CONFRONTATION
Right or Wrong?

See Nehemiah 13: 7-25.
We now stand at the edge of the great abyss. Seventh-day Adventists who are daily preparing for eternity are watching the rapid movements which are catapulting us toward the final crisis, the close of probation, the plagues, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The evidence is overwhelming that our stay in this sin-cursed world could be very short. If God’s faithful, loyal, and obedient people will rally now to the banner of our Leader, the last movements will be very rapid, and Jesus will cut His work short in righteousness. “For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Romans 9:28.

“We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude....”

“The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thiefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 11.

God’s stirring message admonishes us: “Be quick to recognize and seize every opportunity and advantage offered in the turning of the wheel of providence. God and Christ and the heavenly angels are working with intense activity to hold in check the fierceness of Satan’s wrath, that God’s plans may not be thwarted. God lives and reigns. He is conducting the affairs of the universe. Let His soldiers move forward to victory. Let there be perfect unity in their ranks. Let them press the battle to the gates. As a mighty Conqueror, the Lord will work for them.

“Let the gospel message ring through our churches, summoning them to universal action. Let the members of the church have increased faith, gaining zeal from their unseen, heavenly allies, from a knowledge of their exhaustless resources, from the greatness of the enterprise in which they are engaged, and from the power of their Leader. Those who place themselves under God’s control, to be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events ordained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotence, pointing to what they cannot do. Putting on the armor of heaven, they will go forth to the warfare, willing to do and dare for God, knowing that His omnipotence will supply their need.” Ibid., vol. 7, 14.

Soon, very soon, Daniel’s prophecy will overtake the unprepared. There will be a short time of trouble such as there has never been in the history of the 6,000 years of the great controversy. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

His advent will come suddenly, as an awful surprise to both the wise and the foolish virgins, as explained by our Saviour in Matthew 25. But only the wise virgins who have daily studied and prayed, who have worn the robe of Christ’s righteousness will be part of the great wedding ceremony in heaven. Again God speaks to us through His prophet:

“My heart is filled with anguish when I think of the same messages borne by some of our ministers, when they have a message of life and death to bear. The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world. Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message.” Ibid., vol. 8, 37.

Jesus tells us that many are called, but few will be chosen. See Matthew 22:14. The majority of Seventh-day Adventists will be lost because they made inadequate preparation. See ibid., vol. 5, 15–83; vol. 8, 41.

Many church members, though they have faithfully attended church and paid a faithful tithe, will be destitute of the character of Christ which constitutes fitness for heaven—a requirement for entrance into the city of God. What a tragedy! May God help us now to awake out of our sleep, our Laodicean slumber. I pray that daily we will make the preparation needed through study and prayer and obedience to all knowledge.

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

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.
The Sanctuary

Part 6

The Scapegoat

The ministry in the Most Holy being finished, it yet remained for the priest to bear out the sins from the sanctuary, place them upon the head of the scapegoat and send him away by the hand of a fit man into a land not inhabited. Leviticus 16:20–22. This ceremony as performed in the type we have already noticed. We now inquire, what service connected with the more perfect tabernacle, answers to this, and to what being shall we look, as the one shadowed forth antecedently by the literal and typical goat, as, loaded with the sins of Israel, he went forth from the camp to be heard of no more forever? This point demands more particular notice, as here, again, we are led to differ very materially from the views which have generally obtained upon this subject.

Because John says, (chapter 1:29) “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh (margin, beareth,) away the sin of the world,” and because it is said of the scapegoat that he “shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited,” (Leviticus 16:22), it has been concluded, by some, that the latter is a type of the former.

From the view, however, that Christ is the antitype of the scapegoat, we are compelled to differ, for what we shall offer as very plain reasons:

1. If Christ, in bearing the sin of the world, fulfilled the antitype of the scapegoat, he must have accomplished it at the crucifixion; for Peter says of Him, “Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree.” 1 Peter 2:24. But in the type the goat was not sent away till after the cleansing of the sanctuary; hence the antitype of this work cannot be performed till after the termination of the 2300 days; for it is not till after those days have ended that the sanctuary is cleansed. Daniel 8:14; Hebrews 9:23. It is therefore impossible to carry this work back to the crucifixion of Christ, which was even before He commenced His ministration in the sanctuary above; and therefore He cannot be the antitype of the scapegoat.

2. Christ is our great High Priest, the Minister of the sanctuary; but the goat is something to be sent away by the priest: therefore he cannot be the priest himself: in other words, he cannot in this dispensation be Christ; but he must be a being whom Christ, after He had loaded him with the sins borne from the sanctuary, can send away into a land not inhabited.1

3. The goat was sent away from Israel into a land not inhabited, to be heard of no more forever. But Christ will dwell in the midst of His people, the true Israel of faith.

4. It is impossible that two goats, one of which was chosen by the Lord and is called the Lord's and was for a sin offering, while the other is not so called, but was left to perform an entirely different office;—it is impossible that these both should typify the same person.

From these considerations we think it must be evident to everyone that Christ cannot be the antitype of the Levitical scapegoat. Who then can be? We answer, The devil; and our reasons for this position are at hand:

1. We know of only two beings which anyone has ever thought could possibly be typified by the scapegoat; and these are Christ and Satan. We have shown above that the goat cannot be a type of Christ; we must therefore look to the devil for its fulfillment.

2. The Hebrew word for scapegoat, as given in the margin of Leviticus 16:8, is Azazel. On this verse, Jenks in his "Comprehensive Commentary" remarks, "Scapegoat. See diff. opin. in Bochart. Spencer after the oldest opinion of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks Azazel is the name of the devil; and so Rosenmire, whom see. The Syriac has Azzail, the angel (strong one) who revolted." The devil is here evidently pointed out. Thus we have the definition of the Scripture term in two ancient languages, with the

James White, husband of Ellen White, was ten years president of the General Conference as well as editor of several church publications.
oldest opinion of the Christians in favor of the view that the scapegoat is a type of Satan.

3. In the common acceptation of the word, the term scapegoat, is applied to any miserable vagabond who has become obnoxious to the claims of justice; and while it is revolting to all our conceptions of the character and glory of Christ, to apply this term to Him, it must strike everyone as a very appropriate designation of the devil, who is styled in the Scriptures the accuser, adversary, angel of the bottomless pit, Belzebub, Belial, dragon, enemy, evil spirit, father of lies, murderer, prince of devils, serpent, tempter, and so on.

4. Our fourth reason for this position is the very striking manner in which it harmonizes with the events to transpire in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as far as revealed to us in the Scriptures of truth.

