what is truth, and proclaim the truth to those who are in the darkness of error. How diligently should we search this Word! The diligent student will be amply rewarded; for gems of truth are to be gathered up, and separated from the companionship of error. The Bible is presented to us as a precious revelation from Heaven; but in order to understand it, we must diligently search its pages, with prayerful spirit and humble heart.

The prevailing spirit of our times is that of infidelity and apostasy. The spirit manifested in the world is one of pride and self-exaltation. Men boast of illumination, which in reality is the blind presumption; for they are in opposition to
the plain Word of God. Many exalt human reason, idealize human wisdom, and set the opinions of men above the revealed wisdom of God. This affords opportunity for working of Satan, and the spirit of antichrist is far more widespread than any of us imagine. Among the great mass of professing Christians, the grievous character of the transgression of the law of God is not understood. They do not realize that salvation can be obtained only through the blood of Christ, through His imputed righteousness; but this alone will avail to make fallen man what he should be, and exalt him to become a member of the royal family.

The truth as it is in Jesus is regarded as an old-fashioned doctrine. The maxims of the world, that know not God, have been worked into the theories of the church. In the eyes of men, vain philosophy and science, falsely so-called, is of more value than the Word of God. The sentiment prevails to a large extent that the divine Mediator is not essential to the salvation of man. A variety of theories advanced by the so-called worldly-wise men for man's elevation, are believed and trusted in more than is the truth of God, as taught by Christ and His apostles. The lying spirit that enticed Eve in Eden, finds acceptance with the majority of earth's inhabitants today. Even the Christian world refuses to be converted by the Spirit of God, but listen to the prince of darkness, as he comes to them in the garb of an angel of light. The spirit of antichrist is prevailing in the world to a far greater extent than it has ever prevailed before. The day of test and purification is just upon us. Signs of a most startling character appear, in floods, in hurricanes, in tornadoes, in cloud-bursts, in casualties by land and by sea, that proclaim the approach of the end of all things. The judgments of God are falling on the world, that men may be awakened to the fact that Christ will come speedily. The Lord is about to reveal the difference between the righteous and the wicked; for His "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:12.

The time is upon us when the miracle-working power of the archdeceiver will be more decidedly revealed. And his deceptions will increase in their delusive attraction, so that they will perplex, and if possible, deceive, the very elect. The prince of darkness with his evil angels is working upon the Christian world, inducing those who profess the name of Christ to stand under the banner of darkness, to make war with those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. An apostate church will unite with the powers of earth and hell to place upon the forehead or in the hand, the mark of the beast, and prevail upon the children of God to worship the beast and his image. They will seek to compel them to renounce their allegiance to God's law, and yield homage to the Papacy. Then will come the times which will try men's souls; for the confederacy of apostasy will demand that the loyal subjects of God shall renounce the law of Jehovah, and repudiate the truth of His Word. Then will the gold be separated from the dross, and it will be made apparent who are the godly, who are loyal and true, and who are the disloyal, the dross and the tinsel. What clouds of chaff will then be borne away by the fan of God! Where now our eyes can discover only rich floors of wheat, will be chaff blown away by the fan of God. Every one who is not centered in Christ will fail to stand the test and ordeal of that day. While those who are clothed with Christ's righteousness will stand firm to truth and duty, those who have trusted in their own righteousness will be ranged under the black banner of the prince of darkness. Then it will be seen whether the choice is for Christ or Belial. Those who have been self-distrustful, who have been so circumstanced that they have not dared to face stigma and reproach, will at last openly declare themselves for Christ and His law; while many who have appeared to be flourishing trees, but who have borne no fruit, will go with the multitude to do evil, and will receive the mark of apostasy in the forehead or in the hand.

Now we have the precious opportunity of making our calling and election sure. Every soul is to proclaim the truth because it is the truth. There must not be with any of us a betrayal of sacred trusts. Although Satan lifts up himself, although he numbers the world as his subjects, and exalts himself above God, we must be faithful and loyal sons and daughters of God. Our eyes not blinded by the enemy, our hearts not corrupted by the delusive deception that has covered the earth, and by the gross darkness that has covered the people. Let us raise high the standard of victory, proclaiming in the strength of Jehovah, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, while believing with all the heart that the Lord our righteousness" will be our defense in that day.

We are living in a time of worldwide apostasy; but the more widespread unbelief and infidelity are, the more does the Word of God shine forth as the truth to the believing soul; for in the Bible the believer recognizes the voice of the Almighty. With what awe and reverence, with what humiliation of soul, should we attempt the searching of the Scriptures, the Word of the living God. At this time the Lord has precious truth to open unto us. It is not new truth, but old, old truth, although to the receiver it is new, grand, inspiring, and glorious truth. It has been rescued from the companionship of error, and has been placed in the framework of truth. Long enough have the Lord's precious words of truth been perverted to serve the purpose of the enemy.

Although the living oracles are in our hands, although we have some understanding of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments, there is much that even in our day we do not see and comprehend.

