Cunningly Devised Fables

See page 8
Editorial

There is much being said today regarding the belief that Christ justified all of us at the cross. The cross offers to all a choice to obey and be saved or disobey and be lost. Forensic justification is the very first identifying mark of the New Theology. When forensic justification becomes the main emphasis of our thinking and our beliefs and we take the emphasis off our sanctification, we are in the New Theology. Forensic justification has produced the idea that it is easy to be saved and hard to be lost. But the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us it is a battle and a march every day.

"It is hard work to follow on, step by step painfully and slowly, onward and upward, in the path of purity and holiness." Testimonies, vol. 3, 193.

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. 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." Ibid., 106-107.

"The Lord has singled us out and made us subjects of His marvelous mercy. Shall we be charmed with the gratings of the apostate? Shall we choose to take our stand with Satan and his host? Shall we join with the transgressors of God's law? Rather let it be our prayer: 'Lord, put enmity between me and the serpent.' If we are not at enmity with his works of darkness, his powerful folds encircle us, and his sting is ready at any moment to be driven to our hearts. We should count him a deadly foe. We should oppose him in the name of Christ. Our work is still onward. We must battle for every inch of ground. Let all who name the name of Christ clothe themselves with the armor of righteousness." Ibid., vol. 4, 595-596.

The same temptation and victories that Jesus had, must be ours. It was not easy for Jesus; it will never be easy for the devout Christian seeking after righteousness. His will must be our will. His obedience must be our obedience to all truth with no compromise or neutrality.

True justification comes only when we are sorry for sinning that we are ready to covenant with God to stop sinning. Knowing that we cannot of ourselves do so, but with Christ in the heart all things are possible. See 2 Corinthians 7: 9-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13, 19. When our will is surrendered to His will, then with the Holy Spirit in us, we can do everything that Christ did as He surrendered His will to the Father. He could overcome every temptation. The Desire of Ages, 664, tells us that Jesus used no power or quality that we cannot have. All power that was His is now waiting for us to use when we are ready to make that full surrender of the will.

Then and then only can we make the final demonstration that God needs and for which He has waited for over 100 years.

Everyone knows that without the cross there can be no salvation. The cross is the very heart of the gospel. The teaching that the cross is the only condition of our entire justification is the foundation of the doctrine, once saved always saved. It is the devil's lie. Forensic justification minimizes obedience. Ellen White tells us we cannot retain justification unless we are obedient to all truth.

"Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained." Selected Messages, book 1, 397.

When we give our will to God, then we belong to God. If God does not have our will, we then belong to Satan. God can own us only when we are willing to be made willing to obey. We do not fully believe until we believe with our will.

When tempted to yield to temptation in the warfare against Satan, we may always say, "I will not surrender; I will not give up." If we have fallen into sin and are discouraged, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (see 1 John 2:1) and if we confess, He will forgive every sin. 1 John 1:9.

A Christian who does not exercise His will for right doing is casting a reflection upon the name Christian. Those who are moved simply by their emotions of the moment in the conflict with temptation, are bound to fail. We must stand upon the foundation of the Word, and Jesus is the Word. John 1:14. There is power in the Word (John 1:12), power to overcome every temptation, every evil temper, every sin. See Testimonies, vol. 1, 144. We must set our face like a flint.

"For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Isaiah 50:7.

We must persevere. We must surrender, now, fully, entirely, for Jesus has made a way of escape for all who are willing to be made willing to obey. See Testimonies, vol. 1, 144.

My brother, my sister, give your will to God, today, without delay. Let Him strengthen your will and make it unconquerable. Hope against hope, believe against every earthly evidence, for God has spoken, for He has promised and He will not fail. He that willeth shall be led of God and shall know His teachings and shall not be deceived by Satan's deceptions, by forensic justification in the New Theology, in the omega of apostasy. We will then surely prevail to the very end and see Jesus.

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

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**Moving?**

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

No human being can fully comprehend the problem that our God and Creator faced with the rebellion of Lucifer and the angels who followed him, and Satan's attack and victory over God's newly created beings, Adam and Eve. The whole universe was watching. 1 Corinthians 4:9. Angels of God held their breath, so to speak, as they watched intently the temptation, which was a very light test. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1083. Adam and Eve were not hungry; everything had been provided for them. They lived in the atmosphere of joy and happiness. Their souls were continually bathed each day in the sunshine of heaven. Angels attended their every need. The Creator was their Instructor in the mysteries of creation and the entire universe. But in that very short moment, Eve was hypnotized by the serpent. Satan promised that she would be like God, knowing everything.

Adam looked at the forbidden fruit in the hands of his beautiful wife. He knew the penalty; they had been carefully instructed that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4; Romans 5:13; Romans 4:15. The law of God was created in their hearts as they came forth from the hand of the Creator. Our prophet, Ellen White, gives the tragic history of that moment and God's solution to the sin problem: "Adam and Eve at their creation had knowledge of the original law of God. It was imprinted upon their hearts, and they were acquainted with the claims of law upon them. When they transgressed the law of God, and fell from their state of happy innocence, and became sinners, the future of the fallen race was not relieved by a single ray of hope. God pitied them, and Christ devised the plan for their salvation by Himself bearing the guilt. When the curse was pronounced upon the earth and upon man, in connection with the curse was a promise that through Christ there was hope and pardon for the transgression of God's law. Although gloom and darkness hung, like the pall of death, over the future, yet in the promise of the Redeemer, the Star of hope lighted up the dark future. The gospel was first preached to Adam by Christ. Adam and Eve felt sincere sorrow and repentance for their guilt. They believed the precious promise of God, and were saved from utter ruin." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1084.

God the Father and the Son immediately put into operation a plan to redeem the fallen race. Jesus the Creator offered Himself to be the Redeemer. John 3:16. Again the prophet speaks:

"Jesus became the world's Redeemer, rendering perfect obedience to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He redeemed Adam's disgraceful fall, uniting the earth that had been divorced from God by sin, to the continent of heaven." Ibid.

"Though earth was struck off from the continent of heaven and alienated from its communion, Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory.

"The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, 'Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance.'"

"What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity! He would place His feet in Adam's steps. He would take man's fallen nature, and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam. He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing He would open the way for
the redemption from the disgrace of Adam's failure and fall, of all those who would believe on Him." Ibid., vol. 1, 1085.

The broken law demanded the death of the lawbreaker. The only way that God could satisfy the broken law and its penalty would be for God, the Creator, to accept the penalty in the place of the sinner. God agreed to allow Jesus to be treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness in which we had no share. He suffered the death that was ours that we might receive the life that was His—with His stripes we are healed. See *The Desire of Ages*, 25.

Love Rejected

Oh, what love, a love that humans have never understood fully! Yes, a few of the possible one-hundred billion people who have lived and died in the six-thousand years of the great controversy have experienced some of it—but only a very few. Why? Why only such a small number in comparison to the multitude of the wicked? Revelation 20:8 says they are like the sands of the sea. Jesus said many are called but few are chosen. Matthew 20:16; 22:14. Why so few? Ellen White states in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 136: "To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test." How many will pass the test? Why have these tragic statistics been written into the history of God's church?

During the six-thousand years of the controversy, Jesus has wept over His remnant people. And why does He weep? Because the majority of His people have rejected Him and are still rejecting Him. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, His church.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke 19:41-42.

He weeps today for us, His remnant people. Why? Because we are still rejecting His love, His sacrifice, His gift of eternal life.

Ellen White speaks of the rejection of the Jews of His love, His plan to save them: "The generation that Jesus denounced was not responsible for the sins of their fathers, only so far as they followed their evil practices, and thus made themselves accountable for their course of hatred and revenge in persecuting the ancient messengers of God. It was the present mercies and warnings which that generation were rejecting that fastened upon them guilt which the blood of bulls and goats could not wash away. Proud, self-righteous, and independent, they had separated farther and farther from heaven until they had become willing subjects of Satan. The Jewish nation for centuries had been forging the fetters which that generation were irrevocably fastening upon themselves." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, 1122.

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**During the six-thousand years of the controversy, Jesus has wept over His remnant people. And why does He weep? Because the majority of His people have rejected Him and are still rejecting Him.**

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**Laodicea**

But the prophet also reveals the wretched condition of the Laodicean church, the very last-day church, our church, God's remnant:

"The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people. It has been placed before us for a long time, but has not been heeded as it should have been. When the work of repentance is earnest and deep, the individual members of the church will buy the rich goods of heaven. 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.' Revelation 3:18. Oh, how many behold things in a perverted light, in the light in which Satan would have them see!

"You may manifest great zeal in missionary effort, and yet because it is corrupted with selfishness, and tastes strongly of self, it is sought in the sight of God; for it is a tainted, corrupted offering. Unless the door of the heart is open to Jesus, unless He occupies the soul temple, unless the heart is imbued with His divine attributes, human actions when weighed in the heavenly balances, will be pronounced 'Wanting.' The love of Christ would make you rich; but many do not realize the value of His love. Many do not realize that the spirit which they cherish is destitute of the meekness and lowliness of Christ, destitute of the love that would constitute them channels of light." Ibid., vol. 7, 961.

Could it be we do not understand our true condition? Could it be that we are really wretched and miserable, poor, blind and spiritually naked? In this final crisis hour of the great controversy, could it really be that the church is asleep—paralyzed in carnal security and worldliness, when it should be experiencing its greatest hour, shouting to the world a warning of its soon-coming doom? See *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 297–298.

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**Following the Steps of Israel**

Could it really be that we have followed in the very steps of the rebellion of the Jewish church? Yes, the prophet tells us many times that we have. Nineteen times alone in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, she tells us so. What a tragedy!

"I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord's displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace, and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 75–76.

Read "The Testimonies Slighted," *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 62–84. See also vol. 5, 94, 99, 160, 217, 226, 297, 456, 535, 601. How could it happen? "The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them." Ibid., 94.

We are guilty of disregarding the commands of God, His orders, and command-

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ments. Men have devised in committees their own plans—disregarding the Testimonies given by God to His prophet, and there followed a misunderstanding of the conditions of salvation. Like the Jews, we have convinced ourselves that because we are the remnant church, as leaders, pastors and laity, we can go to heaven because we are good people. What folly! Therefore we have distorted the plan of salvation to fit our carnal security. For years, during the reign of a living prophet we were exhorted, counseled, warned and rebuked. But even then our minds were dulled with our carnal security, should be a solemn warning to us. We need never expect that when the Lord has light for His people, Satan will stand calmly by and make no effort to prevent them from receiving it. He will work upon minds to excite distrust and jealousy and unbelief. Let us beware that we do not refuse the light God sends, because it does not come in a way to please us. Let not God's blessing be turned away from us because we know not the time of our visitation. If there are any who do not see and accept the light themselves, let them not stand in the way of others. Let it not be said of this highly startling nature foretold by the prophet while she was living. See Selected Messages, book 1, 197–208.

