**STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

We the undersigned affirm that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon. It is therefore necessary to leave. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Rev. 18:4

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<td>A. W. Stanton</td>
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<td>V. T. Houteff</td>
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<td>L. R. Conradi</td>
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**Why Are These Men Wrong? See Page 4**
SOME have not the knowledge of, or experience of, God which is righteousness. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." 1 Corinthians 15:34. The Moffat translation puts it this way: "Regain your sober senses and avoid sin, for some of you—and I say this to your shame—some of you are insensible to God." The RSV translates it: "Come to your right mind, and sin no more, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame." When Paul tells us to awake, it means that some are asleep, and if we are asleep our understanding of the righteousness of God is defective.

God’s great plan for the salvation of the human race is the everlasting gospel, first given to Adam and Eve after they sinned, and given to every generation thereafter.

Sin is a destroyer. Just one sin forced the perfect pair, Adam and Eve, from their garden home. Just one sin unconfessed and unforsaken will keep a person from returning. Why? we may ask. Because God must be 100 percent sure of our characters; He must be certain that we will not start another revolution. "None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality." Testimonies, vol. 2, 505.

Remember, Lucifer started the sin problem with only a one percent rebellion, which became in him a 100 percent rebellion. This rebellion started a war in heaven which eventually led to the Fall on earth of our first parents. God must be sure that after we have lived 100 billion years in eternity, we will not start another revolt. Sin will never rise up again. See Nahum 1:9. The only way He can be sure is by seeing that the character of Christ has been perfectly reproduced in the redeemed. Rebellion is fully conquered by the daily surrender of our will to Jesus. See Steps to Christ, 47.

We must each day be born again in our love for righteousness, or we will never see the kingdom. Listen to Jesus speaking to Nicodemus: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:1–3. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16. Disobedience to known truth places an individual in a perilous unsaved position, outside of justification and sanctification. One compromise demands another compromise, until the sinner finally becomes comfortable with sin. Compromise eventually places the sinner in a neutral state, and neutrality is an abhorrent crime against God.

In the days of Elijah, the church had committed this very crime against God. It had become neutral. Even the 7,000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal were unwilling to be counted on the side of truth. They were silent, but God saw them and numbered them.

"What astonishing deception and fearful blindness had, like a dark cloud, covered Israel! This blindness and apostasy had not closed about them suddenly; it had come upon them gradually as they had not heeded the word of rebuke and warning which the Lord had sent to them because of their pride and their sins. And now, in this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and the apostate king, they remained neutral. If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God." Testimonies, vol. 3, 280–281.

"Christ’s followers have no right to stand on neutral ground. There is more hope for an open enemy, than one who is neutral." Review and Herald, February 25, 1902.

"The testimonies will not be hindered. The words of rebuke and warning, the plain ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ will come from God’s appointed agencies; for the words do not originate with the human instrument; they are from God, who appointed them their work. If a suit is instituted in earthly tribunals, and God suffers it to come to trial, it is that His own name may be glorified. But a woe will be upon the man who gives himself to do this work. God reads the motives, whatever they may be. I pray that the Lord will teach our brethren to be straightforward, and make no compromise in the matter. The cause of God has been bruised and wounded by any such men connecting with it, and the sooner they are separated from it, the better.

"God calls for men of decided fidelity. He has no use in an emergency for two-sided men. He wants men who will lay their hand upon a wrong work and say, ‘This is not according to the will of God.’ " Selected Messages, book 2, 153.

God calls on all of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, laity, pastors, leaders, to awake to righteousness and sin not. The Holy Spirit will then teach us righteousness. We will stand justified and sanctified each day by the Holy Spirit’s power. Then it can be said of us in heaven that we are complete in Jesus Christ, not because of what we have done, but because of what we have allowed grace to do in us each day.

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

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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.
Weighed in the Balances: Found Wanting?

If ever there was an apostate nation, it was Israel. But Israel was the chosen nation of God, a people set apart to be God's representatives. They were the "fewest of all people" when they were chosen, but God intended to use them as His church upon earth to be a witness to the surrounding nations. See Deuteronomy 7:6-7. If Israel would be obedient to all of God's commandments, they would realize great blessings, but if not, they would suffer curses. See Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15.

But no matter which choice they made, the sacred oracles of God were to be preserved through the Jews. God's commandments were given in written form to them at the beginning of their journey to "the Promised Land." They were given the symbolic services contained within the sanctuary system. Most of the prophets, and thus the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, were to come through these people, as was also the Messiah. See Romans 9:5. And Jesus said of them when speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, "Salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22. The Sabbath as appointed in Eden was to be a distinct part of their service, as a sign of their belonging to the God of creation. Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

The Jewish nation failed miserably overall, even though they had a few high points along their journey. From the beginning they murmured against Moses, and they even complained about the food from heaven which God provided. See Numbers 21:5. "And they built the high places of Baal...to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I [God] commanded them not [see Leviticus 18:21], neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." Jeremiah 32:35.

They allowed false prophets, who spoke heresy among them. See Ezekiel 13:2, 8-10. "Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem." 2 Chronicles 36:14. Abomination after abomination was committed by the professed people of God (see Ezekiel 8:7-18), but God did not cast them off for hundreds of years. They often suffered the consequences of their disobedience and sins, but God did not abandon them simply because of apostasy. "For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." Jeremiah 51:5.

Even when Jesus walked the earth and directed His disciples, He said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 10:5-6. And Daniel 9:24 tells us that the probation of the Jews lingered on even after the advent and death of Jesus, although He did pronounce their house desolate while He was still alive. See Matthew 23:38; Review and Herald, March 10, 1896, paragraph 2; Christ's Object Lessons, 218.

Why did God have such great patience with the apostasy of these people? Why were they permitted to preserve the oracles of God as contained in the Old Testament ("What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Romans 3:1-2.) His purpose was also to preserve the line through which the Messiah was prophesied to come (see Romans 9:5; 1:1-3). He also gave them the opportunity to have full knowledge of the character of God.
through Jesus' personal presence among them upon this earth. Jesus was the substance of all their prophetic symbols; everything pointed to Him. What fuller revelation of light could have been given?

"The Jews had exalted the forms and ceremonies and had lost sight of their object. The traditions, maxims, and enactments of men hid from them the lessons which God intended to convey. These maxims and traditions became an obstacle to their understanding and practice of their religion. And when the reality came, in the person of Christ, they did not recognize in Him the fulfillment of all their types, the substance of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. They rejected the antitype, and clung to their types and useless ceremonies."  

*Christ's Object Lessons*, 34–35.

The apostolic church, which was formed on the ruins of the Jewish church by the disciples of Christ, was constantly under the threat of persecution, first from the Jews and the Romans, and finally from the Catholic Church. As a result, God's true church, consisting of many separate bodies of believers throughout different parts of the world, withdrew into the wilderness for a time and times and the dividing of time—1260 years. See Daniel 7:25 and The Great Controversy, 681, Appendix on "Prophetic Dates."

Then at the end of this period of prophetic time God raised up another people whose purpose was to prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus, just as the Jews were to prepare the world for His first coming. To these people were to be entrusted certain oracles, for through them the commandments of God were again to be brought to the front, and the true Sabbath was again to be exalted. The symbolic services of the sanctuary were to be understood and taught along with Christ's priestly ministry. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 were to be proclaimed, and the Spirit of Prophecy was to be manifest in their midst.

"We want to understand the time in which we live. We do not half understand it. We do not half take it in. My heart trembles in me when I think of what a foe we have to meet, and how poorly we are prepared to meet him. The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ—how the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jew, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God's servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 406. All emphasis supplied.

And what is our condition today? "The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The Testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has

1845—"My lot seemed hard. Discouragements pressed heavily upon me; and the condition of God's people so filled me with anguish that for two weeks I was prostrated with sickness." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 67.

1859—"I was shown the awful fact that Satan and his angels have had more to do with the management of the property of God's professed people than the Lord has." Ibid., 199.

1862—"I am alarmed for the people of God who profess to believe solemn, important truth, for I know that many of them are not converted nor sanctified

If apostasy and the lack of spiritual closeness to God were good reasons for abandoning the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it should have been the thing to do very early in the church's formative years.

spoken to you. *Light has been shining from His word and from the Testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded.* The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 217.

In light of this counsel, should we now separate ourselves from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, either physically or emotionally? When we have done so, could we then justly claiming that our group is the true continuation of God's movement? Should we call the Seventh-day Adventist Church which became organized in 1863, "Babylon"? Should we call people out of her ranks and form a new group, a new church?

If we base our answer on the apostasy and worldliness found within the church and its institutions because of disobedience to the counsels of God as contained within the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, we will be too late. We might have joined those who separated years ago. But if we had done that we ourselves would have been in conflict with the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy. If apostasy and the lack of spiritual closeness to God were good reasons for abandoning the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it should have been the thing to do very early in the church's formative years. Notice the following statements from Ellen White in regard to the condition of the church at that time:

through it. Men can hear and acknowledge the whole truth, and yet know nothing of the power of godliness." Ibid., 262.

1865—"God's people, as a general thing, are worldly-minded and have departed from the simplicity of the gospel."


1868—"Not one in twenty of those who have a good standing with Seventh-day Adventists is living out the self-sacrificing principles of the Word of God." *Ibid.*, 632.

1870—"Right here in this church, corruption is teeming on every hand. Now and then there is a sing, or some gathering for pleasure [celebration?]. Every time I hear of these, I feel like clothing myself in sackcloth. 'Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!' 'Spare Thy people, O Lord.' I feel distressed. I have an agony of soul that is beyond anything that I can describe to you. You are asleep." *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 361.

1880—"The people who profess the truth are backsliding from God. Jesus is soon to come, and they are unready." *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 400.

1882—"Have I not a knowledge of the state of the church, when the Lord has presented their case before me again and again for years? Repeated warnings have been given, yet there has been no decided change." *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 64.
Many more examples could be given from year after year through the church history of our early pioneers. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 535–536; ibid., vol. 6, 145, 452; Testimonies to Ministers 151, 249; Evangelism, 696; Gospel Workers, 300; The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 2, 996; Review and Herald, March 22, 1906.

The question then becomes: When should the true and faithful have pulled away from the rest of the church to protect themselves and their families from the apostasy within its midst? What would you have done in Ellen White’s day?

In 1893, a Brother Stanton and others associated with him sought to answer this question by publishing a large pamphlet entitled “The Loud Cry! Babylon Fallen! Weighed in the Balances—Found Wanting.” This pamphlet of more than sixty pages, quotes quite heavily from both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy in calling people out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Ellen White responded in a series of articles found in the Review and Herald for August 22 and 29, and September 5 and 12, 1893: “I have been made very sad in reading the pamphlet that has been issued by Brother Stanton and by those associated with him in the work he has been doing. Without my consent, they have made selections from the Testimonies, and have inserted them in the pamphlet they have published, to make it appear that my writings sustain and approve the position they advocate. In doing this, they have done that which is not justice or righteousness. Through taking unwarrantable liberties, they have presented to the people a theory that is of a character to deceive and destroy. In times past many others have done this same thing, and have made it appear that the Testimonies sustained positions that were untenable and false.

“I have had light to the effect that the position taken by Brother Stanton and his sympathizers is not true, but one of the ‘lo heres’ and ‘lo there’s,’ that will characterize the days in which we are living. . . . I know that their message is mingled with truth, but the truth is misapplied and wrested by its connection with error.

“In the pamphlet published by Brother Stanton and his associates, he accuses the church of God [the Seventh-day Adventist Church] of being Babylon, and would urge a separation from the church. This is a work that is neither honorable nor righteous. In compiling this work, they have used my name and writings for the support of that which I disapprove and denounce as error. The people to whom this pamphlet will come will charge the responsibility of this false position upon me, when it is utterly contrary to the teachings of my writings and the light which God has given me. I have no hesitancy in saying that those who are urging on this work are greatly deceived.

. . . Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. . . . In place of working with divine agencies to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord, they have taken their stand with him who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night. . . .

“Such messages will come, and it will be claimed for them that they are sent of God, but the claim will be false; for they are not filled with light, but with darkness. . . . The message that has been borne by those who have proclaimed the church to be Babylon has made the impression that God has no church upon earth.

Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. We are sorry that there are defective members, that there are tares amid the wheat.” (Please read this whole article as also found in Testimonies to Ministers, 32–62).

As the years passed others withdrew from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We know that John Harvey Kellogg left as he carried forward his spiritualistic teachings in the book The Living Temple. Albion Ballenger left as he was writing against there being a sanctuary in heaven. A. T. Jones left amid his teachings on what is the church. The Adventist Reform movement broke off in 1915. Others have separated since.

The church will continue to consist of both converted and unconverted members until God takes the reins in His own hand. Apostasy in various forms will continue until then. Should we therefore leave the church amidst cries of its being Babylon?

“The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God’s holy and sanctified day.” Testimonies to Ministers, 61.

“How Satan would exult to have a message go broadcast to the only people whom He has made the repositories of His law are the ones to whom this message applies. The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also [it is] the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon.” Selected Messages, book 2, 68.

As of this time, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not adopted any of these wines of Babylon in world session.

“Again I say, the Lord hath not spoken by any messenger who calls the church that keeps the commandments of God, Babylon. True, there are tares with the wheat; but Christ said He would send His angels to first gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into the garner. I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this; there is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. Those who shall heed this false message and try to leave others will be deceived and prepared to receive advanced delusions, and they will come to nought.” Selected Messages, book 2, 68–69.

“Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to
be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The Faith I Live By, 305. "The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory." Testimonies to Ministers, 50.

Do you understand the significance of this last statement? The full display of the love of God to the world is to be made through the church. That means you and me. In order to make that display the character of Christ will have to be perfectly reproduced in each of our lives. See Christ's Object Lessons, 69. As Jesus walked among the Israelites and gave them the opportunity to know God fully, so in the person of His saints here on earth just before His second coming, the opportunity will exist to see His character again fully displayed. This display will lead into the testing time which will purify His church. Those who do not form His character now will not be able to stand, and will leave His church rather than suffer persecution.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church." Ibid. 69. "The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God." Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 129.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness will appear in the shame of their own nakedness." Testimonies, vol. 5, 81.

Brothers and sisters, do not allow yourselves to be separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of the deceptive reasonings of men. You must study these issues for yourselves. They are not new issues. God is not leaving it to man to purify the church by calling His people out into a new church or movement. If He were, based on the record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, people should have left even before you and I were born. God is allowing and using heresy within the confines of this church to cause the shaking and to awaken us from our Laodicean condition. He wants us to develop that close personal relationship with Jesus that will help us to be discerners of truth.

People in the past have been led astray by men who have had name and rank in the church—Kellogg, Conradi, Ballenger, Jones, Waggoner, and many others. Do not allow yourselves to be separated now. Have you conquered self? Do not be distracted from allowing the Lord to perfectly reproduce His character in your life. May the Word of God as contained in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy be your only guide. □

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A WAY WITH THE LAW! Away with God's commandments! I do not want to hear about them. All we have to do is to believe in Jesus! These are among the expressions used by the proponents of antinomianism. Such sentiments are not new; their genesis may be traced to heaven itself. The angels that sinned, rebelled against God's righteous and just law, the foundation of His government—His throne. See 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 3:4; Revelation 12:7-9; Psalm 119:172; 89:14.

Satan, the chief rebel, "urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government." The Great Controversy, 498. The archdeceiver, "denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the host of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence." Ibid., 499. The angels, "could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law." Ibid., 497. Lamentably, a third of the heavenly host were deceived and joined the rebellion.

At Christ's death, "Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law... It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Yet before Moses died, "He was permitted to look down the stream of time... He had been shown the work of Satan in leading the Jews to reject Christ, while they professed to honor His Father's law. He now saw the Christian world under a similar deception in professing to accept Christ while they rejected God's law... He heard from professedly Christian teachers the cry, 'Away with the law!'... Moses was filled with astonishment and horror. How could those who believed in Christ reject the law spoken by His own voice upon the sacred mount? How could any that feared God yet aside the law which is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth?" Patriarchs and Prophets, 475-477. Emphasis supplied except where noted otherwise.

"It is a dangerous theory that leads men to declare that all that is necessary to salvation is to simply believe in Christ, while disregarding His plain commands. The gospel is not the Old Testament standard lowered; it requires faith that works righteousness, that keeps the commandments of God. Says the apostle, 'This is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' When men claim to be saved while living in violation of God's law, they claim that to which they have no right. Their salvation is not assured, but they are deceived by the falsehoods of the evil one. The same sophistry is indulged, the same lie repeated by men, as was first spoken in Eden through the mediumship of the serpent. Though the medium is changed, the sentiment is the same." The Signs of the Times, May 12, 1890.

Subtle Antinomianism

The mastermind of antinomianism, Satan himself, has deceitfully "declared that no man could keep God's law, and he pointed to the disobedience of Adam as proving the declaration true." Ibid., April 10, 1893.

Jesus' response to this false declaration was the following: "In human nature I will bear the test and proving of God. Satan has declared that man cannot keep the law. I will show that his statement is false; that man can keep the law. I have come to remove deception from the minds of men, to make plain that which Satan is trying to make obscure. I have come to establish the law Satan is seeking to make void, to show how far-reaching are the principles of this law. I have come to strip from it the burdensome exactions with which man has loaded it down. I have come to show its length and breadth, its dignity and nobility.
I will open before men its purity and spirituality. Not to introduce a new law, have I come, but to establish the law which to all eternity will be the standard of obedience.” Ibid., January 25, 1905.

Accordingly, “Christ came to vindicate the sacred claims of the law. He came to live a life of obedience to its requirements, and thus prove the falsity of the charge made by Satan that it is impossible for man to keep the law of God. As a man He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. . . . His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.” Pacific Union Recorder, December 17, 1903. “Satan’s charges were refuted.” The Desire of Ages, 762.

When I became a Seventh-day Adventist it had not occurred to me that the Bible training I had received as to how to confront the antinomian sentiments advocated by members of Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations would someday be needed to expose the erroneous teachings of misguided brethren in my own beloved church.

Inspiration does not treat lightly the disregarding of God’s law and the teaching of doctrines that undermine His authority. Sister White clearly states that “Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations [of Satan] against God, in asserting that men cannot keep the law of God.” The Signs of the Times, January 16, 1896.

There are no exceptions. It does not matter if the teacher be an administrator, renowned writer, university professor, local pastor or church member. This statement also applies to any leader or layman of a study group, committee, or an independent ministry, who asserts or suggests openly or subtly that men cannot keep the law of God, or need not do so. As a matter of fact, there are some in Adventism today who are cleverly teaching that we can obey God’s law and we must do so, nevertheless, obedience contributes nothing to our salvation, and even if we break God’s law, we still remain justified (saved). What a deception! Lord, help Thy people to wake up and firmly confront this heresy.

Few have the boldness to openly declare their antinomian beliefs. Most promoters of the New Theology within the ranks of Adventism admit the binding claims of God’s law and recognize its present validity. However, lost in sophistries, they support the Augustinian concept that we are born sinners. They then propose that the reason why we sin is that our nature itself is sin. They conclude, of course, that this condition will remain until Christ changes our sinful nature at His second coming. Only then, they declare, will we have perfect characters.

In Maranatha, 227, is an inspired statement about the danger of believing that we need not overcome all sin in this life. It says: “But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin [which is transgression of God’s law], will be disappointed.” And on page 221 Mrs. White also says: “When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, un sanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.” The word now is emphasized in the original.

Wonder of wonders! Many Seventh-day Adventists fail to realize that the logical reason for concluding that we are unable to keep the law because of a sinful nature is that we have been given an unfair demand by the Lawgiver. This reasoning makes God’s law a farce and indicates a fault in His government. Therefore, the New Theology teachings which declare that our natures are themselves sin and thus we cannot quit sinning in this life, would prove Satan’s accusations against Jehovah true, and would make God responsible for sin.

However, contrary to this dangerous rationale, we are told that “As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accom- plished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 333.

“God requires of man nothing that is impossible for him to do. . . . Christ kept the law, proving beyond controversy that man also can keep it.” Review and Herald, May 7, 1901.

There is another group within Adventism who recognize the demands of God’s law; exhort the people to obey it; teach the importance of sanctification in the Christian life; and advocate that Christians must overcome sin. Yet they propose that sanctification (works of obedience motivated by love to the

Sister White clearly states that “Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations [of Satan] against God, in asserting that men cannot keep the law of God.”

Redeemer and performed by Christ’s powerful grace (in the life of the believer) is not essential for salvation; rather it is just an ideal principle to live by, but it has no bearing upon one’s eternal destiny.

A Bible passage often used by the defenders of this latter position to undermine the fundamental and vital importance of works of obedience in the plan of salvation, is Romans 4:2–5. A summary of this passage is the following:

1. The apostle recalls Genesis 15:1–6 in which Abraham believed God’s promise of an heir of his own flesh, and how his faith “was counted unto him for righteousness.”

2. Paul also points out that “if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”

The key point to determine in this Bible passage is the apostle’s understanding of the term “works.”

Does he mean by the word “works” the obedience to God’s will which is the result of full surrender to the indwelling presence and power of Christ (see John 14:15; 15:10)? Or is he referring to the outward “obedience” associated with a heart that is surrendered to the Saviour? Which so-called obedience is legalism?

Legalism

“The scribes and the Pharisees appeared to be very punctilious in living out
They exalted the commandments of God in words, but refused to exalt them in practice; and their religion was only a stumbling block to men. . . . The only true faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul.

dry, hard doctrines, intermingled with sacrifices and offerings. They were very particular to practice circumcision, but they did not teach the necessity of having a pure heart. They exalted the commandments of God in words, but refused to exalt them in practice; and their religion was only a stumbling block to men. . . . The only true faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. It is as leaven that transforms human character. The truth brought into the soul temple cleanses it of moral defilement.” Ibid., April 30, 1895.

Their religion was focused on ceremonialism, on self-righteous acts motivated by love for themselves, not by love for God. Their works were performed by their own efforts and strength, but they rejected the true and only Source of power. Their holiness was superficial and selective.2

Today, as there was two thousands years ago, “There is a legal religion, which the Pharisees had, but such religion does not give to the world a Christlike example; it does not represent Christ’s character. Those who have Christ abiding in the heart will work the works of Christ. Such are entitled to all the promises of His Word. Becoming one with Christ, they do the will of God, and exhibit the riches of His grace.” Ibid., August 4, 1891.

“As time is fast closing, we should keep before the mind the spirituality of the law, and the utter worthlessness of a formal, ceremonial obedience to the commandments, involved in a legal religion.” General Conference Bulletin, October 1, 1896.

(For further insight on the topic of legalism as found in the Spirit of Prophecy, please read a brief compilation on pages 25–26 of this journal.)

The Inseparables

We notice in the Holy Scriptures the existence of certain spiritual relationships and principles that are inseparable. The one cannot exist without the other. The overemphasis of one of these principles to the neglect of the others will create serious consequences such as unbalanced opinions. An attempt to divorce these necessary associations will eventually lead the believer to distort some of the most fundamental truths and practices of Christianity, and will create unbalanced characters, thus bringing in its train results that we cannot even imagine.

Among these inseparable principles are

1. The principles of loving the Lord with all our being, and also loving our neighbor as ourselves. See Matthew 22:37–40.