We behold the type:
A. The sin of the transgressor imparted to the victim.
B. We see that sin borne in by the priest in the blood of the offering, into the sanctuary.
C. On the tenth day of the seventh month we see the priest with the blood of the sin offering for the people, remove all these sins from the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of the scapegoat.
D. The goat bears them away into a land not inhabited.

Answering to these events in the type, we behold in the antitype:
A. The great offering for the world made on Calvary.
B. The sins of all those who avail themselves of the merits of Christ’s shed blood, by faith in Him, in that blood are borne into the sanctuary.
C. After Christ, the minister of the true tabernacle, (Hebrews 8:2), has finished His ministration, He will remove the sins of His people from the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of their author, the antitypical scapegoat, the devil.
D. The devil will be sent away with them into a land not inhabited.

If we want a description of this event in plain terms we find it in Revelation 20:1–3: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up; and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.”

But if Satan is the antitypical scapegoat, it may be objected that he shares with Christ the honor of making the atonement. Not at all. The atonement is all made, the servants of God are pardoned and their sins all removed from them and from the sanctuary, before the devil is brought to take any part in the transaction. And what is the part he there performs? Simply receiving upon himself the infinite weight of sins which he has instigated, and being sent away under their intolerable load.

And here we would ask, What could be more fitting than that the author and instigator of all sin should receive the guilt of those transgressions which he has incited mortals to commit, but of which they have repented, back upon his own head? And what could be a more striking antitype of the ancient ceremony of sending away the scapegoat into the wilderness, than the act of the mighty angel in binding Satan and casting him into the bottomless pit at the commencement of the thousand years.

This is a point of transcendent interest to every believer. Then the sins of God’s people will be borne away to be remembered no more forever. Then he who instigated them will have received them back again. Then the serpent’s head will have been bruised by the seed of the woman. Then the “strong man,” (Satan), will have been bound by a stronger than he, (Christ), and the house of the strong man (the grave) spoiled of its goods, the saints. Matthew 12:29; Hebrews 2:14. Then will the work of the enemy, in sowing tares among the wheat, (Matthew 13:24–43), be forever remedied, the tares will have been gathered into bundles to burn, and the wheat gathered into the garner. Then our great High Priest will have come forth from the sanctuary to pronounce the everlasting blessing upon His waiting people. Then shall we have come unto the Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. Then will the redeemed, placing the foot of triumph upon the world, the flesh and the devil, raise their glad voices in the song of Moses and the Lamb. O glorious day! May the Lord hasten it in His good time. Who would not, in view of this, take up the petition of the beloved John, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” Revelation 22:20.

These are scenes to which the children of hope in this lower world love to look forward. On these hang their brightest anticipations. These are the very portals to the glorious city, and to their eternal inheritance.

These are scenes to which the children of hope in this lower world love to look forward. On these hang their brightest anticipations. These are the very portals to the glorious city, and to their eternal inheritance.

The question, “Why were those so grievously disappointed who looked for the Lord in 1844?” has now been answered. That disappointment arose not from any mistake in the time, for that was all correct; but from our mistaking the subject of the sanctuary. When we claimed that the earth was the sanctuary, and that the cleansing of the sanctuary was to be the renovation of the earth by fire, and that consequently, the Lord would be revealed from heaven in flaming fire for this very purpose at the end of the 2300 days, we claimed that which we had no warrant to expect. An examination of this subject would have shown us that the cleansing of the sanctuary which was then to take place, signified merely that our great High Priest would change His ministration from the holy to the Most Holy of the heavenly temple, there to finish up His work of mediation for the world.

But an explanation of our past disappointment is not all that is accomplished by the subject of the sanctuary. It throws over the great doctrine of the Lord’s soon coming, an air of nearness and certainty, beyond all other subjects. It is calculated to inspire in the church on earth a spirit of unwonted watchfulness, self-examination, and prayer. It becomes the grand and
radiant nucleus around which cluster the glorious constellations of present truth. How it opens to our understanding the plan of salvation! How it lifts the veil from the position of our Lord in heaven! What a halo of glory it throws upon His ministry! What a divine harmony it establishes in the Word of God! What a flood of light it pours upon past fulfillment of prophecy! How it fortifies the mighty truths of these last days! What a glory it sheds upon the future! With and commenced the work of its cleansing, as the prophecy declared, and that no jot nor title of what we were warranted to expect at that time, has in any wise failed.

Not only might the erroneous movements on time since 1844, have been avoided by a careful investigation of this subject, but we are guarded by it against any such work in the future. In the light of this truth no time can again be set for the coming of the Lord. To illustrate, could it declaring the opposite of this, which is that the wicked shall not stand therein. Psalm 1:5. It will hence be seen that Daniel does not stand in the “lot of his inheritance,” as has been expressed, but he stands in his lot in the decisions of the judgment of the righteous dead. He stands in his lot, with all the righteous dead, in the person of his Advocate. There is, therefore, nothing in this to prove that any of the prophetic periods extend to the coming of the Lord.

Being satisfied with regard to the termination of the prophetic periods, we are guarded also, by the subject of the sanctuary against giving up the past Advent movement, as a delusion, or ignoring the divine agency that produced it. We are prevented from misapplying the first and second messages of Revelation 14, as they were but proclamations preparatory to the sanctuary work; and we are as firmly fixed upon the third, since that work is its very root and foundation.

But we call attention more particularly to the connection which this subject has with a practice which constitutes one of our distinguishing features as a people—we mean the observance of the Lord’s Sabbath.

We read in Revelation, that “the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” Chapter 11:19. This ark of the testament, whether contemplated on the earth, as man was connected with it under the former dispensation, or in heaven as it is here introduced to us, is equally an object of interest.

Considering that the sanctuary of the first covenant was but a type or shadow of the sanctuary of this, which now exists in heaven, who will tell us that the ark of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, differs from the former, either in the purposes for which it was used, or the things which it contains? The ark of the earthly sanctuary was called the ark of the testimony, or testament, because it contained the tables of stone, on which were engraved by the finger of God the Ten Commandments, and just as He engraved them. Exodus 25:16, 22; 31:18. The ark of the heavenly sanctuary, called also the ark of His testament, as in the text above quoted (Revelation 11:19), must also contain similar tables, or it could not be called the “ark of his testament,” and could not be prefigured by the former.

The ark, then, under whatever dispensation we view it, suggests to our mind the same idea: the commandments of God, as He uttered them from Sinai, and engraved them with His own finger.
But who can suppose that thoughts of the ark, or the writing it contained, suggested to the mind of a Jew the observance of the first day of the week as a day of rest? Neither does it suggest such an idea to our minds; but quite another, according as the fourth commandment contained in it declares that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

Such are some of the considerations which naturally connect themselves with the ark of God. But, says Revelation, “The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” (chapter 11:19) therefore considerations like these have been, and are still agitating the minds of the people; and as we have seen by faith, through the declarations of His Word, those tables of the law carefully preserved in the holy temple of the Highest, we have received such overwhelming impressions of its immutability and perpetuity that we could do no otherwise than turn our feet to the keeping of all those holy commandments.

