Reflections on the Waldenses

See page 8
HOPE International and several other “independent” ministries are now facing a problem with our beloved church and some of its leaders over “issues” that deal with important doctrines and the individual liberties of many of our church members. The charge against us is that we are trying to force the church into our way of thinking on these important doctrines of victory over all sin, which some have designated as perfectionism, and the nature of Christ. Some are also saying that we are misusing Ellen White by using compilations of her writings and making her say what we want her to say by taking her statements out of context. We are also told that our continued statements that the church is in apostasy is irresponsible and without foundation. Let us briefly examine these false charges:

Charge No. 1: The Nature of Christ

The position of Hope International in regard to the nature of Christ is the same position that the church took unanimously until the early 1950s. Then a change began to take place as manifested by a two-part editorial in the July 10 and July 17, 1952, issues of the Review and Herald. These editorials stated that Adventists believed that Christ possessed on His human side a nature like that of Adam before he sinned. All previous references—some 1200—to Christ’s human nature that had appeared in official Seventh-day Adventist publications had stated that Jesus Christ had received from His mother Mary the same fallen human nature that we receive from our mothers. See Issues Clarified, 113–139.

The Bible is very clear that Christ took the fallen nature of Abraham and David. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:16–17. “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” Romans 1:3. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:3. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5–8.

It is very clear that Christ took the same fallen nature that Abraham and David had. This is the mystery of godliness. None can fully explain the incarnation; it must be accepted by faith. Ellen White, the last-day prophet, makes this very clear. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1130–1131.

“In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weakness by which man is encompassed, ‘that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness.’ He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are.” Ibid., 1131.

There are at least 400 statements by our prophet which tell us that Jesus came in our fallen nature and did not sin, proving that we also can overcome as He overcame as we receive His divine nature and become completely surrendered to His will. Again from Inspiration we read: “Man has the assurance that he can become a partaker of the divine nature, even as Christ became a partaker of human nature.” Review and Herald, August 28, 1900. “How precious is the thought that we may indeed become partakers of the divine nature, whereby we may overcome as Christ overcame!” Ibid., August 26, 1890.

Jesus represented the law of God perfectly, as our Example. We can then keep the law perfectly by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we will be pure even as He is pure and holy as He is holy. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:3; see also 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 3:6–9; 1 Peter 1:15–16; Matthew 5:48.

Christ was willing to risk everything, to put the whole universe in jeopardy, to come down to the level of fallen human beings to save us. And in saving us through His Son’s sacrifice and death, God vindicated the broken law and secured the universe from rebellion for eternity. Praise God He was willing to do that for sinners like us!

Charge No. 2: Perfectionism

If Jesus overcame all temptations in our fallen nature, then He has shown the human family a perfect example in overcoming.

“God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ’s righteousness into daily practice.” Selected Messages, book 2, 381.

“God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character. . . . The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God’s law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God’s command.

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Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (2300-3600 words) manuscripts for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 3½ or 5¼-inch floppy disk in IBM ASCII format or neatly typed, using double-spacing. If you desire notice of a decision in regard to your article, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Address all correspondence to Editors, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328.
Entire Consecration Necessary

The necessity of thorough consecration to God in all those who have a connection with any branch of His work, has been presented before me. Much is lost by fitful service; and yet many serve God at will, and cease from His service as it suits their convenience or pleasure; and this is why many of our workers are in a weak spiritual condition. Satan is wide-awake and vigilant, and is ever persevering and energetic in his efforts to overthrow the soul. He watches diligently that he may weave his ideas and plans into the work of God. It is only through a living connection with the Source of all wisdom and light, that men may become wise unto salvation, and this living connection must be continually maintained; for Satan will overthrow the soul that does not watch unto prayer. We are to overcome, and overcoming means all that the word implies.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. . . . To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. . . . And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. . . . He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. . . . Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. . . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Revelation 2:11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.

When temptation comes upon us, we need spiritual discernment, that we may detect Satan's agency, and draw close to Jesus. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Resist the devil, and He will flee from you. Every moment it is necessary to fight the good fight of faith; for doubt must be resisted, and faith must be encouraged. In temptation, inclination must be overruled by reason. Self will clamor for indulgence, but inclination must be resisted, and temptation overcome.

The Lord has given warnings, He has presented principles that it is necessary for every Christian to heed, and bring into his practical life. Those who pass on in indifference to the light and warning which God has been pleased to give, will grow more and more egotistical and self-sufficient. Those who do not place their dependence upon God, will certainly be overthrown by the enemy. Satan is working by every conceivable device to keep in his own ranks those who claim to be on the Lord's side. He can blind their eyes until they will call light darkness, and darkness light. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the
name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Isaiah 50:10-11.

Though the light of God is shining in more distinct rays than ever before, and will shine more and more clearly as we near the close of earth's history, those who will be able to discern truth from error, will be men who are often upon their knees, seeking wisdom from God. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness can alone reveal the numerous and varied plottings of the enemy. The wicked one is at work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and while we are not to keep our eyes upon the powers of darkness, we cannot be ignorant of their devices. But our faith must center in Jesus Christ. Looking unto Him, clinging to His strength as sufficient for every emergency, our heart joins His heart, our life is knit by hidden links to His life, and because He lives, we shall live also. This is practical religion; for we are to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. No one of us can be safe save as we join the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten by us.

Heart union with Christ makes believers heirs of God, and laborers together with Him. At home, at church, and in the world, the believer is to show forth the praises of Him who has called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. Those whom the Lord intrusts with His work should cultivate home religion. They should not remain away from the assembly of the people of God, and cease to take an active part in religious meetings. They should continually consider what will be the influence of their actions upon those around them. They should cultivate such traits of character as will qualify them to stand as head of their own households. They should be housebands, and as Abraham, able wisely to instruct and educate their children, commanding their children and their household after them, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

God chose Abraham as the father of the faithful, because he knew that he would cultivate home religion, and cause the fear of the Lord to be the atmosphere of his dwelling-place. The Lord knew that there would be on the part of Abraham no betraying of sacred trusts; but that he would worship the Lord, and Him only would he serve. He knew that His faithful servant would lead his household forward and upward, and influence them to keep the statutes of Jehovah. Abraham did not cherish a blind affection for his family; but by the combined influence of affection and authority, he ruled his home. God's will was made paramount. He feared the Lord with all his house.

Those who have neglected this important work in the home, and have failed to command their children and their households after them to keep the way of the Lord, should now seek to redeem the time. Let parents take their Bibles, and search that they may understand what are the requirements of God in regard to their children. Let them seek to understand what is included in parental duty. The Word of God must be our rule in conducting our family affairs; and neither the waywardness of children, nor the press of business, should be looked upon as excuses for neglect in following the counsel of God. Let parents set before their children a worthy example in personal piety, honoring the house of God and respecting His service. The want of home religion is felt in every branch of God's work, and the necessity of cultivating personal piety in the home should be continually kept before the people. They should have instruction, line upon line and precept upon precept, that all those whose names are upon the church records may hear and obey the Word of the Lord. Parents cannot rightly train their children unless they learn how to co-operate with the Lord in His work upon the heart. The first essential in educating your households in the fear of God, is consecration of yourself and your all to God. Let parents begin with heart work; for out of the heart are the issues of life. Let the prayer ascend from contrite hearts, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” Psalm 51:6-13.

Those who will be able to discern truth from error, will be men who are often upon their knees, seeking wisdom from God.

What a prayer is this! How evident it is that sinners in the household are not to be treated with indifference, but that the Lord looks upon them as the purchase of His blood. In every household where the unconverted are, it should be the work of those who know the Lord to work in wisdom for their conversion. The Lord will surely bless the efforts of parents, as in His fear and love they seek to save the souls of their households. The Lord Jesus is waiting to be gracious. Oh, that the work might begin at the heart! "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:16-17. Then let it be understood by all the members of the household that the work must begin at the heart. The heart must be subdued and made contrite through the creating, regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Realizing the aid of this mighty agency, cannot parents work for the conversion of their children with more zeal and love than ever before?

The promise of the Lord is, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your

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flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:25-27. When the Spirit of the Lord works upon the hearts of the parents, their prayers and tears will come up before God, and they will earnestly entreat, and will receive grace and wisdom from heaven, and will be able to work for their unconverted children. As earnest work. The world would not have occasion to excuse themselves for their ungodliness on account of the example of those who profess to be followers of Christ, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Unity would exist in the church. Love would be cherished one for another; but now love has become almost extinct.

Shall we not as children of the living God, read the living oracle, purposing in our hearts that at whatever cost we will that which now prevails among representative men in our cause. There is altogether too much of self, and too little of Jesus. But there is no safety for any one, no matter what may be his position, his learning, his past experience, unless he is constantly in the fear and love of God. The Lord looks to the humble, and it may be that He will send a message to those who are in high position through a humble instrument, and He would have those who are in positions of trust of so humble a spirit that they will hear and heed the message, and arouse from their lethargy. We should realize how wicked and how foolish it is to contend against Omnipotence. Oh, that all would realize how perilous a thing it is to cherish thoughts or do deeds that are out of harmony with the will of God! Oh, that men would understand and take heed to the message that God mercifully sends to them! The Lord sees a soul wandering in darkness, and in His love and pity He sends to him a message, which, if received, will serve to bring him to the light; but if the message is rejected, the soul goes on in darkness more dense than before. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

The end of earth's history is right upon us, and oh, that all might fully come into the light! Oh, that all might be moved by the Spirit from above! The law of God is trampled underfoot, and the whole world is deceived by the power of the man of sin. Shall we not devote ourselves and our all to God, that souls may be won to Christ? Only a remnant of probationary time is left us, and at this late day, shall our love for God and His truth grow cold? Shall our light flicker and die out in darkness, because we have not the oil of grace in our vessels with our lamps?

The Lord is dishonored by His people when they claim to have light, and yet walk in darkness. They are as men and women looking through smoky glass, and yet they feel competent to judge of the message and the messenger, and do not realize that their vision is perverted. Yet for those who walk in darkness what sympathy should we feel, how tenderly should we labor for them, exercising toward them the pity and love which Christ exercised toward fallen men when He came to earth to suffer and die!

My brethren who occupy responsible positions, your place in the work calls upon you to be representative men. You need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I

As this spirit is manifested in the home, it will be brought into the church, and those who are home missionaries will also become agents for God in the church and in the world.
beseech of you, do not look upon yourselves as safe unless you are in the channel of light. There is a great work to be done in your behalf. You must form new habits, and your natural customs and habits must be subdued by the Spirit of God. Inclination must be denied. Old enemies that war against the Spirit, that you looked upon as dead, under favorable circumstances revive again, and they must be met and vanquished. Self must die. We are to engage earnestly in a spiritual warfare which we do not consider as we should, and we fail to appreciate what it means. The confederacy of evil is arrayed against those who would fight the battles of the Lord.