2. The principles of taking time for ourselves to learn at the feet of Jesus as Mary did, and of witnessing to others the great things that the Lord has done in our behalf. See Luke 10:38–42 and 8:39.


4. The concept of the balanced relationship between justice and mercy.

“God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God’s law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God’s plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Psalm 85:10.” Mrs. White also says: “While you seek to administer justice, remember that she has a twin sister, which is mercy. The two stand side by side and should not be separated.” Child Guidance, 262. See also The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, 1149.


6. The spiritual principles of justification and sanctification—faith and works—are also inseparable. Compare Romans 5:1 and James 2:24. We find that these two concepts (faith and works) are married in the Scriptures, a marriage that was instituted by our Saviour and Lord in both the Old and the New Testaments. And though the words “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” are primarily and fundamentally applicable to the relationship between husband and wife (Matthew 19:6), the same principle applies to any other relationship that God establishes.

Let us analyze, then, the divine relationship existing between faith and works both in the Old and the New Testaments.

Let us begin our analysis by examining Romans 4:3: “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” This is a key text for the proponents of the New Theology. The antinomian theologians use this passage to minimize the necessity of works in the plan of salvation. They assume that just because the expression “It was counted unto him for righteousness” is placed in the context of “believing” God’s promises, it must exclude by default a believer’s works (loving obedience by and through God’s powerful grace) from being a part of the imputed righteousness of God as expressed in the phrase “counted unto him.”

It is a fact that the Hebrew verb “chashab” means to count, to count for, to impute, to reckon.” It is the key theological word in Genesis 15:6 where God registered Abraham’s faith as righteousness (see Romans 4:3).4 It should also be observed that the same Hebrew term “chashab” is used once again in Psalm 106:30–31, where we read: “Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto [chashab] him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.” In this last passage we see that the willful action born from a righteous zeal (see Numbers 25:13) to vindicate God’s honor is counted (chashab) as righteousness.

Some Bible students who hold forensic or legal views regarding justification by faith alone (sola fide), have attempted to minimize the impact of this Bible pas-
It seems that this tendency already existed in the time of the apostle John, for in chapter three, verses 16 and 17, of his first epistle he exhorts the brethren: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

To further illustrate this vital point, let us consider two common examples:

A. We often speak of righteousness as a good, virtuous ideal to which man should aspire or strive. But in the Scripture righteousness is more than an ideal, it is a person: "The Lord our righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6. You and I are also called to incorporate this principle into our daily living, not just into our thinking. Thus the apostle tells us: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7. We are called upon to allow Christ to live within our souls and let Him bring into existence His righteousness [rightdoing] in our lives as we fully surrender to His divine control; because without Him we can do nothing. See John 15:5.

May the Lord grant us divine wisdom to avoid the twin snares of legalism and antinomianism... We lose much, in fact we lose everything, when we attempt to separate faith and works—justification and sanctification.

B. We classify "word" as a speech sound or its written symbol. We consider it intangible, abstract. But in the Scripture, "the Word" goes beyond the realm of abstraction to become flesh, real and tangible in the person of Jesus Christ. See John 1:1, 18.

In the light of our discussion, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James 2:14-17.

Today, we lose a great biblical blessing when we circumscribe believing or belief, to solely a passive response. To a consent of the intellect, destitute of any active, vigorous behavior.

May the Lord grant us divine wisdom to avoid the twin snares of legalism and antinomianism, and never to attempt to divorce His inseparable and eternal principles. We lose much, in fact we lose everything, when we attempt to separate faith and works—justification and sanctification.

God is ready to supply us with His grace which both pardons our sins and gives us His power to live in harmony with the transcription of His character—Jehovah's eternal law. May our prayer be: Father, help me to uplift, in Christ's strength, Your inseparable principles by both word and action. Amen. □

1 Antinomianism: "The doctrine or belief that the Gospel frees Christians from obedience to any law, whether scriptural, civil, or moral, and that salvation is attained solely through faith and divine grace." The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts.
2 For further discussion of the superficial and selective Pharisaical holiness of the first century see Our Firm Foundation, March 1993, 6-7.
3 The doctrine of gaining salvation by man's own works. Out of the four times the word legalism appears in the comprehensive published writings of Ellen G. White, as found in the CD-Rom, there are only two identical direct statements from her; these references do not define the term. However, the concept of legalism is well reflected by our prophet when she uses the phrase: "Legal Religion." Peter's Counsel to Parents, 35; Bible Echo, July 2, 1894; The Signs of the Times, April 9, 1894; The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 352.
4 Lexical Aids to the Old Testament, 1616. The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, by Spirios Zodhiates, World Bible Publishers, Inc.
5 Although unrelated to the subject under discussion, I would like to add that this event happened during the civil and religious theocracy of ancient Israel. Today, with the absence of civil theocracy till Christ's return, a believer could only use the sword of the Spirit—which is God's Word—to confront apostasy and rebellion within the Lord's camp. Thus, to imitate this example in a literal sense is biblically forbidden and is also a civil crime.
7 Ibid.
The Three Elijahs

As a people, we love to regard ourselves as the Elijah movement. A text loved and cherished by devout Seventh-day Adventists is Malachi 4:5-6: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Scripture texts are taken from the New King James Version, Copyright (c) 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.) Seventh-day Adventists do not understand this text to portray a personal return of the prophet Elijah in a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire. Rather, the Bible leads us to believe that God is here describing a group of people whose ministry will parallel that of Elijah, just before Jesus returns to destroy sin and sinners, and to set up His kingdom of righteousness.

To make the picture more interesting, in Matthew 11:14, Jesus identifies John the Baptist as fulfilling the Elijah-style ministry. In Matthew 17:10-13, Scripture reiterates this truth, adding a further dimension: "And his disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah is truly coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of man is also about to suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist."

Three Elijahs are therefore presented in Scripture: the Tishbite himself, John the Baptist, and a third Elijah who will usher in the kingdom of glory. Clearly, the first Elijah, the Tishbite, is the model for the last two, because their ministries are validated by their resemblance to the ministry of Elijah the Tishbite who came from Tishloes in Gilead. So outstanding was the ministry of Elijah the Tishbite, and so crucial and far-reaching were the reforms he effected, that when God chose other individuals to prepare the world for two stupendous events, His first and second comings to the earth, He labeled them Elijahs. For God's people today, who form a conglomerate Elijah, preparing people for the end of the world, it is fruitful to consider the parallels between the ministries of the three Elijahs. These parallels cluster around five aspects of their ministries: appearance, apparel, appetite, appeal and approval.

I. APPEARANCE

According to 1 Kings 17:1, "Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.'" This verse is the first we hear of Elijah. His appearance is sudden, startling and associated with a stern message of rebuke and judgment. In fact, it is his message that brings him into the forefront of history. He was unknown until apostasy became so deep-rooted in Israel that Baal worship became the state religion. In response, the Creator God sent a faithful man to Ahab, king of Israel, to announce a three and one-half-year drought in consequence of Israel's rebellion.

John the Baptist, the second Elijah, was also an unknown quantity until he appeared from obscurity in the wilderness of Judea, preaching repentance from sin and preparation for God's soon-to-come kingdom. In Matthew 3:7 John calls some Pharisees and Saducees a "brood of vipers," and in verse 10 he declares: "And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Elder John Tumpkin is a local pastor in Africa.

John E. Tumpkin
Not surprisingly, in the 1840s a group of people arose to prepare the world for the coming of the Son of God, and for a solemn, searching judgment. The language of their souls was: "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment has come: and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Revelation 14:7.

All three Elijahs are brought into sudden prominence by a message of searching judgment and solemn preparation. Their sudden appearance on center stage is evidence of God's need to bring people to repentance for a saving event. We can claim to be part of God's Elijah movement only if we are cooperating with Him to bring people to repentance, to warn them of the judgment and to prepare them for His kingdom.

II. APPAREL

The apparel, or clothing, worn by both Elijah and John, was strikingly appropriate for the message they bore. Matthew 3:4 indicates that "John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist." Apart from constituting simplicity itself, as well as suitability to the harsh wilderness life, John's clothing also marked him as a prophet. Witness an interesting dialogue in 2 Kings 1:7-8:

"Then he [the king] said to them, 'What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?' So they answered him, 'He was a hairy man, and wore a leather belt around his waist.' And he said, 'It is Elijah the Tishbite.'"

Note a number of startling factors. First, Elijah's clothing, as in the case of John's, was a clear and conclusive indicator of his identity. The king needed no further details in order to correctly make a judgment. Apparently, Elijah's and John's clothing was very different from that of the rest of society. One of the most striking characteristics of Elijah and John is the sharp contrast of their lifestyles with the lifestyes of their contemporaries. One element of this contrast was their manner of dress. It comes as no surprise, then, that God's remnant people are also easily distinguished from the rest of society in dress and adornment.

Second, John the Baptist prophesied about 900 years after Elijah, on a different side of the B.C.-A.D. chronological divide. Despite this difference, John wore a prophet's garb virtually identical to that of Elijah. Nine centuries stood between the two Elijahs, yet their apparel was still the same. This fact is not to suggest that God's people today should wear camel's hair and leather belts. It does suggest, however, that though fashions change considerably, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, there are certain timeless principles of modesty and good taste that will always be hallmarks of the true child of God in every age. It is a sign of worldliness entering the church when exploitative or merely decorative garments, violating these principles, enter God's church in the guise of fashion.

III. APPETITE

The matter of appetite also separated Elijah and John from most of their contemporaries. Of John it is written in Matthew 3:4 that "his food was locusts and wild honey." Of Elijah, the record states in 1 Kings 17:6: "The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook." Even more important than the charming, wholesome simplicity of the food items themselves is the fact that both prophets depended completely on God for their food. They dined on a diet provided by God. In the rainless days of drought, without the miracle of the ravens, Elijah would have withered to death, his sun-bleached bones a bleak and lonely testimony to what man can do without God. However, he trusted God, and God honored him. In the wilderness of Judea, too, John had to constantly rely on God for guidance and wisdom to unlock the hidden treasure-houses of the wasteland.

Likewise, the third Elijah, God's last-day remnant, are characterized by a

One of the most striking characteristics of Elijah and John is the sharp contrast . . . [in] their manner of dress. It comes as no surprise, then, that God's remnant people are also easily distinguished from the rest of society in dress and adornment.
Instead of corrupting our gospel by lowering it to a worldly level for the sake of attracting numbers, we should keep it pure. It is the contrast, the difference, that worldlings see in our lives that will bring them out of sin’s cities of sophistication. The third Elijah is also persecuted by a loose woman, symbolizing a corrupt church. Revelation 17:1–6: “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.”

It is interesting to note that Jezebel adorned herself to try to prolong her life and influence. Herod’s wife’s daughter danced erotically in order to bring the king’s judgment under the control of lust. And the prostitute of Revelation, who commits spiritual adultery with the leaders of the earth, is adorned with fabulous, expensive items of jewelry and clothing: earthy sensuality dressed up to look like religion. For false religion is simply an attempt to let lust rule and wreck humanity.

In Elijah’s day, Jezebel’s Baal-worship was the state religion. In John’s day, paganism and apostate religion ruled. Both Elijah and John were persecuted by a mixture of church and state. Revelation reveals such is also the lot of the third Elijah.