Here is a nail in a sure place. The tables of the testimony are enthroned in heaven. There they exist without liability of change or decay. Men may legislate and hold councils, pass decrees, and wage war against those who will acknowledge the claims of the royal law, but they cannot touch the law: as high as heaven from earth it still remains above their reach. What must man do to change it? He must ascend to heaven, burst through the angel guards into the sacred temple, dethrone Jehovah, wrest from the ark the mercy seat, and with his own would-be omnipotent finger, change the writing of the imperishable tables. And yet people will talk about the change of the law as a very little thing, or even proceed further and speak of its abolition. They might as well talk of abolishing heaven itself.

The temple has been opened in heaven, and there is seen the ark of His testament. “I have set before thee an open door,” says Jesus, “and no man can shut it.” Revelation 3:8. Men may endeavor with all their energies to obscure the claims of the law, but they cannot obscure them. They may raise all the stir they are able to raise amid the rubbish and dirt of earth, and joy over the dust they succeed in throwing into their own eyes; but we have only to look away to the heavenly sanctuary, and there we behold the ark of His testament, and in that ark the tables of the commandments, safely deposited beneath the eye of Him who slumbers not nor sleeps.

We now perceive a beauty, before unnoticed, in the work of redemption. Sin is the transgression of the law. The law is deposited in the ark. The cover of the ark is the mercy seat. Exodus 25:21. Before the mercy seat Christ pleads His blood for sinful man. Before the eyes of our Mediator therefore lies the law which we have transgressed, and which is the test of our characters. And now, reader, what think you? Can you with confidence approach the throne of grace, and plead with the Minister of the sanctuary for mercy until you are conscious that you are at least striving to keep every one of those commandments, just as they are engraved upon those tables which repose beneath the mercy seat before which He judges? Think well upon this point; and may the Lord help you to seek in a consistent manner remission of your sins, and justification by faith in Christ.

Thus the sanctuary becomes the great center and bulwark of truth on every hand. We do not say that a person cannot keep the Sabbath unless he believes in it; but we do say that a person cannot believe in it, and yet consistently, we may say honestly, refuse to observe the Sabbath.

Never lose sight of the sanctuary. When the carnal heart is venting its spite announce that God’s long-extended and long-abused mercy still lingers for a rebel world, is fulfilling His mission. With this message, all offers of amnesty and everlasting life on the part of the government of God forever cease. All that could be done for sinful, rebellious man has been done. Life has been freely offered. The Son of God has died to make an atonement for their transgressions. Yet a few more days will He plead His blood in the sanctuary in their behalf, ere the work is forever finished. The announcement that His mediation is consummated will soon be heralded from on high, announcing their day of triumph to His waiting church, and startling from their delusive dreams of peace and safety, a hapless world. The “great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne” will soon be heard saying, “It is done.” Revelation 16:17. The fearful decree is soon to go forth, “He which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.” Revelation 22:11.

May it not be in vain for us that the plan of salvation was ever devised; but when the sanctuary work which was set forth in shadow here upon earth, but which is now in hours of darkness, trial, temptation, and persecution, look to the sanctuary. There is light and glory there. There help has been laid upon One that is mighty. There our High Priest ministers for us; and thither our hope has entered within the veil.

against the law of God, look to the sanctuary. Amid all the opposition of “unreasonable men” against the commandments of God, look to the sanctuary. In hours of darkness, trial, temptation, and persecution, look to the sanctuary. There is light and glory there. There help has been laid upon One that is mighty. There our High Priest ministers for us; and thither our hope has entered within the veil. Hebrews 6:19-20.

Reader, remember that you have an interest in the great and momentous work which the world’s High Priest is now consummating before the ark of God in heaven. Whether men know it or not, their eternal interests center there. The last great act in the plan of salvation is being accomplished; and the last messenger, the third angel of Revelation 14, that is ever to be performed in fact and once for all, in the tabernacle in heaven, shall be finished, be it ours to be among the holy company who shall be holy still; to have on the wedding garment when the King shall come in to see the guests; to be prepared to join the ransomed of the Lord, when they shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; when the “tabernacle of God is with men,” and He shall dwell with them forevermore. Revelation 21:3.

Footnote

1. “Then he [the scapegoat] was led by a proper man into the wilderness, where he was to remain till his death. Jewish writers say the animal was thrown over a steep precipice, and so died.” Practical Lessons From the Experience of Israel for the Church of Today, F. C. Gilbert, 69.
Confrontation—Right or Wrong?

Do not suppose that this is the end. It is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year, unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigor we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in olden times.”

These were words of Winston Churchill, eleven months before the outbreak of hostilities in World War II. For Europe, the 1930s was a time of crisis. Appeasement was the order of the day. Undoubtedly, Adolf Hitler could have been turned aside if decisive action had been taken immediately.

If Hitler had been challenged at that time, the thrust for global conflict might have been avoided, but Europe claimed peace as if it were an inheritance. And even injustice, even genocide, and the unlawful expansion by armed might did not arouse in most people the awareness that such acts were repugnant to his delusions of grandeur. What were they to do? Those who perceptively weighed the obvious evidence at hand were subjected to criticism of the most malicious nature. They had their motives challenged as if their detractors had access somehow to the inner resources of their minds. It was an unpopular stand that Winston Churchill took, but it was right.

Six short months prior to the war an opinion poll in England found only seven percent of Churchill’s fellow Britains regarded him as a suitable successor to Neville Chamberlain as the holder of the highest office of the crown in the United Kingdom.

A difficult time, a difficult position. We too, have had our Munchs, which led only to the emboldening of those intent on increasing their territorial grip on our beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church. The bitter cup has been proffered to us year by year. Just as the last half of the 1930s saw the Ruhr takeover accepted, the enforced union of Austria with Germany condoned, the acquisition of Sudetenland exonerated, and the military occupation of Bohemia meekly countenanced, so Seventh-day Adventists, alert to the ruthless destruction of one doctrinal province after another, have had their earnest cries to halt the insatiable onslaught given interpretations entirely alien to their motives. Had decisive action been taken after the first sip, how few then might have been the casualties?

It is not easy to talk about confrontation. It was not easy for Winston Churchill. It was a very unpopular thing to do. It is not easy today, for sometimes we have to confront those who are our friends, those who are our associates. What are we going to do? Will we stand by and watch? Or will we take a stand?