But we battle not alone. The fellowship of the saints in light is ours, the championship of the hosts of heaven is ours, and more than angels are on our side; for leading the ranks of His armies is the Captain of the Lord’s hosts. He is Commander of the battle, and as He leads His army to the fields of action, His voice is heard above the din of the battle and the strife, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. Our Leader is a conqueror. Advance, then, to victory. The armies of Heaven are engaged in the contest, and we fight as in the sight of invisible worlds. We may calmly face the foe, and by faith press on to the conflict. We shall press the battle to the gate, saying, “Our life is hid with Christ in God; because He lives we shall live also.”

Let every man constrained by the love of Christ, stand in his appointed place, and steadily, cheerfully, bravely bear the burden assigned him by the Lord. Let every burden-bearer contemplate this fact—God is love. “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. Oh, what a God have we! what a Benefactor! What claim has He upon our love! Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of infinite power, He gave all the heavenly treasure into the hands of Christ, and said, “All these are for man. Use them to convince him that there is no love greater than mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness consists in loving Me, and giving his heart to Me who hath loved him with an infinite love.”

Review and Herald, March 14, 1893.

I want to express my gratitude to God first for giving you the privilege of producing such a magazine to His glory. I save them and pass them on to friends. I especially appreciate the Spirit of Prophecy issue—all of them, really.

It is very difficult to find any churches that preach the “straight testimony,” but is this not to be expected?

Some day I hope to be able to join forces with some of you. In the meantime I hold you up in prayer.
—PC, Maryland

Recently I read something excerpted from Our Firm Foundation and was impressed with its clear, plain message of truth. I feel starved for the straight testimony of the true witness that should be coming each week from the pulpit. I pray that the Holy Spirit is using your ministry to awaken a sleeping church. Christ loves this church with a supreme love and will use any and every avenue to bring His beloved to repentance and reformation. Pray with me for this church. This is the body of Christ.
—RN, Tennessee

In these days of chaos I really appreciate your ministry. I was really thrilled to read the Bill Stringfellow letter. Our Firm Foundation is such a blessing in this time of great confusion. I pray for your continued obedience to the Lord and for His blessing on your ministry.
—ML, South Dakota

Since receiving Our Firm Foundation several years ago, I have felt the warmth of God’s love, gentle rebukes, and uplifting, life-generating spiritual food within my soul. Our Firm Foundation inspires me to study God’s Word and Ellen G. White’s writings for myself. What a joy and inspiration!

Remember, truth triumphs, and God’s people are going through. Don’t worry about the accusations. Continue your good work. God will bless and see it through to the end. Keep preaching the straight testimony with the deepest of God’s agape. Keep blowing the trumpet with that certain sound. It is time, high time, to be ready. Jesus is coming. Proclaim it, let us live it and preach it.
—BH, Kentucky

Thank you for your faithfulness to God and His Word. We are definitely in the shaking, and we can see that we are living in the last days of earth’s history, especially when we look at what is happening in our church.

“We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. . . . How often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement!” Selected Messages, book 1, 122.

We are so blessed to have the writings of Ellen G. White. I pray that God will bless you and keep you faithful to the end.
—JR, Ohio

Enclosed is a donation for your important ministry. I was so sorry to see the underhanded attack on you in the Issues insert and book. You have many, many friends, and I just hope that assurance as well as knowing that you are on God’s side will comfort and reassure you. Please try not to let this very apparent groundless attack discourage you. Any thinking Seventh-day Adventist surely can see through it and recognize the desperate situation those in leadership positions have backed themselves into. Take courage! I pray for all of you daily.
—ES, Ohio

A couple years ago, while working with our “40+ Club,” we found some old issues of Our Firm Foundation among the old church periodicals which were to be sent to Africa. We took them home and “devoured” them. What a feast! I am enclosing a check for our new subscription to your magazine. We have already received one issue and are so blessed by the articles—pure, historic Adventist theology. Thank you and God bless.
—AC, Washington
Reflections on the Waldenses

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5. This Bible verse was inscribed above the door of the sixteenth-century Waldensian church I visited in the Alps of Italy. In every age there have been men and women willing to suffer extreme hardship and privation in order to maintain the simple Bible faith in its purity. The grand offense of these Waldenses was that they would not worship God according to the will of the Church of Rome. They would not accept a “Thus saith the church” for a “Thus saith the Lord.” For this resistance they were branded as heretics, their motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, and mutilated. Persecuted and oppressed for hundreds of years they found refuge behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains in northern Italy. Here they maintained, at great peril and hardship, the ancient faith of the apostles. It was largely by fleeing from the power of the Church of Rome that they preserved their freedom to worship God in the liberty of their individual consciences.

The Church of Rome wanted to assume the role of mediator between God and these simple people. She wanted them to look to her, to follow her man-made guidelines, rules and regulations. She wanted to be conscience for these people, to raise her authority above the authority of God’s Word. But the Waldenses, in their purity and simplicity, rejected the supremacy of the Church of Rome and held to the Bible as the only supreme infallible authority and the rule of life and faith.

The Waldenses were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the right of individual liberty of conscience; thus an inevitable separation took place. But, I ask you, who was the schismatic? Was it the Waldenses who continued to worship God in spirit and truth? Or was it the Church of Rome with all her man-made guidelines, rules and regulations? Who, I ask you, was the most dependent upon God? And who was the most independent of God? Friends, it was the proud hierarchical Church of Rome which was the schismatic and not the church in the wilderness. It was the Church of Rome that left off her dependence upon God and His Word and became the most independent of all.

I was raised in this Church of Rome, was taught from the catechism rather than from the Bible, confessed my sins to a priest rather than to God, prayed to Mary rather than to Christ, attended church on Sunday instead of on Sabbath, refrained from eating meat on Fridays, used holy water to sanctify myself, paid money to get souls out of purgatory, got absolution from a priest for breaking what I thought was the law of God, prayed Hail Marys for the forgiveness of sins, and kissed the bishop’s ring on my confirmation day. In short, I grew up understanding, believing and acting as if the authority of the church superseded that of the Scriptures. Thus my religion was made up of externals; there was no real heart conversion, no true trusting in Christ as my daily Mediator and in His Word as a sure path for my feet.

Friends, this church, the church of my youth, had in reality stolen the place of Christ in my life. She had become my mediator, her man-made rules and guidelines had become the basis for my religious experience. But when I was about thirty years of age, God sent Paul and Ethel into Sally’s and my life. They introduced us to God’s infallible Word. After thorough study for more than eighteen months, we decided to join God’s remnant church. No longer would it be necessary

Jim Hohnberger and his wife, Sally, of Restoration International, live in Polebridge, Montana, and they have dedicated their lives full-time to reaching all people with the practical gospel.
to blindly follow the counsels and decrees of man, or to substitute the church for my true Mediator. Everything would be put to the test of God’s Word. “Sola Scriptura” would be our rule of faith. In our vows in joining the remnant church, we confirmed that “We believe that the Bible is God’s inspired Word, and that it constitutes the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian.” We also vowed that “We accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, recognizing Him as our Intercessor.”

One might ask, Why did we not join the Waldensian Church, the church that maintained the ancient faith for a thousand years? The church that longer than any other church lived out the simple, pure faith of Christ and held the Bible as the only supreme, infallible authority, for its life and faith? It grieves my heart to tell you this but eventually the “Church in the Wilderness” left off Christ as her only Mediator and agreed to accept man-made guidelines from the Church of Rome in order to secure peace, falsely so-called. But friends, these concessions could not be substantiated from the Word of God. Thus the Waldenses allowed the Church of Rome to become the mediator between them and God. Thus the pure church fell.

Today, if you visit a Waldensian church, you will find there a nominal profession and a dry formality. How terribly sad have been the results of one moment of wavering, one decision to compromise! Today, the Waldensian Church has lost that purity and simplicity which she held, against all odds, for a thousand years. She fell in one day, the day she allowed the Church of Rome to become her mediator, the day she accepted Rome’s man-made guidelines in exchange for a false peace. For a thousand years the Waldenses preferred to submit to loss of property and even to the loss of their lives and their children’s lives, rather than to sanction the mingling of human requirements with divine precepts. But at last, when they grew tired of the battle, the Church of Rome offered them a favor which in reality had always been their divine right.

What was this favor granted them? Namely, the liberty of Protestant worship within their territorial limits. What was it that the Waldenses had to acce to, to gain this so-called favor? They had to, among other requirements, agree to banish into permanent exile Henri Arnaud, their faithful leader, along with other faithful shephers and men of strength and virtue. They were forbidden to evangelize, or to make converts. They were forbidden to have a printing press. And they were forbidden to sell or even lend their books to Roman Catholics. See History of the Waldenses by J.A. Wylie. In short, many of the duties, rights, and privileges of the Christian life were denied them. Thus the spiritual condition of the Waldenses languished. Though the hand of bloody persecution was no more placed on them, they were now more captives than when they were hunted and treated as animals.

The principle of freedom of conscience—the root of all liberty—they traded for peace, falsely so-called. Friends, they abjured their God-given inalienable rights. They allowed themselves to be put under exactions not prescribed in the Word of God. Whenever any of us follow this course, either as individuals or as a church body, we will surely fall as they did. We must all choose to be God’s separate, peculiar people, regardless of the cost, regardless of what others may think or say about us.

Since my days of membership in the Church of Rome, I have learned to cast off blind submission to the teachings of mere human authorities, unsubstantiated by the authority of God’s Word, for to submit to such teachings always and inevitably brings bondage. I have also come to see that the Bible is a sufficient and all-perfect rule, and that every man, woman and child has an inalienable right to follow the Word of God as his only guide for faith and practice. Even Jesus, “acted independently of the rabbinical laws . . . . They urged Him to receive the maxims and traditions that had been handed down from the ancient rabbis, but He asked for their authority in Holy Writ. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the inventions of men.” The Desire of Ages, 84-85. So it was with the apostles when they were commanded not to preach the gospel of Christ, they answered the leaders of the Jewish church, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29.

We are rightly told that “Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the Word of God above the visible church.” The Great Controversy, 204.

The two great issues of all time are authority and liberty. These are the two fundamentals needing to be rightly restored in the church today. Authority in the infallible Guide; and liberty, freedom to follow that Guide. These two must ever go together, for one cannot exist without the other. Liberty without authority is anarchy. Authority without liberty is bondage. These two great essentials must flourish together or die together.