IV. APPEAL

This above-described rare combination will ensure that the ministry of the third Elijah will have an irresistible appeal. Both Elijah and John had an appeal far beyond anything we have yet exhibited. Matthew 3:1–2, 5–6 states: “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ” “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”

Note that vast numbers of people left their villages and towns and went into the wilderness to hear John’s message. Many try to argue that in order to win sophisticated worldlings, we must become more like them. John’s experience shows the opposite. Instead of corrupting our gospel by lowering it to a worldly level for the sake of attracting numbers, we should keep it pure. It is the contrast, the difference, that worldlings see in our lives that will bring them out of sin’s cities of sophistication into the wilderness of worship. Jesus asked of John the Baptist, in Matthew 11:7–9: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”

Today, Seventh-day Adventism has lost much of its early fervor and appeal. Not only is it proving difficult to win converts into the church, but it is proving equally difficult to retain those converts we already have, particularly among the youth. This trend is indicative of the fact that large segments of the church have moved out of the wilderness of want into the palace of prosperity. But the wilderness of want is also the wilderness of worship, and the palace of prosperity is also the palace of pretense.

Elijah, too, lived such a lifestyle that he was the hunted instead of the hunter. Obadiah declares of him in 1 Kings 18:10: “As the Lord your God lives, there is no
Elijah went through a period of depression when Jezebel threatened to kill him. He thought he was the only soldier of God left. God showed him that things were 7,000 times better than he thought. In the gloom of the dungeon, John wondered whether Jesus was the legitimate Messiah, or if he should look for another, preferably one who would release him from prison. Jesus revived his hope and faith.

Today, dear saint, you may be discouraged; you may wonder whether God’s battered church will accomplish His purposes. Jesus assures you that His movement will succeed in preparing people for His coming. That promise is as sure as the promise of His coming. Might was thought to be right in Elijah’s day, and the minority was persecuted. So also in John’s day, so also in ours, but the remnant will succeed. For Elijah’s ministry succeeded, and Baal worship was demoted from being Israel’s state religion to being a defeated religion. John’s ministry succeeded, for according to John 10:41–42; “Then many came to Him and said, ‘John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.’ And many believed in Him there.” Elijah’s ministry was cut short by his translation, and John’s by his martyrdom. The third Elijah is also to fearlessly represent God in the face of death threats.

VI. CONCLUSION

According to Young’s Analytical Concordance, Elijah can mean either “My God is Jah,” or “God Himself.” Both meanings are appropriate to God’s remnant people, the latter-day Elijah. Like the first two Elijahs, the third Elijah must demonstrate loyalty to the true God in the face of widespread apostasy and paganism. The third Elijah must also imitate the beauty of Christ’s character so deeply that observers will see in the lives of His followers the character of God Himself.

Thank you for the Firm Foundation magazine that you provide for the spiritual instruction of God’s people. It is an immeasurable blessing. Praise the Lord! God bless you.

And may you continue strong under attack of the enemy, conquering with God’s weapons—the sword and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

I am writing to inform you of the death of my wife and your sister in Christ. She passed away with an acute heart attack.

I want to thank you for the inspiration you have given her through the Firm Foundation and the many tapes that she bought from your organization. She was an astute Bible student and believed and worked for Christ.

Thanks again for keeping alive the Adventist message. It is needed so much in these last days.

I want to let you know how pleased I was with the calendar you sent. It is good to be reminded of our Adventist roots, and I know that God is in command of our Church in these last days. I think it is a thrilling time we are living in, for we see prophecy being fulfilled. It makes me feel that it won’t be long until this world of sin and misery of all kinds will be over with.

Thank you so much for the work you are doing and for the open letter you sent me. I need to share it with my brother to help him understand why the Firm Foundation paper is so important to us. I do pray for you and look forward to seeing you all in heaven.

We really appreciate your dedication and tireless effort and Christian love in our behalf as sheep who have no shepherds. We thank the Lord for you and pray that God will sustain you and carry you through to the kingdom—with not one lost.

We are not ignorant of the troubles even in our beloved “special ministries,” but don’t be discouraged and let down the standards—please, we plead with you!

We appreciate your giving the gospel in true Christian love for souls who are misled and dying. Our son died six years ago at 31, but because the special ministries cared to share their faith, he died knowing Jesus. Praise His name. He was reared in our schools, but didn’t know “how to overcome.”

May we meet someday soon in that better world where Jesus will be and where sorrow will be no more.

Do not get discouraged one single moment due to the attacks of the enemy, Satan, the devil. Our Firm Foundation is a blessing in this time of heresies, apostasies, and confusion, and we are by the thousands praying for all of you daily. Indeed you have enemies, but thank God, and glory to His name so powerful, you have also many, many, and very many friends.

We are sending a donation of $10 to help in our small way in your ministry. We do appreciate Our Firm Foundation because it is truth-filled and leading us in the right way. It is hard to find anything else worth reading outside of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. May God keep us all faithful until the end.

I’ve just finished your latest Firm Foundation which makes clear the need for a transformed life as well as forensic justification through the merits of Christ and His death in our place. Exclusive focus on the courtroom model of forensic justification tends to be egocentric and legalistic with concern mainly for personal salvation from death (Hebrews 2:15) rather than a desire to be clean and healed (Psalm 51) and transformed to honor God and win others. We might define legalism as undue concern about our legal standing whether by sacraments, penance, good works, or any substitute for humble faith that will trust and obey.

I object to Brother Sequin’s use of “objective” and “subjective.” Words are distorted from their true meaning (e.g. meat, drink, love, conservative, liberal, eau de vie, the good life, and reformation theology). Is it the advance in discerning the true gospel of God’s free grace, or the old Augustinian errors retained by many reformers?

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ABRAHAM was a bright and shining light. His faith, his piety, his devotion, were to keep the knowledge of God alive in the age in which he lived. "The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Genesis 12:1–2. Abraham would have greater influence with strangers than with those who were connected with him. He was therefore required to leave his kindred, and the Lord's promise to him was, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Verse 3.

Abraham obeyed the voice of God. No sooner did he have an indication of God's will than he was ready to obey. He did not stop to consider whether it would be for his financial advantage to do this. In faith, putting his confidence in the guidance of God, he left his home and his kindred, and "went out, not knowing whither he went."

In that age, idolatry was fast creeping in and conflicting with the worship of the true God. But Abraham did not become an idolater. Although his own father was vacillating between the true and the false worship, and with his knowledge of the truth false theories and idolatrous practices were mingled, Abraham kept free from this infatuation. He was not ashamed of his faith, and made no effort to hide the fact that he made God his trust. "He builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." Genesis 12:8.

Everything like idolatry is abhorrent to God; and He gave special directions to those whom He accepted as worshipers of Himself, that they should not mingle with other nations, to do after their works and forget God. He forbade them to intermarry with idolaters, lest their hearts should be led away from God, and there should become mingled with the worship of God the customs and practices of idolatrous nations, and thus His service become corrupted.

But it was not the design of God to keep His chosen people exclusively to themselves. He did not intend that they should build up a wall of partition between themselves and the rest of mankind. The banner of faith must ever be held aloft; His people are to be as the salt, to preserve the earth from moral corruption. When men thought to build a tower that would reach unto heaven, the very talents that were given them of God were perverted to a wrong purpose, to carry out plans that would be in opposition to the purposes of God. It was their design to confederate together, to separate from the world at large, and to become an independent community. But this was not God's purpose. He spoiled their plans, confusing their language so they could not understand the words or plans of one another.

God designed that Abraham should be a channel of light and blessing, that he should have a gathering influence, and that God should have a people on the earth. Abraham was to be in the world, reflecting in his life the character of Jesus. When he received the divine call, Abraham was not a man of renown, neither a lawgiver, nor a conqueror. He was a simple herdsman, dwelling in tents, but employing a large number of workmen to carry on his humble employment. And the honor which he received was due to his faithfulness to God, his strict integrity and just dealing. The Lord said of him: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and
The Sanctuary—Part 2

THE inquiry now follows, Are those correct who remove the date of the seventy weeks from 457 B.C.? The data which the Bible furnished on this point are found in the further instruction of the angel to Daniel. After telling him that seventy weeks are cut off, and allotted to his people and their holy city, he speaks as follows: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease.” Daniel 9:25–27.

Seventy weeks contain 490 days. But before proceeding to an application of this prophecy, a word may be necessary relative to the nature of the time here introduced: is it literal or symbolic?

1. It is a fact that 2300 literal days (but little over six years) would not cover the duration of a single power in this prophecy, much less extend over them all. Therefore the days must be symbols, even as the beasts and horns are shown to be symbols.

2. It is a fact that a symbolic or prophetic day, is one year. Ezekiel 4:5–6; Numbers 14:34. Hence the 2300 days denote 2300 years; and the seventy weeks, or 490 days, 490 years.

3. The fact that the seventy weeks, as all admit, were fulfilled in 490 years, is a demonstration of this theory.

The seventy weeks were to date from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, and we have thus only to find that commandment, to ascertain their starting point. But the prophecy is still more definite than this; for it gives us also the events which mark their termination. Sixty-nine of the seventy weeks were to extend to the Messiah the Prince, or, to the commencement of our Lord’s ministry upon the earth. During the seventieth week He was to confirm the covenant with many. In the midst, or middle of that week, He was to be cut off, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; which can refer to nothing else but His crucifixion. The seventy weeks then must be so dated as to bring the commencement of Christ’s public ministry, and His crucifixion at the commencement and middle, respectively, of the last week. And taking the widest difference of opinion there is only a variation of a few years involved in the question respecting the date of the crucifixion of Christ; so there can justly be but little difference as to the date from which the seventy weeks should be reckoned. And this whole question might be left to an argument on this point, since this has as much bearing upon the question at issue, as even the commandment itself from which it is to date.

But it is not difficult to find the commandment to restore Jerusalem, a commandment, too, which went forth at the precise time to make the prophecy perfectly harmonize throughout.

There are but four events which can be taken as answering to the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. These are

1. The decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the house of God, 536 B.C.
2. The decree of Darius for the prosecution of that work which had been hindered, 519 B.C.
3. The decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra, 457 B.C. Ezra 7.
4. The commission to Nehemiah from the same king in his twentieth year, 444 B.C. Nehemiah 2.

Dating from the first two of these decrees, the seventy weeks would fall many years short of reaching even to the Christian era; besides, they had reference principally to the restoration of the temple and the temple worship of the Jews, and not to the restoration of their civil state and policy, all of which must be intended by the expression, “to restore and to build Jerusalem.” Thus failing to answer to the prophecy in any respect, these two decrees have never been brought into the controversy. The only question lies be-

James White, husband of Ellen White, was ten years president of the General Conference as well as editor of several church publications.
between the decrees which were granted to Ezra and to Nehemiah.

The facts between which we are to decide here, are briefly these: in 457 B.C., a decree was granted to Ezra by the Persian emperor, Artaxerxes Longimanus, to go up to Jerusalem with as many of his people as were minded to go with him. The commission granted him an unlimited amount of treasure, to beautify the house of God, procure offerings for its service, and to do whatever else might seem good unto them. It empowered him to ordain laws, set magistrates and judges, and execute punishment even unto death; in other words, to restore the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, according to the law of God and the ancient customs of that people. Inspiration has seen fit to preserve this decree; and a full and accurate copy of it is given in the seventh chapter of the book of Ezra.

Thirteen years after this, in the twentieth year of the same king, 444 B.C., Nehemiah sought and obtained permission to go up to Jerusalem. Nehemiah 2. Permission was granted him, but we have no evidence that it was anything more than verbal. It pertained to him individually, nothing being said about others going up with him. The king asked him how long a journey he wished to make, and when he would return. He received letters to the governors beyond the river, to help him on his way to Judah, and an order on the keeper of the king's forest for timber for beams, etc. When he arrived at Jerusalem, he found rulers, priests, and nobles, and people already engaged in the work of building Jerusalem. Nehemiah 2:16. These were, of course, acting under the decree given to Ezra thirteen years before. And finally, Nehemiah, having arrived at Jerusalem, finished the work he came to accomplish, in fifty-two days. Nehemiah 6:15.

Now which of these commissions, Ezra's or Nehemiah's, constitutes the decree for the restoration of Jerusalem, from which the seventy weeks are to be dated? It hardly seems that there can be any question on this point.

