The Myth of the Objective Gospel

See page 8
EDITORIAL

AND that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:11-14.

Do we who consider ourselves faithful, obedient, loyal Seventh-day Adventists, cognizant that these are the final hours of our probationary time in the great controversy, understand what God expects of us in this final crisis, in this hour in which the judgments of God are being clearly apparent?

Ellen White reveals much to us regarding the prophetic time in which we now live, including the following:

"More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world. In fire and flood and earthquake He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach. The time is near when the great crisis in the history of the world will have come, when every movement in the government of God will be watched with intense interest and inexpressible apprehension. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire and flood and earthquake, with war and bloodshed.

"Oh, that the people might know the time of their visitation! There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter." Testimonies, vol. 9, 97.

"God cannot forbear much longer. Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places." Testimonies, vol. 9, 96.

There will come to the faithful an understanding of these events, the purpose of which is to bring an urgency to people to prepare their characters for the final events that will burst upon the world as an overwhelming surprise. Already we are seeing many of these warning events: earthquakes, fires, floods, and terrible storms.

"The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect." Testimonies, vol. 8, 27-28.

Now, right now, is our time to prepare so that we can help to prepare others. The loud-cry message of Revelation 18 will be given only by faithful Seventh-day Adventists, by those who have been obedient to all truth without compromise. See Testimonies, vol. 3, 281. These faithful leaders and layman will catch the steady tread of events God ordains to awaken His faithful people.

"Do we realize how large a number in the world are watching our movements? From quarters where we least expect will come voices urging us forward in the work of giving to the world the last message of mercy. Ministers and people, wake up! Be quick to recognize and seize every opportunity and advantage offered in the turning of the wheel of providence. God and Christ and the heavenly angels are working with intense activity to hold in check the fierceness of Satan's wrath, that God's plans may not be thwarted. God lives and reigns. He is conducting the affairs of the universe. Let His soldiers move forward to victory. Let there be perfect unity in their ranks. Let them press the battle to the gates. As a mighty Conqueror, the Lord will work for them.

"Let the gospel message ring through our churches, summoning them to universal action. Let the members of the church have increased faith, gaining zeal from their unseen, heavenly allies, from a knowledge of their exhaustless resources, from the greatness of the enterprise in which they are engaged, and from the power of their Leader. Those who place themselves under God's control, be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events ordained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotency, pointing to what they cannot do. Putting on the armor of heaven, they will go forth to the warfare, willing to do and dare for God, knowing that His omnipotence will supply their need.

"God's servants are to make use of every resource for enlarging His kingdom." Testimonies, vol. 7, 14.

God's faithful saints who give the loud cry to a waiting, doomed world will reprove and rebuke sin because of their love for righteousness. They cannot and will not hold their peace.

"Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtu-

Continued on 27
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—Editors

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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this remnant church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.
The Myth of the Objective Gospel

In last month’s article we investigated the Word of God and discovered that the gospel of salvation encompasses both justification by faith and sanctification by faith. We proved that Christ and the Bible writers presented a gospel which denied the Reformational claim that the gospel was justification alone. This month we will look at the claims of the “objective gospel” which concept is a central feature of the 1888 Study Group’s teaching and of Elder Jack Sequeira’s book, Beyond Belief. This latter fact is made clear in the preface to Elder Sequeira’s book:

“For four hundred years, Protestant Christianity has been divided into two camps regarding salvation. The first, Calvinism, confesses that Christ actually saved human beings on the cross, but that this salvation is limited only to the elect—those whom God has predetermined to be saved. The second view, Arminianism [the concepts of the Dutch reformer, Arminius, who strongly opposed Calvin’s concepts of predestination and once saved, always saved], holds that on the cross Christ obtained salvation for all humanity, but that this salvation is only a provision; [1] a person must believe and repent for the provision to become a reality. Both these views are only conditional good news.

“I believe that neither camp presents the full truth about salvation. I believe the Bible teaches that [2] God actually and unconditionally saved all humanity at the cross so that we are justified and reconciled by God by that act (see Romans 5:10, 18; 2 Corinthians 5:18–19). I believe that [3] the only reason anyone will be lost is because he or she willfully and persistently rejects God’s gift of salvation in Christ (see John 3:18, 36). This is what constitutes the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, the everlasting gospel that must be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people before the end comes.” Jack Sequeira, Beyond Belief, 7–8. All emphases added unless otherwise noted.

This opening statement should have raised a red flag right at the beginning for anyone who read it. That so many have accepted this amazing introduction, among them many who had no difficulty rejecting the presentations of Dr. Ford a decade or two ago, is remarkable. Let us briefly examine the three emphasized portions of this statement in the light of divine revelation.

1. To deny that we must believe and repent to attain salvation denies the very gospel preached by Jesus. “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:14–15.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.


2. The claim that salvation is unconditional is just as devoid of scriptural foundation as is the claim that salvation does not require belief or repentance.

“There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ.” Selected Messages, vol. 1, 377.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:12.

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” James 2:5.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” Isaiah 64:4.
“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Psalm 103:13.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” Exodus 20:6.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

3. The third concept is just as erroneous. While rejection will lead to eternal loss, so will neglect.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?” Hebrews 2:3.

The concept that we are saved unless we reject or resist is extraordinarily dangerous. It indicates that if we make no decision we will be saved. In reality we must accept Christ’s saving grace, or we will be lost. We must choose to be for Christ.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” Matthew 12:30.

On the issue of righteousness by faith there are few substantial differences between the message of Elder Jack Sequeira and the message of Dr. Desmond Ford.

Jack Sequeira has presented a concept of salvation that many will recognize has many elements common with those taught by Dr. Desmond Ford in the 1970s and 1980s. For example:

1. Salvation is justification alone. “Justification means all of Christ’s righteousness that He provided for us so that nothing more is required of us to qualify for heaven. In other words, we stand perfect in Him.” Beyond Belief, 103. Emphasis in the original.

2. There is an objective gospel. “The objective gospel (the imputed righteousness of Christ) is what qualifies us for heaven—both now and in the judgment.” Ibid., 36. However, unlike Desmond Ford, Jack Sequeira also believes in justification by faith.

3. That sanctification is a very part of truth, but it does not contribute to our qualification for heaven. “The subjective gospel (the imparted righteousness of Christ) does not contribute to our qualification for heaven; it gives evidence of the reality of Christ’s imputed righteousness in the life.” Ibid.

4. The centrality of the gospel is the “in Christ” motif. “The central theme of the apostle Paul’s theology regarding the gospel is the ‘in Christ’ motif or idea.” Ibid., 33.

5. All of our salvation was accomplished 2000 years ago on Calvary logically making the sanctuary ministry of Christ redundant; in spite of the fact that both Ford and Sequeira have spoken much about the sanctuary message. “All three of these aspects of our salvation—justification, sanctification, and glorification—have already been accomplished in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ibid., 30.

The concept that we are saved unless we reject or resist is extraordinarily dangerous. It indicates that if we make no decision we will be saved.

6. Both teach a universal salvation. “I believe the Bible teaches that God actually and unconditionally saved all humanity at the cross so that we are justified and reconciled to God by that act.” Ibid., 8.

7. We can lose salvation only by active and persistent rejection of salvation. “I believe that the only reason anyone will be lost is because he or she willfully and persistently rejects God’s gift of salvation in Christ.” Ibid.

8. If we sin we still retain justification. “However, God does not reject us every time we make a mistake or fall into sin. If we believe that we lose our justification in Christ each time we sin, we completely invalidate the truth of justification by faith.” Ibid., 104.

Both teach many concepts common to Evangelical Protestantism, Calvinism, and Augustinian Catholicism. These concepts do not allow for a true Seventh-day Adventist position on the sanctuary message, despite the fact that Elder Sequeira has done a lengthy series on this message. The book Beyond Belief significantly ignores the heavenly sanctuary message as part of the salvational acts of God; therefore one assumes that Elder Sequeira believes that the atonement was completed on the cross, rather than in the heavenly sanctuary, as clearly identified in the type.

“And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the [most] holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.” Leviticus 16:17.

Sister White says that the sanctuary message is the center of our faith. “The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.” Evangelism, 221.

Some have challenged this concept, saying that the cross is the center of our faith, but, of course, the cross of Christ, His death and sacrifice, are integral to the sanctuary message. Without the sacrifice,

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Righteousness, never once distinguishes between an objective and a subjective form of justification.

It is not uncommon for those who support the 1888 Study Committee to say that there are two phases of justification: forensic (legal, universal, corporate, temporary, judicial) justification, which is a justification which came upon all men through the death of Jesus Christ; and justification by faith.

Unlike Dr. Ford’s presentations, there is an emphasis on justification by faith; but, as pointed out in the October 1993 issue of Our Firm Foundation, vol. 8, no. 10, we have seen that the forensic justification concept has no foundation in the Bible or in the Spirit of Prophecy. We also noted that in the end this concept begins to dominate over the only justification that will ever save us, and that is justification by faith. This teaching leaves us in danger of moving God’s people toward a concept in which obedience is seen to have less and less importance in the development of a people of God who will be fit for the kingdom of heaven. The Bible is rich with statements showing that the subjective transformation of the life is absolutely essential in those who will be saved.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 24.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Revelation 3:5.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” Revelation 3:12.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Revelation 3:21.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Thessalonians 5:23.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Acts 20:32.

One of the most important pillars of the objective gospel is the “in Christ” motif. As Elder Sequeira says: “The central theme of the apostle Paul’s theology regarding the gospel is the ‘in Christ’ motif or idea.” Ibid. 33. He sees it as his fundamental concept of “corporate oneness.” The idea is that we were all “in Christ” when He died on Calvary, when He paid the penalty for our sins.

While Elder Sequeira also refers to the “Christ in,” motif it is clear that, like his reference to sanctification, it does not see it as essential to the salvation of mankind. But let us look at the foundation of this message. Christ Himself refused to separate the two components; they are as indivisibly linked as are justification and sanctification.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” John 6:56.

"At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” John 14:20.

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:23.

Perhaps the unity of the two is best seen in Jesus’ use of the vine-and-branch illustration of John 15.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John 15:4.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7.

The picture is clear. Is the wine in the branch, or the branch in the vine? Obviously they are in each other. There is no such thing as an “in Christ” motif outside of a “Christ in” motif; the two cohere together in the gospel.

In his first epistle, John continues to emphasize the unity of the “in Christ” and the “Christ in” message.

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” I John 3:24.

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” I John 4:13–16.

That Paul fully acknowledged the “Christ in” and the “in Christ” concepts can be seen from the following texts:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Romans 8:9–10.