We are told that this final apostasy will continue and worsen until the coming of the Lord.

"Confederacies will increase in number and power as we draw nearer to the end of time. These confederacies will create opposing influences to the truth, forming new parties of professed believers who will act out their own delusive theories. The apostasy will increase. 'Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils' (1 Timothy 4:1). Men and women have confederated to oppose the Lord God of heaven, and the church is only half awake to the situation. There needs to be much more of prayer, much more of earnest effort, among professed believers." Ibid., book 2, 383; see Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 7, 56–57.

The prophet warns: "Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. They are praising Christ and the god of this world in the same breath. While professedly they receive Christ, they embrace Barabbas, and by their actions say, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas.' Let all who read these lines, take heed. Satan has made his boast of what he can do. He thinks to dissolve the unity which Christ prayed might exist in His church. He says, 'I will go forth and be a lying spirit to deceive those that I can, to criticize, and condemn, and falsify.' Let the sin of deceit and false witness be entertained by a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. Satan laughs at their folly, for he knows what truth is.

"Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much. 'If thou hast known,' said Christ, 'even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' Luke 19:42," Testimonies to Ministers, 409–410.

The New Theology is now preached from many of our pulpits without opposition. The same messages that Desmond Ford was defrocked for are given by pastors without embarrassment or censure. The Celebration movement is gathering momentum around the world. The drums and music, gospel rock, is there to remind us that probation will soon close.

Like the Jews, we have convinced ourselves that because we are the remnant church, as leaders, pastors and laity, we can go to heaven because we are good people. What folly!

and we boasted of our statistics, and our stubborn hearts refused the counsel of the Lord. Policy and politics become the rule of leadership. The prophet tells the sad story: "There is a deplorable lack of spirituality among our people. A great work must be done for them before they can become what Christ designed they should be—the light of the world. For years I have felt deep anguish of soul as the Lord has presented before me the want in our churches of Jesus and His love. There has been a spirit of self-sufficiency and a disposition to strive for position and supremacy. I have seen that self-glorification was becoming common among Seventh-day Adventists and that unless the pride of man should be abased and Christ exalted we should, as a people, be in no better condition to receive Christ at His second advent than were the Jewish people to receive Him at His first advent.

"The Jews were looking for the Messiah; but He did not come as they had predicted that He would, and if He were accepted as the Promised One, their learned teachers would be forced to acknowledge that they had erred. These leaders had separated themselves from God, and Satan worked upon their minds to lead them to reject the Saviour. Rather than yield their pride of opinion, they closed their eyes to all the evidences of His Messiahship, and they not only rejected the message of salvation themselves, but they steeled the hearts of the people against Jesus. Their history favored people, as of the Jews when the great news of the kingdom was preached to them: 'Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.' Luke 11:52." Ibid., 727–728.

"The Lord has shown me that men in responsible positions are standing directly in the way of His work because they think the work must be done and the blessing must come in a certain way, and they will not recognize that which comes in any other way. My brethren, may the Lord place this matter before you as it is. God does not work as men plan, or as they wish; He "moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." Why reject the Lord's methods of working, because they do not coincide with our ideas? God has His appointed channels of light, but these are not necessarily the minds of any particular set of men. When all shall take their appointed place in God's work, earnestly seeking wisdom and guidance from Him, then a great advance will have been made toward letting light shine upon the world. When men shall cease to place themselves in the way, God will work among us as never before." Ibid., 726.

Increasing Apostasy

Our prophet has now lain in the grave since 1915. Seventy-eight years have passed into history, and each passing year our apostasy has deepened until we are now in the very last apostasy of a very
See Selected Messages, book 2, 35-36. Labs 1 and 2 are teaching pastors how to manipulate the minds of people.

Will we now continue to cry out that we are not in apostasy? What is apostasy? It is disobedience to God's plans, His orders. The theology of many is so close to that of the Evangelicals that we can no longer preach the mark of the beast, the three angels' messages and the cleansing of the sanctuary. They no longer are considered present truth. Humanism and Evangelical thinking have captured the educational institutions God designed to be like the schools of the prophets.

**Sinning Until Christ Comes?**

By far, the majority of our people, leaders and pastors, are asleep in their carnal security, believing that we cannot keep the commandments of God perfectly now, that we will sin until Jesus comes. Sanctification is something that God does for us just before the coming of Jesus. What folly! We are told that our character is the only thing we can take with us from this world. See Christ's Object Lessons, 332-333.

"Christ came to the world to counteract Satan's falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven." The Faith I Live By, 114. God tells us through the prophet that all overcoming of sin and the development of character are the work of every Christian before probation closes.

"We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us." Testimonies, vol. 2, 355. See also ibid., 505.

God can justify no one who is practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. See Selected Messages, book 1, 366, 397.

**A Call to Follow Christ**

There can be no neutrality in the work of preparing for eternity.

"If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of living with impenitent hearts against God." Testimonies, vol. 3, 281.

Again God speaks: "Christ's followers have no right to stand on the ground of neutrality. There is more hope of an open enemy, than one who is neutral." Review and Herald, vol. 4, 386.

The plan of salvation is a very serious matter now. We have come to the end of time. We are now forced to make our decision for life or death. If we hold to the idea that we cannot keep the law perfectly, then we cannot keep the Sabbath and we make our religion and the cross of Christ and His message ridiculous. Why would Jesus come down to the level of us fallen human beings and suffer humiliation and death if the law could not be kept perfectly by the power of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us Jesus came in our fallen nature and

When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, hostility against God." Testimonies, vol. 2, 39, 281.

Now, we are not to follow Christ fitfully or capriciously, only when it is for our advantage.

"We must choose to follow Him. In daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd. We are to follow Him by suffering for His sake, saying, at every step, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' Job 13:15. His life practice must be our life practice. And as we thus seek to be like Him, and to bring our wills into conformity to His will, we shall reveal Him." The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 978.

There was no excuse for the sin of Adam and Eve. There is no excuse for our sins. God has provided the power to overcome.

"By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey..."
Cunningly Devised Fables

As Jesus was entering into the last days prior to His crucifixion, He uttered that beautiful prophetic discourse in Matthew, chapter 24, not only forewarning of the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, but also speaking of the last days of this earth's history. Knowing of Satan's desire to bring destruction to the people of God, Jesus spoke several times of the deception which would exist in the days just before His return to this earth at the end of time. See verses 4, 5, 11, 24. He indicated that "if it were possible," even the very elect would be deceived.

In Galatians 1:6-7 the apostle Paul warned of men who were attempting in his day to bring another gospel to God's people, thereby seeking to deceive them: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

So it has been throughout the history of the church that men have arisen at various times perverting the true message of God and thus seeking to deceive, if possible, God's elect, those desiring to have a close personal walk with Jesus. These men who so deceive are not always doing it purposely. In fact, in many instances they are themselves deluded, and carry that delusion to others.

Ellen White spoke in regard to these men: "False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they mingle error with truth, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth." Testimonies to Ministers, 55.

Knowing that the eternal salvation of many souls could be threatened by certain ones, Paul named names so that the people could clearly be made aware of the smooth-tongued deceivers. He spoke of Hymenaeus, Philetus, Alexander the coppersmith, and Demas. See 2 Timothy 2:17-18; 4:10, 14. In the same way and for the same reason, Ellen White speaks of John Harvey Kellogg, Pastor Albion Ballenger, and others in her writings. In many instances, these men were very sincere in what they believed; but what they believed and taught was nonetheless a great deception, and a snare to many.

Again, in our day we have those who are bringing to God's people messages containing deception and error, messages which, if believed and followed, will lead into wrong pathways and weaken God's last-day preparatory message for His remnant people. It is the purpose of this series of articles to warn of one in particular who is bearing a false message. His name is Larry Wilson.

I do not believe that Brother Wilson is a bad man, but I do believe he is a teacher of falsehood, and that he is "endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth." In providing his own interpretation of what he calls the eighteen apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, Larry Wilson directly contradicts not only the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but also the writings of Ellen White. What concerns me and has prompted this series of articles is that good, devoted Seventh-day Adventists, some of whom are very close friends of mine, have allowed their minds to be carried away by the deceptions presented in the writings of Larry Wilson. They have been convinced that he has a deeper insight and a better grasp of the Scriptures than the proven prophet of this church. They fail to see the speculative nature of what he says, and the human wisdom on which it is based.

The White Principle

A most dangerous aspect of Brother Wilson's teaching is his claim to be using
Brothers and sisters, do not be deceived by this attempt to undermine our confidence in our prophet. Her writings are either inspired or they or not.

Throughout her, in all of her writings, notice the context, for instance, of the first quotations in the previous series.

In “An Open Letter to Joe Englekemier” a man by the name of Nick subtly seeks to undermine the prophet by misusing her own writings. He states on the front page of that letter, “I will mention that since Larry Wilson claims his teachings are based on the Bible and not on Ellen White or Adventist traditions, if we really want to be fair we can’t use these sources as arguments against his teachings. If we don’t have Bible proof we don’t have any proof. Even Ellen White, as you are aware, has said that some of our Adventist teachings contain error; it might be argued that it is just those errors Larry exposes.”

Brothers and sisters, do not be deceived by this attempt to undermine our confidence in our prophet. Her writings are either inspired or they or not. Any error in Adventist teachings referred to by her will not be in her own writings, which she says God gave her. She writes, “At that time [after the 1844 disappointment] one error after another pressed in upon us: ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people.”

In these letters which I write in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books.”

Should we listen to the prophet? A wholehearted Yes! I came into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1977. I had practiced law for twelve years at that time. My whole training was in the area of investigation and analysis of facts. So, when I learned of Ellen White, I had to study and know for myself that she was truly a prophet of God. I had heard of Joseph Smith and other false prophets. But what about this prophet in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What about inspiration? How did it come? What about those who disclaimed that Ellen White was a prophet? I needed answers to these and many more questions. Through personal study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy with...
On page 144 of his book on Revelation, Wilson says, “The seven churches are not numbered one through seven. They are not sequential or chronological in order.”

“One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan’s banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God’s Spirit.” Ibid., book 3, 84. “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chronicles 20:20.

**Biblical Rules of Interpretation?**

Larry Wilson has certain rules of Bible interpretation which he thinks are derived from the Bible and when applied would give the interpretation that he presents. Other men have other rules of interpretation that they think come from the Bible and result in the interpretations they present. The fact is that the majority of their rules originate from the finite wisdom of men, and involve very speculative areas. In contrast, when Ellen White is accepted as a true prophet of God, the infinite wisdom of God revealed through her is a much safer test of true interpretation. Do not be confused by someone's claiming that you are unfair in using the prophet—that is Satan's greatest ploy to drive you away from the sure protection of God in these last days. That is the only way in which the elect can truly be deceived.

Brother Wilson's rules of interpretation are not all inclusive, for other principles might also be drawn from the fulfilled prophecies of Daniel that would override some of his misinterpretation of prophecy.