1. The grant to Nehemiah cannot be called a decree. It was necessary that a Persian decree should be put in writing, and signed by the king. Daniel 6:8. Such was the document given to Ezra; but Nehemiah had nothing of the kind: his commission being only verbal. If it be said that the letters given him constituted the decree, then the decree was issued not to Nehemiah, but to the governors beyond the river; besides, these would constitute a series of decrees, and not one decree, as the prophecy contemplates.

2. The occasion of Nehemiah's petition to the king for permission to go up to Jerusalem was the report which certain ones, returning, had brought from thence, that those in the province were in great affliction and reproach, that the wall of Jerusalem was also broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire. Nehemiah 1. Whose work were these walls and gates that were broken down and burned with fire? Evidently the work of Ezra and his associates; for it cannot for a moment be supposed that the utter destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar 144 years previous to that time would have been reported to Nehemiah as a matter of news, or that he would have considered it, as he evidently did, a fresh misfortune calling for a fresh expression of his grief. A decree, therefore, authorizing the building of these, had gone forth previous to the grant to Nehemiah.

3. If any should contend that Nehemiah's commission must be the decree, because the object of his request was that he might build the city, it is sufficient to reply as shown above, that gates and walls had been built previous to his going up; besides the work of building which he went to perform was accomplished in fifty-two days; whereas the prophecy allows for the building of the city, seven weeks, or forty-nine years.

4. There was nothing granted to Nehemiah, which was not embraced in the decree to Ezra; while the latter had all the forms and conditions of a decree, and was vastly more ample in its provisions.

5. It is evident from the prayer of Ezra, as recorded in chapter 9:9 of his book, that he considered himself fully empowered to proceed with the building of the city and the wall; and it is evident that he understood, further, that the conditional prophecies concerning his people were then fulfilled, from the closing words of that prayer in which he says, "Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?" Ezra 9:14.

6. Reckoning from the commission to Nehemiah, 444 B.C., the dates throughout are entirely disarranged; for from that point the troubled times which were to attend the building of the street and wall, did not last seven weeks, or forty-nine years. Reckoning from that date, the

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7. Will these dates harmonize if we reckon from the decree to Ezra? Let us see. In this case 457 B.C. is our starting point. Forty-nine years were allotted to the building of the city and the wall. On this point, Prideaux, Connec. vol. 1, pg. 822, says: "In the fifteenth year of Darius Nohus, ended the first seven weeks of the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy. For then the restoration of the church and State of the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea was fully finished, in that last act of reformation which is recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah, from the twenty-third verse to the end of the chapter, just forty-nine years
after it had been commenced by Ezra, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus."

So far all is harmony. Let us apply the measuring rod of the prophecy still further. Sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, were to extend to the Messiah the Prince. Dating from 457 B.C., they end in A.D. 27. And what took place then? Luke thus informs us: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost according to abundance of authority which we might produce, if necessary, the crucifixion is definitely located in the middle of the seventieth week.

It now becomes an important point to determine in what year the crucifixion took place. This question is decided by the following testimony: "The Saviour attended but four Passovers, at the last of which he was crucified. John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 13:1. This could not bring the crucifixion later than A.D. 31, as recorded by

Here, then, are thirteen credible authorities, locating the crucifixion of Christ in the spring of A.D. 31. We may therefore set this down as a fixed fact, as the most cautious or the most skeptical could require nothing more.

descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Luke 3:21–22, margin A.D. 27. After this, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled. Mark 1:14–15. The time here mentioned must have been some specific, definite, and predicted period; but no prophetic period can be found then terminating, except the sixty-nine weeks of the prophecy of Daniel, which were to extend to Messiah the Prince. The Messiah had now come, and with His own lips announced the termination of that period which was to be marked by His manifestation.

Here again is indisputable harmony. But further: Messiah was to confirm the covenant with many for one week. This would be the last week of the seventy, or the last seven years of the 490. In the midst of the week, the prophecy informs us, He should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. These Jewish ordinances, pointing to the death of Christ, could only cease at the cross; and there they did virtually end, though not literally till A.D. 70. After three-score and two weeks, according to the record, the Messiah was to be cut off. It is the same as if it had read, And after three-score and two weeks, in the midst of the seventieth week, shall Messiah be cut off and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Now, as the word, midst, here means middle, Aurelius Cassiodorus, a respectable Roman senator, about A.D. 514; "In the counsels of Tiberius Caesar Augustus 5 and Aelius Sejanus [U.C. 784, A.D. 31], our Lord Jesus Christ suffered on the eighth of the calends of April." In this year and in this day, says Dr. Hales, agree also the council of Caesarea, A.D. 196 or 198, the Alexandrian Chronicle, Maximus Manchus, Nicephorus Constantius, Cedrenus; and in this year but on different days, concour Eusebius and Epiphanius, followed by Kebler, Bucher, Patinus and Petavius. "It is recorded in history that the whole time of our Saviour's teaching was three years and a half, which is the half of a week of years."

Here, then, are thirteen credible authorities, locating the crucifixion of Christ in the spring of A.D. 31. We may therefore set this down as a fixed fact, as the most cautious or the most skeptical could require nothing more. This being in the middle of the last week, we have simply to reckon backward three and a half years to find where the 69 weeks ended, and forward from that point, three and a half years, to find the termination of the whole period. Thus, going back from the crucifixion, A.D. 31, spring and a half years, we find ourselves in the autumn of A.D. 27, where, as we have seen, the 69 weeks ended and Christ commenced His public ministry. And going from the crucifixion forward three and a half years, we are brought to the autumn of A.D. 34, as the grand terminating point of the whole period of the seventy weeks. This date is marked by the martyrdom of Stephen, the formal rejection of the gospel of Christ by the Jewish Sanhedrin in the persecution of His disciples, and the turning of the apostles to the Gentiles. Acts 6:12–15; 7:57–60; 8:1; 9:1–18; 13:45–47. And these are just the events which we should expect to take place, when that period which was cut off for the Jews, and allotted to them as a peculiar people, should fully expire.

A word respecting the date of the seventh of Artaxerxes, and the array of evidence on this point is complete. Was the seventh of Artaxerxes, 457 B.C.? For all those who can appreciate the force of facts, the following testimony will be sufficient here:

"The Bible gives the data for a complete system of chronology, extending from the creation to the birth of Cyrus—a clearly ascertained date. From this period downward we have the undisputed canon of Ptolemy, and the undoubted era of Nabonazzar, extending below our vulgar era. At the point where inspired chronology leaves us, this canon of undoubted accuracy commences. And thus the whole arch is spanned. It is by the canon of Ptolemy that the great prophetic period of seventy weeks is fixed. This canon places the seventh year of Artaxerxes in the year 457 B.C.; and the accuracy of this canon is demonstrated by the concurrent agreement of more than twenty eclipses. This date we cannot change from 457 B.C., without first demonstrating the inaccuracy of Ptolemy's canon. To do this it would be necessary to show that the large number of eclipses by which its accuracy has been repeatedly demonstrated have not been correctly computed; and such a result would unsettle every chronological date, and leave the settlement of epochs and the adjustment of eras entirely at the mercy of every dreamer, so that chronology would be of no more value than mere guesswork. As the seventy weeks must terminate in A.D. 34, unless the seventh of Artaxerxes is wrongly fixed, and as that cannot be changed without some evidence to that effect, we inquire, What evidence marked that termination? The time when the apostles turned to the Gentiles harmonizes with that date better than any other which has been named. And the crucifixion in A.D. 31, in the midst of the last week, is sustained by a mass of testimony which cannot be easily invalidated."

Advent Herald, July 21, 28, 1863.
In 1866 John Orr Corliss became a Freewill Baptist, and in 1868 he became a Seventh-day Adventist. He lived with the James White family for some time and was tutored in Seventh-day Adventist beliefs by Joseph Bates. He pioneered Seventh-day Adventist work in Australia as well as in the states of Virginia, Colorado, and California. In the late 1880s Corliss and A. T. Jones were the first Seventh-day Adventists to appear before legislatures to plead the cause of separation of church and state. See The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 307.

This article continues a 10-part series, originally printed January 16—March 20, 1919, in which John Corliss writes of the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, especially focusing on the value of the Spirit of Prophecy as an agent to unify God's remnant people.

—The Editors

When William Miller and his associates first proclaimed the time of the Second Advent, they argued that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of by the angel Gabriel to Daniel (Daniel 8:14) meant the coming of Christ to cleanse the earth from sin, and so make it the everlasting dwelling place of the redeemed saints. Reckoning the 2300 days, at the end of which this fulfillment would occur, to begin with the year 457 B.C., they readily drew the conclusion, by subtracting the 457 years before Christ from the 2300 day-years of the text, that the Lord's coming would be due by the close of A.D. 1843.

It was supposed by many that this summary of the prophetic dates originated with Mr. Miller, hence believers in their fulfillment at the time anticipated, were called "Millerites." But the general outline of these prophecies drawn by such noted men as Sir Isaac Newton, Kirby Scott, Keith, and others, so fully sustained Mr. Miller's conclusions that Professor George Bush, well-known teacher of Hebrew in the New York University, also author of critical notes on the Pentateuch, addressed a letter to Mr. Miller, admitting his arguments to be conclusive. Following is a portion of Professor Bush's letter, which appeared in the Advent Herald for March 1844.

"Your results in this field of inquiry do not strike me as so far out of the way as to affect any of the great interests of truth and duty. . . . Your error, as I apprehend, lies in another direction than your chronology . . . . You have entirely mistaken the nature of the events which are to occur when these periods have expired. . . . The great event before the world is not its physical conflagration, but its moral regeneration."

When that year ended without proving their anticipated theories correct, more or less confusion ensued. But the leaders of the movement refused to be moved by the various speculations, until the spring of 1844. At a camp meeting then held in Exeter, New Hampshire, an attempt was made to solve the problem of their religious perplexity, when Captain Joseph Bates arose and offered some general remarks of a nautical nature, along the line of directing providences, suggesting that the sounding of the seventh trumpet of Revelation 10:7 must afford some clue by which to "determine our longitude on the sea of prophecy." As he added the words, "May the Lord help us to obtain our true position on this stormy sea, and again spread all our sails for the gale that shall waft us into the harbor of glory," a woman interrupted by saying: "It is too late now to indulge in such ordinary talk; my brother has light on the situation which he wants to give this people."

John Couch then arose and suggested that the 2300-year period did not synchronize with the opening of 457 B.C., but must be reckoned from the autumn of that year—the season when the rebuilding of Jerusalem was actually begun by Ezra and his associates. Then passing back to the Levitical types, to show that the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary was accomplished by the high priest on the tenth day of the seventh month of the year, he declared that the corresponding period of 1844 would witness the coming of Christ, our High Priest, to cleanse the earth from sin, and so fit it for a dwelling place of the Most High and His redeemed children.

Such a declaration was well calculated to kindle anew the fire of enthusiasm which dire disappointment had so nearly suffocated. The word soon reached S. S. Snow, George Storrs, and others, who quickly passed it on to Mr. Miller. The time thus set would fall on October 22 of that year, according to Jewish reckoning, and in the Voice of Truth for October 17, in a letter dated October 6, Mr. Miller said:

"I see a glory in the seventh month I never saw before. . . . I see that the time is correct, when the seventh month comes—that is the typical time. Then will the people and place be sanctified."

In connection with this the editor of the Voice said:

"We print this number, in order to comfort and strengthen the dear saints a few days longer . . . Whether another number will be published, we can make no promise. We leave the future in the hands of God, fully believing that the tenth day of the seventh month, answering to this October 22 or 23, will reveal the Lord of glory in the clouds of heaven."