Jesus Confronted Temptation

Let us turn to Luke, chapter four. Jesus had spent forty days preparing for confrontation. Suddenly, after forty days of fasting, an angel of light appeared to Him in the middle of this desert. The angel approached Jesus in His emaciated condition and said, “I have been sent from your Father; I have come to help you. I have come to tell you that your test is at an end. Oh, but I guess I made a mistake. I do not think I found the right person. You are not the person I was sent to; I was sent to find the Son of God. You do not look like the Son of God to me. God would not treat His own Son this way. I am afraid I found that other person, that one who was cast out of heaven four thousand years ago. I found the wrong person. Do you claim to be

Harvey Steck
Elijah Confronted

Let us turn to the Old Testament, 1 Kings 18:17–18:

“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.”

Is that confrontation? This time not between Jesus and Satan, but between a prophet of God and the king of Israel. Look at verse twenty-one:

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Were the people like the Europeans in the 30s? The people answered him not a word. The worship of Baal had taken over the people of Israel. Under the groves and in the temples the priests held sway, and the people allowed it to happen. They had remained silent, for some false leaders were their friends and they did not want to stand up. Now it had come to this, where one man had to stand against the king, the prophets, and the people to rebuke them. Verse forty reveals the end of this confrontation:

“And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”

Such decisive action would not be very popular today, but Elijah as a prophet of the Lord knew what he must do if Israel was to be saved. Elijah boldly laid the ax to the root of the tree.

Nehemiah Confronted

Jerusalem lay in ruins and Nehemiah came to rebuild its walls. Nehemiah 4:1–3, says:

“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.”

Nehemiah continues in verses 14–15:

“And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for thy brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.”

Confrontation called their bluff. They were then able to go back to the wall, because they had not been cowed down by the demands and the ridicule of their enemies. But that is not all of the story:

“And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. . . . Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. . . . Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. . . . Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.” Nehemiah 5:1–12.

There was injustice going on in the land of Judah, even after the captivity. And Nehemiah confronted that injustice and restored justice to the land.

But that is still not the end of the story:

“And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: and he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.” Nehemiah 13:4–5.

The place where they brought the offerings of the people was now the special chambers of this enemy of God’s people, and the overseer was one of the priestly family.

“And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.” Verses, 8–9.

Nehemiah threw Tobiah out of the temple, and cleansed the chambers, and

the Son of God? If you do, you’ll have to show me by turning these stones into bread.” What did Jesus do? Jesus answered him:

“It is written.”

Then Satan came again, this time dropping the disguise, dropping the pretense, coming as himself.

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” Luke 4:5–7.

“You do not have to go through the suffering that you think is ahead of you. There is a detour.”

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Luke 4:8.

Is that confrontation? Yes, it is. Jesus confronted Satan’s challenge to the mission of Jesus Christ. Satan said, “I can find you an easier way. You do not have to make it so hard on yourself. God would not treat His own Son like this.” And Jesus said: “Get thee behind me, Satan.” That is confrontation.
proclaimed the place as a hallowed spot for tithes and offering to be brought in.

That took courage. He further says:

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading assers; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. . . . Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." Verses, 15, 17–18.

Again he contended with those who were breaking God's law and encouraging the people to do so. And one last little episode, verses 23–25:

"In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto your sons, nor take your daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves."

Nehemiah was a confrontational character. We would find him quite offensive in the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism today. Yet he was one of the greatest leaders after the captivity that Israel ever knew. A very, very faithful man of God. But he took a stand against enemies, against leaders, against fellow Jews, against anything that dishonored God, no matter where it came from.

Jesus Confronted False Leaders

Jesus, the greatest revealer of the love of God ever to grace this earth, the One whose spirit is long-suffering and caring and ultimately reasonable, spoke some cutting truths to the people of His time:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoul-

Dangers in Confrontation

Is confrontation a biblical concept? It is not an easy concept. It is one that ninety percent of Seventh-day Adventists would rather not address. There are a few people who love to confront, but they are in the minority. Most of us find it very repugnant to stand up against a friend, a colleague, a leader and say "No."

There are dangers in confrontation, real dangers. It is easy to exercise the spirit of Satan. Bitter, angry, cynical, denouncing, looking for every evil thing that can be thought of, but that is not what Jesus Christ did. Confrontation as Jesus did it was with a breaking heart. There is a difference between sighing and crying for the abominations that are done and exulting over the latest scandal in our church. It is easy to exercise the spirit of Satan and think we are following the example of Jesus and Nehemiah.

Another problem is that it is easy to judge motives, but that is God's province. We have no way of seeing into the mind of anyone else. All we can judge are actions, issues, and truth versus error. We have no way to read the motives of someone who we believe is promoting error. Therefore, we must keep our mouths closed, or we are under the condemnation of Jesus.

Because there are dangers in confrontation, before there is confrontation of any kind, let there be much prayer; let there be counsel together. Let there be study. But brothers and sisters, let us not avoid the fight because it is unpleasant.

What to Confront

What must we confront? We must confront the worldliness that is as the tide sweeping through the ranks of Seventh-day Adventism, not just in America but in virtually all parts of the world. Satan has marched worldliness into many areas of our church, and we have not even watched carefully to see how much damage he has done to our own souls. Worldliness in music has allowed Satan's way of presenting music to infiltrate, to become part of God's way. Now the two are blended together so that we are almost helpless to
tell the difference. If this trend had been confronted years ago, we would not be facing these difficulties today.

As for television and movie productions, there are not many born-again Christians producing out of Hollywood or New York. There are not many born-again Christians deciding what would be best morally for our young people to watch. Their motives are different from those held by Christians.

As for entertainment, with what are we spending our time? Where are we giving our attention? Could we proudly and happily take Jesus Christ with us to every place we go for entertainment?

It is easy to say that clothes are just a matter of taste. But nothing is neutral. Satan will not allow any innocent practice of mankind to remain innocent. He will find a way to corrupt it. He will find a way to get his ideas incorporated into what we put upon our bodies so that pride, jealousy, covetousness, and all sorts of emotions and feelings rise to the forefront. Yes, what we put upon our bodies is very much a decision for or against God. What we put inside our bodies is also very much a decision for or against Him. The body is the temple of God, and how we treat this temple is the way we treat all of God’s creation. It is not a private matter; it is not a personal issue. It is a matter of right and wrong, of good and evil, of God and Satan in controversy.

In 2 Timothy 4:10 is one of Paul’s saddest little sentences, “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” Many Adventists are going to forsake the truth because they love this present world. One cannot love God and this world at the same time:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:15–16.