Christ was the great Teacher of truth, and to Him we must come to learn of the great doctrine of justice, grace, and mercy. His words are as seeds that germinate and take root, and are again to be sown and cultivated by His delegated ambassadors. The disciples were put in close connection with eternal, essential truth; for it was laid open to their understanding; but they failed to comprehend it in its fullness, and although the living oracles are in our hands, although we have some understanding of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments, there is much that even in our day we do not see and comprehend. In order to understand the truth of God, there is need of deep re-
search, that we may discover in the teachings of Christ new aspects of truth, and behold the exceeding breadth and compass of grand old truth, of which we have only a superficial knowledge. The searching of the Scriptures would reveal the harmony existing between the various parts of the Bible, and the bearing of one passage upon another. We do not perceive the meaning of the Word of God without much study; but the reward of the study of the Bible is exceedingly precious to him who fears God, and earnestly searches for truth as for hidden treasure. At the present day there are a large number in our churches who are not sufficiently interested in Bible study to seek to understand the mysteries of the truth. They do not go below the surface. Those who are living in these last days, who acknowledge the binding claims of the law of God, have no ordinary responsibility. They are not to be satisfied with the surface truths. That which lies plainly revealed, which costs us no effort, will not be esteemed as highly as the treasure that costs us diligent, prayerful research and investigation. Celestial truth is represented as treasure hid in a field, "which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matthew 13:44) that he may work every part of it to discover the golden ore or precious gems. The earth itself cannot reveal treasures of as great value as can the Bible. No toil can so repay the diligent worker, as can the search for truth. Let the mines of revelation be properly worked, and the unsearchable riches of Christ will be revealed.

How can we stand in the day of test if we do not understand the words of Christ? He said: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:25-26. It is the Holy Spirit that is to bring to our remembrance the words of Christ. The theme Christ chose to dwell upon in his last discourse to his disciples was that of the office of the Holy Spirit. He opened before them a wide tract of truth. They were to receive his words by faith, and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was to bring all things to their remembrance. The consolation given by Christ in this promise was found in the fact that the divine influence was to be with his followers to the end. But this promise is not accepted and believed by the people today, and therefore is not cherished by them, nor is its fulfillment seen in the experience of the church. The promise of the gift of the Spirit of God is left as a matter to be little considered by the church. It is not impressed upon the people, and the result is only that which might be expected—spiritual drouth, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the mind and soul, but divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, which would, if possessed, bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, although it is offered to us in infinite plenty. Just as long as the church are satisfied with small things, they are disqualified to receive the great things of God. But why do we not hunger and thirst after the gift of the Holy Spirit, since it is the means whereby the heart may be kept pure? The Lord designs that divine power shall co-operate with human effort. It is all-essential for the Christian to understand the meaning of the promise of the Holy Spirit just prior to the coming of our Lord Jesus the second time. Talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it; for the Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than parents are to give good gifts to their children. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

We are living in the last days, when error of a most deceptive character is accepted and believed, while truth is discarded. The Lord will hold both ministers and people responsible for the light which shines in our day. God calls upon all who claim to believe present truth, to work diligently in gathering up the precious jewels of truth, and placing them in their position in the framework of the gospel. Let them shine in all their divine beauty and loveliness, that the light may flash forth amid the moral darkness. This cannot be accomplished without the aid of the Holy Spirit, but with the aid of the Spirit we can do all things. When we are endowed with the Holy Spirit, we by faith take hold of infinite power. There is nothing to be lost of that which comes from God. The Saviour of the world sends His divine messenger to the soul, that men may dig for the truth, that by its revelation they may dispel the multitude of errors. This is the Christian's work.

Review and Herald, vol. 2, 609-612 (November 8, 15, 1892)

Authority in God's Church

WHAT is the basis of church authority? How should church members relate to it? How and when does Christ exercise His authority through His visible church on earth? What is and is not bound in heaven by the actions of the church on earth? What is usurpation of Christ's authority?

THIS 220-page volume reveals the answers to these questions and many more through the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy. This timely material will help God's people to know how to relate to church leadership in the finishing of God's work on earth.

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Our Firm Foundation

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“Too Hasten His Coming,” March 1992

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It was with great sadness that we read the insert, "Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Organizations," found in the November 5, Adventist Review. We were sad because we love the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its message. We have always urged “support of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.” Our Firm Foundation, p. 3, in many issues.

Knowing that the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders have never claimed infallibility, we did not suppose that the leaders of the North American Division, (N.A.D), would quote and then interpret this statement of support in their booklet as follows:

“The foundation was laid for a separatist movement or, at least, a smaller and ‘purer’ church within the larger organization.” see “Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Organizations,” p. 4

We were also saddened by the many misrepresentations and falsehoods contained in the booklet. We could have hoped for a more thorough and accurate investigation.

Because the leaders of N.A.D have sent this booklet to all of the North American Division members and to many others around the world, we at Hope International feel constrained to respond in a direct yet Christian way to the false accusations leveled against this ministry.

With that in mind Hope International has prepared a four-hour quality video presentation featuring Ken Hodges, Hope International’s Administrative Committee Chairman, with Dr. Russell Standish and Raymond DeCarlo.

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