In the same number of the paper, George Storrs exhorted the people to have faith, enforcing his words by the illustration of a flat rock in mid-ocean, to which an imaginary people had been called, with the promise that upon a certain day a spacious fitted steamer would come to take away all found there without personal means of relief, and convey them to a most glorious country. The proof that these isolated ones had no private resource of succor was to be that after landing on the rock they should cast adrift the frail boats in which they had arrived. No others could possibly be taken away by the relief steamer. Concluding, Mr. Storrs exhorted:

"Cut your rope now, brethren. Let your boats float off out of sight; yea, make haste before the 'sign of the Son of man' appears. Then it will be too late. Venture now, and venture all. Oh, make haste, I beseech you! Don't daily now. Push off that boat, or you are lost."

With such passion of enthusiasm spreading like a prairie fire in dry stubble, one cannot wonder that men came up to the appointed time in the same frame of mind as one lying at the point of death. The thing seemed so certain that one became dead to the world, having no human passion to satisfy. His only mental agitation was the question of readiness for the change. When therefore the set time
ROMANS 5:10–21. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Romans 5:10–11.

The eleventh verse states one of the fruits that must follow from a knowledge that we are “saved by his life.” When men have a well-grounded assurance that they are saved by the life of Jesus Christ, when they realize it is so till it becomes a part of their very being, they will “joy in God” through Jesus Christ their Lord. There can be nothing but joy in the heart of an individual when he knows that he is saved by the life of Christ. That is the secret of joying in tribulation.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Verse 12.

This verse contains a partially stated proposition. You will notice that commencing with the thirteenth verse, and continuing down to the end of the seventeenth, there is a parenthesis. Then in the eighteenth verse, the proposition is taken up again and completed. The first part of the eighteenth verse is merely an equivalent to the first part of the twelfth; it is the same truth expressed in other words—“Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Then the closing portion of the verse completes the proposition: “Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

We can notice but briefly the intervening verses. They contain rich truths; but the time allotted for this subject is so limited that our remarks must be confined to the major points of the chapter.

In the fourteenth verse we have reference to the reign of death. What is the reign of death? What was this passage of death upon all men? The apostle says that “death reigned from Adam to Moses.” He does not mean by this that it did not reign at any other time, and that it does not reign at the present time. The part of the verse referring to Adam and Moses is a part of a great argument, which has its starting point back in chapter four. It is a part of his argument on Abraham.

The argument in a nutshell is that the entering in of the law did not in any way interfere with the promise to Abraham. In Romans 4:13–14 we are told that the promise “that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” In these verses the apostle is proving in a practical manner that the law does not enter into man’s justification at all; that justification is solely by faith, and not by works. Why is it that the law does not enter into the justification of man? “Because the law worketh wrath.” Romans 4:15.

If Abraham had been left to be justified by the works of the law, there would have been nothing to be placed to his account but wrath, for that is all that the law can work. But on the other hand, when he is not justified by the law, which could only be the means of imputing wrath to him, and is justified by faith, then there is life placed to his account. And life is what is wanted, not wrath. Life is what all men desire, not wrath. Whoever seeks to be justified by his works will reap only wrath. Abraham will receive the inheritance only by the virtue of the promise, and he will receive his righteousness only by the faith that he had.

Some think that there are two ways of being saved, because the Lord gave the law at Sinai, and death had reigned till that time, so of course that means that the law brought life. It is true that the Lord gave the law at Sinai; but the law was in the world long before it was given at Sinai. Abraham had the law, and through

E.J. Waggoner is best known for his collaboration with A.T. Jones in emphasizing righteousness by faith at the 1888 General Conference.
the righteousness of faith he was able to keep that law. So the entering in of the law at Sinai did not militate against the promise of God to Abraham. There was no different phase of the plan of salvation introduced at Mount Sinai, or at the time of the Exodus. There was no more law after that time than there was before it. Abraham kept the law. If there had not been any law there, Abraham could never have been justified; but he kept the law by his faith. Death reigned through sin before the time of Moses, but righteousness was imputed unto life. This shows that the law was all there already, although they did not have it in that written, open form, that they had it afterwards.

In regard to the reign of death, I am persuaded that we lose much of the good and the encouragement that is in this fifth chapter simply by the misapplying of these words—“death reigned,” and also the expression “death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned.” Why did death pass upon all men? Because that all had sinned. By one man sin came into the world. There are many who will stop at this point, and philosophize and question, as to how this could be, and try to figure out for themselves the justice of it. They will query why it is that we are here in this sinful condition, without having had any choice or say in the matter ourselves. Now we know that there was one man in the beginning, and he fell. We are his children, and it is impossible for us to be born in any higher condition than he was.

Some will shut themselves out of eternal life because they cannot figure that thing out to a nicety and see the justice of it. The finite mind of man cannot do this, so it is better for him to leave it alone, and devote himself to seeking for the proffered salvation. That is the important point for all to consider. We know that we are in a sinful condition, and that this sinful condition, is a lost condition. Seeing then, that we are in a lost condition, is it not best for us to devote our energies to seeking to attain to that state whereby we may be in a saved condition?

What would you think of a man drowning in the ocean, who, when someone throws him a rope, looks at it, and then says: “I know that I am drowning, and that the only hope I have lies in my getting hold of that rope; but I will not take hold of it unless I know that it has really been my own fault that I fell into the water. If it was my own fault, then I will take it, because I am the only one who is to blame for my being in this condition. But if, on the other hand, someone pushed me into the water, and I could not help myself, then I will have nothing to do with that rope.” Such a man would be considered devoid of common sense. Then, acknowledging that we are sinners, and in a lost condition, let us take hold of the salvation that is offered to us.

“Death reigned,” it “passed upon all men.” The twelfth and eighteenth verses tell us what this death is. Why did it pass? Because that “all have sinned.” “Judge-ment came upon all!” What for? What to?—Condemnation. We are familiar with death; we see people being placed in their graves every day. But is that the death referred to? Good men die: with only two exceptions, all the good men that have ever lived upon the earth have died. Do they die under condemnation? No, certainly not. Do they die because they are sinners? No, if they were sinners, they were not good men. There has been no man in this world upon whom the death sentence has not passed, for there never was a man in this world that was not a sinner, and if he became a good man so that he walked with God as Enoch did, it was by faith.

If we say that the death which comes to all men—good and bad, old and young alike—is the carrying out of that judgment which “came upon all men to condemnation,” then we take the position that there is no hope for any one who has died. For there is no such thing as probation after death, and therefore the man who dies in sin can never be accounted righteous. If it is said that the good do not die in sin, but only because of sins previously committed, the justice of God is impugned, and His imputed righteousness denied. For when God declares His righteousness upon the one who believes, that man stands as clear as though he had never sinned, and cannot be punished as a sinner, unless he denies the faith. Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

When Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, the Lord told him, “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:17. That does not mean “dying thou shalt die,” as the marginal reading has it. That expression is neither Hebrew nor English. It means just what it says, that in the day that Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in that day he died. In the very day that Adam ate of the fruit, he fell, and the

I am persuaded that we lose much of the good and the encouragement that there is in this fifth chapter simply by the misapplying of these words... “death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned.” Why did death pass upon all men? Because that all had sinned.
There is no life to the wicked; they have no life; they are dead. Said Christ: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. Christ came to give life to the dead. He gives life only to those who conscientiously lay hold of that life, who bring His life into their lives, so that it takes the place of their forfeited lives. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." I John 5:12. He is dead.

The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Are all men going to be justified? All men might if they would; but says Christ: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." John 5:40.

So Adam died; and because of that, every man born into the world is a sinner, and the sentence of death is passed upon him. Judgment has passed upon all men to condemnation, and there is not a man in this world but has been under the condemnation of death. The only way that he can get free from that condemnation and that death, is through Christ, who died for him, and who, in His own body, bore our sins upon the cross. He bore the penalty of the law, and suffered the condemnation of the law for us, not for Himself, for He was sinless.

"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin... even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." What is the free gift? It is the free gift by grace, and it appertaineth unto many. The work of Adam plunged man into sin; the work of Christ brings men out of sin. One man's single offense plunged many into many offenses; but the one man's obedience gathers the many offenses of many men, and brings them out from beneath the condemnation of those offenses.

Then the free gift is the righteousness of Christ. How do we get the righteousness of Christ? We cannot separate the righteousness of Christ from Christ Himself. Therefore in order for men to get the righteousness of Christ, they must have the life of Christ. So the free gift comes upon all men who are justified by the life of Christ. Justification is life. It is the life of Christ. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." These are simple and positive statements. No good can come to man by questioning them. He only reaps barrenness to his soul. Let us accept them and believe them.

"The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Are all men going to be justified? All men might if they would; but says Christ: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." John 5:40. All are dead in trespasses and sins. The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared unto all men. It comes right within the reach of all men, and those who do not get it are those who do not want it.

"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." That settles the whole question, as to whether you and I can do works that will make us righteous. It is by the obedience of one man. Now which man shall that be? Can I do righteousness that will do you any good?—No. Can you do righteousness that will do me any good?—No. Suppose that one man could do righteous works that would be set to his account as making him righteous—who shall he be? I cannot do it for you, and you cannot do it for me. Then who is the man? Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

This settles the question as to whether justification by faith comes by the law. By the obedience of Christ are many made righteous or obedient. Righteousness is obedience to the law. Did you ever read or hear of any human being who kept the law perfectly? Or did you ever hear of anyone, however high his standard was, who did not find something beyond, that he had not attained to? Even worldly men often have an ideal of their own; but the nearer they can come to that ideal, the greater lack they see in themselves. Anyone who is sincere in trying to reach a high standard, when he gets there, will see something beyond it.

There is one spotless life. There is one man, the man Christ Jesus, who resisted successfully all the powers of sin, when He was here upon earth. He was the Word made flesh. God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself. He could stand before the world, and challenge any to convict Him of sin. No guile was found in His mouth. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" (Hebrews 7:26) and by His obedience shall many be made righteous.

Then comes the question, How can this be? It is the same question that the Jews propounded to Christ, when He said, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." See John 6:53–56. Said they, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" John 6:52. There are many today who may be found asking the same question when they say, How can I have His life or His righteousness? Could Jesus explain to them how He could give them His flesh? He could not do it except by the words He spake unto them—they are spirit and they are life. The plan of salvation cannot be explained to man. It was made by an infinite being, and we cannot understand it. As to how it takes place we are ignorant. Through all eternity we will not understand how it was done. It is only infinite power that can or could do it; it is only infinite wisdom that can understand it.

If we will eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood, we will have the life of Christ. If we have His life, we have a righteous life; His obedienc works in us, and that makes us righteous. This does not leave any room for the statement that Christ obeyed for us, and that therefore we can do as we please, and His righteousness will be accounted unto us just the same. His obedience must be manifested in us day by day. It is not our obedience, but the obedience of Christ working in us. By those "exceeding great and precious promises," (2 Peter 1:4) we take the divine life into us. The life we live is the life of the Son of God. He died for us, and loved us with a love that we cannot fathom. The righteousness that we have is His. Thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift. He lets us get all the benefit of that obedience, because we have shown our intense desire for obedience. That is why He gives it to us.

When you go to God, take these scriptures on your lips: "We shall be saved by His life." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Take
them to God in prayer. They are true, for the Lord Himself has said so. How can these blessings be obtained? By faith! Take it by faith, and it is yours, and no one can take it from you. Then you will have it, although you do not understand how it can be done. When you have it, you have life. What life? The divine life. Then when you come up to the time of temptation, the time when you have usually fallen, you can tell Satan that he has no power to make you fall beneath that temptation, for it is not you, but Christ that dwelleth in you.