We owe much to the Waldenses. They planted the seeds of the Reformation that began to sprout in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and are to continue developing to the close of time in those of us also who are willing to suffer all things for “the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9. These twentieth-century Waldenses are called the 144,000. It is they who to the end will hold to Jesus as their only Mediator and to the Word of God as their only rule of life and faith. Will you be one of them? Or will you, with the vast majority of Christians, past as well as present, bow your neck to another besides your Creator? □
How God Deals With Sin

WHY should we even discuss or consider this subject? Surely everyone knows how God deals with sin. Most Christians would say, You repent, you confess, you remind yourself of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary's cross, you accept God's loving grace and forgiveness, and the sin is gone. Miraculously, by His grace God has removed your shame and guilt. Now you are free. But free for what? To live and sin again? Or to live as God has designed through obedience to His law and will? All too often the first alternative typifies our experience. Does God not know that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak? Does He not have a plan more effective than what we are experiencing? Or is there some fundamental flaw in our understanding of God's plan for dealing with the sin problem?

Let us consider for a moment God's object lesson presented to give us divine understanding of this most human enigma. There is nothing clearer in this sin-cursed world than that we have not solved the sin-problem puzzle. But the object lesson found in the sanctuary service given to Moses and to the children of Israel, was designed to aid us in solving it.

Let us therefore study this object lesson carefully.

In Exodus 25:8 the Lord said, "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." God wanted to dwell with His people. The God who was a Pillar of fire by day, a Light by night, and who made the earth shake when He spoke wanted to live among His people. His plan to protect the people from His overpowering glory was to make a tabernacle with an inner room isolated from the congregation by an outer room, a large courtyard and a high fence. The priests were instructed to conduct special services so that their lives would be protected when they ministered before the Lord. Laws were given to govern the conduct of the people, for the wages of every sin is death. There had to be real answers in order for the people to survive in this God-inhabited environment. To avoid the death penalty, one who sinned must bring as a special sin offering, a lamb who was then slain and whose blood made an atonement for the sinner. By this blood his sins were transferred to the sanctuary. He was then given a pardon and the sentence was stayed. Day after day the sins accumulated in the sanctuary until the yearly Day of Atonement, at which time the sanctuary was cleansed of the accumulated sin burden through special services involving two goats, a ram and a bullock.

To refresh our memories let us read Leviticus 16:5-11: "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself."

Vernon Jennings, one of the co-founders of Hope International, is presently working in the Engineering and Accounting Departments.
We need first to realize that this offering was for sin. While the sinner had been set free on probation, his sin had not been fully dealt with. God realized that something else was needed before the sinner obtained victory over the sin problem. The daily offerings had not done away with sin. The daily sin offerings made for the people had only transferred their sins into the sanctuary, where the Lord was standing in the place of the sinners as their Substitute so that His people could live.

The second fact to realize is that death was the only way that atonement could be achieved. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]." Hebrews 9:22. The old sanctuary service required the death of the lamb. The blood of the lamb was taken into the sanctuary by the priest and put on the horns of the altar to show that the sins were now resting in the sanctuary. Time was granted so that the Lord could work with His people to overcome the sin in their lives. If the confessed sins had been cancelled when confessed there would have been no need to offer more blood to make an atonement for the sanctuary. With the Lord as His High Priest and Mediator, taking care of his sins, man was placed in a position where he could respond to the grace of God and have opportunity to overcome the commission of sins during his probationary time, with the help of the Lord. Mankind was given a second chance and put on probation. We must understand that confessed sin is not cancelled or destroyed, but it is transferred by the blood of Jesus to the sanctuary in heaven to be dealt with during the final atonement or cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

In Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 357 and 358, Ellen White makes the matter clear and explains the concept that originated in the book of Leviticus: "The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement. In the great day of final award, the dead are to be 'judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted."

Whenever Seventh-day Adventist religious writers state that sin or sin's associated guilt is cancelled at the time of confession and forgiveness they are denying the transfer of sins to the heavenly sanctuary. I advise the reader to consider carefully the message he is getting in the articles he reads. One such article was recently published in the Adventist Review. See the article in the November 5, 1992, issue entitled, "Why Did Jesus Die?" Such articles are saying in effect that the atonement was completed on the cross, that there is no need to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary, that the beginning of the antitypical day of atonement in 1844 was unnecessary because there is nothing needing atonement in the sanctuary. One wonders why God would have a heavenly sanctuary if confessed sins are cancelled on earth before an investigative judgment? If confessed sins have been cancelled, there is nothing to investigate; there is nothing to cleanse. If confessed sins have been cancelled, the whole reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is nullified. If confessed sins are cancelled the 1844 movement was a colossal mistake. Such is the ultimate logical conclusion of deviating from truth by using a seemingly small word, "cancelled."

The seventeenth fundamental doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reads as follows: "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested." Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 216.

In the book, The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism, by Walter Martin ("The Bible-Answer Man," who led out in the discussions of 1956 with our leadership), it is stated on page 88: "Current Adventist writings teach that the atonement was completed on the cross; and no less an Adventist than Ellen G. White, writing in the Review and Herald, September 21, 1901, stated: "He [Christ] planted the cross between heaven and earth and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. 'It is enough,' He said, 'The atonement is completed.'"

This charge is very serious, for it contradicts the plain statements just quoted from Leviticus and Patriarchs and Prophets, which clearly teach that in the earthly sanctuary the atonement was completed not at the death of the lamb but at a later time during the annual Day of Atonement. This problem has a very simple solution. First, the date of the article quoted above should have been September 24, 1901. That is important if you try to look it up. Second, Walter Martin misquoted God. What God actually said was, 'It is enough, the atonement is complete.' The difference is the letter "d," but that "d" makes all the difference in the world. Contrary to Walter Martin, Ellen G. White did not teach that the atonement was completed on the cross. Where he obtained this false quotation is not known, but in any event his scholarship is called into question, especially since he has made such a big issue of it.

When I came out of the Lutheran Church in 1936 to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I left behind a number of doctrines not based on the Bible. I have no intention of going back to them. Some of these discarded doctrines were Sunday observance, infant baptism, consubstantiation, the use of fermented wine in the...
Lord's supper, original sin, the atonement completed on the cross, eternally burning hell-fire forever tormenting the wicked, immortality of the soul, righteous souls going directly to heaven at death, sins being cancelled (and not just forgiven) when confessed, and so on. Because of the Spirit of Prophecy the Seventh-day Adventist Church I joined at the time was still spared these heresies. I praise God for His wisdom in giving us the gift of prophecy through Ellen G. White. Without apology or embarrassment I will continue

heavenly sanctuary. After His ascension our Saviour began His work as our high priest. Says Paul: 'Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' Hebrews 9:24....

"As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners." *The Great Controversy*, 420-422.

This passage has very significant implications directly affecting the life of the Christian. Jesus bears our sins in a very real way in the heavenly sanctuary. It is more than a historical record in a book. He has a very real interest in our overcom- ing sin. He has taken the place of man with the purpose of mediating man's guilt before the throne of God. He wants us to be victorious in our battle with sin. He will not be satisfied until we truly "go and sin no more," as He so often said during His life on earth. He is our true Substitute, our Mediator, our Counsellor, our Advocate. He has promised all the resources in heaven to help every repentant, believing soul gain the victory in his battle with the forces of evil. This victory must be secured before the sanctuary is cleansed, or we will be lost.

We need to remind ourselves of the angel's message given through Ellen White. "'They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.' The third angel closes his message thus: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the Most Holy Place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God's commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts." *Early Writings*, 254. "As the priest entered the Most Holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the Most Holy of the heavenly, at

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Christ has promised all the resources in heaven to help every repentant, believing soul gain the victory in his battle with the forces of evil. This victory must be secured before the sanctuary is cleansed, or we will be lost.

to quote from her inspired writings regarding the disposition of sin according to God's plan.

"Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the Most Holy Place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people.

"Such was the service performed 'unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.' And what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary is done in reality in the ministration of the in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. See Revelation 22:12.

"Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming.

"It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as a mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the people.
the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary.” Ibid., 253.

Does God have the power to overcome sin in our lives? He is the Creator of heaven and earth. “He spoke and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:9. “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.” Exodus 20:11. The seventh-day Sabbath testifies to us that God has the power to create. Does this creative power extend to the moral power of man? David prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. Was this prayer in vain? God called David a man after His own heart. He had to be talking about the David with the clean heart, not David the adulterer. Paul makes a marvelous statement in Romans: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1-4. The only way we can be free from the law of sin and death is to obey the moral law by God’s redeeming grace and strength—that is to stop sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sin brings us under the law. If you do not believe that, why do you obey the speed laws when you know the highway patrol is watching? God is aware of everything we do. In 1 John 2:1-4 we read: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Ellen White also gives us great encouragement: “You can walk in the light, and daily receive strength from God to overcome every imperfection, and finally be among the faithful, true, and holy in the kingdom of God.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 312. “He [Christ] fought and conquered Satan, that He might give us vantage ground, bringing us divine strength to conquer appetite and every unholy passion.” Ibid., vol. 5, 510. “We cannot individually, or as a body, secure ourselves from his [Satan’s] constant assaults; but in the strength of Jesus every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted.” Signs of the Times, vol. 2, 154. “But we have reason to thank God that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, and came off conqueror in our behalf. Every son and daughter of Adam may have this divine strength.” The Youth’s Instructor, 438. “He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.” The Great Controversy, 560.

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August 1993 Our Firm Foundation 13
God's Plan for Church Organization and Authority—Part 11

The Shaking of Adventism

Phase 2

In our last article we studied how, because of our persistent and broad-based insubordination to His counsels, God caused (permitted) heresies to come in among us as the first phase of His shaking of Adventism. Since the early 1950s an increasing pluralism of doctrinal beliefs has been allowed to enter the very heart of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The New Theology doctrines derived from fallen Christianity are presently very prevalent products of Adventist pens, pulpits and presses. To many the vast majority of our leadership seems unconcerned by the inroads into our theology of doctrines that change beliefs which we have held with great unanimity for at least one hundred years. Since we are experiencing increasingly rapid growth in church membership, we seem reluctant to express alarm over beliefs that apparently are giving us great success in carrying forward the gospel commission.

A period of rapid church growth as a result of a pluralism of beliefs also took place in the apostolic church, resulting in its transformation into the Papacy—the man of sin. This general falling away from truth necessitated the rejection, by true believers, of that distorted version of what had been God’s church and their coming out of it in the Protestant Reformation. God has promised that He will not allow pluralism of beliefs in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to transform it into Babylon as He allowed with the apostolic church. Not until the Seventh-day Adventist Church is purified during the persecution associated with the Sunday laws will we possibly know to what extent an organizational structure will remain. Those whose pillars of belief are weakened, and remain weakened, because of a mixture of error and truth will then be shaken out of God’s remnant church. Those who are not willing to live up to the full meaning of the name Seventh-day Adventist will then no longer pretend to do so.