For instance, throughout the book of Daniel, we find the use of parallelism and enlargement. That means that a prophecy found in Daniel 7 will cover the same period of time as the prophecy found in Daniel 2, but additional information is given in Daniel 7. Likewise Daniel 8 would be parallel to Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 with additional enlargement.

Larry Wilson, however, has taken the little horn of Daniel 8, which very clearly arises after that power identified as Greece (Daniel 8:21), then allows a large gap of time, and says it is Satan in his personal appearance at the end of time. “The horn power of Daniel 8 is the physical appearing of the devil which is yet to come.” The Revelation of Jesus, page 75.

He then makes an argument alluding to Protestant interpreters claiming this little horn is the Papacy and says, “But the Papacy is almost 700 years after the death of the four kings of Greece,” p. 80, indicating that there is too much time between the powers, while he, in fact, has a greater gap in time with his interpretation. He gives other weak reasons why the little horn cannot be the Papacy. But in all this reasoning Brother Wilson misleads, because Protestant interpreters, including our pioneers, endorsed by Ellen White, have said the horn of Daniel 8 is the Roman power in both its pagan and papal forms, thus fitting perfectly with the interpretations of the earlier parallel chapters of Daniel. The pagan Roman power followed directly after the Greek power, and came from one of the four winds (directions).

Our prophet has stated in The Acts of the Apostles, 583, “In the revelation given to him [John] there was unfolded scene after scene of thrilling interest in the experience of the people of God, and the history of the church foretold to the very close of time. In figures and symbols, subjects of vast importance were presented to John, which he was to record, that the people of God living in his age and in future ages might have an intelligent understanding of the perils and conflicts before them.

“This revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation.”

The seven churches of Revelation have been interpreted by many to cover a period from the time of John to the close of the Christian dispensation. This interpretation is likewise true of the seals and the trumpets of Revelation. It would fit perfectly with the rule of interpretation as above given and demonstrated in the book of Daniel. However, it disagrees with where Larry Wilson wants to go with these prophecies.

On page 144 of his book on Revelation, Wilson says, “The seven churches are not numbered one through seven. They are not sequential or chronological in order. They are not apocalyptic. They do not represent seven time periods since the ascension of Jesus. They simultaneously exist now.” In other words, the seven churches, as taught by Ellen White and the pioneers, do not fit into the nice package he has put together of man-made rules of apocalyptic prophecy and interpretation.

Sister White says in Acts of the Apostles, 585, “The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.”

Brothers and sisters, beware of those who seem to formulate their own rules of interpretation of Scripture to seek to give what they say greater validity and in so doing undermine the authority of a prophet of God. They will lead many souls into perdition.

Larry Wilson himself says in The Revelation of Jesus on page 31, “In fact, the devil often mixes 99% truth with 1% lie to capture his subjects.” And then throughout his book, he does just that. He has many statements that are true and thus seeks to build reliability. But at the same time the falsehood is there.

“Prophets can make serious mistakes”

He seems to go out of his way to disagree with Ellen White and the pioneers. He agrees that Jesus began His
ministry in A.D. 27, but then, in order to fit in with his Jubilee ideas, he says, "Jesus died in the middle of the 70th week (A.D. 30)," page 110. The pioneers, of course, say that Jesus began His ministry in the fall of A.D. 27, and 3 1/2 years later ended it in the spring of A.D. 31. Larry Wilson states that "Israel lost their position as trustees of the gospel at the end of the 70 sevens (A.D. 33). The pioneers indicate that this happened in the fall of A.D. 34.

In regard to the 144,000, Brother Wilson again uses some Bible manipulation to arrive at something that will fit into his interpretation. In order to bring the 144,000 into chapter 10 of Revelation, he makes prophets out of them. Notice what he says, "Revelation 10:11 says, 'Then I [John, in the experience of the 144,000] was told, you must prophesy again about many people, nations, languages and kings.' Notice in this text, that those who proclaim the message contained in the open book are to prophesy again. Prophets prophesy, don't they?" The Revelation of Jesus, page 205.

Now he is building on his already false foundation, and he seeks to reinforce it by proving that the 144,000 are prophets by saying that the 144,000 are called "servants" in Revelation 7.3. Then in Revelation 10:7 prophets are called "servants." Therefore, the reasoning is that the 144,000 are servants, prophets are servants, therefore the 144,000 are prophets. The fact is that all prophets are servants, but not all servants are prophets, so the 144,000 cannot be proved to be prophets in this manner. This tactic is misleading people by playing with words. Not just prophets are servants of Jesus, for in John 12:26 we are informed that all followers of Jesus are servants.

When Revelation 12:17 combined with Revelation 19:10 speaks of a remnant which have the Spirit of Prophecy, Larry Wilson thinks more in terms of the 144,000 than of Ellen White. He would rather think of her as a "great author" than as God's last-day prophet. Ibid., 278.

Larry Wilson is very dangerous in his approach because he wants to uphold his understanding of prophecy, seemingly at any cost. To accomplish his objective he must contradict the prophet. And to do that he must say the prophet is wrong. He supports his position on page 307 of his book when he says, "This scripture reveals the fact that prophets can make serious mistakes," and he goes on to relate the story of Abraham, a prophet, faithful to Abimelech about Sarah. Brother Wilson does not distinguish between the growth in the life of one of God's prophets—and admittedly all prophets must have character growth—and the writings of a prophet that God has commissioned. If we go with Larry Wilson's reasoning, we could soon begin to throw aside any Scripture of the Bible or any of the writings of Ellen White if they did not correlate with our own personal understandings. He has in fact done that with Ellen White's writings.

There are other areas of Larry Wilson's writings that could be questioned. For instance, in regard to the Jubilee reckoning, he tries to keep the Jubilee cycle at 49 years so that it can divide evenly into the 490 years of Daniel and also other calculations of his. Of course the Jubilee year was always the fiftieth year (see Patriarchs and Prophets, 533; Ministry of Healing, 184.), and in order to keep it to 49-year cycles, more reasoning has to be employed to try to prove the fiftieth year was also the first year of the next cycle. This method of reckoning is not specifically so indicated in the Bible in regard to Jubilees.

Sister White says in Acts of the Apostles, 585, "The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era."

Brothers and sisters, I appeal to you not to let yourselves be carried away by the deceit and subterfuge of those who place themselves and their understanding above that of the prophet who was given to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Uphold the Pioneers

In speaking of the church of Ephesus, Ellen G. White, spoke of the dying off of the old standard-bearers and the coming of the new generation:

"One by one the old standard-bearers fell at their post. Some of the younger workers, who might have shared the burdens of those pioneers, and thus have been prepared for wise leadership, had become weary of oft-repeated truths. In their desire for something novel and startling they attempted to introduce new phases of doctrines, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel. In their self-confidence and spiritual blindness they failed to discern that those sophistries would cause many to question the experiences of the past, and would lead to confusion and unbelief." The Acts of the Apostles, 580.

And now our own pioneers, including the prophet, are being questioned in the same way. Larry Wilson's writings completely contradict the writings of Uriah Smith in Daniel and the Revelation. The prophet says in regard to this book:

"Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies will find Daniel and the Revelation an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that
She does not say that everything in the book Daniel and the Revelation is accurate, but she definitely infers that a good portion is correct. Larry Wilson does not agree.

The 1843 chart as prepared by one of the pioneers, is again in opposition to much that Larry Wilson professes. It shows that prophecy runs from the time of the prophet to the end of time. It shows the 1290 and the 1335 to be years in prophecy, not days. It shows that the seals and trumpets having already been mostly fulfilled, not something totally placed in the future or beginning in 1798 as taught by Larry Wilson. (This chart can be ordered from Hope International.)

In commenting on the book, The Great Controversy, another book that Larry Wilson continually contradicts, Ellen White says, "While writing the manuscript of The Great Controversy, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. Many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind." Colporteur Ministry, 128.

She further states in referring to The Great Controversy, "I was moved by the Spirit of the Lord to write that book." p.127. "God gave me the light contained in the The Great Controversy and Patriarchs and Prophets and this light was needed to arouse the people to prepare for the great day of God, which is just before us." p. 129.

In Colporteur Ministry, 126, she says, "How many have read carefully Patriarchs and Prophets, The Great Controversy and The Desire of Ages? I wish all to understand that my confidence in the light God has given stands firm, because I know that the Holy Spirit's power magnified the truth, and made it honorable, saying: 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' Isaiah 30:21. In my books, the truth is stated, barricated by a 'Thus saith the Lord.' The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone, which are now in the ark, to be brought forth in that great day when sentence will be pronounced against every evil, seducing science produced by the father of lies."

A Prophet of God or an Impostor?

Brothers and sisters, Ellen White is either a prophet of God or she is an impostor. If you choose to accept Larry Wilson's speculative interpretation of prophecy, you are saying Ellen White has lied, is wrong, and therefore cannot be a prophet of God, for she claims these materials in her books that are in opposition to Larry Wilson came from God.

Notice again the statements above, as well as the following statement, "I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books."

In Part Two of this article, I will show a comparison of statements between the pioneers, Ellen White, and Larry Wilson.

Remember we are told in Selected Messages, book 1, 48, "Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingenuously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."

Sadly, many sincere people have been carried away with the writings of Larry Wilson because they continued to venture deeper into his writings, even when they saw the conflict between what he had to say and the Spirit of Prophecy as expressed through the writings of Ellen White. We are told that Satan has a dish of fables cooked up for every soul who is not cherishing the truth as it is in Jesus. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1147. "The world is full of men and women who cherish deceptive theories, and it is dangerous to listen to them." Upward Look, 75.

"In some instances men have been turned away from the truth to listen to fables. Efforts were made to set right those thus deceived, but some had drunk so deeply from the polluted fountain, and had become so impregnated with false impressions, that it was impossible to undeceive them." Review and Herald, January 21, 1904. □

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God calls for workers from every church among us to enter His service as canvasser evangelists. . . . If the members will do His will, if they will strive to impart the light to those in darkness, He will greatly bless their efforts.—Colporteur Ministry, 20.

Entering the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven, which will abide in these homes.—Evangelism, 115.

Those who at this time take up the canvassing work with earnestness and consecration will be greatly blessed. You have no time to lose.—Colporteur Ministry, 15.

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Today there are many people who claim to have discovered "new light," and who have a burden to proclaim it to others. How can we know whether what we read or hear is new light or simply another distraction or deception of Satan to take our focus off today's present truth? Should we be alarmed if the "new light" contradicts certain points in the Spirit of Prophecy? In the compilation below we present comments of Ellen G. White concerning whether new light from God will contradict the light that He has revealed in the past.—EDITORS

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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. Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this time God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another, with new light, which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit. A few are still alive who passed through the experience gained in the establishment of this truth. God has graciously spared their lives to repeat and repeat, till the close of their lives, the experience through which they passed even as did John the apostle till the very close of his life. And the standard-bearers who have fallen in death are to speak through the reprinting of their writings. I am instructed that thus their voices are to be heard. They are to bear their testimony as to what constitutes the truth for this time. . . .