There never was a time in the life of any man when of himself he had power to resist temptation. We cannot do it. That proves that we must have a life different from our natural life in order to resist sin at all. That must be a life that sin has never touched and can never touch. Repeat the glorious words over and over again, “His life is mine, I cannot be touched by sin. His strength is my strength; His obedience is my obedience, and His life is my life. That was a sinless life, and by faith I have it. I hold to it because it is mine, and sin cannot touch it.” That is the only way to resist them, and that will be successful every time.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Verses 20–21.

The time of the entering in of the law was the time when it was spoken from Sinai. It entered that the offense, or sin, might abound. But where that sin abounded, grace did much more abound. There was sin in the world before that law was proclaimed from Sinai. Therefore the law was there before it was proclaimed from Sinai. But God spoke it in that awful way, and in those thunder tones from the mount, for the purpose that sin might seem to be a greater sin. It was done that the people might see sin more as God saw it.

These things were written for our benefit. The speaking of that law in thunder tones, with such a solemn scene of grandeur all around it, is to have the same effect on us that it had on the children of Israel. We are to see the thunder clouds and the lightning, and they are to strike terror into our hearts.

Still further: Whoever touched the mount was to die. What is meant by that? All that was intended to show the awfulness of the law. It was given in that way that the people might see the wonderful majesty that it had, and that by it no man could get life. It was so great that no man could keep it. Everything connected with its giving conspired to show man that the only thing he could get by it was death. It was so great, so inexplicably great, that they never could reach to the heights of it. It was given in that way to show the people that there was only death and condemnation to them in it.

Then was not the law just given to put discouragement into the hearts of the people? No; go back to Abraham, and we shall see what else was taught by the giving of the law. There was a promise to Abraham and to his righteous seed, of a righteous inheritance. That promise was sworn to Abraham and to his seed by God Himself. God had pledged His own existence that there should be righteous men—men whose righteousness should be equal to the righteousness of the law. But here was the law in such awful majesty that there could be no righteousness gotten out of it. It was to be the sole standard. Now put two things together: The law is so holy in its claims and nature that no man can get any righteousness out of it, as was shown in the giving of it; but God had sworn that there should be men who would have all the righteousness that it demands; therefore the very giving of the law served to show the people that there must be and was another way of getting that same righteousness.

So in giving the law, He was giving the gospel in thunder tones. Righteousness and peace dwell together in fullness in Christ. So in Him is life. Condemnation is in the law; but the law is in Christ; and in Christ is also life. In Christ we get the righteousness of the law by His life. The voice that declared the law from Sinai, was the voice of Christ, the voice of the very One who has this righteousness to bestow.

Now see the force of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:2–3. “And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people.” Emphasis supplied.

The giving of that law was one of the highest manifestations of love that could be; because it preached to the people in the strongest tones that there was life in Christ. The One who gave the law, was the One who brought them out of Egypt. He was the One who swore to Abraham that he and his seed should be righteous, and this showed to them that they could not get righteousness in the law; but that they could get it through Christ. So there was a superabundance of grace; for where sin, by the giving of the law did abound, there grace did much more abound. That thing is acted out every time that there is a sinner converted. Before his conversion he does not realize the sinfulness of his sins. Then the law comes in and shows him how awful those sins are; but with it comes the gentle voice of Christ, in whom there is grace and life.

Then when you come up to the time of temptation, the time when you have usually fallen, you can tell Satan that he has no power to make you fall beneath that temptation, for it is not you, but Christ that dwelleth in you.

How precious it is to have that conviction of sin sent to our hearts, for we know that it is a part of the work of the Comforter whom God sends into the world to convict of sin. It is a part of the comfort of God to convict of sin; because the same hand that convicts of sin holds the pardon, that as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. In this grace we have again those precious words—much more. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

The Lord searches the heart, and He knows our sins. Shall we go about mourning and sighing, and saying our sins are so great that God cannot forgive such sinners as we are? Some people seem to fancy that God never knew that they had any sins. Then they say that they
A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. When fastings and prayers are practiced in a self-justifying spirit, they are abominable to God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposed sacrifice—all proclaim to the world the testimony that the door of these things considers himself righteous. These things call attention to the observer of rigorous duties, saying, This man is entitled to heaven. But it is all a deception. Works will not buy for us an entrance into heaven. The one great Offering that has been made is ample for all who will believe. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. . . .

"Faith in Christ will be the means whereby the right spirit and motive will actuate the believer, and all goodness and heavenly-mindedness will proceed from him who looks unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith. . . . By beholding Christ, you will become changed, until you will hate your former pride, your former vanity and self-esteem, your self-righteousness and unbelief. You will cast these sins aside as a worthless burden, and walk humbly, meekly, trustfully, before God. You will practice love, patience, gentleness, goodness, mercy, and every grace that dwells in the child of God, and will at last find a place among the sanctified and holy." Selected Messages, book 1, 388.

"The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus." The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1977. Emphasis supplied by the editors.

In His sermon on the mount, Christ presented to the people the fact that personal piety was their strength. They were to surrender themselves to God, working with Him with unreserved cooperation. High pretensions, forms, and ceremonies, however imposing, do not make the heart good and the character pure. True love for God is an active principle, a purifying agency. The scribes and the Pharisees appeared to be very pugnacious in living out the letter of the law; but Christ said to His disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20. What a startling declaration was this! It made manifest the insufficiency of legal or natural religion, and showed the need of moral renovation and the necessity of divine enlightenment. . . . "Christ presented their religion as devoid of saving faith. It was a combination of dry, hard doctrines, intermingled with sacrifices and offerings. They were very particular to practice circumcision, but they did not teach the necessity of having a pure heart. They exalted the commandments of God in words, but refused to exalt them in practice; and their religion was only a stumbling block to men. . . . The only true faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. It is as leaven that transforms human character. The truth brought into the soul temple cleanses it of moral defilement." The Review and Herald, April 30, 1895.

There is a legal religion, which the Pharisees had, but such religion does not give to the world a Christlike example; it does not represent Christ's character. Those who have Christ abiding in the heart will work the works of Christ. Such are entitled to all the promises of His Word. Becoming one with Christ, they do the will of God, and exhibit the riches of His grace." Ibid., August 4, 1891.

"A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit, is an abomination in the sight of God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposing sacrifice, proclaim that the door of these things...
regards himself as righteous, and as entitled to heaven, but it is all a deception. Our own works can never purchase salvation.” *The Desire of Ages*, 280.

“A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, institute of contortion, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners. They were like the salt that had lost its savor; for their influence had no power to preserve the world from corruption. The only true faith is that which ‘worketh by love’ (Galatians 5:6) to purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character.” *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 53.

“As time is fast closing, we should keep before the mind the spirituality of the law, and the utter worthlessness of a formal, ceremonial obedience to the commandments, involved in a legal religion.” *General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1896.

“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness.” Maranatha, 70.

“The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy.

“Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

“Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind. If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their only true faith is that which ‘worketh by love’ (Galatians 5:6) to purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character. . . . Jesus proceeded to show His hearers what it means to keep the commandments of God—that it is a reproduction in themselves of the character of Christ. For in Him, God was daily made manifest before them.” *Reflecting Christ*, 69.

“They [the Pharisees] were exalted to heaven in point of opportunity, in having the Scriptures, in knowing the true God, but their hearts were not filled with thankfulness to God for His great goodness toward them.

There are many who will be lost, because they depend on legal religion, or mere repentance for sin. But repentance for sin alone cannot work the salvation of any soul.
Abraham: God’s Representative
Continued from 16
judgment; that the Lord may bring upon
Abraham that which he hath spoken of
Abraham’s unselfish life made him
indeed a “spectacle unto the world, and to
angels, and to men.” And the Lord de-
clared He would bless those who blessed
Abraham, and that He would punish
those who misused or injured him.
Through Abraham’s experience in his
religious life a correct knowledge of Je-
hovah has been communicated to thou-
sands; and his light will shed its beams all
along the path of those who practice the
piety, the faith, the devotion, and the
obedience of Abraham.

Abraham had a knowledge of Christ;
for the Lord had enlightened him in regard
to the world’s Redeemer. And he made
known to his household and his children
that the sacrificial offerings prefigured
Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to be
slain for the sins of the world. Thus he
gathered converts to believe in the only
true and living God.
The Lord accepted Abraham’s faith
and his unquestioning obedience. While
as yet the patriarch had no child, when the
Canaanites dwelt in the land, and when he
could only claim a place in it as a stranger
and a sojourner, the Lord welcomed him
to the Promised Land, and assured him
that the land would be given to him and to
his posterity for a possession.

Bible Studies on Romans 5
Part 2
Continued from 24
are not worthy that He should take their
sins away. They cannot see how He can
save them. Who is it that makes us feel
sinful? Who shows us our unworthiness?
How do we come to find out that we have
sinned? It is God that shows us our sins.
He had known them all the time. We do
not consider this—that God has known
all our sins beforehand, and that He it is
who shows them to us for the first time,
when we are convicted of sin by Him.
When God made the plan of salvation,
He knew what He was doing. He knew the
human heart. He knew the depth of degra-
dation to which humanity would fall, as no
man has ever known it. Now, by His law He
drives the sins home to our hearts, and then
that sin abounds in the proportion that it
should. It was small in our eyes before; but
He makes us see it as He sees it.
Remember it is the Comforter that
convicts. Remember that where sin
abounds in your heart, or in your mind,
that there grace does much more abound.
It is your firm belief of that that makes
the grace effective in taking away the sin.
Christ is able to save to the uttermost him
that cometh to God by Him. You cannot
ask anything of Him so good or so great,
but what He is able to do it and—much
more.

Early Experiences
Continued from 20
passed without a realization of their
widely proclaimed certainty of entering
eternal rest at a given time, it ought not to
be thought strange that there should ap-
pear among the disappointed ones promi-
nent types of fanaticism.
While some bravely maintained their
pose under the strain, assuming to believe
that their disappointment was but the re-
sult of discrepant chronology, and that by
waiting patiently the tarrying time could
not possibly extend beyond 1847, others
maintained that no loophole for mistaken
time could be found.
From reading the annals of that time,
one would almost conclude that the entire
field was given to sparring debates, as a
delightful pastime. The Voice of Truth,
later known as the Advent Harbinger, was
edited by Joseph Marsh. In nearly every
instance he took issue with the articles
contributed to his paper, as if he alone
were the supreme judge of divine truth.
Doubtless Mr. Marsh felt keenly over the
divided sentiment of the Advent leaders;
f or in an editorial in his paper of Decem-
ber 23, 1846, in reply to an article from
J. B. Cook on the divine guidance of the
advocacy of the Lord’s speedy return, he
said:
“The Second Advent movement in the
aggregate, doubtless is from heaven. The
sure word of prophecy proves this. But in
its minute details—the errors, false doc-
tines, fanciful and wild theories, notions,
dreams and visions, delusions and fanati-
cisms, bitter wranglings, unholy divi-
sions, and dark corruptions of any of those
who were once honestly and truly in this
movement—these we cannot attribute to
divine guidance, or providence. No, no;
an enemy hath done these things.”
But this condition had become deeply
rooted. The minds of the Advent leaders
were in such a turmoil that none could see
anything except the mistakes of all theo-
ries but his own. It was this sad state of
affairs that precluded the possibility of
study upon the real meaning of the sanctu-
ary cleansing. Sometimes writers would
nearly approach the point of discovery
when by some mysterious turn of the
mind, the truth slipped away and was lost.
It may therefore readily be seen how
necessary it was for some gentle mouth-
piece of God to arise, and attempt the
difficult task of bringing unity.

As Abraham and other holy men of old
were a light in their generation, so must
God’s people be a light in the world. The
beams of heaven’s attractive loveliness
are to shine forth from us, showing the
only good and right way, and ever show-
ing the superiority of God’s law above
every human enactment. Bible religion is
not to be hidden away in the dark. It
delights to be examined. Every additional
ray of light that shines upon our pathway
is, in God’s plan, a fresh element of
strength, an added power by which to
draw the world to God.