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27.
There is no objective gospel separate from the subjective gospel. Any legal acts of God reflect what has happened and is happening in the life of the man. Everything that is done reflects what is taking place in the life of the Christian. When we are justified in heaven, it is because we have repented and confessed our sins, and we have new motives, new impulses, new desires, a new character. When we are sanctified in heaven it is because Christ is dwelling daily in our hearts. When our sins are blotted out in the investigative judgment, they are not only blotted out of the books of record in heaven, they are also blotted out of the lives of God’s people. “As in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind, so in the type they were borne away into the wilderness, forever separated from the congregation.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 358.

“The righteous will not cease their earnest agonizing cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sin, but in their whole life they can see but little good. Their sins have gone before hand to judgment, and pardon has been written. Their sins have been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they could not bring them to remembrance.” Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, 135.

“But while they [the saints after the close of probation] have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.” The Great Controversy, 620.

With great joy we can acknowledge that Inspiration presents a gospel that transforms the life and fits men and women for the courts of heaven. Thus we have to reject Elder Sequeira’s statement:

“Performing works of law is a subtle form of rebellion against God because all such works are actually independent of Him.” Beyond Belief, 97.

It is true that the works of the law cannot save us, but it is not true to say that doing the works of the law by faith is a subtle form of rebellion.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16.

It is works of the law through the flesh which are rebellion against God. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19–21.

While Elder Sequeira and the members of the 1888 Message Study Committee do speak about sanctification, the logic of their position leads many thinking men and women to conclude that perfection of character is not essential to salvation. Yet Inspiration says:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

“‘When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.’ Mark 4:29. Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 69.

There is no objective gospel separate from the subjective gospel. Any legal acts of God reflect what has happened and is happening in the life of the man. Everything that is done reflects what is taking place in the life of the Christian.

Acceptance of the objective gospel concept will inevitably lead many to conclude that they can be saved short of perfect obedience, the obedience that comes through the power of the indwelling Christ, and in response to their love for the gift of our heavenly Father. If we doubt this assertion we have only to review the carnage caused by Dr. Ford’s teachings.

In summary, it can be said without doubt that the objective gospel is a figment of human imagination which has arisen out of Augustinian Catholicism, and which ultimately leads people away from the transforming power of Christ in the life and from their preparation to be fit or qualified to walk the streets of gold with the unfallen beings of heaven.

1 The objective gospel is a purported method of justifying man without his knowledge or participation, and thus without the necessity of any internal change or transformation—sanctification. See Beyond Belief, 31–33.

**Special Notice**

As this issue of Our Firm Foundation was going to press, our shipping department notified us that we have sold all but a few of the Spirit of Prophecy three-volume sets at the special clearance price. (These volumes were selling for $150 per set plus $10 shipping.)

Since the price may change when these volumes are reprinted, please watch Our Firm Foundation for prices and availability.
In Adam

We are going to study in this article what it means to be descendants of Adam. We will discover that there are serious, multiple consequences of Adam’s original sin affecting each one of us. Among these consequences are a probationary life that ends in the first death and is followed by a resurrection from the dead. We will conclude, however, that our eternal destiny—life or death—is determined solely by our personal choices regarding the plan of salvation and not by the choices of our ancestors.

Every person is created with the power of individuality. “Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.” Education, 17.

Each individuality is “separate and distinct from all others. Each must be convicted for himself, converted for himself. He must receive the truth, repent, believe, and obey for himself. He must exercise his will for himself. No one can do this work by proxy. No one can submerge his individuality in another’s. Each must surrender to God by his own act and the mystery of godliness.” Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, 423.

It is by the Lord’s design that each person has natural aptitudes and capabilities peculiar to himself or herself. See ibid. The individuality of each person is determined at the fertilization of the mother’s ovum by one sperm of the father. At that moment a unique combination of genetic material is formed, a combination of genetic material—personhood—that has never existed before, nor will it be duplicated in the future. From each such unique, new creation arises a person with a unique mind, with “individuality, power to think and to do,” intended by God to exist eternally from that time onward.

“The great Master Artist has not made two leaves of the same tree precisely alike; so His creative power does not give to all minds the same likeness. They are created to live through ceaseless ages, and there is to be complete unity, mind blending with mind; but no two are to be of the same mold.” Ibid., 426.

Seventh-day Adventists reject the tenet of some Eastern religions that we pre-existed as conscious, morally responsible persons.

In the garden of Eden the first man and woman were so created that both male and female were needed to provide the genetic material to form each of their descendants. Thus it is impossible for us to exist as persons, with moral responsibility and accountability, prior to the union of our own father and mother. We can only marvel at God’s willingness to share with men and women the ability to form new creations. Genetic material capable of forming us was in Adam and in all of our forefathers, but we have not existed as morally accountable persons until the unique, new creation conceived by our specific parents.

Adam and Eve's sin in partaking the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil had a tremendous impact upon all their potential descendants. At the moment they sinned, justice demanded their eternal destruction. If this destruction had occurred it would logically, in harmony with the laws of biology, have also eternally destroyed the genetic material for all of their potential descendants. We could surmise that if God had destroyed Adam and Eve, He could have replaced them with another pair with the same genetic potential to form the same persons who have arisen from Adam and Eve. But God chose a different response—a response of justice mingled with mercy—that would give Adam and Eve and the human race a second chance.

Rather than experiencing eternal oblivion in the obliteration of Adam, the human race immediately received through Christ’s willingness to die in man’s place, a temporal
life of probation and an opportunity to obtain eternal life. All that the potential human race lost by being in Adam it would eventually regain upon condition of returning to the obedience to the Creator that Adam exhibited prior to his fall. Yes, the human race theoretically lost all by being in Adam, but in reality, through Christ, we have present life and the offer of life eternal.

Under Heaven’s plan to redeem man, the punishment or wages of sin—eternal death—was not waived, but was deferred. Thus each present and future member of the human race has the opportunity to personally choose eternal life or eternal death. The plan of redemption was actually developed before man’s creation. Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8. Christ’s promised death if man sinned did not include unconditional justification—pardon or forgiveness—for Adam, Eve and their potential descendants. To unconditionally pardon man before he sinned, or was even created, would indeed be a mockery of God’s law and justice.

If Adam and Eve could have truly been declared salvationally righteous at the moment of their disobedience, through unconditional justification, then there would have been no basis for removing them from the Garden of Eden with its tree of life. The fact that they were evicted confirms that justice or punishment was not annulled, but was merely deferred: temporal probation was provided, for the unjustified to give them the opportunity to demonstrate renewed loyalty to their Creator.

Consequences of Adam’s Sin

The conditions of probationary life, along with the bounties of nature necessary to sustain it, were provided by the Creator for the unjust as well as the just. There were to be consequences of Adam’s sin for Adam and for all future descendants. These consequences were to teach all humanity that intelligent beings are accountable to the Creator for their actions. Among these consequences are the following:

1. No direct communication between God the Father and man—all communication would be through Christ. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 366.

2. Loss of the robe of light which enabled man to clearly perceive the character of God in nature. See Selected Messages, book 1, 290-293.

3. Sinless human nature changed into sinful human nature, with an inherited bent to sin and moral degeneracy,

4. Painful child deliveries. See Genesis 3:16; Patriarchs and Prophets, 58.

5. The woman became subject to the man. See Genesis 3:16.

6. The ground cursed, necessitating earning one’s livelihood by the sweat of one’s brow. See Genesis 3:17-19.

7. The tree of life removed from the diet; for it were substituted the herbs of the field. See Genesis 3:17-18.

8. Inherited and developed evil tendencies, including perverted appetites and debased morals, as well as physical disease and degeneracy, transmitted to the third and fourth generation. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 306.

9. A congenitally defective physical body with diminished physical and mental strength and stamina.

10. The desire to know good and God dependent upon “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9; See Education, 29.


12. Dominion over the earth lost; the inferior creatures in rebellion to man’s authority. See ibid., 59-60.

13. Lifetime sorrow of beholding the bight of sin in nature and humanity—also referred to as “the penalty of transgression.” See Maranatha, 315. All emphasis supplied.

14. Man to return to the dust from which he was taken—the first death. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: ‘I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.’ Deuteronomy 30:15. The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is ‘the second death’ that is placed in contrast with everlasting life.

“In consequence of Adam’s sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. ‘There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22.” The Great Controversy, 544.

It is significant that in the above reference Inspiration applies the passage in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “as in Adam all die,” to the first death which is a sleep, and not to the eternal, second death desired by Adam at the time of his fall and through him affecting the entire potential human race. In the above reference Inspiration also applies the phrase, “all be made alive,” to the resurrection of all—the unjust as well as the just which follows the first death. It does not apply to this present probationary life.

15. One of the final consequences of Adam’s fall will be the dispensing of rewards to both the resurrected just and the unjust.

“But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. ‘All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.’ John 5:28-29. They who have been accounted worthy of the resurrection of life are ‘blessed and holy.’ On such the second death hath no power.” Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression—the wages of sin.” They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, ‘according to their works,’ but finally ending in the second death... Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.” Ibid., 544-545.

The Second Death

Inspiration gives additional information regarding the second death, which helps to contrast it with the first death. The wages of
suffered the wrath of God as well as eternal death. The forbearance that God has exercised toward the wicked has emboldened men in transgression; but their punishment will be nonetheless certain and terrible for being long delayed. The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.” Isaiah 28:21. To our

If they refuse the heavenly benefit and choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death.

merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. Yet He will “by no means clear the guilty.” Exodus 34:7.” The Signs of the Times, January 25, 1910.

“Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs, if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit and choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 210. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

“Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained.” Early Writings, 294.

Each member of the human race is involved in each of these consequences of Adam’s sin. Each of the fifteen is a component of the probationary life provided by Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross because of Adam’s sin. We all—saint and sinner alike—actively participate in each of these consequences merely because we are descended from Adam.

All of these consequences effect the just as well as the unjust, essentially to the same extent, except for the last consequence listed. The just and the unjust receive different eternal rewards. Eternal life is given to the just—all who have placed all their guilt on Christ the Lamb, the Sin-bearer. The punishment by the wrath of God ending in eternal oblivion is experienced by the unjust who have chosen to bear their own guilt.

To fully understand the plan of redemption and the good news of the gospel we must understand clearly when and how a man or woman becomes guilty or condemned.

Justification, or righteousness, versus guilt or condemnation plays a definite, but not always a well-defined, role in the quality of our temporal lives. However, by far its greatest importance will be revealed when the final verdict is pronounced. “He that is unjust, let him be made just; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11) shall be applied to the final entry of our name in the book of life in heaven. This statement is true whether our last entry in the heavenly record book is made when we die the first death of sleep or whether we are alive when the above words are spoken at the general close of probation for the human race. To understand guilt and condemnation, we must first understand their cause, which is sin.