It was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the presentation of the sanctuary question was given. It is eloquence for every one to keep silent in regard to the features of our faith in which they acted no part. God never contradicts Himself. Scripture proofs are misapplied if forced to testify to that which is not true. Another and still another will arise and bring in supposedly great light, and make their assertions. But we stand by the old landmarks. Selected Messages, book 1, 161-162.

What a battle I am obliged to fight! My brethren seem to judge me as taking positions that are not necessary. They do not see that God in His own wisdom has made revelations to me which cannot successfully be contradicted or disputed. Nothing can rub out that which has been presented to me and imprinted on the tablets of my soul. All the opposition or gaining to make my testimony of none effect only compels from me, by the urgency of the Spirit of God, a more decided repetition, and to stand on the light revealed with all the force of the strength God has given me. Ibid., book 3, 73.

We are to work as Christ worked. We are to move carefully. We are not to pour out ideas that contradict the light that God has given; neither are we to follow methods that are opposed to His will. Let us tread in Christ's footsteps. As we follow Him, we may know that we are walking in the pathway of light. Review and Herald, April 23, 1908.

Although the long line of events extends through so many centuries, and new and important truths are from time to time developed, that which was truth in the beginning is the truth still. The increased light of the present day does not contradict or make of none effect the dimmer light of the past. Signs of the Times, June 3, 1883.

If we are the Lord's appointed messengers, we shall not spring up with new ideas and theories to contradict the message that God has given through His servants since 1844. At that time many sought the Lord with heart and soul and voice. The men whom God raised up were diligent searchers of the Scriptures. And those who today claim to have light, and who contradict the teaching of God's ordained messengers, who were working under the Holy Spirit's guidance, those who get up new theories, which remove the pillars of our faith, are not doing the will of God, but are bringing in fallacies of their own invention, which, if received, will cut the church away from the anchorage of truth, and set them drifting, drifting, to where they will receive any sophistries that may arise. Manuscript Releases, vol. 4, 247.

The Lord was leading His people back to the real truth. The Scriptures show the loss they had sustained and would continue to sustain unless they went back to the Word, refusing to let anything they had heard slip from their memory. They were to remember that the words spoken by Christ in His earthly ministry in no case contradicted the words spoken by Him to Moses, to be given to the people. They are to give 'the more earnest heed,' to cherish every ray of light given, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, accepting and applying the words of the Old and New Testaments. Ibid., vol. 13, 380-381.

It will be one of the great evils that will come to our people to have the Scriptures taken out of their true place and so interpreted as to substantiate error that contradicts the light and the testimonies that God has been giving us for the past half century. I declare in the name of the Lord that the most dangerous heresies are seeking to find entrance among us as a people. Manuscript Release, No. 760, 4.

I do not believe that the testimonies in volume 9 of the Testimonies contradict any former testimonies with regard to Sunday labor or any other points. We should bear in mind that Christian experience is progressive, and that the Testimonies have taught advanced principles year by year as the work has progressed and as the people have been prepared to receive new light. The Ellen G. White Biography, vol. 6, 266.
pose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8. Christ vindicated and honored the law of God, declaring that upon the principles of the Ten Commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Those who manifest disrespect for the law of Jehovah, make it evident that they have not been born again, and the truth does not abide in them.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8. This statement must be so read as to harmonize with the statement that if we are born of God, we shall not commit sin; for “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” 1 John 1:9–10. “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. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.” 1 John 2:3–5. John says, “I write no new commandment unto you, but an

old commandment which ye had from the beginning.” 1 John 2:7.

“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not,” (1 John 3:6) that is, does not willfully transgress the law of God; for “sinn is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. But what conclusion are we to draw from the profession of those who claim to be sanctified, to be living without sin, and yet who openly cast contempt upon the law of God? They claim to possess advanced piety, and at the same time, by thought, and word, and deed, they transgress the law, and teach others by precept and example that they may sin with impunity. John tests their pretentious claims, and says, “He that saith, I know him, and

Loyalty to the Law Is Loyalty to God

W HOSOVER is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:9. The standard which is to test every doctrine, every theory, every profession, is the law of God. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,”—break the law of Jehovah. If a man is born of God, he will respect the principles of the divine government, and will not willfully transgress the law of God in thought, or word, or action. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” 1 Peter 1:23. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of

truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1:18. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and added, “Thy word is truth.” John 17:17.

The new birth is accomplished by the reception of the Word of God; but those who belittle the Word of God, those who cast contempt upon the law of Jehovah, place themselves under the banner of the prince of darkness. Satan began the work of rebellion in heaven by opposition to the constitution and government of God; and this is the manner of work he has carried on ever since the Fall of man. Through the agency of evil men he seeks to make void the law of the Most High. “For this pur-

Ellen G. White
keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” Those who claim to be sanctified, and who at the same time openly defame the law of God, are in terrible deception, and are blasphemers of the God of heaven. John says, “Let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness [keeps the commandments of God] is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin [transgresses the law] is of the devil.” 1 John 3:7-8. God has placed the transgressor of the law in the ranks of darkness, in the company of the first great apostate.

“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.” 1 John 2:1. Even those who are striving in sincerity to keep the law of God, are not always free from sin. Through some deceptive temptation, they are deceived, and fall into error. But when their sin comes home to their conscience, they see themselves condemned in the light of the holy precepts of God’s law; but they do not war against the law which condemns them; they repent of their sin, and seek pardon through the merit of Christ, who died for their sins in order that they might be justified by faith in His blood. They do not avoid confession and repentance when the neglected law of God is brought to their attention, by exclaiming, as do the self-righteous pretenders to holiness, “I am sanctified, I am holy, and I cannot sin.” This is the class whom the apostle rebukes; for he says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” It is evident that where a claim to sinlessness is made, there the law of God has not been written in the heart; for the commandments of God are exceeding broad, and are discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The apostle speaks words of encouragement to those who realize that they are sinners, and says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all righteousness.” “If we say we have no sin,” when our thoughts, words, and actions, reflected from the law of God, the great moral mirror, reveal us as transgressors, we make God a liar, and prove that His Word is not in us.

The apostle draws a sharp distinction between the condition of the avowed transgressor, who dares to live in defiance of God’s law, and yet make claim to holiness, and the condition of him who, though yielding his heart to the claims of the law of God, still sees defects in his character, and bows in humility before God to make confession of sin. Paul says: “What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.” Romans 7:7-8. How dangerous is the position of men who, sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despaired my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.” Ezekiel 20:11-13. “For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Romans 10:5.

Sanctification is conformity to the will of God, and the will of God is expressed in His holy law. Those only are truly sanctified who live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Paul waged no war against the commandments of God because of the sharp work they had done in detecting his sin; but, although he was condemned to death by the sentence of the law, he exclaims, “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12. Those who wage war against the commandments of God make it manifest that their minds are carnal; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:7-8. But even when we stand in defense of the law of God, and in opposition to the world, who are making void that law, and who are coming under the temptation of the enemy of God, yet we are not to say that we have no sin, but in meekness repent of sin, and make confession of our shortcoming before the Lord. The law points out our defects of character, but when we see that we have come short, we shall not feel like berating the law which has condemned our sin, we shall not be disposed to call the commandments of God a yoke of bondage, but, like Paul, we shall acknowledge our sin, and self will die. For “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.” 1 John 2:1-2. □

The Signs of the Times, April 30, 1896.
In our last article we discussed the matter of God’s two true churches on earth—His Laodicean, visible church containing both wheat and tares, and His spiritual, invisible church containing those living up to all known light who exist in all religious faiths and are known only to Him.

The end purpose of His visible church from its very inception has been that it would experience and share with the whole world the third angel’s message of righteousness by faith. Through their experiencing of the true gospel, the loyal, faithful and pure in Seventh-day Adventism were to serve as a beacon and a rallying point for Christ’s sheep in the other folds. The loyal, faithful and pure in all faiths were to be gathered into one fold. Christ’s true visible church was to absorb Christ’s invisible church, and in the process be cleansed of all tares and then transported to heaven to become physically as well as spiritually one with Christ’s true church in heaven.

The message of righteousness by faith entrusted to Seventh-day Adventism is not merely justification as a result of Christ’s substitutionary death and ministry in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. True righteousness by faith is also experiencing the enabling grace of Christ from His Most Holy Place ministry, a transforming victory over sin in this present life—sanctification—as an essential component of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

True to the parable of the ten virgins, both the wise as well as the foolish in God’s visible church have been asleep these many years. With Laodicean dim eyesight we have felt rich, increased with goods and in need of nothing. We have felt confident in operating the branches of the Lord’s work in many ways more in harmony with our own wisdom and the wisdom of the world than in harmony with the Lord’s specific instructions. With our persistent disobedience to Christ’s directives has come diminished spiritual discernment. As a result we have permitted some of the partial truths and falsehoods of fallen Christianity to become prominent in our schools, publications and pulpits. See “God’s Plan Misused” Our Firm Foundation, Vol. 7, No. 12.

Though our continued insubordination has delayed Christ’s second coming these many years, Christ has promised a solution to the impasse. He will not allow our persistent disobedience to prevent His return indefinitely. As His followers we want to be found living, and working for the purification of His church on earth as He would want us to be working. If all else fails to arouse the sleeping virgins of His visible church, He has promised to arouse them by permitting the entrance of heresies. See Counsels to Writers and Editors, 40. Christ has committed Himself to the arousing of sufficient numbers of the sleeping saints in Adventism that He can then shake out the tares, pour out the latter rain upon the remaining loyal, faithful and pure in His visible church empowering them to give the loud cry to the invisible, faithful-to-known-light scattered throughout the world. As Christ’s visible true church we are presently in the process of the arousal of the sleeping ten virgins. The unfaithful, foolish virgins will soon be shaken out of the visible church, the wise will remain in God’s visible church and experience the latter rain, the loud cry and the influx of the faithful, honest souls from the other folds. See “The Shaking of Adventism,” Our Firm Foundation, July, August, September 1993.

These are Christ’s plans for His church. This objective He can and will accomplish regardless of how we each one or as the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church relate to His plans. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Christ’s plans for and methods of producing a visible Seventh-day Adventist Church with its members victorious over rebellion against Christ will be accomplished. The question is whether or not we, singly and as organizational bodies, will cooperate with Christ’s purposes and methods and remain in His visible church, or whether we will work contrary to His plans, methods and/or timing for the purification of His people, and thus be in danger of being shaken out of His loyal, faithful and pure church.

Many of us fail to assist Christ in the purification of His church because of our belief that a knowledge of His will without obedience to it is acceptable to Him.

“The same danger exists today among the people who profess to be the depositaries of God’s law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments will preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved for evil, and charge God’s servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey His Word will bring as serious consequences upon God’s people today as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which He will no longer delay His judgments. The desolation of Jerusalem.
stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel, that the corrections given through His chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity." Testimonies, vol. 4, 166–167.