That covers the whole realm. How could Jesus be tempted in all points like as we are when He did not own a television set? Because there was the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life around Him and by inheritance within His own flesh, just yearning to be pulled together. All human beings are tested on the same issues.

Although the circumstances may be different and the stimuli may be different, the temptations are the same, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We must confront pride and lust right here in our own lives. We must confront them when they harm our families, when they harm our children, and when they harm our churches. They must be confronted.

What else are we going to confront? I believe that one of the most dangerous areas right now for us as Adventists is compromise. We will not give up our faith, we will not deny our faith, but we will yield just a little; we will just move a little from the straight truth. Some things can be compromised, but other things cannot. We must confront compromise of truth in both members and leaders.

Confronting Doctrinal Error

Oh, how desperately we want to be liked! We are tired of labels such as cult or legalist. We want to be accepted at the highest gatherings of others who profess to be Christians. We have a fear of being called a sect and in many, many cases, we have allowed public relations to prevail over principle.

We must not allow the desire to put our best foot forward to cause us to leave the other foot dragging in the dust. We must confront compromise, brothers and sisters, although some say it is too late. It is not too late until we decide we are giving up. We must confront error wherever it crops up, in whatever form it appears.

You and I can be saved believing error, if we believe it honestly, and if the light has not come to us. But you and I can never vindicate God and end sin’s reign on this planet by believing and teaching error. And as long as error continues to be taught, just that much longer the second coming of the Lord must be delayed. For God cannot come until His character is revealed verbally and experientially by His people. Only truth can vindicate God’s name, and we must confront error, brothers and sisters, wherever we hear it.

What kinds of error? Read Hebrews 4:15–16, for example:

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

On what basis are we to come boldly unto the throne? The basis that our Lord Jesus Christ was “in all points tempted like as we are,” and the struggle that He went through was more intense than any one of us will ever go through. Only on that basis did Jesus win the great controversy over Satan. If He had avoided that conflict, no one in this universe would have ever proved that one born into this world with a selfish, human nature could ever obey the law of God. And if Jesus had not come with fallen man’s nature into this world, no one would have ever proved Satan a liar on that point. We are one step closer to the end of the great controversy than we were when Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden.

Error must be confronted, brothers and sisters, if there is any hope of ending this great controversy. Teachings about Ellen G. White and relative principles of interpretations and selective use of the writings of a prophet must be confronted. Ignoring some counsel because it does not seem applicable to our time, being out of date, must also be confronted.

That the atonement was finished on the cross must be confronted. Although the sacrifice was complete on Calvary, the atonement was not completed, and will not be complete until Christ finishes His work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. We must confront errors that deny the landmark truths we know, like the time of Jacob’s trouble, the sanctuary message, the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the blotting out of sins. These truths are Adventism. Strip these away and we can close our doors. These truths must be defended. Can God

But you and I can never vindicate God and end sin’s reign on this planet by believing and teaching error. And as long as error continues to be taught, just that much longer the second coming of the Lord must be delayed.
give victory over all sin now? Can God provide the same power to me that He provided to Jesus Christ?

Can God find a whole people who will live around the face of this earth, who will be so loyal to Him that they will, in fact, die rather than sin even once against Him? Can God do that? Who has done it? Are you perfect yet? That is not the issue. Can God do it? That is the issue. And if this issue is denied, it must be confronted.

F. D. Nichol, writing in 1950 after a Bible conference said, “The primary doctrines of this movement are interlocked. They are not isolated, unrelated beliefs, any one of which might be undermined or discarded without damage to the others. On the contrary, the whole structure of truth is affected if even one of them is attacked.” Our Firm Foundation, vol. 2, 764. (This book was published in 1953 by the Review and Herald Publishing Association.)

Our message is a unified message. The message of Adventism cannot be stripped apart here and there. This message is a unified, interlinking set of beliefs that must be maintained together, or they all go down.

Confronting Apathy

We must also confront apathy; perhaps the most deadly of all problems. Apathy—it is so easy to sit back and let someone else do it. Maybe the most dangerous of all our problems is letting someone else do it. Are we really thinking of ourselves as rich and increase in goods and having need of nothing? That question reaches down to the inner motives of the heart:

“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, 281.

The worst type of hostility against God is standing idly by because we do not like the bloodstream. There is spiritual bloodshed going on, brothers and sisters. But we do not want to get involved. If God abhors one sin above another, it is doing nothing in the case of an emergency. We have now the greatest emergency in the whole history of Seventh-day Adventism.

Pantheism pales to nothing beside what we are facing today. The attack on truth is an emergency above all emergencies. Will we do nothing? We must confront fear, brothers and sisters. Fear that may be motivating our apathy. Plain fear is perhaps the hidden motive that discourages most of us from confronting when we should confront.

This ever-thrusting evil will not be stayed by assurances that all is well, that the situation is not grave, or by attempts to find nonexistent, common grounds, such as calls for unity among the irrevocably disunited. Such calls only encourage the advance of error which shows no hesitancy in its steady onslaught against truth. It advances from the Ruhr to Austria to Sudetenland to Bohemia while the cries of “Halt!” are lost on the ears of those who could and should act decisively to stay the tide of evil which places no limitation upon its encroachments. Must God’s people await a climactic Polish invasion before a full-blown effort to throw back this wave after wave of error is initiated?

Each delay, each accommodation of those bent on replacing firmly established doctrinal positions with those of an alien character, involves human losses. Not loss of life as in a battlefield, but loss of everlasting life. Can we dare to trade the eternal destinies of our youth while carefully skirts the advances of those whose loyalties are most certainly foreign to Seventh-day Adventists? Will such an awful price be justified in hindsight? No longer can an indulgent church slumber on in Laodicean complacency. The call is to arms. The King calls forth volunteers. There will not be a single conscript in this army. All volunteers must pass a stringent medical test to determine the presence of moral health and martial vigor. Their leaders must meet this advancing evil alliance head-on. First, present positions must be held and then lost ground reclaimed until there is unconditional surrender of the enemy.

Then it will be said that we have taken our stand for freedom as in the olden times. If we can learn anything from our history, including the history of what happened during World War II and the years before, it is that compromise invites disaster.