“A terrible doom awaits the sinner, and therefore it is necessary that we know what sin is, in order that we may escape from its power. John says, ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.’ 1 John 3:4. Here we have the true definition of sin; it is ‘the transgression of the law.’ How often the sinner is urged to leave his sins, and come to Jesus; but has the messenger who would lead him to Christ clearly pointed out the way? Has he clearly pointed out the fact that ‘sin is the transgression of the law,’ and that he must repent, and forsake the breaking of God’s commandments? Christ will come to consume the false prophet, to sweep away the hosts of apostasy, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of God; and it is of the highest importance to each one of us that we know the conditions by which we shall escape the sinner’s doom. It is of the greatest moment that we understand the nature of our fall and the consequences of transgression. Man’s conscience has become hardened by sin, and his understanding darkened by transgression, and his judgment has become confused as to what is sin. He has become benumbed by the influence of iniquity, and it is essential that his conscience be aroused to understand that sin is the transgression of God’s holy law. He who does not obey the commandments of God is a sinner in the sight of God.” Signs of the Times, June 20, 1895.

It is clear that disobedience to the will of God is sin. In Romans 7:7–9 Paul teaches that sin with guilt and condemnation comes with a knowledge of the law: “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. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

James clearly teaches that sin is committed and condemnation received by those who knowingly disobey. “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

Paul in Acts 17:30 states that the disobedience of ignorance is winked at by God and thus results in no condemnation. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

Ezekiel clarifies the issue further when he says that “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezekiel 18:20.
Thus we see that we are sinners, guilty and condemned before the law, worthy of the second death because of our own personal, knowing disobedience to God's will. The modern prophet is in agreement with this clear biblical teaching.

"None will be condemned for not heeding light and knowledge that they never had, and they could not obtain." Review and Herald, November 25, 1884.

"Men will not be judged for light they have never had." Review and Herald, September 13, 1898.

"We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused. A man could not apprehend the truth which had never been presented to him, and therefore could not be condemned for light he had never had." Review and Herald, April 25, 1893.

"Said the angel: 'If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject.'" Testimonies, vol. 1, 116.

Visiting the Iniquity

The servant of the Lord also helps us to correctly understand how God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

"'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.' Exodus 20:5. It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents. By inheritance and example the sons become partakers of the father's sin. Wrong tendencies, perverted appetites, and debased morals, as well as physical disease and degeneracy, are transmitted as a legacy from father to son, to the third and fourth generation." Patriarchs and Prophets, 306.

"God did not mean in this threatening that the children should be compelled to suffer for their parents' sins, but that the example of the parents would be imitated by the children. If the children of wicked parents should serve God and do righteousness, he would reward their right-doing. But the effects of a sinful life are often inherited by the children. They follow in the footsteps of their parents. Sinful example has its influence from father to son, to the third and fourth generations. If parents indulge in depraved appetites, they will, in almost every case, see the same acted over in their children. The children will develop characters similar to those of their parents; and unless they are renewed by grace, and overcome, they are truly unfortunate. If parents are continually rebellious, and inclined to disobey God, their children will generally imitate their example. Godly parents, who instruct their children by precept and example in the ways of righteousness, will generally see their children following in their footsteps. The example of God-fearing parents will be imitated by their children, and their children's children will imitate the right example their parents have set before them; and thus the influence is seen from generation to generation." The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, 257-258.

Thus the weight of the evidence clearly supports the concept that we are not in any way guilty or condemned to suffer the wrath of God and eternal death merely by being descendants of Adam. All of Adam's descendants—the unjust and the just—suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, but no person is guilty or condemned for actions of his ancestors; neither is he accountable for light that he could not have perceived prior to his birth. We are candidates to suffer the wrath of God ending in the second death death passed upon all men." Romans 5:12.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one."Romans 5:17.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Romans 5:18.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Romans 5:19.


"The sin of our first parents brought guilt and sorrow upon the world." Patriarchs and Prophets, 61.

"Parents have a more serious charge than they imagine. The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God. Jesus gave His life that He might unite the broken links to God. As related to the first Adam, men receive from Him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death." Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, 236.

"Christ volunteered to come to this earth and stand at the head of fallen human beings, who were heirs of guilt, under sentence of eternal death." Manuscript Releases, vol. 12, 61.

"These dear children received from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death." Manuscript Releases, vol. 13, 14.

It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins.

only if we personally choose to participate in, and choose to remain participants in, rebellion against God. There are some inspired counsels, however, that appear on the surface to contradict these divine teachings.

These four scriptural references and five Spirit of Prophecy references are interpreted by many to mean that all mankind are condemned, guilty sinners simply because they are descendants of Adam. They say that this universal guilt and condemnation, being inherited, is registered against our account even prior to our birth, clearly before we can know good from evil. Others believe that somehow we were actually accountable for, and thus guilty for, our "participation" with Adam in his sin, even prior to the creation of our personhood by the union of our specific human father and mother. They say that thus we are guilty at birth for our "implication" with Adam in his sin. Such beliefs are contrary to the inspired writings. (However, Paul states that chil...
In conclusion, being in Adam—his potential descendants—at the time of the Fall robbed the future human race of its God-ordained power of individual existence and choice. Christ immediately stepped in as the second Adam, the first Adam’s Substitute, to provide for each member of the human race a time of personal existence with personal responsibility and accountability.

The entire human race—the unjust as well as the just—are in the first Adam by physical birth through no choice of their own. Through the mercy of God, the unjustified as well as the justified, experience temporary, probationary life ending in the temporary sleep of the first death. During this probationary life each person chooses to, or chooses not to, experience the new birth into the family of the second Adam, Christ.

Those who choose to remain spiritually in the first Adam by choosing to continue to participate in the disobedience of the first Adam will eventually suffer the delayed wages of sin—the wrath of God and eternal death. On the contrary, those persons who choose to be born again and who daily, by the second Adam’s enabling grace, abide in Christ will in the end receive eternal life.

This present, temporary, first life and temporary first death are experienced by all regardless of their choice to be obedient or disobedient, just or unjust. On the contrary, no morally accountable person will experience eternal death merely because of Adam’s disobedience. Neither will he receive eternal life merely because of the second Adam’s obedient substitutionary life.

Through the plan of salvation Christ has provided freedom of choice—religious liberty—to each reasoning descendant of Adam. How we exercise our will, what we choose, is a matter of life and death. Because of the second Adam our eternal destiny is our choice, personally, alone.

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We can receive the justification and righteousness of Christ only if we choose to participate in it; so also we receive the disobedience and condemnation of others only as we choose to participate in their disobedience.

second Adam can or will force us to participate in his activities against our will.

Being in Adam we all, both just and unjust, obedient and rebellious, receive by inheritance the consequences of Adam’s sin. But only post-birth willful disobedience results in the guilt and rebellion which will be punished in the lake of fire ending in eternal death. The plan of redemption was designed to provide for all in Adam the consequences of Adam’s sin (for example, temporal life and the first death) in order that all might have the opportunity of avoiding the second death—the wages of sin. The terms “guilt, condemnation, obedience, righteousness, pardon, and justification” are all plan-of-salvation terms relating to eternal life and eternal death rather than to the first life and the first death.

The plan of salvation was designed to justify and save individual sinners condemned to the wrath of God and eternal oblivion because of their personal, active, known participation in disobedience to God’s will. Guilt, condemnation and the second death come to each of Adam’s descendants, not directly because of Adam’s sin, but indirectly as each descendant chooses to join Adam in his rebellion.

The plan of salvation was designed to protect the religious liberty of each soul. It was activated at the time of Adam’s sin in order to give each child of Adam the opportunity and the freedom to decide his own destiny.

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"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall deliver their own souls by their righteousness,' (Ezekiel 14:20) which is the imputed righteousness of Christ." Manuscript Releases, vol. 18, 246.

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ECENTLY I have been wrought upon by the Spirit of God to say to you some things that I did not say at the General Conference in Oakland because I felt that that was not the proper time or place to mention them. I have hoped that you would give heed to the messages borne to you, and humble your heart before God: but you have not done this.

Last Tuesday, in the early morning hours, your case was presented before me in such a way that now, for your own soul's sake, I will mention some things, but not all now. I am instructed to bear a message to you, and to our brethren who claim to believe the truth as revealed in the messages that Christ came to the Isle of Patmos to give to John while this apostle was in exile—the messages portraying the events that will occur in the last days of this earth's history. John was directed to communicate these messages to the churches.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." [Revelation 1:1.] If at the time these things were revealed, it could be said that they would "shortly come to pass," they must be very nigh now. It is of far greater importance to us that we understand this solemn revelation, which concerns our temporal and eternal interests, the consequence of sins unconfessed [and] unrepented of, than that we study Latin, or Greek, or the science of drug medication. We do not need these branches of learning to save the soul or the body. If we had needed them, the great Medical Missionary would certainly have given us some instruction in regard to the matter.

At this time, when the inhabitants of the whole world are being worked with an intensity by satanic agencies, [and] a certain feature of scientific mesmerism is exercised, mind upon mind, which is destroying souls, we are to gain an understanding of the one thing needful that will make it possible for us to secure eternal life. The one thing positively needful now, in this last remnant of time, is that we should love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves. When practical godliness of this sort shall come into the church, Heaven's signature will be attached to the work done to reveal to the world the true Medical Missionary, which saves soul and body and destroys sin. Christ came to this earth to lift up the fallen, to ennoble and refine and sanctify humanity. By His words and works in behalf of the fallen race, He evidenced to men and women what they can become by cooperating with their Creator, while Satan is working with his satanic agencies to destroy sound judgment founded on the Bible. And that is the foundation of true faith that is unto eternal life.

The desecrated and defiled order of beings, united with the great deceiver, work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Satanic agencies, working through human minds, devise and plan wonderful things that are not acceptable to God, nor in harmony with His purpose.

We see Satan's work constantly growing in intensity, as manifested in increasing deception, violence, and crime. How can the false and cruel work of apostasy and rebellion be dealt with, both for the destruction of evil and the restoration of the evildoers? I have withheld many things of sins unconfessed by you, hoping that there would be a reformation in you,
and reformations have been presented to me of what might be in you, but the remedial agencies must stand forth pure and unconfounded.

All our medical missionary work is to bear the marks of heavenly, denominated power. It is to be free from stain and corruption and defilement. When Christ was engaged in medical missionary work, He declared to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 4:34. If this was His plan in doing this line of work, if the Lord of life and glory thus resigned Himself in conformity to the divine will in order to give to the world an example of self-denial and self-sacrifice, how it does put to shame our human preferences, our human exaltation, the multitude of falsehoods to deny truth!