As an integral part of His shaking and purifying His church God has called for the straight testimony to be revived among His people. When our church was threatened by the heresies of the alpha of apostasy around the turn of the century, Ellen White was instructed to “meet it.” See Selected Messages, book 1, 205. With the present startling inroads of the New Theology, God’s faithful people of today are also called to “meet it.”

“The people of God must see their wrongs and arouse to zealous repentance and a putting away of those sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of poverty, blindness, wretchedness, and fearful deception. I was shown that the pointed testimony must live in the church. This alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. Wrongs must be reproved, sin must be called sin, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 260.

God will not acknowledge as His shepherds those whose testimonies are not more pointed and specific than those given by John the Baptist.

“The forerunner of Christ’s first advent was a very plain-spoken man. He rebuked sin, and called things by their right names. He laid the ax at the root of the tree. . . .

Vernon Sparks

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“In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God’s faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth things, God will not acknowledge as His shepherds. A fearful woe is upon them.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 321.

We are not to allow the banner of the third angel to be taken from our hands. See Selected Messages, book 2, 390. We are now to arise and shine rather than turn traitor to truth.

“Now is the time when the loyal and true are to arise and shine; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon them. It is no time now to hide our colors, no time to turn traitors when the battle presses sore, no time to lay aside our weapons of warfare. Watchmen on the walls of Zion must be wide awake.” Selected Messages, book 2, 373.

We are to call rebellion by its right name as we stand in the breach made in the doctrines of our faith.

“The doctrines must be plainly understood. . . . The deceptions will increase, and we are to call rebellion by its right name. We are to stand with the whole armor on. In this conflict we do not meet men only, but principalities and powers. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. . . .

“I write this because many in the church are represented to me as seeing men like trees walking. They must have another and deeper experience before they discern the snares spread to take them in the net of the deceiver. There must be no halfway work done now. The Lord calls for staunch, decided, whole-souled men and women to stand in the gap, and make up the hedge.” Ibid., 395.

We are to follow no false colors. We are to contest every inch of ground as we advance rather than retreat.

“Nerve yourselves for duty, and dispute every inch of ground. Instead of retreating, advance; instead of becoming weak and nerveless, brace yourselves for the conflict. God calls on you to engage with all your powers against sin in every form.

“God’s people will be tested and proved. The plain and pointed testimony must act a prominent part in this work. In these days of darkness and peril who is able to stand and speak the whole truth? Multitudes of teachers prophesy smooth things. They see no special cause of alarm in the present condition of the professed people of God. The people are asleep, and the teachers are asleep. They cry, Peace, peace, and the multitude that hear believe their report and are at ease. This makes the necessity greater for faithful teachers to bear the pointed, faithful testimony. The present is a time of scouring and purifying, a time of warfare and trial.” Review and Herald, November 26, 1861.

Rather than being given in language that is coarse and rude, the pointed testimony should be given in words patterned after the language of heaven.

“I have been shown that the Lord is reviving the living, pointed testimony, which will develop character and purify the church. But while we are commanded to separate from the world, it is not necessary that we become coarse and rough, and descend to common expressions, and make our remarks as rude as possible. The truth is designed to elevate the receiver, to refine his taste and sanctify his judgment. There should be a continual effort to imitate the society we expect soon to join;
namely, angels of God who have never fallen by sin. The character should be holy, the manners comely, the words without guile, and thus should we follow on step by step until we are fitted for translation." Testimonies, vol. 1, 216.

While manifesting commendable traits of character, we are yet to cry aloud and to spare not.

"Misunderstanding, misapplication, of the truth will alienate the hearts of those who have been brethren. But this would not be if self and self-esteem, if customs and traditions, were not disturbed by the message of truth. Patience, moderation, self-control, and carefulness of speech should ever be cultivated and manifested. But while we show these commendable traits of character, for Christ's sake let us cry aloud and spare not. Says the word of God, 'Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sin.' Isaiah 58:1." The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 421.

This straight testimony, this saying what God says about sin, disobedience, and apostasy; this saying what God says about how to operate the branches of His work; this saying what God says about His standards for Christian living; and this saying what God says regarding pure doctrinal truth, is being used of God as the second phase of the shaking and purifying of His people. We are told that "some" will not accept the straight truth. "Some" will rise up against God's efforts to restore sight to our Laodicean blindness. The servant of the Lord tells us that this rising up against the straight testimony will also cause a shaking among us.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen. I was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. It will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver of the testimony, and it will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. This straight testimony some will not bear. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people." Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, 184.

The rising up against the counsel of the true Witness to the Laodiceans will undoubtedly take many forms. One of the most serious forms of rising up against truth is the endeavoring of church leaders to prevent God's people from accepting Christ's message regarding our true spiritual condition. Even though the straight

Let all who have had the light of truth shining clear and distinct upon their pathway, be careful how they cry, Peace and safety. Be careful how you make the first move to suppress the messages of truth.

testimony apparently destroys unity, it is essential, and leaders are warned to be careful how they move to suppress truth.

"The true peace will come among God's people when through united zeal and earnest prayer the false peace, that exists to a large degree, is disturbed.... Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm, steadfast, free from extravagance. But let all who have had the light of truth shining clear and distinct upon their pathway, be careful how they cry, Peace and safety. Be careful how you make the first move to suppress the messages of truth. Be careful what influence you exert at this time." General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 6, 1903; emphasis in the original.

Leaders are cautioned not to hinder those upon whom God has placed the burden of reproving and correcting sin.

"There are many who do not have the discretion of Joshua and who have no special duty to search out wrongs and to deal promptly with the sins existing among them. Let not such hinder those who have the burden of this work upon them; let them not stand in the way of those who have this duty to do. Some make it a point to question and doubt and find fault because others do the work that God has not laid upon them. These stand directly in the way to hinder those upon whom God has laid the burden of reproving and correcting prevailing sins in order that His frown may be turned away from His people." Testimonies, vol. 3, 270.

Leaders are warned not to muffle Christ's message to His people by crying Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

"Our work is now to rouse the people. Satan with all his angels has come down with great power, to work with every conceivable deception to counterwork the work of God. The Lord has a message for His people. This message will be borne, whether men will accept or reject it. As in the days of Christ, there will be the deep plots of the powers of darkness, but the message must not be muffled with smooth words or fair speeches, crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, to those who are turning away from God. 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' " The Signs of the Times, December 23, 1897.

Those who teach that less than perfect character development is acceptable to God are crying Peace, peace.

"The little sins that men think are of so trivial a character that on their account they will not be brought into condemnation, are very offensive in the sight of God. Says one, 'You are too severe, a man must be allowed these little defects of character.' Let us hear the words of Christ. He says, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' James 2:10. People venture to commit sins that are grievous in the sight of God, and think that they are not to be called to task for them, because they say they are due to nervousness, to a peculiar temperament; but this is simply soothing the conscience, and crying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.' Sin is sin, and it is the delusion of Satan to look upon it in any other light than that it is grievous." Review and Herald, August 1, 1893.

Those who stir up rebellion against God's servants are rebelling against God.

"God has no sympathy with the evildoer. He gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of His people, nor to cry, 'Peace, peace,' when He has declared that there shall be no peace for the wicked. Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver His messages are rebelling against the word of the Lord." Testimonies, vol. 4, 185.

Those who rise up against the straight testimony will use falsehoods and unsound reasons rather than truth to defend their positions.

"Those in our council meetings who are Christians will be thoughtful, serious, sober-minded, calm, and not easily thrown off their balance by the sweeping assertions
and misrepresentations which they will have to meet, though there be one by their side who is led by the spirit of Satan to bring confusion and humiliation and defeat upon those who stand in vindication of the truth. Positive disrespect has been shown to these men as they have advanced their opinions in regard to the work, while those who have stood in opposition have not given an honest answer to prove why the position taken was not right. A sneer goes a long way with some who are very sensitive, but let all remember that loud voiced reiteration of opinion is not evidence. Let all bear in mind that whatever we have said or ever may say is of value only as far as the Word of God can endorse and sustain their opinions. A jingle of words is only as chaff when compared to sound reasoning and sound principles. What is the chaff to the wheat?" manuscript releases, vol. 17, 226.

Those who place obstacles to prevent light from coming to the people will have an account to settle with God.

"Like the Pharisees of old, the self-deceived, the self-sufficient, the self-righteous, refuse to be warned. The Lord points out their dangers, but they do not heed his voice. As they assimilate to the world, they become the friends of evil-doers. While God reproves the transgressor, they feel inclined to excuse and encourage him. Thus they say to the sinner, it shall be well with thee. Such persons call good evil, in that they oppose and denounce those who faithfully deliver the messages of warning and reproof committed to them of God. They call evil good by extolling those who have no reproofs to bear and no warnings to give, who pass along in a careless, indifferent spirit, excusing sin, and by their own course encouraging worldliness and backsliding. All these are sanctifying a deception which has proved the ruin of many. The blood of souls is upon them. Their course is more offensive to God than is that of the open sinner. Anciantly, the Lord always had among his people faithful prophets, whom, he sent to reprove sin. He has never removed these from his church. Those who rise up against warning and reproof, and seek by their jeers, their smart speeches, or their deceptions, to make of no effect the plain words of reproof prompted by the Spirit of God, will find, in the great day of final reckoning, an account against them which they will not wish to meet." the signs of the times, October 4, 1883.

"God speaks to whom He will to carry His message. They must declare the message He gives, without reservation . . . . Those who are commanded to bear a message must move out although obstacles of a forbidding character are in the way. Those who claim to know the truth, and yet lay every obstacle in the way so that light shall not come to the people, will have an account to settle with God that they will not be pleased to meet. God manages His own work, and woe to the man who puts his hand to the ark of God." the Ellen G. White 1888 materials, 1031.

Those who will not accept the Lord's admonitions will be punished as broadly as the effects of the wrongs they have committed. The hearts of those who reject the Spirit of truth will be hardened.

"I am instructed to present these words before those who have had light and evidence, but who have walked directly contrary to the light. The Lord will make the punishment of those who will not receive His admonitions and warnings as broad as the wrong has been. The purpose of those who have tried to cover their wrong, while they have secretly worked against the purposes of God, will be fully revealed. Truth will be vindicated. God will make manifest that He is God.

"There is a spirit of wickedness at work in the church that is striving at every opportunity to make void the law of God. While the Lord may not punish unto death those who have carried their rebellion to great lengths, the light will never again shine with such convincing power upon the stubborn opposers of truth. Sufficient evidence is given to every soul regarding what is truth and what is error. But the deceptive power of evil upon some is so great that they will not receive the evidence and respond to it by repentance.

"A long-continued resistance of truth will harden the most impressionable heart. Those who reject the Spirit of truth place themselves under the control of a spirit that is opposed to the Word and work of God. For a time they may continue to teach some phases of the truth; but their refusal to accept all the light God sends will after a time place them where they will do the work of a false Watchman." the paulson collection, 60.