The Youth’s Instructor, March 4, 1897.

Bible Studies on the Book of Romans, by
E. J. Waggoner, 28–36.

June 1994  Our Firm Foundation  27
Eight Steps to Christian Perfection

B e perfect, therefore even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. Perfection is difficult to attain. Very few people want to confront the reality of perfection. I did not; now I sit in prison.

Though I once was “free” in the world, I was bound by Satan, and far from perfect. Now I am “bound” by the world, but free and perfect in Jesus Christ.

God has promised trials and tribulations to discipline those who love Him, and those He loves. I loved Him. He loved me. But I did not realize how far I had fallen. Unfortunately, the church did not send a clear signal of what sin is and of how to be perfect. Therefore I was tossed about by a sea of doubt and temptations.

With time on my hands while in prison, I have been able to study the Scriptures without distraction. For the past three years I have come closer and closer to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Philippians 3:7–11.

I understand this feeling. I feel a kinship with Paul. I have lost all earthly things—my business, family, home, car, indoor swimming pool. I have no money. I have nothing. Yet through it all, I have found riches beyond compare.

I would like to share some thoughts on what I have learned. Maybe my experience will help to keep someone else from learning the hard way. Prison is a hard place to be disciplined. But I prefer to be in prison rather than to be cast into the lake of fire.

The first lesson I learned was that God is Love. I had heard that all my life in Sabbath school and church. But I used it as a panacea, an excuse to continue my life of sin. Now I understand God’s love in its true application. His love will destroy the sinner. Only when we turn to God and away from sin can God’s love be fully experienced in our lives. Even though I am being disciplined because of my sin and its natural results, God loves me. From the second I gave my heart to Him, He began working for me, easing the pain of the disciplinary process. Miracles happened. Miracles continue to happen.

“Not that I have already attained this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12–14.

After learning this lesson I began to search the Bible for a plan. I am a very organized person. I ran a business by an organized, thoughtful outline. The Bible

Henry Johnson is presently a prisoner and writes under a pen name.
tells us that we will be successful if we follow plans. Therefore it was only natural for me to look for a plan for my salvation. The God who keeps the world and universe in perfect order by immutable laws of physics, must have a plan for my perfection. He does!

When I found this plan, I was so awed by it that it took a long time for its full significance to break upon me. I am still examining it; not for confirmation as to its truth, but for its deep, deep spiritual significance that will change my life.

Before I introduce you to what I call the “Eight Steps to Christian Perfection,” I want to introduce you to its author.

Its author was a Galilean, a fisherman by trade. He and a partner owned and operated a small fishing business that was rather successful. From the record, it appears that they owned a boat.

He was rough and considered “uneducated” by the educated classes. Not that he could not read or write, but he did not have a “higher” education.

But there was one thing in his favor. He was searching for something better. He was not satisfied with his life. Not that he wanted to change occupations; he was just searching for meaning, looking for the Messiah in his life.

He was rough in his speech, as many fishermen are. I imagine, as I sit here among the rough in prison, that I can see a likeness to Peter in many of these men. He was not a bad person; he just had some ideas and some ways of expressing them that the local rabbinical community did not approve. In fact, they would rather not come in contact with him and his kind at all.

Peter was loud, offensive in speech and, more often than not, he spoke without first thinking of the consequences of his words.

One time Jesus was speaking of the suffering that He would have to endure. Peter rebuked Him. Jesus in turn rebuked Peter saying, “Get behind me, Satan!” He said, “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Mark 8:33.

Peter had a good heart; he just needed to have it remade, and brought into submission to God. Many of us have good hearts, but a good heart will not save us. We must be reborn into the image and character of God.

Finally, there is that infamous occasion when Peter vowed he would never forsake Jesus. Yet Peter denied Him three times. Poor impulsive, self-sufficient Peter! He turned and looked into the face of his Redeemer, that face of love. As he looked into those eyes of the One who had already forgiven him, Peter’s heart was broken. His pride, self, temper, all the elements of sin in his life, became painfully apparent to him. He went out and wept.

Peter had walked with Jesus for three years. He had beheld Christ’s every look, every touch, every word of love. Only twice do we have a record of Jesus rebuking Peter, though I am sure Peter presented many an opportunity for rebuke. Through it all, Peter learned the “Eight Steps to Christian Perfection.” After that night of self-revelation when he denied his Lord, Peter was a different man. The old Peter died; the new Peter was born.

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22–24.

Peter started imitating God. In a way, my experience was like that of Peter. When the cell door closed on me, I looked into the face of Love and saw how disappointing I had been to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. At that moment I died to my old self; and I became alive in the new life.

After Jesus rose from the tomb, He met with the disciples and had breakfast with them. Three times Peter had denied Jesus. Now Jesus had to draw out of Peter his commitment to Him. “When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’”

‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’

“Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’

“Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’

“He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’

“Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’

“The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’

“Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Lord you know all things; you know that I love you.’


Peter was heartbroken that Christ would need to ask. But He understood. He submitted. No longer boastful, no longer self-centered, he fell upon the infinite, knowing God and confessed that which

Peter had a good heart; he just needed to have it remade, and brought into submission to God. Many of us have good hearts; but a good heart will not save us. We must be reborn into the image and character of God.

only God knew. Three times Peter denied and three times Peter affirmed his love.

The last words Jesus said to Peter were “Follow me.” John 21:19. This admonition became the theme of each disciple. But for Peter, it became the driving force behind his life. To follow Jesus.

How do I do that? How do I follow Jesus? That was my question. Peter revealed it to me. Nineteen centuries ago, Peter wrote down the “Eight Steps to Christian Perfection” so that I could know how to follow Jesus.

I invite you to turn with me to 2 Peter 1:3–8. Peter here unlocks the secret to Christian perfection. If anyone should know this secret, Peter should. His life became an example of perfection. He lived the perfect life after his conversion. Let us start with verse 3:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

His divine power. The Christian life-walk cannot be accomplished with our efforts alone. It is through the divine power of God that we become changed. This power gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Everything! There is nothing that cannot be conquered or achieved through God’s power. Nothing. Perfection is already ours. Now. But it can only come through knowledge of Him. Only through the study of the life of
Christ can we imitate His perfect life. By beholding we become like Him—perfect in character.

Verse 4:

"Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

It is hard for me to express the overwhelming emotion that swept over me causing me to weep with joy, when I realized that I no longer had to live in sin; that I could participate in the divine nature. Not only could I have the divine nature, but I could also escape the corruption in the world caused by evil. I understood that. I was tired of being under the corruption of the world. I wanted the divine nature.

Promises. Promises. Promises. You must understand, as I have come to understand, that only through promises can we attain to Christ’s perfection. You see, GOD CANNOT LIE. (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2) HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF. God must fulfill His promises. Therefore, your duty is to learn them, and the conditions that apply to them. Once I understood that truth, God’s perfection became mine. Life became so much fun as I reminded God of His promises and watched Him fulfill them.

Now that we have laid the foundation for the "Eight Steps to Christian Perfection," let us explore them in verses 5-7.

Step One—FAITH

This step is the foundation. The other seven steps are built on this step. You cannot take any other step without this first step. Faith recognizes that there is a God; that there is a heaven to win and a hell to avoid; that God will reward each person for what he does, good or bad. Be assured, you will be judged by God’s standard, not yours.

FAITH brings JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION. The moment you accept God as your Saviour, you are justified. No matter how sinful you are, the moment you recognize your need of a Saviour, the blood of Jesus covers you. If you should die at that moment, you would be saved. But if you live, you must from then on live in sanctification. Sanctification describes the walk up the remaining seven steps.

Step Two—GOODNESS

Now that we have accepted Jesus as our standard, we must show that acceptance in our lives. Starting immediately, we must live up to all that we know to be right. That is GOODNESS. We must obey the traffic laws, pay our taxes, and so on. This second step eases us into the Christian way and helps us to start doing something for God, even though we may not know much about the Christian life.

Common courtesies, correct speech, helpfulness, civil obligations are now followed and obeyed. This lifestyle is what Peter calls the "milk" of the Word.

Step Three—KNOWLEDGE

Now comes the challenging part. To test our desire to truly serve God, we must study His Word to find what He wants us to do. Doctrines, health principles and every other aspect of the Christian walk must be studied. This KNOWLEDGE is what makes sanctification the work of a lifetime.

When we discover a new piece of information, we must then return to step one. Again, we are incapable of alone obeying anything God requires of us. We must return to step one and acquire more faith to obey each requirement that God reveals to us. Every step is to be founded on faith.

It is at this step that most "Christians" stop being Christians. They continue to walk up and down steps one, two and three. Unless we continue up the ladder, we are lost, and will never attain to the perfection of character to which God calls us.

A notable feature of this ladder is its individuality. I cannot climb your ladder. You cannot climb my ladder. As with Jacob, each ladder must reach from us individually to God. Each of us must climb at our own pace. Therefore, I can not judge any other person in his Christian walk. I can only keep my feet on my ladder and my eyes on Jesus.

At the step of KNOWLEDGE we are to ask, seek and knock so that we may have revealed to us all that God wants us to have.

Step Four—SELF-CONTROL

Once we learn our duty from Scripture, we must put forth every effort to fulfill our duty. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13–14.

If you find that your duty is to tell the truth, you must develop habits of truthfulness. If you find that God requires you to stop stealing, you must develop habits of honesty.

When we know our duty, and place our will on the side of God to accomplish His will, He then gives us the strength, by His power and Holy Spirit, to succeed. But it takes striving. It is not a casual effort. It is hard work, a sweating-unto-blood, experience. "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Hebrews 12:4.

Step Five—PERSEVERANCE

As you put self-control into action, you will find that it must be continued. "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." 1 Timothy 4:16.

It cannot be a one-time experience. Perseverance, or patience is patiently continuing in our Christian walk. 1 John 3:6 says, "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning."

Step Six—GODLINESS

Another form of, or word for, GODLINESS, is given in the Greek as "piety." At this point in our life we should be developing an attitude of piety, humility, servitude. "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of
doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” 1 Peter 2:12.

Up to this point, the Christian fight has been mostly internal, developing internal habits of righteousness, and a growing personal experience and walk with God. Getting to know Him. Now this personal experience must bear fruit and be seen by all men in our everyday walk. In our home, business, and civic responsibilities. If our walk is sincere, all will see the true results of the working of the Spirit of God on our hearts.

**Step Seven—BROTHERLY KINDNESS**

The test of true Christianity comes even closer home with this step. It may be easy to stop lying, give up the smoking habit and perform our civic duties in a generic way. Anyone can cloister himself away from the world and live the “righteous life.” But God calls us to exhibit BROTHERLY KINDNESS in this step. We must forgive those in our Christian circle of friends. We must care for those within our church community. We must give ourselves for the blessing of those who claim the name of Jesus and are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Here the Christian walk becomes steeper. It was fine as long as it was limited to my personal needs, such as going to church, and reading my Bible. But now I must begin to lay down my life for the good of the church family.

**Step Eight—LOVE**

Now comes the supreme test. Far above our own responsibilities, beyond our responsibilities to those we know and call brothers and sisters, we must now exhibit true LOVE to those who even persecute us. To those who hate us. To those who are “strangers.” “Who is my neighbor?” was asked almost 2000 years ago. True LOVE will move us to give, as Jesus gave, our lives for those who do not care. To go the extra mile. To turn the other cheek.

Here in prison, I have begun to understand these “Eight Steps to Christian Perfection.” Here I find the whole world compressed into an acre of space. Here I am confronted daily by all the aspects of life. On the outside, you can hide in the safety of your home, school, church, or retreat to the mountains. Here, there is no place to hide. One is forced to confront and decide, “How will I live?”

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