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Individual Accountability

There are many professors of religion who claim to be servants of God, and yet are filled with spiritual pride and self-exaltation. They make high pretensions to holiness, and feel that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Revelation 3: 17. They are like the fig tree which put forth its boastful foliage, but when the Master came seeking fruit upon it, He found nothing but leaves. They are ever ready to advance their opinions, to display their attainments, and to interpret the meaning of the Word of God. They claim to be led by the Spirit, but they turn away their ear from hearing the law of God. Says the psalmist, "Thy law is the truth," and "all thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:142, 172. The

Spirit of God will lead us in the path of the commandments; for the promise is that "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16: 13. We should try the spirits by the test of God's Word; for there are many spirits in the world. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

Some of these false teachers occupy prominent positions in the churches, and they influence others to swerve from the path of humble obedience. God holds every one of us to an individual accountability, and calls upon us to serve Him from principle, to choose Him for ourselves. We should not hang our souls upon the words and actions of another; for Satan uses men as his agents, and clothes his ministers in garments of light. Not one of us can pardon the sins of any other. In the day of judgment, when the question comes to you as to why you did not obey the commandments of God, you cannot make an acceptable excuse on the plea of another's disobedience. If your words and example have led others in the path of sin, you alone must bear the responsibility of your actions and influence. Because a man who professes to love God disobeys the plain word of instruction, you will not be justified in neglect of duty. We should every one ask, How shall I keep the commandments of our God?

God will not lightly esteem the transgression of his law. "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. The consequences of disobedience prove that the nature of sin is at enmity with the well-being of God's government and the good of His creatures. God is a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of them that hate him: the results of transgression follow those who persist in wrongdoing; but He shows mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. Those who repent and turn to His service find the favor of the Lord, and He forgiveth all their iniquities and health all their diseases.

In earthly affairs, the servant who seeks most carefully to fulfill the requirements of his office, and to carry out the will of his master, is most highly valued. A gentleman once wanted to employ a trusty coachman. Several men came in answer to his advertisement. He asked each one how near he could drive to the edge of a certain precipice without upsetting the carriage. One and another replied that he could go within a very perilous distance; but at last one answered that he would keep as far as possible from such a dangerous undertaking. He was employed to fill the position. Shall a man be more appreciative of a good servant than is our Heavenly Father? Our anxiety should not be to see how far we can depart from the commandments of the Lord and presume on the mercy of the Lawgiver, and still flatter our souls that we are within the bounds of God's forbearance; but our care should be to keep as far as possible from transgression. We should be determined to be on the side of Christ and our Heavenly Father, and run no risks by heady presumption.
What reason have men for thinking that God is not particular whether they obey Him implicitly or take their own course? Adam and Eve lost Eden for one transgression of His command; and how dare we trifle with the law of the Most High, and frame deceitful apologies to our souls? We do it at a terrible peril. We must keep all the law, every jot and tittle; for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. Every ray of light must be received and cherished, or we shall become bodies of darkness. The Lord Jesus declares, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:19. We should magnify the precepts of Heaven by our words and actions. He that honors the law shall be honored by it in the judgment; but he that treats it with contempt shall be condenmed by it before the Judge of all the earth.

Before the Flood swept upon the world, God sent a message through Noah to warn the people of the coming deluge. There were those who did not believe the warning; but their unbelief did not stay the showers, nor prevent the waters of the great deep from submerging a scoffing world. And today, while the last message is being heralded to bring God’s servants into harmony with every precept of His law, there will be scoffers and unbelievers; but every soul must stand in his own integrity. As Noah was faithful in warning the antediluvian world, so we must be faithful to the great trust that God has given us. Although there are scoffers and traducers on every side, we must not shrink from presenting the truth of Heaven to this generation.

I have not come to cry peace; you can hear this voice wherever you go. There are those who will be glad to lull you to sleep in your carnal security; but I have a different work. My message is to alarm you, to bid you to reform your lives, and cease your rebellion against the God of the universe. Take the Word of God, and see if you are in harmony with it. Is your character such as will bear the search of the heavenly investigation? Remember, Jesus says that not every one that says, “Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21.

Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:20–21. Repentance must be exercised toward God because we have all sinned, broken His righteous law, violated the rule of His government, and brought discord into His harmony. We must exercise faith toward Jesus Christ because He has become our Sacrifice and Surety. He has died that we might have “remission of sins that are past,” (Romans 3:25) and obtain grace and great salvation, and refuse to comply with the conditions of eternal life.

One of God’s commandments reads: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed

When your faith has been tested, as the Lord opened the Red Sea, so the waters will divide, and His providence will make a path for your feet. It is safe to serve God.
His light is shed upon us. It is the desire of our Saviour that we should be the light of the world, reflecting every ray that shines upon us. What straight paths should we make for our feet, so that the lame may not be turned out of the way! This is an age of light. The Lord of Heaven is sending the rays of light into the homes of the world. A special light is shining upon the commandments of God. The door of the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary stands ajar, ancient Israel, it was read before Josiah, the king. And he rent his garments, and bade the men in holy office to inquire of the Lord for him, and for his people; for they had departed from the statutes of the Lord. He called together all the men of Israel, and the words of the book were read in the hearing of the congregation. The sin of the rulers and the people was pointed out, and the king stood up before them, and confessed his transgression. He

Josiah did not rest until the people did all that they could to return from their backsliding, and serve the living God. Is not this our work today?

and within, as in the Most Holy Place of the ancient sanctuary, is the ark of the testimony. The law of the Most High is beneath the mercy seat. The light of this law is shining upon the world, penetrating the moral darkness that has covered the people.

John beheld an angel flying through the midst of heaven, warning men of the final judgments of God. He proclaimed the position of those who heeded His warning, and who would escape the seven last plagues. He announced them as God’s people, and called attention to their peculiar character: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. The time for the fulfillment of this prophecy has come. We hear the sound of this very message calling the attention of men and women to the broken law of God, and demanding repentance and reform.

The children of light are to be as a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. The world will be condemned by the testimony of those who follow the light as it shines upon their pathway. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.” John 3:19. The servants of Jesus are to bear the precious truth to the world, and to present the claims of God to every soul, not pandering to custom, or lessening the responsibility of any soul, but declaring the whole counsel of God.

When the book of the law was found in the house of the Lord, in the time of manifested his repentance, and made a covenant to keep the statutes of the Lord with his whole heart. Josiah did not rest until the people did all that they could to return from their backsliding, and serve the living God.

Is not this our work today? Our fathers have transgressed, and we have followed in their footsteps; but God has opened the book of the law, and backslidden Israel hear the commandments of the Lord. Their transgression stands revealed, and the wrath of God will be upon every soul that does not repent and reform as the light shines upon his pathway.

When Josiah heard the words of warning and condemnation because Israel had trampled upon the precepts of Heaven, He humbled himself. He wept before the Lord. He made a thorough work of repentance and reformation, and God accepted his efforts. The whole congregation of Israel entered into a solemn covenant to keep the commandments of Jehovah. This is our work today. We must repent of the past evil of our doings, and seek God with all our hearts. We must believe that God means just what He says, and make no compromise with evil in any way. We should greatly humble ourselves before God, and consider any loss preferable to the loss of His favor.