The Laodicean message does not inform the church that its condition is hopeless or that its probation is closed. The purpose of the pointed testimony of the True Witness is not to cause despair and hopelessness. As previously noted, the purpose of the straight testimony is to arouse Laodicea to a recognition of her true condition. The second phase of the shaking is not a physical separation of the wheat from the tares. It is an awakening, by means of the pointed testimony, of Seventh-day Adventists, and an encouraging of them to obtain the remedy for lukewarmness so that they will not be shaken out by the final and third phase of the shaking.

"The counsel of the True Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm as in a hopeless case. There is yet a chance to remedy their state, and the Laodicean message is full of encouragement; for the backslidden church may yet buy the gold of faith and love, may yet have the white robe of the righteousness of Christ, that the shame of their nakedness need not appear. Purity of heart, purity of motive, may yet characterize those who are halfhearted and who are striving to serve God and mammon. They may yet wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." the seventh-day adventist bible commentary, vol. 7, 966.

Though some will rise up against the straight testimony and contribute to the shaking, others will awaken and turn from disloyalty to allegiance to Christ.

"However weak and compassed with infirmity the people of God may be, those who turn from disloyalty to God in this wicked and perverse generation, and come back to their allegiance, . . . will be accounted the children of God.
natural luster, and will stand fast forever and ever." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 40.

God is able to change the most hopeless and discouraging outlook. But the well-being and prosperity of God's church depends upon its possessing three characteristics—loyalty, faithfulness and righteousness, or right-doing.

"The church of Christ is God's agency for the proclamation of truth; she is empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to God, obedient to His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine power. If she will be true to her allegiance, there is no power that can stand against her. The forces of the enemy will be no more able to overwhelm her than is the chaff to resist the whirlwind.

"There is before the church the dawn of a bright, glorious day, if she will put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, withdrawing from all allegiance to the world.

"God calls upon His faithful ones, who believe in Him, to talk courage to those who are unbelieving and hopeless. Turn to the Lord, ye prisoners of hope. Seek strength from God, the living God.

Show an unwavering, humble faith in His power and His willingness to save. When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He will do this for the glory of His name." *Prophets and Kings*, 259-260.

As pointed out in our preceding article, "God's Response to Apostasy—Part 1," *Our Firm Foundation*, July 1993, we as a church are well into the first phase of the shaking of Adventism which is the entrance of doctrinal heresies into our church. Only time will tell how much more severe and deceptive this doctrinal dilution and confusion will become. So with the second phase of the shaking—which is the giving of the straight testimony and the rising up against it. Only as the scroll unrolls will we know how much more pointed the straight testimony must become to arouse God's people to flee the promised spewing out of unpertinent Laodicea. Only time will tell in what forms and how much more severe the rising up against that pointed testimony will become. Whatever the future holds during the shaking of Adventism we must always be aware that God is in control. It is His hand that holds the fan that is purging His floor and gathering His wheat into the garner. See Matthew 3:12.

Our next article will present the third and final phase of the shaking—which is God’s response to persistent lukewarmness, stiffnecked disobedience, continued insubordination, and self-willed apostasy in His end-time Laodicean church. The pluralism of beliefs and practices among us as a result of the first two phases—the introduction of heresies, the pointed testimony and the rising up against the pointed testimony—will become increasingly manifest as the maturing or ripening of the wheat and the tares occurs. warmth will be gathered from the coldness of others. The zeal for and obedience to Christ of the wheat will be seen in every more marked contrast to the lukewarmness and disobedience of the tares. This divergence will become increasingly manifest until in the third phase of God's shaking of His people He separates the two groups. May each one of us be found in that group obedient to Christ is our prayer.

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**Editorial**

Continued from 2

ments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven." *Christ's Object Lesson*, 315.

"The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God and being clothed with humility, possessing that love that is pure, peaceable, and easy to be entreated, full of gentleness and good fruits, is not an easy attainment. And yet it is his privilege and his duty to be a perfect overcomer here. The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in knowledge and true holiness. The holy life and character of Christ is a faithful example." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 106-107.

"By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ. . . . Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 506.

Obedience is the bottom line of God's great plan of salvation. Disobedience brings sin and death; only perfect obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit working continually in the fully surrendered life will bring life everlasting.

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**Charge No. 3: Apostasy**

Hope International and *Our Firm Foundation* state that the church is in apostasy. What is apostasy? Apostasy is disobedience to God's orders and His commands. "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.

When we place what the church has done and is doing in the field of education, medical missionary work, publishing and evangelism alongside of God's plans and orders in these areas, we are forced to confess we are in disobedience, and yes, apostasy.

We, the Laodicean church, stand charged with the delay in the coming of our Lord. The prophet wrote we could have been in the kingdom shortly after 1844, if we had accepted the experience of victory, which is justification through faith in Christ in the setting of the third angel's message. See *Evangelism*, 190, 196. Again at the turn of the century our prophet wrote that we could have been in the kingdom shortly after 1888. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 68; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 450.

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We are still here because of disobedience, apostasy, and doing our own way and not God's way in at least these four areas. We are then in insubordination to God's orders, His plans for His remnant church.

"For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

"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." *Evangelism*, 696.

This editorial of *Our Firm Foundation* is not to defend Hope International. However, we believe each member of the church has a great responsibility to defend God's truth, the very pillars of our faith and the faith of our pioneers and our prophet Ellen White.

Ron Spear, EDITOR
HAVE you heard the expression “historic Adventist” and wondered exactly what it meant? Just what is historic Adventism and who are historic Adventists? Unfortunately, for too many Seventh-day Adventists, we have either forgotten or never known what are some of our historic beliefs.

But not all sources are saying the same thing. Confusion results when different views are declared to be genuine historic Adventism. Some are wondering, Are we as a people truly in apostasy? Or is that term too strong? What does God say? What about the nature of Christ—can this hotly debated issue be understood? “Perfection,” “the New Theology,” “legalism,” “the shaking,” “the straight testimony,” “the remnant church”—these are just a few of many terms which are often misunderstood. Thus there is a great need for historic Adventism to be clarified.

“When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions, contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained.” Counsels to Writers and Editors, 31–32.


The book Issues: Clarified has been written for the following three reasons:

1. To accurately and thoroughly clarify the many false charges made against this ministry from the sources mentioned above.
2. To clarify from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy the one and only basis for church authority and unity.
3. To clarify what are the real issues and problems facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In addition to a point-by-point clarification of specific accusations leveled against Hope International the appendixes in the book Issues: Clarified address many of the historic beliefs and real issues in Adventism. They include the following:


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August 1993 Our Firm Foundation
NEARLY one hundred years ago, in 1894, the pen of Inspiration gave us the following counsel and warning: “The Lord is soon to work in greater power among us, but there is danger of allowing our impulses to carry us where the Lord would not want us to go. We must not make one step that we will have to retrace. We must move solemnly, prudently, and not make use of extravagant expressions or allow our feelings to become overwrought.” Testimonies to Ministers, 227.

Today, as we look to past history, and in particular to that of the Davidians and the Branch Davidians, we can see with more accuracy the truthfulness of this statement. Whenever man allows his impulses or feelings, unsanctified by God’s Word, to shape his religious experience, we can be certain that the final outcome will not be for the growth in grace and the perfecting of the saints. We may end in a situation or an experience “where the Lord would not want us to go.”

Therefore, “We must guard against creating extremes, guard against encouraging those who would either be in the fire or in the water.” Ibid., 228. Those who are engaged in a work of revival and reformation must accept this call with its challenges very seriously. Sometimes their task will not be easy. Reformers will be urged to “break the shackles” that supposedly keep them bound to what seems indifference and insubordination of church laity and leadership as well. Reformers will be tempted to use language more fiery and even caustic, in attempts to awaken the brethren from their slumber.

On the other hand, they will also find good brothers and sisters who feel that they must add the cooling water of silence to those fiery issues sometimes addressed by concerned laity and clergy. They will be urged to remain quiet on controversial subjects for the sake of unity, especially in a highly divided religious world.

Thus, as we perceive these various forces, we may sense how delicate and volatile a position like this could be. To the end, reformers should continue their sincere and honest efforts to remain balanced. This balance can be achieved as we search God’s wisdom in the testimony of His Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Modern reformers should be ready “to secure peace and unity” and “to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God.” However, they will also feel, like the reformers of past centuries, “that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.” The Great Controversy, 45.

Reformers should also be aware that “one fanatical streak exhibited among us will close many doors against the soundest principles of truth. Oh, how careful should every worker be not to rush on before the Master, but to follow where He leads the way!” Testimonies to Ministers, 228.

Personally, with the Lord’s help, I have taken seriously Mrs. White’s statement that “We must guard against creating extremes, guard against encouraging those who would either be in the fire or in the water.” Honestly, there are many other subjects in which I would rather dwell than having to analyze the teachings and practices of David Koresh and his followers. But I am compelled, by the Spirit of the Lord to impress upon the mind of the reader the dangers of fanaticism.

We cannot ignore such clear warnings as the following: “As the end draws near, the enemy will work with all his power to bring in fanaticism among us. He would rejoice to see Seventh-day Adventists going to such extremes that they would be branded by the world as a body of fanatics.” Gospel Workers, 316.
In my previous article, I mentioned that “in one Northwest conference, pastors report that attendance at evangelistic meetings is down and directly traceable to the association of Adventism with the Waco debacle.” North Pacific Union Conference Gleaner, April 5, 1993, 4. “In Waco, the cult’s [Branch Davidians] existence has hampered the growth of three small Adventist churches,” said Mr. Miller, the Southwestern Conference president. “It’s regrettable that they have defamed our name and reputation and marred our image,” he said.” The Dallas Morning News, Monday, March 1, 1993, page 13 A.

However, there is no reason for lamenting this pseudo-association between the Branch Davidians and Seventh-day Adventism that some journalists reported. We do not need to feel guilty for the action taken by David Koresh and his deceived followers.

Though it is true that the Branch Davidians cannot and should not be considered Seventh-day Adventists, the lessons learned from their tragedy should be well understood. Our Firm Foundation published a Special Issue on Waco (June 1993, Vol. 8, No. 6) which addressed some of the lessons that both denominational and self-supporting ministries must learn. It is possible that as time progresses, more lessons will be drawn from the Branch Davidians’ tragedy.

In the first article of a two-part series entitled “Insights on the Davidian Movement,” I shared with the reader my belief that we could indeed arrive at correct answers regarding the Branch Davidians’ biblical misunderstanding and deplorable actions. But we needed to look beyond the peripheral aspects of the problem and to its roots. We shared also that this problem was complex by nature, for many factors were involved.