The primary manner of not cooperating with Christ in the purification of His visible church is failure to fully arouse out of the Laodicean blindness to our condition of having turned back from following Christ in how to live for Him, in how to operate His institutions and in not recognizing the entrance of doctrinal heresies among us. There is one thing that Christ cannot do and that is to cleanse us as persons and organizational bodies of our insubordination and apostasy if we refuse to perceive, acknowledge, confess and turn from that disobedience. The only way Christ could cleanse those of us refusing to acknowledge our filthiness would be to force our will, removing our freedom of choice. Christ's character will never permit Him to use force.

Today, many Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh-day Adventist organizational bodies are refusing to recognize their turning back from following Christ and their replacing His counsels with those of the world. In their blindness to their insubordination they pray for Christ's blessing upon their disobedient lifestyles and upon their own methods of doing the Lord's work. They pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain upon their methods and beliefs gathered from fallen Christianity. In its blindness, Laodicea interprets the seeming success of her disobedient "laborers for the Lord" as the providences of God. Many in Adventism today are unconcerned by the great danger explained to us by the servant of the Lord. Whether our diminished spiritual discernment is the result of disobedience to health reform or any of the other counsels of the Lord, the great danger is the same.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who overcome as Christ overcame will need to constantly guard themselves against the temptations of Satan. The appetite and passions should be restricted and under the control of enlightened conscience, that the intellect may be unimpaired, the perceptive powers clear, so that the workings of Satan and his snares may not be interpreted as the providence of God." Ibid., vol. 3, 491.

By running ahead of the Lord in looking for and expecting the latter rain before being cleansed of their disobedience and rebellion, many persons and organizational entities in God's visible church today are in danger of experiencing a false revival, a false latter rain under the auspices of Satan rather than of Christ. By living and working for Christ as though obedience (sanctification) is not a requirement for His blessings, they are living and working on the basis that justification (pardon) is righteousness by faith and the gospel. They fail to recognize that it is the incomplete gospel of fallen Christianity. It is looking and praying to Christ in the holy place and rejecting His sanctifying ministry in the Most Holy Place. Not realizing the importance of Christ's leaving the holy place in 1844, their prayers directed to Him requesting a holy-place relationship with His ministry are interrupted by and answered by Satan. See Early Writings, 56, 261.

Other sincere Seventh-day Adventists, noting the broad-based disobedience to Christ by the Seventh-day Adventist organization and its persistent refusal to acknowledge its apostasy—turning back from following Christ's directives—are stating that the organized church is Babylon. Others state that probation has closed for the leaders of God's organized Seventh-day Adventist Church and that the conference church is no longer God's chosen church. It is just another way for saying that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has become a part of Babylon. Whether or not some persons or an organization's probation is closed is known only to God and to those to whom He reveals it. To profess to have messages from God regarding the probationary status of others is to profess to be doing the work of a prophet. We need to be very cautious in listening to and following those who purport to have such messages.

The false doctrines of Babylon are listed as Sunday sacredness, the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked and the denial that Christ existed prior to His birth in Bethle-

There is one thing that Christ cannot do and that is to cleanse us as persons and organizational bodies of our insubordination and apostasy if we refuse to perceive, acknowledge, confess and turn from that disobedience.
independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this. There is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. Those who shall heed this false message, and try to leaven others will be deceived, and prepared to receive advance delusions, and they will come to naught." Ibid., 302-303.

"The Lord has given to His people appropriate messages of warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, but it is not appropriate to take these messages out of their connection and place them where they will seem to give force to messages of error. In the pamphlet published by Brother S. and his associates, he accuses the church of God of being Babylon, and would urge a separation from the church. This is a work that is neither honorable nor righteous. In compiling this work, they have used my name and writings for the support of that which I disapprove and denounce as error. The people to whom this pamphlet will come will charge the responsibility of this false position upon me, when it is utterly contrary to the teachings of my writings and the light which God has given me. I have no hesitancy in saying that those who are urging on this work are greatly deceived." Testimonies to Ministers, 36.

"My brother, I learn that you are taking the position that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, and that all that would be saved must come out of her. You are not the only man the devil has deceived in this matter. For the last forty years, one man after another has arisen, claiming that the Lord has sent him with the same message; but let me tell you, as I have told them, that this message you are proclaiming is one of the satanic delusions designed to create confusion among the churches.

"My brother, you are certainly off the track. The second angel's message was to go to Babylon [the churches] proclaiming her downfall, and calling the people to come out of her. This same message is to be proclaimed the second time...."

"My brother, if you are teaching that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, you are wrong. God has not given you any such message to bear. Satan will use every mind to which he can attain access, inspiring men to originate false theories or go off on some wrong tangent, that he may create a false excitement, and thus divert souls from the true issue for this time. I presume that some may be deceived by your message, because they are full of curiosity and desire for some new thing.

To minimize the existence and importance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's chosen, visible denomination is to diminish the need to work in harmony with God's plans and methods of purifying His church.

We should not be taken aback by the apparent stubborn blindness of lukewarm Laodicea. The Scriptures tell us that Laodicea is Christ's last visible church, and there is no hint that she goes into the time of the close of probation in any condition other than the Laodicean. Inspiration tells us that before her probation is closed she will be purified by Christ through the means of severe heresies, trials, tribulations and persecutions. See "The Shaking of Adventism"—Phases 1-3, Our Firm Foundation, July, August, September 1993.

Ellen White applies Ezekiel nine to the end-time sealing in God's church. She points out that during that time there will be open sin—"pride, avarice, selfishness and deception of almost every kind...in the church." Testimonies, vol. 5, 210. The servant of the Lord also points out that the destruction of the unfaithful in the church does not precede but occurs at the time of the general destruction of the wicked. See ibid., vol. 3, 266-267; vol. 5, 209-211.

We have repeatedly been told that the faithful in Christ's visible church on earth will be aware that the church is not free from open sin right up until it is purified by the persecution surrounding the Sunday laws.

"The church will not be free from those whose influence is out of harmony with that which should characterize the servants of Christ. The children of God will be stirred in spirit by the doings of these unworthy members, and they will desire to do something to cleanse the church, that its members may be a light to shine in the world.

"It makes me feel sad indeed that you should be deceived in any way by the speculations of the enemy; for I know the theory that you are advocating is not true. In advancing the ideas you do, you will do great injury to yourself and to others. Do not seek to misinterpret, and twist, and pervert the Testimonies to substantiate any such message of error. Many have passed over this ground, and have done great harm. As others have started up full of zeal to proclaim this message, again and again, I have been shown that it was not truth." Ibid., 58-60.

Another group of sincere Adventists is going to great lengths to make the point that the only church membership that has any value is the membership in God's spiritual church containing only the faithful, loyal and true. It is certain that membership in God's visible Seventh-day Adventist Church has no positive value unless we are also members in good standing of His invisible, spiritual church. But to state that there is only the spiritual church is to cause confusion in regard to the importance of the visible church and to deny the kingdom of heaven parables. See "When God's Two Churches Become One," Our Firm Foundation, October 1993. To select certain portions of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy that describe the invisible church with only loyal, faithful and true members and to ignore other portions describing the visible church with both the wheat and the tares is confusing and misleading and is done so to the peril of souls.

The children of God will be stirred in spirit by the doings of these unworthy members, and they will desire to do something to cleanse the church, that its members may be a light to shine in the world.
Contrary to these two scenarios, God presents us the leadership of Moses and the apostasy of Israel at the golden calf as the example of what will happen to the people of God today and how we are to relate to them, however erring, or weak or defective they may be.

In the example of Moses pleading for the children of Israel, is represented the position that we should take in regard to the people of God, however erring, or weak, or defective they may be.

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the heathen nations would fail to understand God as the true God if Israel were to be rejected. A message of repentance, revival and reformation was given to apostate Israel. Those who repented continued on as God's chosen people. Only those who persisted in rebellion were rejected by God and slain. In this story we see how Christ and His loyal and faithful are to relate to modern Israel in apostasy.

Satan's message regarding God's visible church is that she is Babylon. Christ's message to His church is Arise and shine.

"When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent. . . Such messages will come, and it will be claimed for them that they are sent of God, but the claim will be false; for they are not filled with light, but with darkness. There will be messages of accusation against the people of God, similar to the work done by Satan in accusing God's people, and these messages will be sounding at the very time when God is saying to His people, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.'--Testimonies to Ministers, 41-42. See Revelation 3:18-21. Supposing this spurious message is the one everyone must hear for this time, "Come out of her, My people," where shall we go? Where shall we find the purity, goodness, and holiness where we shall be secure? Where is the fold where no wolves will enter?

"I tell you, my brethren, the Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. There may be more than a score of Judases among them; there may be a rascal Peter who will under circumstances of trial deny his Lord; there may be persons represented by John whom Jesus loved, but he may have a zeal that would destroy men's lives by calling down fire from heaven upon them to revenge an insult to Christ and to the truth. But the great Teacher seeks to give lessons of instruction to correct these existing evils. He is doing the same today with His church. He is pointing out their dangers. He is presenting before them the Laodicean message." Manuscript Releases, vol. 1, 354.

We each need to realize that Christ has not been caught off guard by the persistent Laodicean condition of His people. We need to realize that what we portray many times as the problems of Adventism—heresies, disobedience, rising up against the straight testimonies—are in reality part of the solutions. We need to realize that the present "problems" of Adventism are parts of the sifting and the shaking, and they indicate that the final purification of the church by means of persecution cannot be far off. We need to each pray for divine strength and wisdom to follow the example of Moses in relating to Christ's visible church. We especially need divine guidance as we seek to live in harmony with the following word from the Lord and avoid running ahead of, or working contrary to, Him in the purification of His church.

"The Redeemer of the world does not sanction the experience and exercises in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church." Manuscript Releases, vol. 15, 130. For counsels regarding self-supporting work see "Supportive Ministries, Parts 1 and 2," Our Firm Foundation, February and March 1993.

The preceding statement is clearly not referring to Christ's invisible, spiritual church containing only the loyal, faithful and true, for only He knows who are constituents of that church. Neither can the reference above be used to mean that Christ does not sanction religious experience apart from true beliefs, for that is too obvious to need to be stated. Clearly the above word from the Lord's messenger is in reference to the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Our next article will discuss the system of church organization and authority known as a theocracy. Is there to be a theocracy today? □

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Christian Character

The Word of God not only sets forth the great principles of truth and duty which should govern our lives, but it presents also, for our encouragement, the history of many who have exemplified these principles. Men “subject to like passions as we are,” (James 5:17) have fought with temptation, and conquered in the strength of an Almighty Helper. Under difficulties greater than we are called to meet, men have been true to duty and to God.