Christ left all to save man from the consequence and penalty of the transgression of the law. The way from the manger to Calvary was marked with blood. The Son of God did not deviate from the path of unwavering obedience, even to the death of the cross. He endured all the woe of man’s sin; and shall we turn away from the commandments of the Lord because it involves the loss of friends, position, or worldly gain? Will you not take away your feet from trampling upon the Sabbath of Jehovah? Will you continue to rob God of His holy time? You cannot afford to do this work of making void the law of God. It is at an eternal loss that you rebel against the truth of Heaven. I beseech you, in the name of Christ, that you confess your sins, and reform your ways, that your name may not be blotted out from the book of life, but may be confessed before the Father and before His angels. Jesus is pleading His blood before the Father, and now while mercy lingers and probation is prolonged, seek the approbation of Heaven. Delay not to keep the commandments of the Lord. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7. □

Review and Herald, January 31, 1888.

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**Local Church Authority Challenged**

It is God’s plan that local church membership should be placed under the control of the local church. In this matter the *Church Manual* (1977 edition, 251) follows God’s direction and thus must be followed on this issue, not because it is authorized by the *Church Manual*, but because it is God’s will. The *Church Manual* states: “Members may be disfellowshipped from the church or otherwise disciplined only by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting.” This proper procedure is based upon Inspiration. “There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinions of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring one may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 107.

We have further counsel on this matter: “Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one?... Let the church take action in regard to its members... If he will not heed the voice of the church, if he refuses all the efforts made to reclaim him, upon the church rests the responsibility of separating him from fellowship.” *Gospel Workers*, 500–501. The same admonition may also be found in *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 262. The entire context specifies that the term “church” used in these passages is the local church congregation, and not the church in the broader sense. Further, the *Church Manual* itself includes the reference from *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 107, as evidence from Inspiration in support of its policy.

Since this divine plan was set forth by Christ Himself, we may breach it only at great peril to our church. “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17.

**Proposal to Reorder Church Authority**

Gordon Bietz, then senior pastor, Colledgadale (Tennessee) Seventh-day Adventist Church, shared the following with his members in the weekly church newsletter of September 15, 1993.

“Commission on World Church Organization—I spent the week of August 30 to September 5, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, attending the Commission on World Church Organization. This is a commission chaired by Robert Folkenberg that is spending more than three weeks over a couple of years studying the organization of the church and bringing recommendations to the 1995 General Conference on issues of organization.

“The commission is more clearly defining the roles of the administration and departments of the General Conference. With the growing world membership, the General Conference Session will soon be too large, and so recommendations are being made about limiting the number of delegates. Recommendations will also include electing fewer division personnel at a General Conference Session and electing them at division meetings instead. The General Conference Committee has been very large, and there are recommendations to cut the size of the committee dramatically as well as make it more representative of the world church.

“The next meeting will be at Cohutta Springs [Georgia] in March, at which time there will be discussion of more tightly linking the organizational structures of the church. The net effect of such linkage would be to give the higher organizations more authority to prevent lower organizational departure from official church policy. That discussion will include a pro-
posal that would allow a Conference committee or constituency meeting to disfellowship a local church member that the local church refuses to deal with.

“The world church is a very complex organization and there are many cultural and national diversities to consider making organizational change.”

Should this proposal be accepted by the General Conference Session in Utrecht, Netherlands, in 1995, our church will become more hierarchical in structure, approaching that of the Roman Catholic Church in this respect.

God’s church has been founded upon laypeople. It is they who Inspiration declares are the ones, under God’s Spirit, who best understand God’s work. “The interpretation [of Scripture] given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 331. Thus our Lord made no mistake when He entrusted this duty not to conferences, nor to the ministry, but rather to humble men and women at the most basic level of His church. It is they who possess the advantage of a closer acquaintance with the one brought before the church with a view to discipline.

This fact does not mean that local church business meetings will be infallible in their decisions. But God in His wisdom saw that they would be more likely to reach correct decisions than the church organization at any other level, and even the church board. See quotation from Gospel Workers, 500.

With such explicit instruction, we dare not promote another course, lest in doing we dishonor our Lord through disobedience. We may be assured that to follow a procedure contrary to the Word of Inspiration will serve our church poorly.

If this proposal is accepted it will be a clear vote of a lack of confidence in God’s flock. We do not yet know the composition of the delegates for the 1995 General Conference Session, but at the 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis, 92 percent of the delegates were employees of the church organization, of which I was one, and only eight percent of the delegates were not employed by the organization. Thus decisions are largely in the hands of those who may have a personal interest in the vote they cast.

Because of this fact it is essential that local church members let the General Conference know their decision in this matter. We do not know why Pastor Gordon Bietz revealed the plans of the Commission on World Church Organization. He may feel personally opposed to this proposal and may have used the medium of his local church paper to alert the church at large so that if members wished to oppose a takeover by the Conference of the God-ordained prerogatives of God’s flock, they would have knowledge to do so. Equally he could have been asked to “fly a kite” in order for the commission to measure the level of resistance to such a move. Such techniques are commonly utilized by democratic governments seeking administrators of the church. These pastors urged church members to disfellowship them. In the book The Sepulchres Are Whited, 80–81, my brother, Colin, and I recorded the following incidents:

“That the church members may act more responsibly than their church leaders was no idle hope. In December 1986, the Wallsend Church, near Newcastle, was asked to place Brother Bill Turner under church censure for allegedly distributing advertisements in the church inviting members to attend the Hartland Bible Conference held at that time. The

Our Lord made no mistake when He entrusted this duty ... to humble men and women at the most basic level of His church ... who possess the advantage of a closer acquaintance with the one brought before the church with a view to discipline.
That vote should have settled the matter, for the highest human authority in God’s church [delegated by God to deal with individual church membership], the local church business meeting had spoken.

"Unchastened by this setback, the president of the North New South Wales Conference invited the Avondale Memorial Church to take similar action against Brother Hilton Meyers for publishing the Anchor magazine which chronicled unwarranted ecclesiastical actions against God’s saints. Once again the church members, by a majority vote, rejected the request of their Conference president.”

Another incident involved the attempt of the ministry to disfellowship Brother Garry Romano and Sister Vada Kum Yuen:

"On Saturday evening September 12, the business meeting of the Cairns church in North Queensland voted 41 to 25 to disband the church. In this action the membership of all members was transferred to the Northern Australian Conference roll. It was stated that the church would be reorganized within the following weeks and that only those who agreed to a Conference-designed set of rules indicating future conformity to these rules, would be eligible to rejoin the new church congregation as members. In the interim period the church pastor was accorded full control of all aspects of the operation of the disbanded church.