If man will not accept Christ's terms and reform, the seeds of rebellion will take root, spring up, and bear their fruit, whereby many will be deceived and defiled. Rebellion will never cure itself. God alone can conquer it by reproof, by correction in righteousness, through His appointed agencies. But some will not be cured, for they have braced themselves and will never confess their sins and become vessels unto honor. Those sins of transgression of the law of God stand written in the books of heaven to your account, to be proclaimed in the judgment.

Our adversary, Satan, will work in every conceivable way to prevent erring, sinful man—especially one who occupies a leading position of responsibility, as yourself—from making straight paths for his feet, in humbling his will, his mind, his soul, to redeem himself by confession from the sure result, [making] thorough work for time and for eternity.

The Lord has entreated, reproved, encouraged, invited, and drawn by the cords of His love, the erring ones: but they change not their course. "Come unto Me," He says, "that ye might have life, and through humiliation and repentance have it more abundantly." [See] Isaiah 57:15. But the adversary of God and man has exercised his power over these experienced leaders, and wrought through them, doing many things contrary to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and Satan will hold them captive as long as they have any inclination to continue in his service.

Let us obey the Captain of our salvation. His title is The Lord of Hosts. By His sufferings and humiliation He has purchased every soul. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Revelation 6:21. These are the terms of salvation. And may God forbid that poor, weak, erring, finite man should build up barriers around himself to maintain his dignity, for such a man, and all who follow his example, will lose everything of value in this life, as well as the eternal weight of glory granted to the overcomer.

Never will the human family—redeemed by the example of the Sent of God, the Only—Begotten of the Father—understand and fully comprehend the terrible conflict waged with deceptive, alluring power and concealed, deadly hatred by Satan against our Lord when He lived among men. After the battle of the great day of God shall take place, when the power of rebellion is forever broken, and Christ's mediatorial work in its magnitude is represented so plainly that all the redeemed of God's family shall with clear comprehension understand the mission of His Son as the mediatorial Remedy to make of the fallen race a repentant, humble, meek, reclaimed order of beings— then there will be seen developed the difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.

Rebellion will exist in our world until in heaven are spoken the words, "It is done." Revelation 16:17. Rebellion in the church is caused by its members feeling opposed to God and to His terms of salvation. Man wants abundant room to express himself and to attract attention, to be first. He does not know or understand that he is working out the plans of Satan. If he refuses to see and to become enlightened, if he refuses to be instructed, he rejects the mediatorial Remedy that has been given to save the sinner, not in his sin but from his sin. For the express purpose of saving sinners was the remedial work of Christ planned.

When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man, when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God. And when the fullness of time was come, He stepped down from His throne of highest command, laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, clothed His divinity with humanity, and came to this earth to exemplify what humanity must do and be in order to overcome the enemy and to sit with the Father upon His throne. Coming, as He did, as a man, to meet and be subjected with all the evil tendencies to which man is heir, working in every conceivable manner to destroy his faith, He made it possible for Himself to be buffeted by human agencies inspired by Satan, the rebel who had been expelled from heaven.

As the Head of humanity, Christ lived on this earth a perfect, consistent life, in conformity with the will of His heavenly Father. When He left the courts of heaven, He announced the mission that He designed to fulfill. "Lo, I come," He declared, "In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Psalm 40:7-8. Always uppermost in His mind and heart was the thought, "Not My human will, but Thy will be done." This was the infallible principle that actuated Him in all His words and works, and that molded His character. His work is to [do] the will of His heavenly Father. The Majesty of heaven was subjected to the lowliest humiliation.

Born in poverty in a stable, reared and trained in seclusion in the humbler walks of life, the Saviour of mankind was not recognized as a superior being, but He who was the Majesty of heaven, [the] only begotten Son of God, the King of glory, uttered no complaint in regard to His humble station in life. He was reproached even by His own brethren, because He would not take part with them in their sins. He confirmed His will to the will of His Father, as all the
human family should do, to evidence [that] humanity united with the purest divinity would be uncontaminated with sin.

Christ Jesus our Lord was a faultless character, a perfect example of heavenly grace and lowliness. From His birth to His death He gave us an example of what men and women must be, if they are accepted as His disciples, and hold the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end. In the themsevles before God, repent and be converted, that their marked errors, their many sins and transgressions of the law [of God] may be blotted out. [They] will meet all the results of transgression. But God will not be mocked. He cannot, will not, bear much longer with those who make such a showing.

"God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have

He has paid a heavy ransom for their redemption; but still they refuse to represent before the world, in word and deed, the meek and lowly Saviour.

I am instructed to say, It is not now too late to make thorough work for repentance and reformation. There is no excuse for any man to choose to rule others and to exercise a controlling power over human minds, as has been done. The will of such a man needs to be broken and changed. True leaders are willing to be led in the Lord's way because they feel that they are carrying are so fearfully solemn, and the results of following a wrong course so terrible that they dare not choose their own way or carry out their own devising, which would be liable to encourage a condition of things that would place them on the side of the great fallen rebel.

I call upon all who have any desire to be saved: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you further provoke the wrath of an offended God? Why will you be companions of those who love not the truth and the Word—those who never submit their wills to God's will; those who in words and theories and worldly maxims deny the truth, and give heed to seducing spirits, misconstruing, yes, perverting, the truth? Are you not afraid of the next reproof from God? Who will now, while it is called today, while Mercy's sweet voice is still heard calling, repent of their evil course, and follow Him who has said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28–30.

Man can brace himself in stubbornness and rebellion against the truth. He can exalt himself in sinful acts, as some have repeatedly done. Every such one needs now to make a determined effort to cut himself loose from Satan's chariot-car, and no longer do his will. Are you not afraid?

The Lord has a controversy with His people. There are some with whom He has borne long, marking out before them again and again the course that they should pursue. And while they may have made some changes, they do not make thorough work because they receive not the love of the truth that they may be purified and saved. Therefore, very soon the Lord will send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.

Oh, may God forbid that these souls in peril should continue to rebel against the
truth and to take pleasure in unrighteousness! How can so many deceive and spoil themselves by their own deceptions?

All can see that the day of peril is now upon us. No man's life is secure. Men will be imbued with the desire to kill, and anyone that crosses their track is unsafe. In the closing days of this earth's history, Satan seems to have things arranged in his own way. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man shall be revealed. Consider the forbearance God manifested toward the Sodomites and their final punishment. The very sins of which Sodom was guilty are charged in the books of heaven against them.

The Lord lays grave responsibilities on the men who have stood at the head of the rank and file of His people. My brethren, He is trying to call your attention to your own peril. He invites; He presents motives. Who will continue to reject His overtures of mercy? Who will still choose to serve the enemy? If you resist longer, will the Lord God touch your hearts after you have had a more extended experience in regarding your own ideas as supreme? Many of these ideas are brought to the mind by the father of lies and deception.

The cross of Christ, with all its record of the Saviour's humiliation, stands before you. Saith Christ, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mark 8:34. To all such will He give grace and strength. He will be unto them as One who is compassionate and lovely, He is who gives the invitation, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah 27:5. □

Found in DF 63 and added to file December 1993; retyped and grammatically edited January 25, 1994, by the Ellen G. White Estate.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My husband and I have been avid readers of Our Firm Foundation, for years and frequently attend Hope camp meetings. The quality of work that goes into Our Firm Foundation is very evident and I believe honoring to the Lord. The art work is always excellent. Lots of Spirit of Prophecy articles are just what we need now at a time when, unfortunately, so many are leaving the Spirit of Prophecy books on the shelf.

The articles by Tom Waters and Jim Hohberger of Restoration International are very helpful in gaining the victory necessary in our daily walk with Jesus. These gentlemen and their families have ministered to us personally in the past and I can testify that they do practice what they preach. I praise the Lord that more people can receive these blessings through Our Firm Foundation.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all who have a part in Our Firm Foundation. God is using it in my life to prepare me for the coming of Jesus.
—MO, Washington

It was my privilege to meet you and hear your sermons at the camp meeting held at Bangalore, India. I was very much impressed by your presentation of the Message and by your lifestyle. I am a retired minister of the Seventh-day Adventist organization, doing independent ministry. All my sons are employed in the Seventh-day Adventist organization.

We need some free tracts and magazines for free distribution. I would also like to translate some articles into local languages, for which I ask your permission. Above all this we need your prayers and counsel to strengthen this humble beginning.
—I, India

I am very much interested in your ministry. Please send me information on the focus of your ministry and the history, that I might from time to time support it.
—II, Arizona

I cannot thank my Father enough for the article "Holding the Truth in Unrighteousness" in a recent Our Firm Foundation. This, to me, has been the most practical and wisest article I have ever read concerning "walking the walk" of Jesus. All glory be to God.
—JA, New York

My husband and I were impressed as we read "Letters to the Editor," especially from foreign countries expressing the need for literature. This is but a meager donation in comparison with the need, but please accept this check to help with "Overseas Literature," and may God richly bless your ministry.
—RH, Vermont

I am a Seventh-day Adventist local elder and have been reading your book World Peace or Final War [now entitled Heralds of Peace]. I think there could not have been a more appropriate time for those selections to have been put together than now. I am rather interested in sending copies to several of my non-SDA friends, and would like to know just what is the cost.
—RW, Florida

This is just a short note to thank you for the calendar that you mailed to me this last week. It was appreciated very much. I would like to make a suggestion. If it is to be printed again put the days of the week as 1st day, 2nd day, and so on, as stated in the Bible, with the names of the days below in parentheses (Sunday, Monday, and so on). Also the Sabbath should be highlighted with the word Sabbath rather than Saturday. Enclosed is a $50 check to help you with your expenses. Please use where most needed.
—HD, Florida
In his book, Beyond Belief, Jack Sequeira claims that according to Romans 5, the whole human race sinned "in Adam," and fell when he fell (pp. 34, 52). The verse in question is Romans 5:12: "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." Sequeira believes that when this passage says "all men sinned," it really means that all men sinned "in Adam," not individually (pp. 52-54). He offers five reasons in support of his position (pp. 52-53), each of which we will examine:

1. He declares, "It simply isn't true that everyone dies because they have personally sinned as Adam did. Babies, for example, die even though they have no personal sins." P. 52.

This statement actually opens the door to the absurd. Not only do babies die, despite the absence of personal sins, so do animals. Are we prepared to say that animals die because they too sinned "in Adam"? The problem here is that Sequeira contradicts himself again. He clearly seems to be talking about the first death in this context as the focus of Romans 5:12. However, two pages later (p. 54) he says that the first death is not the issue in this verse at all, that the second death is what Paul is talking about. I think Sequeira is right the second time, but his contradictions are likely to seriously confuse the reader.