Except the one perfect Pattern, there is not described in the sacred pages a single character more worthy of emulation than that of the prophet Daniel. Exposed in youth to all the allurements of a royal court, he became a man of unbending integrity and fervent devotion to God. He was subjected to the fierce temptations of Satan, yet his character was not vacillating, nor his course changeable. He was firm where many would be yielding; he was true where they would be false; he was strong where they would be weak. Daniel was a lofty cedar of Lebanon. The angel of the Lord addressed this faithful prophet, “O man greatly beloved, thy prayer is heard.” Would that the faith, integrity, and devotion of the prophet Daniel might live in the hearts of God’s people of today. Never were these noble qualities more needed in the world than now. Never was there greater need of men who will stand firmly and fearlessly for God and the right.

In the records of those who have done and suffered for the name of Jesus, there is no name that shines with a brighter or purer luster than the name of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. The love of Jesus, glowing in his heart, made him self-forgetful, self-denying. He had seen the risen Christ, and the Saviour’s image was impressed upon his soul, and shone forth in his life. With faith, courage, and fortitude, that would not be daunted by danger or stayed by obstacles, he pressed his way from land to land to spread the knowledge of the cross. When summoned to stand before the judgment seat of Nero, and forsaken by his brethren, he was at first thought almost dismayed. Then he gathered courage, as he looked upward to the Source of strength. Though human help forsook him, he declares, “The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.” 2 Timothy 4:17. He placed his hand in the hand of Jesus, and fearlessly went forward to a martyr’s death.

Such noble characters have been; such noble characters will be. None can hide them; none need misinterpret them. They are living epistles, known and read of all men. By the beauty of true goodness shining forth in the life of these chosen men, others were charmed, and were filled with a desire to imitate them. All who seek to reach the Bible standard will stimulate others also to press forward to higher attainments. One whom God is teaching will animate others by his ardent, active efforts for the honor of Christ, and his undying love for souls. In another, a
Christlike meekness and gentleness of spirit will be most apparent. Another will influence many by his fervent charity, his brotherly kindness and Christian courtesy. Still another will manifest such humility and brokenness of heart as will lead the proud and stubborn to self-abasement.

Are the professed followers of Christ thus exemplifying the principles of their faith? Where are the deep, living, holy experiences which men of God were wont to recount? Has the standard of Christianity been lowered to suit the present backslidden condition of God's professed people? No; that standard remains just where God placed it. Holy men of ages past were required to give up all for Christ, to cherish His spirit, and to imitate His example. Nothing less than this will He accept now.

The Christian will begin and end the day with God. His speech will not be frivolous or aimless. He does not indulge in idle jesting or malicious gossip. The peace of God rules in his heart. The power of divine grace strengthens every noble purpose, softens every harsh trait. In his life and character is seen that firm, undaunted principle with which worldliness dares not tamper. Such men are recognized by the world as followers of Christ. They have learned of Him. The Sun of Righteousness shines into the heart, and lights up the countenance. Every faculty is strengthened, developed, by the influence of divine grace. Such Christians have an experience that is of some value.

It is the absence of personal religion, of a daily, living experience in the things of God, that creates such coldness and stupor in the church. We have enjoyed great light and many privileges. Shall we turn away from all these blessings, and sacrifice the peculiar, holy character which should distinguish us as children of God? If we thus slight the mercy of God, the judgments denounced against Capernaum will surely fall upon us. Our punishment will be heavier than if we had not enjoyed so great light. Thus the warnings, reproofs, and counsels, which, accepted and obeyed, would bring us untold blessings, become a curse when they are rejected.

The Lord commanded one of His ancient servants, "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee." Jeremiah 7:16. The prophet thus describes the sins which had called forth this fearful denunciation: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jeremiah 5:31. "From the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Jeremiah 6:13–14.

The apostles declare that this state of things will find its counterpart in the last days. Many have a form of godliness, but in their daily life deny the power thereof. They have ceased to be convicted of their sins or alarmed at their state. They say in their hearts, "The church is flourishing. Peace and spiritual prosperity are within her borders." The words of the prophet may well apply to these self-deceivers, "They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them." Isaiah 66:3–4.

The carnal mind is enmity against God. Not one of us can love and keep His commandments, only as we deny self, and take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ. Divine truth has never been in harmony with the traditions and customs of the world; it has never conformed to our opinions. Christ Himself received not honor from men. He was meek and lowly of heart, and made Himself of no reputation. His simple dress and unpretending manners were in so marked contrast to the pomposity, self-conceit, and vain display of the Pharisees, that they would not accept Him. All witnessed the manifestation of divine power, but few saw in Christ, amid His sufferings and humiliation, the Saviour of the world.

At the present day a form of godliness is popular, even in the world. A profession of Christianity costs little. But those who follow Jesus must walk in the same path of self-denial and cross-bearing which the from all iniquity, that they should show forth My praise, who have called them out of darkness into My marvelous light. Would not the Lord say, rather, How is the beautiful city become a harlot, and My Father's house a place of merchandise? Because of your unbelief, I cannot do many mighty works among you.

We are not to call sin righteousness, or righteousness sin. While we should ever manifest pity and compassion for the erring, we should be governed by sanctified judgment and the fear of God. In their undue sympathy for the sinner, many are learning to palliate sin. The most hardened criminals in our land find a host of sympathizers. Special attention is shown them, simply because their crimes have brought them into disrepute, and exposed them to the penalty of the law. It is considered a virtue to throw the mantle of charity over sins that are misleading and corrupting thousands.

The same spirit is coming into the church. However guilty a wrong-doer may be, however lamentable the results of his course, he will find sympathizers. When he is reproved, there are unconscionated ones who stand ready to sustain him. By their unwise sympathy, they lead him to look upon himself as abused, and thus they effectually bar his way to repentance and reform.

The approval of men—even of professed Christians—is no evidence of the

In the records of those who have done and suffered for the name of Jesus, there is no name that shines with a brighter or purer luster than the name of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.
favor of God. The Christian experience of thousands is gauged by the standard of those who profess to love the truth and to be servants of Christ, but who serve Satan. In their blindness and self-complacency, many are saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." (Revelation 3:17) when Christ declares that they are poor and miserable, blind and naked. To such he addresses the solemn admonition, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18.

Every one who shall at last enter the kingdom of God will be tested. It will be manifest whether we desire to know and do the will of God, or merely to please ourselves. When called to give up all for Christ, who will stand the test? Many have been guided by their own understanding, and have indulged the desires of their own heart. The treasures of divine grace and love do not overbalance the inducements and attractions of the world. They choose self-gratification rather than Christ and His grace at the price of self-denial and self-consecration.

The cause of God today calls for men—men in understanding and Christian experience—men who are true to God and to the interests of His work. My brethren and sisters in the truth, I know the dangers which surround you. Search the Scriptures, examine your own hearts, meditate, pray, till you realize, by vivid conviction, your true state, till you see the peril which threatens you. Never rest till you know beyond all controversy that you have been transformed by the spirit of Christ; till you have clear evidence that you have been born again. Never rest till you know that Christ abideth in you. It will be vain for you to hope to meet the approval of God, until you come up to the Bible standard.

Review and Herald, November 7, 1882.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enclosed is my gift for September to help you in your work. I surely look forward to receiving the Firm Foundation. The messages given are so needful for all our people; also for our leaders and ministers. I wept when I read the Editorial in the last Review (August 26, 1993). It surely will deceive all of God’s people who are depending upon such leaders and are not studying and searching for truth in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. May you and your staff continue to “earnestly contend for the faith” and truth God has given us as a people, to share with each other and the world.

—HP, California

Thank you for your magazine Our Firm Foundation. It is a blessing to me as I am learning so much from it. I was truly impressed with “Reverence” in the September issue. Now I see why we need to treat God with more love and respect, for He is a great and mighty God. He has touched me since I read that article. I pray that our kind Father will continue to bless you as you go about doing His work to hasten His soon return.

—MJ, Minnesota

A friend of mine, Pastor ———, worker in the ——— Department at ——— Conference, Brazil, brought to me as a very good gift the Nosso Fimere Fundamento magazine [a Portuguese translation of Our Firm Foundation]. I sat down in my private office on my little farm in the country, and in the next six hours I read all of that very important magazine.

I liked it a lot. In the same moment I wrote my first letter to the translator of the magazine. I asked for the magazine in other languages because I will read them and I want to have a collection of all the articles published by you. She answered that I should write to Eatonville, U.S.A. Thus I am asking you, please, for your magazine in English, French, Spanish, Italian, and German. [Not available in Italian—Editor]

Please also send subscriptions to my son and daughter.

—JB, Brazil

I want to thank you again for the good work you are doing for our faithful Adventists who want to know the truth for this time. As an Adventist minister my heart breaks for what is happening to our churches. Some think no Independent ministry can do right and therefore refuse to examine the evidence for themselves. Numerous heresies are coming in, and too much of our valuable time is used in trying to protect the sheep from them. I wish all of our members received Firm Foundation. I have encouraged as many as I can to subscribe to it.

Currently I need some information on the observance of the Feast Days. Also, we are being questioned now on the Trinity. If you have any good help in this area I would appreciate it very much.

—Pastor, North American Division

I pray for you and your helpers that God will continue to be with you and bless you as you witness for Him. I am very sure we only have a very short time to get the last-day message to all the world and have many souls ready and waiting to meet Him in the sky. I really do look forward to the wonderful and glad day. I love my Saviour with all my heart.

—IS, Colorado

Response to World Peace or Final War?

I recently came across World Peace or Final War? at a flea market. . . I have a problem about the Sabbath—is it Saturday or Sunday? . . . I have prayed to God for an answer on this, but maybe you can help. This book has opened my eyes on things!

—SC, North Carolina
The Sin Problem and Its Cure

Continued from 7

God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, 312; see 333, *Steps to Christ*, 47.

An Essential Experience

We began this article by stating that very few in the history of the great controversy have understood the love of God and experienced it by the Spirit. But unless we experience it in this life we cannot be trusted with eternal life. We must search for that love and experience every day and never be satisfied until we find it, and hold it in our life experience.

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

This experience is truly represented in these inspired words:

“The soul is never safe unless it is under the divine guidance. Then it will be led into all truth. The word of Christ will fall with living power upon obedient hearts; and through the application of divine truth the perfect image of God will be reproduced, and in heaven it will be said: ‘Ye are complete in Him.’ Colossians 2:10.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 167.

“None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 96.

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” *The Desire of Ages*, 172.

“God’s work of refining and purifying must go on until His servants are so humble, so dead to self, that, when called into active service, their eye will be single to His glory. . . . God brings men over the ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility and a transformation of character bring them into harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven, and they are victors over themselves.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 86.

“Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted, as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 514.

“True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 97–98.

The tragedy of the fall of Adam and Eve will soon be rectified. Jesus our Sacrifice and Example in overcoming has made it possible now and for all time for every one to overcome as He overcame. His great love for the fallen race He offers to us with His Spirit. He offers us His righteousness in return for our filthy rags of unrighteousness and provides the power to follow in His steps. He not only is our Substitute, but He is also our Example.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and if this be not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:1–3.