Though nine factors were listed, only the last two were studied in detail. These two were (1) Futurism, and, to be more specific, time setting. This area is one that many fanatical groups often dwell on. (2) The loss of confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy and the neglect to follow its clear instructions. This last factor is very significant because if we lose our confidence in the testimonies we will drift away from Bible truth.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 98.

Having seen the fulfillment of the truthfulness of the last statement from Inspiration over and over in the lives and movements of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, (with his rejection of the Testimonies warning him against pantheism, and where his false concepts about God could lead him; see Manuscript Release 332, 1; A. T. Jones’ refusal of “the counsels of God, and walk[ing] directly contrary to them” Psalm Collection, 123; D.M. Carrington’s dismissal of the Testimonies against his self-centered ambition, and desire for power and popularity, see Selected Messages, book 2, 162-170; A.F. Ballenger’s denial of the sanctuary message by following his “new light” on the sanctuary service rather than the truth already established by the pioneers (see Manuscript Release 760, 10-17); Robert Brinsmead’s repudiation of the only definition of sin as described in The Great Controversy, 493, thus placing an increasing emphasis in the Augustinian concept of the original sin which eventually led him to identify himself with the evangelicals rather than with historical Adventism; Desmond Ford, Victor Houteff and recently David Koresh—let us learn from our history and discuss the remaining factors of the Branch Davidians’ complex problem.

1. The failure to learn lessons from our past history.

History has always been a schoolbook for the wise. Since we have just a short life span to live in a meaningful way for the Lord, it becomes imperative for us to learn from the successes and the failures of others. In the secular world we find folk sayings that invite us to be careful students of history. The Latin-American people have a saying: “The devil is more devil for being old [with his many years of experience] than just for the fact that he is a devil.”

The Holy Scriptures also appeal to our comprehension and discernment by recalling history in a divine perspective and persuading us to beware of its teachings; thus Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth:

“No all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:11-12.

If the Davidians and Branch Davidians had learned the lessons from the Great Disappointment, and later, the failures of fanatical groups in time setting; if they had paid attention to history, and regarded the biblical understanding of the pioneers of the truths that they studied and comprehended with much toil, fasting, prayers and tears, then they would have been better protected from the many snare's the enemy placed in their path.

“In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” Life Sketches of Ellen White, 196; emphasis supplied in all quotations.

2. Faulty methods of Bible and prophetic interpretation.

“Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel’s message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father [William] Miller adopted. In the little book entitled Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology, Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation. . . and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth.” Review and Herald, November 25, 1884.

He saw that the prophecies, so far as they had been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other scriptures; and when thus explained were to be literally understood. . . Link after link of

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
the chain of truth rewarded his efforts, as step by step he traced down the great lines of prophecy. Angels of Heaven were guiding his mind and opening the Scriptures to his understanding.” The Great Controversy, 320.

One of the rules that William Miller followed in his study and interpretation of Scriptures and Bible prophecies was basically this:

“To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of a prophecy. If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But, if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true, believing children of God may never be ashamed.” Principles and Keys of Prophetic Interpretation, Gathered from the Writings of Ellen White and William Miller, 21, published by Light Bearers “Present Truths” Ministries, Malo, Washington.

If the Davidians had followed this "simple but intelligent and important" rule of prophetic interpretation in their study of the 1260-day prophecy, then they could have prevented the disappointment, demoralization and fragmentation of nearly one thousand followers on April 22, 1959.

In a sense, the Davidians became victims of an erroneous interpretation of the "apotelesmatic principle." This same principle became the "philosophical basis upon which Desmond Ford built his denial of our historic teaching of the sanctuary. He did not deny that the 2300-day prophecy had been fulfilled in 1844; he simply saw it as 'a' fulfillment rather than 'the' fulfillment, which so weakened its application that he was led to reject the concept of the investigative judgment.” Our Firm Foundation, September 1987, 9. “One of the beauties of Adventist theology is its hundreds of interconnections.

How many times has the church been spared the desolating effect of false teaching because what presented a fair appearance on one front failed to match up on another! How many times has the church been spared the desolating effect of false teaching because what presented a fair appearance on one front failed to match up on another? It is almost impossible to change any portion of our doctrinal truth without running into manifest inconsistencies when attempting to harmonize the new teaching with other points of doctrine.” Ibid.

“This has been a decided inconvenience to many good Adventists with inventive, inquiring minds—and praise the Lord for it! To those now studying the prophecies with renewed vigor I would say, Be careful that you don’t force your way over the boundaries the Lord has set up. If you take an interest in a prophecy, take an interest in every point of the prophecy, or find a clear biblical reason not to. To do otherwise is too great a risk.” Ibid.

It is very obvious, if we judge David Koresh’s public statements on the seven seals of Revelation, that either he was ignorant of the traditional position that the church has taken regarding the seals, or that he took the great risk of using the apotelesmatic principle and became entangled with it to the point of becoming confused and more deceived with his erroneous prophetic interpretations. This fact should be a warning for those who presently are involved with finding a double fulfillment to Bible prophecies.

3. Insufficient knowledge of our historic Adventist message, both spiritually and intellectually.

Historic Adventists have understood through the passing of time that the lamb brought to the slaughter of Isaiah 53 found its fulfillment in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He, as the antitypical sin offering, is "THE Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28. Seventh-day Adventists have always believed that when Christ comes the second time to this world, “every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7); and when He descends “from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” “and all the holy angels with him”; then “the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 25:31.

“We know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:2-3. If David Koresh had an intellectual and spiritual (experimental) knowledge of our historical message, then his life and soul might have been spared from the delusion of Satan. Lamentably, instead of purifying himself as Christ is pure, he chose the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," which ultimately led him to his destruction.

Thus, Koresh’s public and bold claims that he was a new incarnation of Jesus Christ, and that he was “the lamb of God” who would open the seals of Revelation were an absolute fallacy.

4. Unfounded or ungrounded isolation from the main body of the church.

It is truth that “a bare assent to the truth is not Bible religion. Men do not become Christians merely by having their names written in the church books.” The Youth’s Instructor, 374. We know also that “Many have been cast out of the church whose names were registered upon the book of life.” Signs of the Times, December 4, 1893. But praise be to God that “The decisions of unjust judges will be of no account in the court of heaven. They will not make an innocent man guilty nor change his character in the least before God. As surely as men in responsible positions become lifted up in their own esteem, and act as though they were to lord it over their brethren, they will
render decisions which Heaven cannot ratify." Review and Herald, April 16, 1895.

On the other hand, we should also acknowledge that “many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline. . . . Church relationship is not to be lightly canceled; yet when the path of some professed followers of Christ is crossed, or when their voice has not the controlling influence which they think it deserves, they will threaten to leave the church. True, in leaving the church they would themselves be the greatest sufferers; for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world. Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 17-18.

Why should our church relationship be lightly canceled? Why should every believer be wholehearted in his attachment to the church? Because “The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church. Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the facts, which He has given for our instruction.” Ibid., vol. 3, 432-433.

If David Koresh had examined what God really regards as zeal, he would have been found wanting. But what about you and me? Can we pass God’s test?

When Victor Houteff and David Koresh chose directly or indirectly to isolate themselves and to sever their relationship from the main body of the church because of their heretical beliefs and practices, and because their voices had not the controlling influence which they thought they deserved; in leaving the church they themselves were “the greatest sufferers for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence,” they subjected themselves to the full temptations of the world. Ibid., vol. 4, 17-18.

May God help us to have wisdom regarding these matters in such a way that if we suffer it will be for truth’s sake and not because of pride, stubbornness, heresy or evil behavior.

5. The overemphasis of personal biblical viewpoints nonessential for the salvation of mankind.

Both Victor Houteff and David Koresh had some doctrines that were overemphasized. These beliefs were not essential for man’s salvation. To have a clear and complete understanding of them was not required in order to enter into the New Jerusalem. For example: The seven apocalyptic seals became an area that was overemphasized by Mr. Koresh.

Soon after the shoot-out that began the siege and the standoff of Ranch Apocalypse, Mr. Koresh spoke and said: “All I’ve ever done is to try to teach the world the Seven Seals.” “The next thing, the sun and the stars will be darkened,” he said, “that is the Sixth Seal.” The Dallas Morning News, Monday, March 1, 1993, page 13A. The same journal also stated that after Koresh “spoke at breakneck speed, often switching topics with little apparent logic.” One clear theme emerged: “his conviction that he is the Lamb of God.” “Asked if he was the Lamb referred to in Revelation, he said, ‘I was the Lamb.’ ” He spoke in the past tense, he said, because he believed he was dying. “These blankets are soaked (with blood),” he said.” Ibid. So important and emphasis of some truths to the neglect of others.


It might be safe to say that most of those who met either Victor Houteff, or David Koresh, must have observed a common denominator in their charismatic personalities—religious zeal. The public media was able to immediately perceive this quality in Koresh’s life. Thus, People’s Weekly Magazine entitled its cover story of March 15, 1993: “Zenlot of God.” It was, at least partially, this type of zeal that kept him fighting for his convictions all the way to the end.

Though we consider zeal itself as a virtue, a blind and unreasonable zeal is its perversion.

Even though the church’s zeal today should exceed that of apostolic times (see Testimonies, vol. 7, 33); and there is a lack of zeal in proclaiming the third angel’s message (see ibid., vol. 8, 119); and therefore, our zeal must be intensified (see ibid., vol 5, 383); nevertheless, we should be also aware that “there is a noisy zeal, without aim or purpose, which is not according to knowledge, which is blind in its operations and destructive in its results. This is not Christian zeal. Christian zeal is controlled by principle and is not spasmodic. It is earnest, deep, and strong, engaging the whole soul and arousing to exercise the moral sensibilities.” Ibid., vol 2, 232. See also Selected Messages, book 2, 59. Thus, our zeal should “be tempered with reason.” Testimonies, vol 7, 298. A reason that is sanctified is subjected to the Word of God alone.

“There is in human nature a tendency to run to extremes and from one extreme to another entirely opposite. Many are fanatics. They are consumed by a fiery zeal which is mistaken for religion, but character is the true test of discipleship. Have they the meekness of Christ? have they His humility and sweet benevolence? Is the soul-temple emptied of pride, arrogance, selfishness, and censoriousness? If not, they know not what manner of spirit they are of. They do not realize true Christianity consists in bearing much fruit to the glory of God.” Ibid., vol. 5, 305-306.

If David Koresh had examined what God really regards as zeal, he would have been found wanting. But what about you and me? Can we pass God’s test? Let us examine ourselves and let us ask the Lord to help us to pass “the true test of discipleship.”
Let us always keep in mind that "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history."

crucified." Dr. Bob E. Patterson, a professor of theology at Baylor University in Waco, said Mr. Howell apparently believes that 'bringing about his own death would bring about the final kingdom.' "The Dallas Morning News, Monday, March 1, 1993, page 13 A.