2. Sequeira states that because the statement "all men sinned" is in the past tense, it must therefore refer to the corporate Fall of all humanity "in Adam" (pp. 52-53). But obviously, this statement need not be what the verse is saying. In no way does the past tense require, grammatically or otherwise, that this passage refer to a "single past historical event" (p. 52), as Sequeira claims. The past tense can just as easily mean that the free choices of free and responsible beings on earth have thus far been universally rebellious. Indeed, the totality of inspired evidence requires that this understanding be accepted.

The Scriptures state elsewhere: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." Ezekiel 18:20, KJV. No interpretation of Romans 5 or any other inspired passage should be accepted without consideration of everything Inspiration teaches. Commenting on the language of Romans 5, Ellen White observes:

"Human beings have degenerated. One after another they fall under the curse, because sin has entered into the world, and death by sin. . . . We may choose God's way and live; we may choose our own way, and know that sin has entered into the world, and death by sin."

Sequeira teaches that the whole human race fell "in Adam" (p. 34). The above statement disagrees. It says we fall "one after another."

Ellen White presents the same thought elsewhere:

"If the race had ceased to fall when Adam was driven from Eden, we should now be in a far more elevated condition physically, mentally, and morally. But while men deplore the fall of Adam, which has resulted in such unutterable woe, they disobey the express injunctions of God, as did Adam, although they have his experience to warn them from doing as he did in violating the law of Jehovah.

Kevin Paulson writes from Loma Linda, California.
Would that man had stopped falling with Adam. But there has been a succession of falls. 12 The fact that Sequeira equates sinful human nature with sin itself (pp. 11, 13) adds a new twist to contemporary Adventist discussions on the human nature of Christ. We noted at the beginning that Sequeira does teach, in harmony with Scripture and Ellen White, that Christ took fallen human nature during the incarnation (pp. 146–147, 154). But he claims that this sinful human nature was an actual part of the sin which Christ bore as our Sacrifice, and that He bore it not vicariously, but in actuality (pp. 42–44). Sequeira likewise insists that the salvation of all mankind at Calvary was not vicarious, but actual (pp. 42–43). Because he equates sinful nature with actual sin, Sequeira maintains that we must always say Christ took a sinful nature rather than say He had one—for to say the latter, he implies, would be to compromise His utter sinlessness (p. 44).

While it is true that Ellen White frequently uses the verb “took” to describe Jesus’ assumption of fallen humanity, she also says in at least one statement that He had fallen humanity. She writes: “Though He [Christ] had all the strength of passion of humanity, never did He yield to temptation to do one single thing which was not pure and elevating and ennobling.” 13 This assertion is clearly referring to temptations to impurity and baseness which arise from the lower passions, which this passage says Jesus “had” in His humanity.

Sequeira is right when he says that Jesus was made to be what He was originally not (pp. 43–44), but it is not only true of His assumption of fallen humanity; it is also true of His assumption of humanity in the broadest sense. Even if Christ had taken the unfallen nature of Adam, He still would have been made into something which He had not been before. But to insist, as Sequeira and others do, that it is wrong to say Christ “had” a sinful nature because it would mean He was not entirely sinless, is to embrace at least partly the unscriptural teaching that sin is involuntary.

3. Sequeira claims that because verses 13 and 14 of Romans 5 state that death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who had not sinned as did Adam, that Paul must be teaching that all humanity fell with Adam (p. 53). But again, Sequeira is unclear as to which death Paul is talking about. As we saw before, he says on the very next page (p. 54) that Paul is speaking here of the second death, while on the previous page (p. 52) he says Paul is talking about the first death. We repeat that it is ridiculous to view the physical death of a human being as evidence that all mankind sinned “in Adam,” unless we wish to say that animals die for the same reason.

It seems that verse 14, in contrast with verse 12, is talking about the first death, for it would surely contradict the inspired consensus to claim that anyone will suffer eternal death despite the absence of conscious rebellion.

4. Sequeira states that subsequent verses in Romans 5 make clear that Adam’s sin, not our personal sins, have brought judgment and condemnation to all humanity (p. 53). But to read these passages as stating that Adam and Christ respectively have made sin and salvation inevitable for anyone, is to read more into these verses than they actually say. This interpretation rests largely on supplied words from the King James Version. These words make it appear that the condemnation and salvation offered respectively by Adam and Christ have occurred in the past tense. The whole race was damned by Adam, so it is thought, and thus the whole race was pardoned by Christ. Thus the KJV in verse 18 speaks of how “judgment came” and the free gift came—both obviously in the past tense. But these words are supplied, and thus the KJV has them in italics. The RSV is more faithful to the text when it reads that “one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (emphasis supplied).

That these consequences are effective only through our choice to follow Adam’s or Christ’s example is obvious from the following verse, which states that “by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (verse 19). Notice that this verse is in the future tense (“many will be made righteous”). This rendering does not sound as if Calvary has already made everybody righteous. This verse seriously damages the notion that Adam and Christ have respectively damned and saved all men whether they like it or not.

While it is true that all human beings have chosen to sin (Romans 3:23), only a few will choose to repent of their sins and become righteous (Matthew 7:14). The “many” which Romans 5:19 says will be made righteous will still be a small number compared to the wicked majority, though Revelation does describe the saved as a “great multitude” (Revelation 7:9). In any case, it is clear that being made sinful and righteous involves a conscious choice to follow the respective courses of Adam and

To insist . . . that it is wrong to say Christ “had” a sinful nature because it would mean He was not entirely sinless, is to embrace at least partly the unscriptural teaching that sin is involuntary.

Christ. Using the RSV again, we read that Adam’s sin has led to condemnation for all, and Christ has made release from this condemnation available to all.

5. Sequeira’s fifth and final point on Romans 5 is one we have addressed already—that if we are saved because we choose to follow Christ’s example, we are contradicting Paul’s teaching that salvation is not by works (p. 53). And we have already shown from both Scripture and Ellen White that the reproduction of Christ’s obedience in Christian lives is not at all the works-righteousness Paul condemns.

Like many who hold a similar position, Sequeira refuses to say whether babies (or others) who die before accepting Christ will suffer the second death because of being born “in Adam.” He writes, “Every baby is born subjectively under the reign of sin, condemnation, and death because of Adam’s fall.” P. 61. “Thus the life we receive at birth is . . . a life that is condemned by the law. This means that the just demands of the law leave us facing nothing but eternal death (see John 3:36; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 20:14–15).” P. 63. Again Sequeira quotes texts which fail to support his position. In fact, one of these verses repeats the thought of an Ellen White statement we quoted earlier: 4

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon
Many do not realize that the doctrine of universal justification at Calvary is indistinguishable from the doctrine of a finished atonement at Calvary.

Christians, and proceed to develop their own form of infant baptism.

In summary, the theme of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 is simply this: Christ has replaced Adam as the Father of humanity, offering salvation to a race which has universally chosen to follow its ancestor in sin. Because of Christ, human beings have a second chance to prove their love and loyalty to God through obedience. See John 15:10. Had Christ not intervened in Eden and become “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8, KJV), Adam’s and Eve’s partaking of the forbidden fruit would have at once produced the divine sentence, that “in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” Genesis 2:17. Why were not our first parents annihilated at that moment? Because Jesus offered to take their punishment, together with the punishment of all their descendants who should choose to follow their example in sin.

Every man or woman who has ever lived thus owes his or her physical existence to the sacrifice of Jesus. Little wonder that Ellen White speaks of the cross as reflected in every water spring and stamped on every loaf of bread. This fact, at the bottom line, is what Christ has done for every human being. Not only has He provided sufficient power for all to be saved, He has also granted physical life—and thus the opportunity for eternal life—to a race which rightfully should never have existed. But while the cross of Christ

in Romans that “while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” Romans 5:10. Notice he does not say we were reconciled at the death of Jesus, but rather, by His death. The theme here is instrumental, not chronological. This point is clarified in 2 Corinthians 5, where Paul makes clear that the reconciliation God seeks was not finished at Calvary. We read that in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself. See 2 Corinthians 5:19. The word reconciling implies that the process is continuing and has not been finished, a point made even plainer by Paul’s invitation to his readers to “be reconciled to God.” Verse 20.

Another passage, also in 2 Corinthians 5, is used to support universal salvation at Calvary: “Because we are convinced that if one has died for all, therefore all have died.” 2 Corinthians 5:14. But is this verse saying that all have “legally” died with Christ and therefore received salvation? The passage does not say so. This verse must be read with Ephesians 2:1: “And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.” The reason Christ died for all is that all have received the eternal death sentence through their choice to sin. Human beings participate in Christ’s death only when they die to self and experience baptism. Romans 6:3-7.

The concept that all humanity was corporately condemned “in Adam” and corporately justified “in Christ” is the basis for one of Sequeira’s best-known themes—the “in-Christ” motif (pp. 33-35). The notion of corporate oneness has attracted many to Sequeira’s theology who have long sought to direct the church’s attention to the concept of corporate repentance—the identification even by godly individuals with the sins of an apostate people, as was done by Moses and Daniel (Exodus 32:32; Daniel 9:5-19). But to twist the idea of corporate solidarity into some form of universal salvation is to go beyond the words of Scripture. The Bible is very clear about what it means to be “in Christ”:

“Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The word “if” implies conditionality, as we noted before, clearly indicating that not all are “in Christ,” as Sequeira claims (p. 34), and that certain conditions must be met if one is in fact to be in Christ. The following verses make plain that to be “in Christ” and to have Christ dwelling in us are one and the same thing:

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.” John 15:5. “But whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in Him.” I John 2:5. “All who keep His commandments abide in Him, and He in them.” I John 4:15-16.

Clearly, the “in Christ” motif as taught in the New Testament includes only those who have accepted God’s transforming grace.

Many do not realize that the doctrine of universal justification at Calvary is indistinguishable from the doctrine of a finished atonement at Calvary. It is this doctrine which has led thousands of Adventists during the past fifteen years to discard their belief in total victory over sin, the investigative judgment, and the doctrinal authority of Ellen G. White. Consider the following statements:

“Christ now, I realized, was primarily my atonement for sin, and secondarily He was my example. . . . I was under no illusion now. I knew I could not equal Christ. Christ had done all the equaling necessary.”

“Hebrews knows nothing of an ‘extended’ atonement which drags on for 1800 years after the cross. . . . Every
translation of these verses makes it plain that the *cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement* by the Jewish high priest found its fulfillment in the cross of Christ, for on Calvary Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.97

"The finality of the Christ event in salvation history is inseparable from the finality of the apostolic witness and interpretation. A subsequent, supplementary, and doctrinally authoritative revelation is not necessary. It is neither anticipated nor allowed by the New Testament. The finality of the New Testament revelation is a necessary corollary of the finished work of Christ."98

Well might Brother Sequeira and his sympathizers recall the words of Santayana: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

**Assurance**

Few questions are quite as emotional in contemporary Adventism as the assurance of salvation. In many ways it is understandable, since the human heart craves security. Insurance companies know this fact, which is the reason they are among the wealthiest organizations in our society.