His standard of righteousness can be ours if we will accept the conditions of salvation—perfect obedience to His righteous law by the Holy Spirit’s power.

God’s Cure

In closing this very important subject we read these beautiful thoughts from the prophet: “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:3.

“Does this text mean that the human agent can remove one stain of sin from his soul? No. Then what does it mean to purify himself? It means to look upon the Lord’s great moral standard of righteousness, the holy law of God, and see that he is a sinner in the light of that law. ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.’ 1 John 3:4–5.

A nominal acceptance of truth is good as far as it goes, and the ability to give a reason for our faith is a good accomplishment, but if the truth does not go deeper than this, the soul will never be saved.”

“It is through faith in Jesus Christ that the truth is accepted in the heart, and the human agent is purified and cleansed. . . . He has an abiding principle in the soul, that enables him to overcome temptation. ‘Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.’ 1 John 3:6. God has power to keep the soul that is in Christ who is under temptation. . . .

“A mere profession of godliness is worthless. It is he that abideth in Christ that is a Christian. . . . Unless the mind of God becomes the mind of men, every effort to purify himself will be useless; for it is impossible to elevate man except through a knowledge of God. The outward gloss may be put on, and men may be as were the Pharisees whom Jesus describes as ‘whited sepulchres’ full of corruption and dead men’s bones. But all the deformity of the soul is open to Him who judgeth righteousness, and unless the truth is planted in the heart, it cannot control the life. Cleansing the outside of the cup will never make the vessel pure within. A nominal acceptance of truth is good as far as it goes, and the ability to give a reason for our faith is a good accomplishment, but if the truth does not go deeper than this, the soul will never be saved. The heart must be purified from all moral defilement.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 950–951.

This path is God’s only cure for the sin problem. □
My wife and I had just returned from conducting a five-day series of meetings. We were sharing how well the meetings had gone and how the Holy Spirit had moved upon the hearts of many, when a friend of ours expressed a sobering thought about the sin of Moses. Moses' sin did not consist solely in striking the rock when God had said, "Speak ye unto the rock." Numbers 20:8. Moses' sin was also in saying, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Numbers 20:10. We are told that "He spake advisedly with his lips." Psalm 106:33. We are also told that "Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God. . . they put themselves in God's place as though the power lay with themselves." Patriarchs and Prophets, 418. Moses said "we" when he should have said God. Moses was ascribing the miracle-working power and the glory to himself and Aaron, rather than to God alone, when bringing forth the water from the rock. He allowed himself and Aaron to be magnified and lifted up before God's people, as though there was some credit due them. He inadvertently drew the people's attention to himself and Aaron rather than pointing them to God alone. Such misdirection must never be done, not then nor now, because it displaces the people's faith to man, rather than to the Man Jesus Christ. For committing this sin, Moses was not allowed to bring the congregation into the Land of Promise.

When I heard my friend say this, the Spirit of the Lord said to me, "Jim, you have attributed some of the credit to yourself in your recent seminar. I could not excuse this sin in Moses, nor can I in you." Friends, we are never under any circumstances to ascribe to ourselves that which God's power alone can perform. Yes, hearts were changed in the seminar my wife and I had just conducted, but all the glory, all the honor and all the power must be ascribed alone to God. How terribly rebuked I was in my own heart! God has forgiven me, but He has also shown me how sensitive I must be to the fact that it is not the man who brings the Word who is to be exalted, but it is the Word that the man brings that is to be held high! How easy it is to inadvertently displace the faith of the people in man or in man's institutions, rather than to direct their faith only to the Word made flesh, to Christ Himself.

In this experience God was saying to me, "Hear now, ye rebel." Why? Because I was inadvertently pointing someone to myself rather than to God. Oh, it was done in a pleasant sort of way as far as man's eyes could see, but not in the sight of God's eyes. The apostle Peter, when he stood before the rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas and Caiaphas, rightly said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. God was forewarning me that I was to be a transparent vessel and that I was always, in all places and at all times, to point everyone to the only One mighty to save, the Man Jesus Christ. Yes, we are all to be transparent tools, pointing everyone to the Living Water, to the Spiritual Rock, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4: "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

"That Rock was Christ," not the man Moses nor the assembly of Israel, nor is the Rock today a ministry, or a prominent person, or a church organization. Christ Jesus is the Rock; He is the living water; He is the remnant's salvation. God will bring us all into the Promised Land, but our eyes must be focused on Him, not on the instruments He chooses to use.

Jim Hohnberger and his wife, Sally, of Restoration International, live in Polebridge, Montana, and have dedicated their lives full-time to reaching all people with the practical gospel.
The history of the Jewish nation was recorded for the instruction and warning of coming generations. The Jewish nation drew attention to itself, saying with Moses, "we." It ascribed honor to itself and allowed its people to seek their safety within its membership. But it failed, friends, miserably failed because of the "we" attitude. It gathered to itself rather than to Christ, and thus its members entered into a grave deception, believing they were all right when they were all wrong. The Jewish church was to be merely a transparent tool; it was not the solution. It made the same mistake as Moses, drawing attention to itself, and it never repented of its sin. It still exists today as a monument to itself. It displaced the faith of the people from God to a system of worship which became an end in itself. The Jews forged their own downfall with the "we" attitude. The downfall of the Jewish church is a fearful and solemn warning to us all. It displaced the faith of the people to the "tool" away from the Solution. Let us not exalt the church that Christ raised up. Rather let us exalt the Christ that raised up the church.

Whenever this "we" attitude gains hold, Christ warns us, "Hear now, ye rebels." Do not draw the focus of My people to anyone, to any system or any institution, but to Me alone, lest ye be counted among the rebels. I think of the scandal of the TV evangelists. They claimed to have done it in "Thy name," but to whom in essence were they drawing the people? To themselves, their ministries, their church. They misplaced the faith of the people.

Friends, today this problem is serious. I call it misplaced faith. The Christian is led to believe that he should invest his confidence in "the church," whatever that very broad, all-encompassing term may mean, or in a ministry. Or the church member is led to place his trust in a pastor, an evangelist, a speaker, a person who has touched his life, or in doctrines and reforms. It is displaced faith, such as occurred when Israel was led to look to Moses and Aaron rather than to God alone. God had to deal very firmly with this sin of turning the people's faith, confidence, or security to anyone, or anything but to Himself. Moses and Aaron were to be merely God's transparent instruments used in solving a problem, not the solution. In the same way the church, a ministry or a person is to be a transparent instrument to draw people to God alone, and not to the instrument.

"Christ's act in cursing the tree which His own power had created stands as a warning to all churches and to all Christians." The Desire of Ages, 584. Why did Christ curse the fig tree, which represented the Jewish nation, the chosen people of God? Because Jesus found nothing in it but a mass of pretentious foliage, as the apostle Paul said, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:5. The tree drew people to itself with the hope of receiving nourishment, but it had none to give, only pretentious leaves. When any group or person draws followers to itself rather than pointing them to Christ, not just in theory but in practice, it usurps the place of Christ and becomes a curse rather than an instrument of grace. As a church draws people to itself, and its focus becomes the support of its system, the allegiance to its system, the connection with its system and an elevation of its system, it then becomes a curse. There is no system or church that has ever saved a man. Not in membership in the Jewish church, nor in the Adventist church, nor in any other church is there salvation to be found. We have been rightly cautioned, "The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received." Ibid., 675.

Did you hear what Christ said through His present-day prophet? "Through Me alone is spiritual life received." The church is to be a transparent medium pointing everyone to Christ, not just theoretically but practically. If it is not, it becomes a rebel just as the Jewish church became.

This Jewish church that Christ raised up was to point the people to the coming promised Messiah, but instead it became the very church that turned the allegiance of its people from the Messiah, in order to lift itself up and to insure its own welfare. How sad that the very One the church was to point all men to, it crucified! This same danger still exists today. Everywhere we hear the cry, "Support the system; be faithful to the system; don't leave the system." This focus can easily misplace the faith of the people! Why? Because it inadvertently draws people to trust in the system and to feel secure as long as they are in the system, rather than in Christ and His Word.

Is your church drawing you to itself or to a moment-by-moment dependence on

God will use men and ministries and religious movements to help finish His work, but if they begin to draw unto themselves He will surely have to curse them as He did the fig tree which had only pretentious leaves.

the only One who is mighty to save? My plea to you is not to abandon the church, but to so attach yourself to the church's Leader, Jesus, that through you Christ can awaken and revive His church. Let us not utter one word of cursing against the church, but let us rather cry over the sins found in her, as Christ did over Jerusalem. We cannot and must not throw out the church, no more than we would throw out the truth. The church has no power in itself, no more than did Moses, nor than do I, nor than does the reader of this article. All the machinery in the world is useless if it is not attached to an engine. If it is attached to an engine it will never attribute any power to itself, only to the engine, which engine for the church is Christ.

The same danger exists in various religious movements today. Many of them are drawing adherents to themselves. The recent tragedy in Waco, Texas, with the Davidian movement should be enough to startle all of us. Whenever a man, or a movement, or a ministry draws people to trust in him or it, beware, for they are surely rebels against the Lord. God will use men and ministries and religious movements to help finish His work, but if they begin to draw unto themselves He will surely have to curse them as He did the fig tree which had only pretentious leaves.
While writing this article, I invited my wife and two sons to my room for a test. I stated the names of present-day ministries, and then asked them to share the first thought that came to mind, their first impression of what that ministry did. I was pleased at some of their responses and wept, truly wept, at other responses. I suggest you try the same test on yourself. Many of the ministries today are not majoring in the real gospel. They are not bringing souls to Christ, or preparing them for heaven. I believe that the instruction given by the apostle Paul is good advice to us regarding how to relate to some of today’s ministries. He tells us that from those “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:5.

Friends, I would not throw out a Moses; neither would I throw out the church or a ministry. But I caution, not only myself, but also the church, as well as all the ministries of today, to take heed not to displace the people’s faith. Person after person, ministry after ministry, and church after church have fallen again and again into the sin of Moses. Let us all learn not to displace the people’s faith. Let us all learn that “When we have done all that is possible for us to do, we are to count ourselves as unprofitable servants.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1122. Let all see that we really do believe that Christ is the only perfect One, who will never, never disappoint anyone.

It is absolutely imperative that as persons, ministries or as a church, we direct the people’s undying faith, loyalty, trust, focus and dependence to Christ alone. Total faith and utter trust must be in the one only One mighty to save. It is our solemn obligation to direct everyone to Him in every sermon, every article, every video and every conversation. For if we do not, we too will be guilty of the sin of Moses. Let us not forget that “For this failure on the part of Moses, God would not permit him to lead the people to the Promised Land.” The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, 310.