I should say that Christians should be ready and willing to give their lives for their Master any time and anywhere. We cannot rule out the possibility that you or I may never walk the path to martyrdom. It could be that some of us might seal our witnessing for Christ with our own blood. Most Christians "have not yet resisted unto crucifixion." From the desire of self-preservation to self-denial; from the earthly feelings to seek vengeance, to the heavenly principles of pity and love toward those who despise us and persecute us; from doubts and disappointments, to faith, a renewed hope and reliance on God's providences. "In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings." The Ministry of Healing, 474.

A few years ago, I met a godly man who always inspired me with a phrase he frequently used: "The future is bright if Christ is on our side." And as he faced his many trials, his faith and hope never faded, but became stronger and stronger through a daily, saving and dynamic communion with the Lord. As a result of this saving relationship with Christ, his lips uttered only words of encouragement and reassurance for his fellow workers, who sometimes wavered in confronting challenges.

Yes, dear reader, "The future is bright" for you and me as individuals, as unique children of God; and for us as a church or prophetic movement "if Christ is on our side." Although many more false christs, as David Koresh, shall come to deceive and lead souls to an eternal oblivion, let us not forget that God is in charge of the affairs of the universe and particularly of Planet Earth. The Lord's throne is stable and everlasting. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Psalm 121:4. And soon the genuine Christ, He alone shall destroy evil and the evildoers; leaving neither "root nor branch," thus "affliction shall not rise up the second time." Malachi 4:1; Nahum 1:9.

And finally brethren, let us always keep in mind that "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history." Life Sketches of Ellen White, 196.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom," (Colossians 3:16) now and forevermore. Amen. □

Theological term used to indicate that a prophecy can have multiple fulfillments.

There is only one God-given formula for avoiding fanaticism and assuring unity within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This formula is to preach and follow present truth as described in Early Writings, 63. Our Firm Foundation is dedicated to promulgating Adventism's unique, life-changing, world-saving message. Here are several ways you can share this message with your family and friends through the pages of Our Firm Foundation.

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ACREDITATION, sports, liberal arts, entertainment, immorality, and New Age humanism, along with career choices, and student associations destitute of a missionary vision and commitment to Adventist historic values are evidenced in the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. These fruits bespeak a faul ted response to God’s call to establish a true educational program. Since the beginning of the world, there has never been an educational institution that has continued to serve God faithfully. The Eden school failed; the patriarchal school disappeared during the Egyptian captivity; the educational system of the children of Israel failed because of intermarriage with the heathen; the schools of the prophets established by Samuel and Elijah became corrupted; the synagogue and the rabbinical schools of the post-Babylonian captivity were Hellenized; the early Christian schools became paganized; the schools of the Reformation were secularized; and now a similar fate is befalling the educational system God raised up to finish His work.

Education is the heart of reformation and redemption. “In the highest sense, the work of education and redemption are one.” Education, 30. Wherever God has had a reformatory movement, He has had an educational system. This fact was true of the Celts, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and the Huguenots. But each of these groups, while remaining faithful to God for centuries, eventually was derailed by Satan. Perhaps the classic example of such derailing is the rapid demise in one generation of the Waldensian school that had stood faithful to the Lord for over a millennium. Similarly the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to have many problems following the acceptance by some of our young people of invitations to be trained in Calvinistic seminaries.

Commencing with Battle Creek College, our first denominational school, our Seventh-day Adventist educational system soon included elementary and secondary schools. It expanded rapidly until it was the largest Protestant parochial educational system in the world. But Christian education is not meant merely to have larger facilities or to be simply better than the education of the world. It is meant to be altogether different. It is predicated on the pure, unadulterated truth of God which leads to righteousness and to the fulfillment of the mission of His church.

In the secularized, humanized world in which we live, we face challenges almost identical to those faced by Paul in Corinth. The choices are the same today: Do we accept the wisdom of God, or the wisdom of man? “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” 1 Corinthians 1:21-25. Later Paul states this truth even more specifically: “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” 1 Corinthians 3:19.

Satan knows that if he can derailed, he can derail the church. And indeed, to do so has clearly been his intention. We started badly in our educational program when at Battle Creek five years of classical Greek and five years of classical Latin were taught. But then, by the grace of God, we were able to move onto a firmer platform. In 1897 God raised up Avondale College in Australia as the pattern for all our denominational schools. But today Avondale College no longer even begins to stand as the paradigm for all of our training institutions. In 1904, Madison College was established as another pattern school. But Satan found a way to derailed that institution also.

Today we are in a situation where we are no longer single-mindedly training young people for the work of God, to be the final generation, to take the everlasting gospel to every nook and cranny of this world. Rather, we are content to train them to seek after the accolades of the world. We are happy to have good secular
institutions that show little evidence of spiritual life. But we are far, far from the perfect plan that God desires for us. Sadly, few are willing to address this issue. Indeed, those who attempt to address it are considered fanatical and unrealistic.

But there is a plan which God has established, a plan patterned after the school of Eden. See Education, 30. Despite the changing conditions of today, we are to seek to follow it in every detail. That pattern of education is designed to further God’s threefold purpose for man. The first purpose is to present to our children and youth a knowledge and understanding of God and His work. The second purpose is to lead our children and youth to the full surrender of their lives to the matchless claims of Jesus. And the third purpose is to train our children and youth in service for God and man. Never were our institutions meant to prepare our young people merely for secular careers. Never were our institutions meant to prepare our young people merely for secular careers. Like the Waldensians, young man and woman is to be trained to play his or her vital role in the gospel proclamation.

We are far, far too late in history to seek after worldly goals, to strive for power, popularity, financial achievements, and possessions. Rather we are to teach our young people to aspire after the glorious privilege of being that final generation which will carry the gospel to all the world. Their education should uphold before our students the greatest challenges that a generation has ever received. In our academic curriculum, every subject should be centered upon the Word of God. The textbooks should reflect the wisdom, the eternal, infinite wisdom of Heaven. It matters not whether the class be history, or science, or English, or mathematics, or geography, or music, or art, or recreation. Each subject must reflect the purposes of God and the truth of God. No teachers should be chosen to train our young people except those who are wholly committed to the Lord. Such teachers should show by test and trial that they love to obey God and hate to do evil. Such teachers must be wholly committed to God and to His service.

Everything must be different in a Christian school: the goals, the motives, the curriculum, the teachers, the environment. In 1976, at the North American Division Higher Educational Institute, held at Andrews University, I was devastated to hear college leaders confidently proclaim that our schools must reflect the varied beliefs, practices and career choices seen in our churches. If that be true, every abomination will be acknowledged in our schools, and every heresy will be tolerated. But our schools, like the schools of the prophets, are meant to draw the people back from the tide of apostasy. Therefore, the curriculum must diligently seek to teach our students the precious truths of the everlasting gospel.

It is sad if our students fail to learn history, mathematics and science well. But much sadder will be the results if they fail to learn intellectually and spiritually the truths of the Word of God. There is no subject that can be taught in our schools in the same way as in a Seventh-day Adventist educators follow. That voice is the voice of God. Many argue that accreditational teams evaluate only in the light of the goals and objectives of the institution. But there is no way that fallible, unconverted men and women can truly evaluate the goals and objectives of a true Christian education.

Many of the problems that we see in our schools today have surreptitiously entered through the door of accreditation. For example, consider our physical educational program. Whereas God’s program for physical education is built

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A secular school. Not even subjects such as mathematics. Certainly history cannot be taught from the normal perspective of lauding the successes of man, and promoting concepts such as the victor is greater, the loser is weaker. Rather, history must be taught from the perspective of viewing God’s hand over the affairs of the nations, of seeing Him at work in the great reformatory movements, of promoting the great brotherhood of all mankind. The Bible is not to be judged by man’s ideas of science; but science is to be examined along with its unerring guide, the Bible. Because many of our professors have failed to teach science thus, it is not uncommon to find among Seventh-day Adventist science teachers those who no longer believe the Word that the earth is approximately six thousand years old. When teachers fail to see the hand of God in history, they fail to present history in that light to our children. But teachers who have a love for God and His honor, and who believe in the mission to which they are called, do not waste a moment teaching our young people that which is not meat and drink for eternity.

When in the 1930s our educational institutions began seeking accreditation, we took hold of that which forced our educators to look for approval to man rather than to God. There should be one voice, and one voice alone, which

wholly upon non-competitive activities, is centered upon a physical work program, and is combined with activities such as brisk walking and missionary endeavor; the secular accrediting agents expect gymnastics and sports programs. Step by insidious step, we have moved from pick-up games, to intramural games, to challenges between rival Seventh-day Adventist schools, to where now some of our colleges and academies are playing in recognized competitive leagues with the schools of the world. We see our young people being inspired with the idolatry of the world. The servant of the Lord was shown that even cricket and tennis were “species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, 350.

What important lessons there are to be learned from the experience of Israel and the golden calf! It will be noted that the idolatry then was associated with feasting (Exodus 32:5), sports (32:6), wild music (32:18), dancing (32:19), and immodest dress (32:25) which almost certainly must have led to immorality. As we take an honest look at many of our schools and colleges today, we have to admit that the same conditions are extant. There are banquets, worldly music, competitive sports, a lack of modest dress, and immorality. Not all teachers or students are involved, but we are beholding a fearful trend in our educational system.
Further, our young people are being trained for and encouraged to prepare for worldly success rather than for following in the humble footsteps of Jesus who sent His disciples out without any thought for personal gain or comfort. Luke 9:1-6. Now we need to be training a generation of young people who will selflessly give up all worldly ambition and place their lives fully in the hands of the Lord. It is not merely for a career, a job, or an occupation that our young people must be trained. It is to follow the calling of God to a mission and a destiny. Like Isaiah (Isaiah 49:1), like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), these young people have been called. It is our responsibility under God to turn their hearts and minds to that call, ever upholding before them the righteous claims of God upon their lives and service. Our colleges have become perpetrators of apostasy. And while it is true that in most of them it is possible to find faithful teachers trying to explain the gospel of Christ, nevertheless, far too many of the teachers no longer believe the Seventh-day Adventist message. This attitude is sadly prevalent even among the Bible teachers. There is no doubt that our drive for worldly accreditation has had its effect. As accrediting bodies have increasingly pressured our administrators to upgrade the academic degrees of our faculties, they have been forced to look more at applicants’ academic qualifications than at their spiritual qualifications. Therefore, many men and women who have demonstrated scholastic excellence in non-Adventist institutions have come to teach in our schools. This practice the servant of the Lord condemned.