But as the victims of illness and natural disaster often learn, those who promise security do not always deliver. And the purveyors of spiritual security are frequently less reliable than their temporal counterparts. However appealing full assurance of salvation may be, we must bypass our emotions and test every theory presented by the written counsel of God.

Sequeira recounts in writing a story he often includes in his preaching—an encounter he had with an African Christian who claimed he was saved despite the beer on his breath (p. 155). Unfortunately, Sequeira fails to perceive the helplessness of his own theology against this kind of self-indulgent religion. When he makes the utterly audacious claim that "There is a world of difference between sinning under law and sinning under grace" (p. 165), that "stumbling under grace, falling into sin, does not deprive us of justification" (p. 166), how can he argue that an occasional beer or extramarital fling could not perhaps be included among the stumbles and sins committed "under grace"? This conundrum is especially a problem for Sequeira since he consistently stops short of saying that the sanctification of God's people will ever be perfect in this life—a point we will address shortly.

It makes no sense on the one hand to deny that "salvation depends to some degree on his or her [the Christian's] behavior" (p. 91), and then to speak of a necessary sanctified response (p. 30). Let us remember that for Sequeira, the behavior here described as without saving value includes not only works of legalism, but also the work of Christ in the believer (pp. 25, 32, 33, 170). Put simply, Sequeira teaches that sanctification saves no one. Add to this belief his refusal to affirm the completeness of the believer's sanctification here on earth, and one has all the ingredients of a religion in which believers inevitably gravitate toward eventual accommodation of their favorite sins.

It is truly difficult to harmonize this notion of "sinning under grace" with Paul's impassioned protest—"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Romans 6:15, KJV. King David was certainly under no illusion that his sin would deprive him of salvation. Why else would he have prayed, "Restore to me the joy of thy salvation"? Psalm 51:12. Ellen White is equally clear regarding the conditions for retaining justification:

"In order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul."99

**In order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.**

"It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained."100

Sequeira notwithstanding, according to the written counsel of God, any sinful choice will most assuredly deprive us of justification. Of course, the God who is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9) will do all in His power to bring us back to a spirit of repentance. God is not like the military drill instructor who vows to use "every means necessary, fair and unfair," to wash his cadets out of the training program. On the contrary, God wants us in heaven more than we want to get there. But the fact remains that Scripture promises no assurance which transcends the practical choices of our daily lives.

Neither the Bible nor Ellen White makes any distinction between choosing Christ and choosing obedience. The attempt to make this distinction forms the basis of many assurance theories in popular Christianity—and indeed, in contemporary Adventism. People want an assurance in which the choice for Christ overshadows the occasional lustful glance, the momentary loss of temper, the frequent lapse into gossip whispering. But the prophet declares, "However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act."11 Every action we take is our responsibility, and in every decision relative to the counsel of God, a decision is thereby made for or against God. However, the opportunity for repentance will always exist for the heart not sufficiently hardened against it, for the Lord desperately seeks our repentance. When probation closes, God will have granted sufficient light and grace to either fully convert or fully harden every heart.

The Bible does teach that we can know that we have eternal life. 1 John 5:13. But having eternal life, as described in the writings of John the apostle, refers to the newborn experience, not a finished salvation. As the apostle concludes the very chapter where the above verse is found, this point is clari-
guage. In the words of Jesus, “He who endures to the end will be saved.” Matthew 24:13.

One year ago I attended a series of meetings given by the author of Beyond Belief, in which he spoke of his years as a missionary in Africa and of how young people from the evangelical churches there were supposedly better able than Adventists to face persecution because they, unlike the Adventists, possessed full assurance of salvation. I advised Brother Sequeira to read The Great Controversy again. Those who have not accepted the biblical teaching that character perfection is essential to salvation have a false assurance. The saints during the time of trouble will be fearful that there are sins in their lives that are yet unrecognized, unconfessed and unforsaken. We read: “If they the saints] could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God’s holy name would be reproached. . . . So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance.”

The word “if” makes it clear that the saints at this time will not have full assurance, any more than Jesus did on the cross of Calvary, when He cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46. At the beginning of Part I of this series of articles we quoted Sequeira’s statement that “What Satan and the world did to Christ on the cross, they will do to us. This is the ‘offense of the cross’ that all true believers must endure” (p. 70). If so, we had best recall the utter absence of certainty with which Jesus confronted His final test. In this way the great time of trouble will test the faith of God’s last generation, thus making all the more splendid their ultimate triumph.

The contemporary Adventist obsession with assurance, borrowed largely from Protestant evangelicals, represents a gross betrayal of the spirit of Adventism and a detraction from the future glory she will offer her Lord.

Perfection and the Final Conflict

While Sequeira affirms the need for God’s people to reflect the image of Jesus (pp. 71, 173), we have noted already that he stops short of affirming the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy truth that this reflection will be perfect. 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Peter 2:21-22; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 3:3, 7; Revelation 21:4-5. In fact, Sequeira states quite clearly that “sanctification is not perfection” (p. 109), thereby contradicting the following inspired statements:

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23, KJV.

Because he fails to define this much-abused term, he leaves himself wide open to the perception that he embraces the unscriptural teaching that sinless living is impossible before Jesus comes.

Sequeira promotes the utterly strange concept that the church will fully reflect Jesus’ character corporately, but not individually. He writes, “No individual member can fully display Christ completely for the simple reason that no individual member is the total body of Christ. Only

The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another.

“What is sanctification? It is to give one’s self wholly and without reserve—soul, body and spirit—to God; to deal justly; to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; to know and to do the will of God without regard to self or self-interest; to be heavenly-minded, pure, unforsaken, holy, and without spot or stain.”

“Sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God.”

Sequeira speaks of the belief that “Christ became a man to prove that men and women can keep God’s law” (p. 41), and states that “the problem with this answer is that we cannot explicitly substantiate it from Scripture.” Ibid. But we can. What else can the following verses mean?

“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:3-4.

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” 1 Peter 2:21-22, KJV.

“And in their [the saints’] mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:5, KJV.

Sequeira speaks of the “heresy of perfectionism,” both in his book (p. 41) and in a recent letter to the Adventist Review. Through the church as a whole, living in perfect coordination and conformity to the direction of the Holy Spirit, can the life of Christ be fully displayed” (pp. 152-153). The unbeliever who encounters an individual Christian who abuses his children or deals dishonestly in business can console himself that, while the Christian he happened to meet was not perfect, the church as a corporate body is. The big problem with this theory is that, as one contemporary gospel song says, “You and I are the only Jesus some will ever see.” Our friends and neighbors cannot possibly observe the church as a whole, but they can certainly see us as individuals. Ellen White is clear that the perfection God requires of His people is indeed an individual matter:

“No one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us.”

Following this notion of corporate perfection even further, Sequeira makes an even more extreme statement, declaring that “Christ will never take us to heaven as individuals, but only as members of His church” (p. 115). Ellen White disagrees decisively:

“The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in
judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”

Not only is perfect obedience required of each of us, it is also a fundamental part of our salvation. The first reference to salvation in the New Testament makes clear what biblical salvation is: “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21. We cannot be saved from our sins unless, through divine power, we stop committing them. No wonder the modern prophet tells us:

“Christ came to this world and lived a life of perfect obedience, that men and women, through His grace, might also live lives of perfect obedience. This is necessary to their salvation.”

In his final chapter, Sequeira repeats another popular but confusing theory in contemporary Adventism—the notion that salvation by faith versus salvation by works will be the great issue in the final conflict. Pp. 182, 185. Nowhere does Inspiration use this terminology to define the issues of the last days. Ellen White repeatedly insists that the central issue in the great controversy is over whether God’s law can in fact be obeyed. The only reason Satan uses legalism to tempt a certain class is that he knows the end result will be disobedience to God’s law. We can be sure that Satan, who thoroughly despises the law of God, receives no great thrill watching people pay attention to its precepts. The legalistic attention to lawkeeping serves Satan’s purpose only because the end result is law-breaking. Ellen White points out this fact as the basic reason the devil tempted the Jews along these lines. The bottom line of the great controversy always has been, and always will be, obedience to the divine law. Thus Ellen White defines the issues in the final conflict:

“The warfare against God’s law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed, and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.”

Where does she say the dividing line will be drawn? Between faith and works? No, between obedience and disobedience. While some will claim that legalism is the bottom line of all disobedience (though Inspiration never says so), the language Ellen White uses when discussing legalism is very different from the language she uses when discussing laxity and carelessness. She speaks of how the Papacy appeals to “two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins.”

Notice the different language she uses in describing the two groups. Ellen White is equally clear that the latter group will be by far the dominant one among God’s professed people at the end of time. Describing those who will be shaken out, she speaks of “those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs,” the “careless and indifferent,” those “not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth,” those “who have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth . . . uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit.”

Notice she does not speak in this context of those who “have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa,” or who are trying to earn their way to heaven through excessive obedience to obedience. Nowhere does Scripture or Ellen White describe such persons as the primary sources of apostasy in the church at the close of time.

But overemphasizing the danger of legalism is nothing compared to misunderstanding what legalism is. This tactic is the basis of Sequeira’s theological problems. By teaching that salvation by sanctified obedience is the same as salvation by works (p. 25), he adds yet another contribution to the contemporary Adventist “righteousness by faith” obsession, which begins by misunderstanding the problem grace seeks to correct.

Instead of recognizing that legalism is obedience wrongly motivated, we have sidestepped the motivation issue and concluded that we were simply preaching the law too much. If we would only emphasize Jesus, His love, and the believer’s relationship with Him, without the intimidating clarity of law and doctrine, we assumed it would eventually develop an interest in the law and the doctrines. Sadly, just the opposite has happened. Attempts to bring revival through this approach have repeatedly fallen flat, since no reformation can possibly result from de-emphasizing the law. The result instead has been widespread personal and institutional disregard for the written counsel of God. The simple fact is that Sequeira’s theology renders the church helpless against apostasy, for it makes no sense to sound the call to reform and risk dividing the church over behavior—which, even when sanctified, has no saving value. P. 170.

In short, Jack Sequeira’s book is a dangerous document, a mingling of incompatible concepts, one more promotion of a passive salvation whose logical antipathy to the pillars of our faith should have caused us to uproot it from our ranks long ago. Some have described Sequeira’s theology as a “third force” in contemporary Adventism, an alternative to the polarized forces of historic and evangelical theology. But there is no third option. Our prophet is clear: “Divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed.” There is no room for a third. Either we will stand with those in whom God’s grace will produce sinless obedience here and now, or we will stand with those who employ God’s grace as a sacrilegious covering for occasional sin. The choice is ours. On which side will we stand?