An invitation has gone out throughout all generations to every nation, kindred, tongue and people: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Isaiah 55:1. Christ re-echoed that cry as He stood in the midst of His church: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” John 7:37. And today, in the closing pages of the sacred Word, this gracious call is still ringing down through the ages to you and me: “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17. Friends, for our faith to stand firm, it must be founded, not on a man, a ministry or a church, but on Christ alone.

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Health Reform and the Sanctuary

Do we really understand why God gave the health-reform message to the Seventh-day Adventist people? Many of us have believed these instructions were given mainly to enable us to have longer, healthier lives. We need to be aware of God’s ultimate purpose in giving specific directions for our conduct in these areas and why He instructed us to be, not merely missionaries, but medical missionaries.

In the tapes listed below, Dr. Phil Collins explains why and how health reform is an integral part of the third angel’s message. Dr. Collins holds a Ph.D. in Health Science from Loma Linda University and is a health educator employed by Park Ridge (SDA) Hospital. You and your family will find vital information contained in these presentations. They are especially important for persons raising small children in this temptation-saturated world.

The primary concept which differentiates Seventh-day Adventists from other denominations is our sanctuary doctrine. But how many of us truly understand the full import of the sanctuary message? How many of us know why it makes our church fundamentally different from other Protestant denominations? If we do not understand the meaning of the sanctuary ourselves, then we cannot share it with others. It is time we came to grips with the full impact of our God-given sanctuary teaching, the message that drew our pioneers together and made us a people.

Few people have studied the sanctuary as has Bob Jorgensen, founder and director of Medical Missionary Press in Marshall, North Carolina. Bob has been an avid student of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy since his middle teens. In this series of presentations he shares with us insights gleaned from his years of study into the sanctuary and its meaning for us in these last days. Without these understandings we will one day find ourselves adrift, a ship without an anchor, unable to explain to an asking world why we are Seventh-day Adventists. We urge you to hear his messages and share them with others so that we may all be prepared for the testing days ahead.

You may purchase these messages on VHS video tapes or audio cassettes from Hope International. Save money by buying complete sets. Individual video tapes may be ordered for $20 per tape; individual audio tapes are $2.50 each.

Please add 10% ($1.50 minimum) for shipping. Washington residents add 7.5% sales tax.
BIBLICAL apostasy, secularism, humanism, New Theology, astrology, fiction, all have found their way into various publications put out by our denominational presses. There have been few avenues of our communication by Seventh-day Adventists more important than the printed page. Perhaps it is the most important means of communicating between believer and believer, and between believers and those not of our faith. So important is it that it has been associated with the giving of the loud cry of Revelation 18 to the world. See Testimonies, vol. 7, 140.

We have been admonished to scatter our publications like the leaves of autumn. It can well be understood then why Satan has so seriously attacked the content of our denominational publications and eroded their impact for finishing the work of God. The powerful unifying influence of the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald has given way to divisive, often uncertain, and sometimes heretical messages of the Adventist Review.

The Youth Instructor that once presented such a dynamic message to our youth, has given way to the Insight magazine. It is dominated by worldly and New-Age thinking, and has even presented spiritualistic messages through astro-projectional poetry. The Signs of the Times which was designed to present the events taking place in the world and present them in the light of biblical prophecy and to turn the minds of the people towards their preparation for the second coming of Jesus has given way to the Signs, which more than not is a sociological magazine.

The problems do not end there. Those who have been long-term members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will recall when the Sabbath-school lessons presented questions with biblical references to provide the answer to those questions, and almost exclusively commentary from the Spirit of Prophecy. Today the lesson quarterlies have a greatly reduced amount of divinely inspired material. The material for our youngsters is no less alarming. Issue after issue of the Guide magazine presents fictitious material and material that can hardly be seen as designed to prepare the children and youth for the final generation of ministry upon this earth.

Many of the changes have come slowly and gradually. Some, like the introduction of the Insight magazine in 1970 have come rapidly. But whether they have come more slowly or more quickly, the net result has been a terrible retardation of the preparation of God’s people for the coming of the Lord and for our witness to the world at large. Similar trends have been seen in other magazines, such as the Message magazine, Vibrant Life, and Listen. Various arguments are given for some of these trends and for the kind of witness that we are presenting. But while it is not difficult to defend these publications by quality articles here and there, the tenor of each of them is away from preparing men and women for the solemn moments that will bring together the final generation of those who will reflect the character of Jesus before He returns.

There has been just as great alarm about some of the books that are coming off the press. The servant of the Lord warned that there would be books of a new order. See Selected Messages, book 1, 204. Certainly we have many of these books today. Some of these books include Inspiration, a book questioning the basic foundations of the inspiration of the Word of God. Other books redefine righteousness by faith, such as Perfect in Christ, Adventist Hot Potatoes, More Hot Potatoes, The Pharisees Guide to Christian Perfection, My Tortured Conscience, Ninety-Five Theses, and so on. There have also been books that revise history such as 1888 to Apostasy.

It is true that there have been other excellent books coming off our presses. But surely now is not a time to present a mixture of truth and error. What is taking place reflects only the broader and more general apostasy within God’s remnant church. The change in the presentation of truth in our periodicals has certainly weakened the sales of many of them. The Adventist Review is presently at a low level of subscriptions. The Signs struggles
for subscriptions. And there has been an increasing trend by concerned churches to cancel periodical subscriptions for younger members of the church community.

It has not been uncommon to blame much of this upon the exploding number of self-supporting presses that are pouring out literature for church members and for the world at large. However, an objective analysis would lead many to recognize that it is but a response to the vacuum left by the changing quality of denominational publications. The more perceptive members of the church see the independent publications as the fulfillment of the promise of God that He will not leave His Word without faithful witness, be it the spoken word or the written word.

Today self-supporting institutions are publishing many books meant to affirm and develop Seventh-day Adventist members in the faith delivered to the saints and to spread the word around the world. They are publishing regular magazines that constantly feed the flock with the truth and the gospel. They also publish magazines that are being distributed like the leaves of autumn to men and women around the world and many thrilling soul-winning reports are being received. They have also taken an interest in the younger generation, putting out publications to feed the needs of the generation that God has called to take the final gospel of salvation to the world.1

But, nevertheless, we must recognize that still our denominational publications have a significant role to play and that for many Seventh-day Adventists, it is the only literature that they have or will read.

We must not ignore the great need for reformation in our publishing work. It is essential to the culmination of the gospel challenge. One of the greatest needs today is to reevaluate the training and choice of editorial and assisting staff for our publications. It appears that many of the editorial staff chosen today are chosen because of their skills in journalism. But just as obvious is the fact that many of them have gone through programs which meet the mind of the secular journalistic world, but are wholly incompatible with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, the form and presentation of the message takes on what many have considered a contemporary look, but indeed it is a reproach that reflects the perverted tastes, motives, and goals of the world. It is especially evident in the publications for our children and youth.

It is frequently argued that the children and youth of today no longer will read the kind of material commonly placed before them in the nineteenth and the earlier parts of the twentieth centuries. There is no question that the television age has perverted the minds of many of our young people. Nevertheless, though in the most winning and appealing way, we must present the gospel of Jesus to these young people, it can never be revitalizing messages of salvation to our people and prepare the most Spirit-filled publications for the world community.

The Adventist Review, together with the Division and Union papers must re-focus their emphasis upon the pillars of our faith and must inspire our people to accept the power of Jesus Christ, so that they may live in righteousness and faith. The Ministry magazine has a solemn responsibility to re-educate a ministry, many of whose members have lost the clearly distinctive message of Adventism. The magazine needs to point out the truth

We must not ignore the great need for reformation in our publishing work. It is essential to the culmination of the gospel challenge.
In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: “Found wanting.” By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.

God’s Purpose for His People

God has in store love, joy, peace, and glorious triumph for all who serve Him in spirit and in truth. His commandment-keeping people are to stand constantly in readiness for service. They are to receive increased grace and power, and increased knowledge of the Holy Spirit’s working. But many are not ready to receive the precious gifts of the Spirit which God is waiting to bestow on them. They are not reaching higher and still higher for power from above that through the gifts bestowed, they may be recognized as God’s peculiar people, zealous of good works.

“Repent, and do the first works”

Solemn admonitions of warning, manifest in the destruction of dearly cherished facilities for service, say to us: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” Revelation 2:5. Why is there so dim a perception of the true spiritual condition of the church? Has not blindness fallen upon the watchmen standing on the walls of Zion? Are not many of God’s servants unconcerned and well satisfied, as if the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night rested upon the sanctuary? Are there not those in positions of responsibility, professing to know God, who in life and character deny Him? Are not many of those who count themselves as His chosen, peculiar people satisfied to live without the evidence that of a truth God is among them to save them from Satan’s snares and attacks?

Would we not now have much greater light if, in the past, we had received the Lord’s admonitions, acknowledged His presence, and turned away from all practices contrary to His will? Had we done this, the light of heaven would have shone into the soul-temple, enabling us to comprehend the truth and to love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves. Oh, how greatly Christ is dishonored by those who, professing to be Christians, disgrace the name they bear by failing to make their lives correspond to their profession, by failing to treat one another with the love and respect that God expects them to reveal in kind words and courteous acts!

The powers from beneath are stirred with deep intensity. War and bloodshed are the result. The moral atmosphere is poisoned with cruel, horrible doings. The spirit of strife is spreading; it abounds in every place. Many souls are being taken possession of by the spirit of
fraud, or underhand dealing. Many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They do not discern what spirit has taken possession of them.

A Failure to Honor God

One who sees beneath the surface, who reads the hearts of all men, says of those who have had great light: “They are not afflicted and astonished because of their moral and spiritual condition.” “Yea, they have chosen their own ways, humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing.

Who can truthfully say, “Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world”? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: “Can you not see how close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God’s servants will speak the same things. The Lord will co-operate with His servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ taught His servants: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10.

Testimonies, vol. 8, 247–251.

Issues: The Publication Work

Continued from 29 tising, promoting, and praising activities of our people and institutions that are contrary to the inspired counsels. We need to cease publishing articles and books that diminish our people’s confidence in a “Thus saith the Lord” by teaching that Ellen White contradicts herself or that her teachings support more than one view of a given issue. We need to constantly remind ourselves that “The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.” Selected Messages, book 1, 48. Our church publications need to cease assisting in that work.

If we as a people were more accepting of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels as to how we are to live and to work for the Lord, we would be even more enthusiastic in sharing with the world those Spirit-filled, Spirit of Prophecy volumes such as The Great Controversy, The Desire of Ages, Patriarchs and Prophets, The Ministry of Healing and Christ’s Object Lessons that were especially written to help us reach the world with the everlasting gospel. See Evangelism, 366; Testimonies, vol. 9, 84.

With all the avenues we have at our command for the reformation and revival in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there is none more potentially effective than the literature work. Our presses must provide present-truth books, and our educational leadership must seek to provide Bible and other textbooks that will provide the basis for true Christian education. We have not one moment to wait to move forward in this tremendous reformation.

1 Excellent catalogs of such publications are available from both Hartland Publications and Hope International.
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