“The light has been given me that tremendous pressures will be brought upon every Seventh-day Adventist with whom the world can get into close connection. Those who seek the education that the world esteems so highly, are gradually led further and further from the principles of truth until they become educated worldlings. At what a price have they gained their education! They have parted with the Holy Spirit of God. They have chosen to accept what the world calls knowledge in the place of the truths which God has committed to men through His ministers and prophets and apostles. And there are some who, having secured this worldly education, think that they can introduce it into our schools. But let me tell you that you must not take what the world calls the higher education and bring it into our schools and sanitariums and churches. We need to understand these things. I speak to you definitely. This must not be done.” Review and Herald, November 11, 1909.

What is the answer to the dilemma? It is my conviction, built upon my study of the Word, and upon my experience of more than forty-one years in education, that there is little hope for our colleges as they are presently established unless they will listen to God’s voice and follow in His ways.

“Though in many respects our institutions of learning have swung into worldly conformity, though step by step they have advanced toward the world, they are prisoners of hope. Fate has not so woven its meshes about their workings that they need to remain helpless and in uncertainty. If they will listen to His voice and follow in His ways, God will correct and enlighten them, and bring them back to their upright position of distinction from the world. When the advantage of working upon Christian principles is discerned, when self is hid in Christ, much greater progress will be made; for each worker will feel his own human weakness; he will supplicate for the wisdom and grace of God, and will receive the divine help that is pledged for every emergency.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 145.

Probably this assessment is true of the overwhelming majority of academies and elementary schools. Certainly small elementary schools may possibly be turned around by the appointment of teachers who will follow only the Lord and His educational program. But as for the colleges, the larger academies, and the larger elementary schools, we are left with the chilling realization that they have largely failed the church. These institutions are primarily responsible for the education of our ministry, teachers, health workers, business personnel, and other workers.

Perhaps the best answer is to close many of these institutions and start again—God’s way.

“If a worldly influence is to bear sway in our school, then sell it out to worldlings, and let them take the entire control; and those who have invested their means in that institution will establish another school.

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By the providence of God, many of these properties are extraordinarily valuable, because suburbia has grown up around them. Therefore, many millions of dollars could be redeemed from their sale. Then we could start all over, forgetting accreditation except the accreditation of God; raising up small colleges, preferably limiting them to a maximum of about 250 students, scattering them all over North America and the world. But we should do this only at such a rate as we can find teachers wholly suitable to the task of training the final generation.

As for our academies, they need to be much smaller, about sixty to eighty students at the most. There is no way that a larger institution can give the kind of personalized attention that is needed in training leaders. Small elementary schools are vastly to be preferred to large ones. Too many believe that a small school cannot effectively do the work done by a large school. But the large schools are habits for sin and immorality, and it is very difficult to control wrong influences there. The large schools are a trap of Satan. There he is binding up our children and youth in bundles for the great conflagration.

The curriculum in our schools must be wholly designed around the principles of God’s Word. It must be a solid work-study, outreach program. Every educational institution must develop its cur...
UNTO the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and held fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Revelation 3:1-3. “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. For we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” 1 Thessalonians 2:3-7.

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:7-11.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” Ephesians 3:14-21.

The solemn work of the gospel minister is to make all men see “what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” If one enters upon this work choosing the least self-sacrificing part of it, contenting himself with preaching, and leaving the work of ministering for some one else to do, he need not expect that his labors will be acceptable to God. Souls for whom Christ has died are perishing for want of well-directed personal labor; and when the minister is not willing to be a servant of the people, as Jesus has directed in His Word, then he has mistaken his calling. Those who minister in the sacred desk should fall upon the Rock and be broken, that the Lord may put His superscription upon them and fashion them as vessels unto honor. If those engaged in the work of the ministry were indeed laborers together with God, we should see a solid and beautiful work wrought in all countries for the saving of the souls for whom Christ has died.

God calls for consecrated men, who are willing to deny self. The work of the heavenly intelligences is constant and
earnest; for they are intent upon drawing men to Jesus. This is the manner in which ministers should labor. Their message should be, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. In the ministration of angels, they do not labor so as to shut any soul out, but rather to gather them all in; but if the message of the gospel is to go to all men, human agents must co-operate with the angel workers. Divine and human agencies must combine in order to accomplish the great work of saving the souls of the lost. Man cannot work out his own salvation without divine aid, and God will not save him without willing, decided co-operation. Human agencies must be educated; they must become sufficient for this great work, and their growth and education depend upon their union with divine forces. God provides all the capabilities, all the talents, by which men may enter the work; but the highest development of the worker for God can never be attained without divine co-operation. Symmetry of character and the harmonious development of the work will be accomplished only through continual dependence upon God and earnest effort on the part of man; for the secret of our success and power as a people advocating advanced truth will be found in making direct, personal appeals to those who are interested, having unwavering reliance upon the Most High.

Satan and his angels are struggling for the mastery of the world, while the Prince of life and the angels of heaven are engaged in the battle, determined to rescue all those who would escape from the bondage of evil. God waits to see what those who have been enlightened by His truth will do. Again and again He has called for His ministers to be shepherds to the flock. He is now waiting for the co-operation of His human agents, waiting for the ministers to minister to the diseased lambs and sheep that are ready to die. Oh, will not the ministers of God, as obedient children, take up one line of work after another, as He presents it to them? Every herald of the gospel is to be a minister indeed. Every forgiven child of God is to be instructed by those who are laborers together with Heaven, that he is to be a messenger to work in the same way as the Father and the Son are working, seeking to save the lost. Every Christian is to lift up Jesus, and say, Behold Him; behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

The sacred responsibility rests upon the minister to watch for souls as one that must give an account. He must interest himself in the souls for whom he labors, finding out all that perplexes and troubles them and hinders them from walking in the light of the truth. Job says, "The cause which I knew not I searched out." Job 29:16. This should be considered the important work of the ministry, even if it demands much painstaking effort and inconvenience. This is home missionary work, and it is in no case to be neglected; for eternal interests are here involved. The excuses of those who fail to do this work do not relieve them of the responsibility, full treasure-house he can bring forth things new and old, which will stir the hearts of his hearers, and convicted, they will cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. If the minister steps from the pulpit, and separates himself from the people without making a special personal effort for those who have been touched by the love of Christ, he has lost an opportunity which he will never recover.

We need more missionary ministers, ministers who are missionaries in deed and in truth, who place themselves in communication with the Lord Jesus Christ by earnest prayer, by complete surrender to God.

We need more missionary ministers, ministers who are missionaries in deed and in truth, who place themselves in communication with the Lord Jesus Christ by earnest prayer, by complete surrender to God.
instructed and enlightened in the truth that maketh wise unto salvation. In visiting the people, he will learn their necessities, and his sympathies will be called out. The love of Jesus for blood-bought souls will manifest itself in tenderness to the lost, and will grow by exercise. He will sink self in his interest for the work. He will have many straight and plain words to address to those who need them; for when God commissions men to do in the relation of anecdotes, but he is to preach the Word. "Then that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." 1 Timothy 5:20-21. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12. "Study to

We are not to fear that there will be any failure on the part of God, but fear lest because of our own sinful inclinations any of us should seem to come short of the promise.

His work, He lays upon them the burden of watching for souls as they that must give an account. When needed warnings are to be given, sins are to be rebuked, errors and wrongs are to be corrected, not only in the pulpit but personal labor. This is divine work, and although it is not congenial to the natural inclinations, the minister must proclaim the straight truth which will make the ears of them that hear tingle; for they must lay before those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, the dangers and perils that are around them, and the doom that awaits the impenitent. Because this message is not agreeable to their inclination, or welcome to those who must be warned, they are solemnly charged to be faithful in its declaration. The ministers will meet wrongs that will seem to defy correction. They will be made aware of sins that seem to be covered that will need to be exposed, on the right hand and on the left. The prophet says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God." Isaiah 58:1-2. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:1-2. The minister is not to indulge show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15. We are to present Christ to the people, following the words of the apostle where he says, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Colossians 1:28-29. Was it essential for Paul to have this experience? Read carefully, meditate upon his words, and see if it is safe for any of the ministers of Christ to shape their life according to any lower standard of godliness.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3. What is there left for us to ask that is not included in this merciful, abundant provision? Through the merits of Christ we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is our privilege to draw nigh to God, to breathe in the atmosphere of His presence. If we keep ourselves in close union with the common, cheap, sensual things of this earth, Satan will interpose his shadow, so that we shall fail to discern the blessedness of the promises and assurances of God, and so shall fail to be strengthened to attain to a high spiritual standard. Nothing short of abiding in the presence of Christ will bring peace, freedom, courage, and power.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephesians 1:4. There can be no misunderstanding here, unless there is wilful blindness. We are to be holy and without blame before Him in love. The condition upon which we receive an increase of grace is that we improve upon the light we already have. If we would find, we must go on continually seeking; if we would receive, we must ask; if we would have the door opened, we must knock.

The responsibility of our own ruin will lie at our own door. The Word of God speaks to us as if everything depended upon our own efforts. We must come, we must resist the devil, we must strive to enter in at the strait gate, we must run the race with patience, we must fight the fight of faith, we must wrestle with principalities and powers, we must agonize before God in prayer, if we would stand blameless before the throne of God. We must have the faith that works, or it will be powerless. Good works will not pay the price of our redemption; they are only the fruit of our faith.

Our experience must broaden and deepen; for by His grace we are to be made perfect in our weakness. Our will must be placed firmly, decidedly, intelligently; on the side of God's will. There must be no presumption; for it becomes us to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, not in distrust of the grace of God, but in fear that self shall gain the supremacy. We are not to fear that there will be any failure on the part of God, but fear lest because of our own sinful inclinations any of us should seem to come short of the promise. Let the standard be set high, and let there be an earnest striving to reach it in our daily lives, till our souls burn with holy desire. We need to talk faith; for it is very feeble, but in talking faith we must speak of that faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

We have come to have very meager ideas as to what constitutes the duty of a Christian minister. Many who minister in the sacred desk do not half understand their responsibilities. They are taking many things altogether too easy and comfortable, and without them the ministers, in the presence of Christ will bring peace, freedom, courage, and power.
tion that we may understand whether we are learning the meekness and lowliness of Christ; for we are to follow His example. In our labors we are to bear the same testimony as did Paul. He says, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, . . . and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:18–21. "Therefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:26–28. "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

The Lord Jesus said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"; (Luke 22:32) and after His resurrection, just before His ascension, He said to His disciples, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." John 21:15. This was a work in which Peter had but little experience; but he could not be complete in Christian life unless he learned to feed the lambs, those who are young in the faith. It would require great care, much patience and perseverance to give those who are ignorant the suitable teachings, opening up to them the Scriptures, and educating them for usefulness and duty. This is the work that must be done in the church at this day, or the advocates of truth will have a dwarfed experience, and will be exposed to temptation and deception. The charge given to Peter should come home to every minister. Again and again, the voice of Christ is heard repeating the charge to His under shepherds, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." John 21:15–16.

Review and Herald, August 30 and September 6, 1892.

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