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Should God Say Thank You?

This article deals with the neglected parable. Though it is in the very heart of the gospels (Luke 17), it seems to be hardly noticed. I have never read an article about it. I have never heard it referred to in a sermon, other than one that I preached myself. This neglect is a loss, for the parable contains a profound and basic truth providing the key to understanding certain other truths that we sometimes find perplexing, such as “We are saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8) and judged by works (Revelation 20:12–13),” and “While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.” Selected Messages, book 1, 377.

Let us read the parable as it was given by Jesus in Luke 17:7–10: “But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Dost he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”

In her inspired commentary on this passage, Ellen White points out two reasons why God need not say Thank you for any of our good works.

First, we are only doing our duty for which we have already been abundantly paid; and second, we are performing our good works only in strength supplied by God. Notice the clarity of this statement found in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1122:

“Our works in and of themselves have no merit. When we have done all that it is possible for us to do, we are to count ourselves as unprofitable servants. We deserve no thanks from God. We have done only what it was our duty to do, and our works could not have been performed in the strength of our own sinful natures.” Emphasis supplied.

She adds in Testimonies, vol. 1, 167: “The very best you can do will not merit the favor of God.”

And notice the exquisite balance and clarity of this application: “Will any refuse Him that which, though it may be given without merit, cannot be denied without ruin?” Testimonies, vol 6, 481.

“It may be given without merit.” Our good works are a debt that we owe to God and to our neighbor. They have already been more than paid for by the death of Christ on the cross. We could not perform them at all if God did not provide the strength. Self-congratulation, then, is not appropriate. Our debt is far greater than the total of all of our good works. We have earned no merit, for God owes us no gratitude. We cannot point to our good works as an evidence that God should save us.

“It cannot be denied without ruin.” This is simply another way of saying that we cannot be saved without works. Is it logical? Yes, indeed. Based upon a principle that we all practice daily, the principle of the measurement of forces.

A force cannot be measured directly by ascertaining its length, width, and depth—its mass or its weight. It can only be measured by the work that it does.

We utilize forces very frequently, such as heat, light, air pressure, water pressure,

Ralph Larson, a retired pastor, last served as chairman of the Church and Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Far East.

Ralph Larson
vacuum, gravity, electricity, and so forth. And we could not get along with these forces if we had no way to measure them. Fortunately, forces can be measured with precise accuracy by letting them do some work. We let electric light bulbs of various sizes test voltage. We let air pressure thrust a calibrated rod out of a tube to check our tires. We let heat elevate mercury in a thermometer to check our temperature. Probably the most common and familiar application of this principle is a gauge or dial across which a needle is moved by a force. We have learned to trust the needle.

The truck driver, who uses the force of air pressure to stop the huge vehicle that he steers down the highway, places full confidence in the tiny needle in the gauge to the left of his steering wheel, which tells him how many pounds of air pressure he has in reserve. We trust the needle that records the temperature in our houses, and the mercury column that records our body temperatures to fractions of degrees. We have learned that they are trustworthy. Works are accurately measurements of forces, including the force of faith.

Would a truck driver pull his rig out onto the highway if his air-pressure gauge indicated only a few pounds of pressure? Indeed not. Is it because he depends upon the gauge to stop his truck? Of course not.

The gauge cannot stop the truck, but it does testify to the life-saving quality of the truck’s braking system. The gauge on the wall of our house cannot heat the house, but it testifies to the quality of our heating system. The works that we perform cannot save us, but they can, and must, testify to the saving quality of our faith.

“A faith that is not sustained by works is worthless.” Bible Training School, June 1, 1815.

“Saving faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul.” Signs of the Times, June 16, 1890.

“That faith, and that alone, which cleanses the soul temple, is the genuine faith.” Ibid., February 16, 1890.

“We are to be judged according to our works.”

“Those who claim that faith alone will save them, are trusting to a rope of sand; for faith is made perfect by good works.” Review and Herald, April 13, 1911.

“Unless we have this faith that works, it is of no advantage to us.” In Heavenly Places, 118.

“A living faith in Christ will bring every action of the life and every emotion of the soul into harmony with God’s truth and righteousness.” Lift Him Up, 188.

“Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith.” Selected Messages, book 1, 397.

All of these are simply echoes of James 2:26: “Faith without works is dead.”

A dead faith is obviously not a saving faith. A saving faith always produces good works. That is why it is perfectly logical to say that while we cannot be saved by works, neither can we be saved without works. If the works are not there, the faith is deficient and is not the real thing.

It will be helpful also to clarify in our minds the difference between positive qualifications and negative disqualifications. They are not the same and should not be confused one with another.

Suppose I see you loading suitcases into your car and ask where you are going. “To New York City,” you reply.

But as I look at your car I notice that one wheel is missing. “You will never get there with only three wheels on your car,” I point out. You thank me and bolt on the fourth wheel, thus eliminating a negative disqualification.

Just then your wife comes out the door and you say to her, “Honey, Ralph says we can’t fail to reach New York City now because we have four wheels on the car.”

Is that what I said? Hardly. I only pointed out a negative disqualification. I said nothing at all about such positive qualifications as fuel, maps, and so on.

A moment’s reflection will reveal that the Ten Commandments deal primarily with negative disqualifications, not positive qualifications. You cannot marry your way into the kingdom of God, but you can marry your way out. You cannot talk your way into the kingdom of God, but you can talk your way out. You cannot finance your way into the kingdom of God, but you can finance your way out. You cannot say to God, “I have not stolen, nor lied, nor committed adultery.

Therefore, I am fully qualified for salvation. You have to save me.”

God will answer, “It was only by My grace that you obeyed the commandments, and it is only by My grace that you will enter the kingdom of God. I am not a debtor to you. I do not owe you anything.”

Persons who have not grasped these basic principles are prone to a variety of errors. Perhaps the most common and the most dangerous of these errors is the conclusion that if we cannot be saved by works, it follows that works have no place in the plan of salvation. This concept is

“God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 80.

“The deeper the night for God’s people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ Song of Solomon 6:10.” Ibid., 81–82.

Some people will not be deceived by the errors around them and will be unmoved by the apostasies that challenge them. Whether the error be crude and vulgar or clothed in the charming garb of philosophical sophistries, they will simply test it by the Word of God and continue steadfastly on their way, letting the purity of their saving faith be demonstrated in their Christlike living.

“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.” Malachi 3: 17–18. □

Editorial
Continued from 2
ally excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and who murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God’s sealing approval. They will fall in the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons. Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done’ (Ezekiel 9:4) in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying. Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 267.

Eli’s sin was that he did not rebuke the evils committed by his sons and by the people. As a result he lost eternal life. He was a good man. He loved righteousness and hated evil. But he could not bring himself to warn the people, and to rebuke sin in others. Our prophet tells us the sad story:

“Eli was a good man, pure in morals; but he was too indulgent. He incurred the displeasure of God because he did not strengthen the weak points in his character. He did not want to hurt the feelings of anyone and had not the moral courage to rebuke and reprove sin. His sons were vile men; yet he did not remove them from their position of trust. These sons profaned the house of God. He knew this, and felt sad in consequence of it, for he loved purity and righteousness: but he had not sufficient moral force to suppress the evil. He loved peace and harmony, and became more and more insensible to impurity and crime. But the great God takes the matter in hand Himself. When the rebuke falls upon him, through the instrumentality of a child, he accepts it, feeling that it is what he deserves. He does not show any resentment toward Samuel, the messenger of God; he loves him as he has done, but condemns himself.

“The guilty sons of Eli were slain in battle. He could endure to hear that his sons were slain, but he could not bear the news that the ark of God was taken. He knew that his sin of neglect in failing to stand for the right and restrain wrong had at last deprived Israel of her strength and glory. The pallor of death came upon his face, and he fell backward and died.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 516.

“Christ’s instruction as to the treatment of the erring repeats in more specific form the teaching given to Israel through Moses: ‘Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, that thou bear not sin for him.’ Leviticus 19:17, margin. That is, if one neglects the duty Christ has enjoined, of trying to restore those who are in error and sin, he becomes a partaker in the sin. For evils that we might have checked, we are just as responsible as if we were guilty of the acts ourselves.

“But it is to the wrongdoer himself that we are to present the wrong. We are not to make it a matter of comment and criticism among ourselves; nor even after it is told to the church, are we at liberty to repeat it to others. A knowledge of the faults of Christians will be only a cause of stumbling to the unbelieving world; and by dwelling upon these things, we ourselves can receive only harm; for it is by believing that we become changed. While we seek to correct the errors of a brother, the Spirit of Christ will lead us to shield him, as far as possible, from the criticism of even his own brethren, and how much more from the censure of the unbelieving world. We ourselves are erring, and need Christ’s pity and forgiveness, and just as we wish Him to deal with us, He bids us deal with one another.

“Whosoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 18:18. You are acting as the ambassadors of heaven, and the issues of your work are for eternity.” The Desire of Ages, 441–442.

Thus God tells us clearly through His prophet that we are responsible for the sins of others, both in the church and in the home, if we fail to do all in our power to check their wrongdoings.

If we do not, in the love of Christ, warn and rebuke sin then we too become guilty, and, like Eli, we will lose our souls for eternity. What a tragedy! Let us remember that we cannot warn or rebuke sin in others unless, through the Spirit’s power, we are living in harmony with all known truth, and are willing to be made willing to be obedient, and to love God supremely and others as ourselves.

Ron Spear, EDITOR
Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

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TUDY to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” Isaiah 2:22.

Our counsel is clear. We are not to rely on man for our understanding of spiritual matters. We can listen to sermons, we can read articles, we can watch videos; but in the final analysis we must study for ourselves the Word of God in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy for true understanding in regard to our personal walk with God.

In the days of the apostles, there were people who sought to put their reliance and confidence in men. Some would say that they were followers of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas. Paul rebuked them by pointing out that Christ is not divided. Today we have people following the conference, or this independent ministry or that independent ministry. They accept as correct whatever is said by the leaders they follow without themselves studying the issues, using the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The truth is, these persons need to be followers “of Christ” (see 1 Corinthians 1:12-13), or they will be lost.

Understanding how God has led His people in the past and reviewing the mistakes made by those who previously have gone astray can be quite instructive. We are told that many things recorded from the past are for the admonition of those “upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11. In its past history the Seventh-day Adventist Church had what is often referred to as “the Alpha of apostasy.” Many of us know that this Alpha involved John Harvey Kellogg and his writings on pantheism—which might be correlated to modern-day spiritualism. Also involved with Kellogg was Albion Ballenger with his attack on the sanctuary doctrine. Ballenger’s teachings might be correlated to the modern-day attack on the sanctuary by Desmond Ford and others.

What many Seventh-day Adventists do not realize is that a third person was eventually involved with Kellogg. This person was A.T. Jones. Ellen White said of him in July 1906, that he was following the same course as John Harvey Kellogg. She continued concerning the course of A.T. Jones by stating: “I have before me such a revival of the first great apostasy in the heavenly courts, that I am bowed down with an agony that can not be expressed.” Manuscript Release, No. 185. Interestingly, one of the themes of A.T. Jones, as he began to draw away from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was the question, “What is the church?” All emphases supplied unless otherwise noted.

Brother Jones spoke against the concept of the “visible” and the “invisible” church. He said that it is only a fallacy of spiritually blind men to argue since Pentecost about the “visible” and the “invisible” head of the church, or about the “visible” and the “invisible” church. See Lessons From the Reformation, 148. As we will see, this statement is a mixture of truth and error.

The Roman Catholic Church has taught for many years that there is an invisible spiritual head and a visible spiritual head of their church—Christ and the pope—and that these have equal authority. This concept definitely is not biblical, for we are told in Ephesians 4:4-6: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” We clearly believe that there is only one spiritual head of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, who is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Ellen White states in Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1117: “The Lord God of heaven is our Leader. He is a leader whom we can safely follow; for He never makes a mistake. Let us honor God and His Son Jesus Christ, through whom He communicates with the world. It was

Clark Floyd
Christ who gave to Moses the instruction that He gave to the children of Israel. It was Christ who delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Moses and Aaron were the visible leaders of the people. To Moses instruction was given by their invisible Leader, to be repeated to them." See also The Signs of the Times, September 9, 1880; The Youth's Instructor, December 13, 1900; Patriarchs and Prophets, 463.

Ellen White further states in Testimonies, vol. 5, 553: "God wants as perfect work as it is possible for human beings to do. It is a dishonor to sacred truth and its Author to do His work in any other way. I saw that unless the workers in our institutions were subject to the authority of God, there would be a lack of harmony and unity of action among them. If all will obey His directions, the Lord will stand as the invisible Commander; but there must also be a visible head who fears God."

The distinction between this statement of Ellen White and the understanding of the Roman Catholic Church is that she is here speaking of a visible leader to help carry the work forward, not a visible spiritual leader who stands in the place of Jesus. As Protestants and Seventh-day Adventists, we recognize the priesthood of all believers, and that Jesus Christ is our one and only High Priest and Mediator before God.

The History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff, vol. VIII, 458, states: "The Reformers [not the Roman Catholics] introduced the terminology 'visible' and 'invisible' Church. By this they did not mean two distinct and separate Churches, but rather two classes of Christians within the same outward communion. The invisible Church is in the visible Church, as the soul is in the body, or the kernel in the shell, but God only knows with a certainty who belong to the invisible Church and will ultimately be saved; and in this sense His true children are invisible, that is, not certainly recognizable and known to men. We may object to the terminology, but the distinction is real and important. . . . Zwingli first introduced both terms. He meant by the 'visible' Church the community of all who bear the Christian name, by the 'invisible' Church the totality of true believers of all ages."

In The Developments of Roman Catholicism by John Bain, 1908, 94–95, we read: "One of the most important distinctions drawn by theologians is that between the visible and the invisible Church. By the visible Church is meant the outward organization, the membership of which is indicated by outward adherence to the visible ecclesiastical body. The invisible Church is the body of those who are real believers in Christ, who have been regenerated by the power of His Spirit, and are being prepared by the Spirit for the presence of God above . . . . Now this distinction the Church of Rome refuses to draw, and claims that all are in the Church who have been received into its membership by baptism, and all others are outside of the Church and of salvation."

Read Luke 17:20–21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." When the kingdom of God is set up in the heart of the believer, it is visible only to God, for it is established by faith, and "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. On the other hand, in Romans 9:6, we read, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Though many make the claim of belonging to God and are very visible, again only God can see the heart, which is wholly invisible to man. Only He can know whether a member of the visible church body is also one of the true and the faithful of all ages, who compose the invisible church of God.

As further support for the concept of the visible and invisible aspects of God's church, consider the parables of the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, and the gospel net. Finally, we have the statement in 2 Timothy 2:19–20: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."

Ellen White, in commenting on this verse, says: "The 'great house' represents the church. In the church will be found the vile as well as the precious. The net cast into the sea gathers both good and bad." Review and Herald, February 5, 1901.

"And let us thank God that the Master has His hidden [invisible] ones whose value may not be recognized by the world, but whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. The Lord knoweth
There are precious ones now hidden [invisible] who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven but do not see the stars [they are invisible to us]. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

She states that the testing time will come when the mark of the beast will be urged upon every soul. "In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church." Ibid., 81.

The concepts of the visible and the invisible church are definitely in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Why then do some men miss these concepts? Why do they, in fact, seek to criticize those who believe and teach them? The answer is that they have used Lessons From the Reformation by A.T. Jones as part of their source material. This book clearly speaks against the idea of a visible and an invisible aspect to the church. Its author sought to answer the question What is the church? and he spoke in his day (the early 1900s) against the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In view of this fact, let us take a closer look at the experience of A.T. Jones so that we may determine the safety of using material provided by him in 1913, as authoritative. In mid-1907 Jones' Seventh-day Adventist ministerial credentials were withdrawn. In 1909 he was removed from church membership. "Jones' apostasy consisted of 1) sowing seeds of dissatisfaction among the church members, 2) then advocating separation from the systems of Babylon (any church organization, including the Adventist Church), and 3) encouraging congregationalism. It is no wonder that people who have been hurt by or dissociated from the church hold very strongly to Jones' later writings." A.T. Jones and the Church, Our Firm Foundation, vol. 7, No. 11, page 7, Jeff Reich.

Over a period of years, Ellen White worked in vain... No longer confine your efforts to one place. ... Let there be a renunciation of self to God." Manuscript Release, No. 185. Note: Ellen White was seeking to have Elder Jones remove himself from Battle Creek and the influence of John Harvey Kellogg.

2. December 29, 1905—a letter to Brother Amadon: "I send no more testimonies to be read to the church to A.T. Jones, for I have evidence that a work will have to be done for him before the Lord will accept his service. God has given him warnings which he has repudiated, and I am deeply grieved that he has so little spiritual eyesight." Ibid.

3. March 12, 1906—A letter to Brother and Sister Farnsworth: "You may be surprised to hear the words that you have heard from Elder A.T. Jones; but I am not at all surprised. This is the development of the man when the spirit that is counter to the Spirit of God comes upon him. ... The Lord accepts no such demonstrations of bitterness. ... Read in my books, Patriarchs and Prophets and The Great Controversy, the story of the first great apostasy [the apostasy of Satan in heaven]. History is being repeated and will be repeated. Read them, and understand." Ibid.

4. April 2, 1906—a letter to Brother and Sister Paulson: "Before Elder A.T. Jones went to Battle Creek, he told me that he would be guarded. I met him shortly before he left, and told him that in vision I had seen him under the influence of Dr. Kellogg. Fine threads were being
woven around him, till he was being bound hand and foot, and his mind and his senses were becoming captivated... He did not believe the warning given." Ibid.

5. June 15, 1906—a letter to Brother and Sister Haskell: "Dr. Kellogg controls the voice of Elder A.T. Jones, and will use him as his mouthpiece." Ibid.

6. July 3, 1906—a letter to Elder A.T. Jones: "Again and again your case has been presented before me... Since the Berrien Springs meeting, your attitude and the attitude of several others has grieved the Spirit of God. You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting..."

"Brother Jones, I have a message for you. In many respects you are a weak man. If I were to write out all that has been revealed to me of your weakness, and of the developments of your work that have not been in accordance with the course of a true Christian, the representation would not be pleasing. This may have to be done if you continue to justify yourself in a course of apostasy." Ibid.

7. July 27, 1906—a letter to Brother and Sister Kress: "My heart was filled with sorrow because of the course that J.H. Kellogg is following. And A.T. Jones is following the same course and voicing the same sentiments, with a most determined spirit. When a realization of this comes over me, with such force, great sorrow fills my soul. I have before me such a revival of the first great apostasy in

The Church Today

The visible church
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Distinct, visible denominational boundaries
Conditional promises
Advanced light in Medical Missionary Work
Education Reforms and Practices
SACRED ORACLES GIVEN TO SDA
Spirit of Prophecy manifest in midst
Given the Law, the Sabbath, the symbolic service of the sanctuary

The invisible church
Faithful Souls
No visible distinction by denominational membership
Majority are still in Babylon
Final testing truth does not originate here
No prophetic symbols
No sacred oracles
Faithful to all the light they have.

Faithful souls in SDA Church
Invisible in the visible

given heed to seducing spirits. He knows not what manner of spirit he is of." Manuscript Release, No. 185.

12. November 19, 1911—a letter to A.T. Jones: "Your lips have uttered perverse things. You have denied the clear light of truth, and have linked up with strange elements... The question is, Do you think you can still hold your membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and go on hurting the influence of this people by the tracts that you publish? You have done a cruel work... I think you have never yet been thoroughly converted... Scenes have been presented to me in which I have heard you use rough, harsh language, coarse and denunciatory. Close beside you stood the father of lies, insinuating with his satanic energy, and you uttered words of which you should ever be ashamed...

"He [A.T. Jones] has set himself in direct opposition to the work. The Lord laid out for him, and has gone to desperate lengths in walking and working in defiance of light... The message given me to bear concerning him is, If he does not truly repent, let him alone, I do not advise that our people accept him as a safe teacher." Ibid.

Brothers and sisters, plain evidence is given in this article, and is available from other sources as well. The concept of there being both a visible and an invisible aspect to the church is biblical. It was first presented by the Reformers, not by the Roman Catholic Church. The source heavily relied upon by those speaking against this concept is not the Bible, but A.T. Jones' book, written after he had "set himself in direct opposition to the work the Lord had laid out for him."

And where will relying upon this book lead its advocates? They would do well to consider the tragic results in the life of Brother A.T. Jones, when he allowed a bitter and defiant spirit to harden his mind on an erroneous position he came to hold regarding the church. Concerning the subject of What Is the Church? we must not be followers of any one person or group, for it is dangerous to the soul.

Read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy for yourselves and follow the counsels therein. Spend time on your knees with the Lord in prayer. Know why you believe what you believe and have a "Thus saith the Lord" to support it. May God thus guide you safely into His kingdom, is my prayer. □
Winter 1994
Week of Prayer

Staff and guests of Hope International received a tremendous blessing as Colin Standish and Ralph Larson presented our first Week of Prayer for 1994. We wish to share these blessings with you through the video and/or the audio tapes listed below.

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Complete set:
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