“This action, unprecedented in the experience of the most senior pastors in the South Pacific Division, was motivated by the desire of the Conference and the local ministry to disfellowship two faithful members, Garry Romano and Vada Kum Yuen. Garry, a commercial airline pilot, and Vada, a qualified school teacher and daughter of the late Pastor Ronald Heggie, who was a noble soldier for truth, were brought before the church business meeting in December 1991 with a view to disciplining them for their open stand for Bible truths and upright standards.

“The Cairns church emphatically rejected the Conference and ministerial call for church action, thus confirming that Garry and Vada were members in good and regular standing. Fifty-eight people attended that meeting. The vote in support of Garry was 37 to 17 with two abstentions (two did not vote on Garry’s membership); for Vada the vote was 51 to four with three abstentions. Thus 68.5 percent of valid votes favored Garry and 92.7 percent favored Vada, in both cases a majority in excess of two thirds. That vote should have settled the matter, for the highest human authority in God’s church [delegated by God to deal with individual church membership], the local church business meeting had spoken.” Remnant Herald, September 1992.

With the disbanding of the church, all members were arbitrarily transferred to the Northern Australian Conference roll. In a short time the Conference Committee disfellowshipped these two worthy members. This action led to thirty adult members, including six ordained church elders and two ordained deacons, seeking an alternative church fellowship because they could not conscientiously sign unscriptural conditions imposed upon them.

This author is aware of four churches in the United States that have been cast out of the sisterhood of churches because each has refused to implement the “counsels” of their Conference leaders in regard to disfellowshipping members.

In the United Kingdom, authoritative actions have been instituted against God-fearing church members in congregations such as Norwich, Eastbourne, Portsmouth, Coventry, Bury St. Edmonds, and Lowestoft.

All these procedures, utilized to overcome local resistance to the purported ecclesiastical authority of church administrators, are perceived to suffer from major disadvantages. They are time consuming; they put church administrators in a poor light; they require church administrators to answer to the laity for this desired action, and, perhaps creating the most difficulty for administrations, they afford those whom the leaders seek to disfellowship an opportunity to present their unanswerable cases before laity.

The proposed procedure, where behind closed doors, a Conference executive committee can disfellowship a believer after a few minutes discussion, is perceived to solve most of these difficulties.

Already the Church Manual has robbed God’s people of their right and responsibility to decide who shall preach to their children and themselves. “Each one worthy of confidence of our churches will be able to identify himself/herself by producing proper credentials. All others shall be excluded from the pulpit unless permission be granted from the Conference office. It is the duty of every elder, minister, and Conference president to see that this rule is carried out.” Church Manual, 1990 edition, 75.

The South England Conference at its fifty-fourth Session, October 14–17, 1993, made it perfectly plain that it intended to cast out entire congregations who would not blindly follow the dictates of Conference authorities.

“This Conference in Session reminds each local church of the need to discipline by censure or disfellowship on the grounds of ‘adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization.’ Church Manual, 160, 1990 edition. The ultimate action remains the possibility of disbanding a church where it cannot or will not bring about self-discipline.” “Protecting the Flock,” adopted by the South England Conference Session, October 14–17, 1993.

The South England Conference has gone so far as to usurp the right of God’s people to select their church officers, and outreach personnel, free of Conference dictates: “We therefore resolve that this Sisterhood of Churches shall expect that every local church, company, and branch Sabbath school, shall appoint to office only those who are known to be faithful Seventh-day Adventists in good and regular standing and who will not introduce with their leadership the divisive and disruptive influence associated with those ‘Certain Private Ministries.’ "

Continued on 27
Your magazine, Our Firm Foundation, is truly a must for every Seventh-day Adventist. I thank you for keeping the standards of Christian life. I am not a born Adventist, but becoming one through reading the Bible, and the Bible only, I was moved by the prophecy. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is surely the remnant church of God. I am pleased with your articles. I would dearly like to continue reading this inspiring magazine but am not capable of paying for the magazine. At the moment I cannot afford it, but I would try to send a donation in the near future.

CD, South Africa

Your donations marked “Overseas Literature” will assist us in filling the increasing requests from overseas for our publications.

—EDITORS

Thank you very much for the book Issues: Clarified, and other magazines you sent me. I studied all carefully and I appreciate Hope International for enthusiastic clearances of the unnecessary misunderstandings among the ministries of the professed remnant of God. Therefore I sincerely pray that the Lord will clear all the foggy misunderstandings so the three angels’ messages may be preached forcefully by the united forces of the SDA Church.

KP, Myanmar

How needed was an understanding on the topic discussed in Our Firm Foundation’s article “Fanaticism in Diet,” (August 1994). Thank you for such a balanced presentation, Brother Paulson.

Years ago, I realized I must make “thus saith the Lord” the deciding voice of my convictions. From those definite comments, I deduced other things that affected my diet decisions. But I began to see that this “standard” (which I deduced from principle and/or scientific research) was not to be made a standard for all. (For that matter, even “thus saith the Lord” is to be shared but not forced upon unwilling hearts, either.)

Many thanks for a practical article that really affects everyone daily and is such a mighty influence in our character development.

CL, Idaho

I have just finished reading “Fanaticism in Diet” in your August 1994 issue. Thank you for publishing such a clear, insightful, and direct article. Kevin Paulson has really hit the nail on the head. Fanatical devotion to all kinds of health advice that “sounds like” EGW is a serious, serious problem in our churches.

FH, Washington

I have always found Our Firm Foundation a blessing. After receiving the August 1994 issue and reading the article “Fanaticism in Diet,” I was not sure I was reading Our Firm Foundation. I am just as much against fanaticism as anyone, but it would appear that this article is a little deceptive.

BP, Texas

I feel that in Kevin Paulson’s articles in Our Firm Foundation you have approved unlimited amounts of processed oils and cottage cheese and cream cheese. Everyone knows how polluted milk is these days so how could cheese, which is made from milk, be healthy?

EY, Washington

The editors received strong endorsement, as well as strong disagreement, with the two-part series “Fanaticism in Diet” in the August and September issues of Our Firm Foundation. The primary purpose in publishing the articles was to address the concept of making moral issues out of parts of our health message in which inspiration has clearly left room for an informed personal conscience. It was not intended to give a definitive position regarding the various topics discussed. However, in retrospect, we can see how our readers might have perceived us as doing so. We agree that it was not the best.

We are destitute that our readers have access to all inspired counsels regarding these topics. Science can be helpful, but it must be interpreted in harmony with “to the law and to the testimony.” For those who send U. S. $3.00, we will mail you two reference documents “Ellen G. White and the Use of Fat and Free Fat” by the EGW Estate and “The No Oil Diet—What Saith the Lord” by J. A. Scharffenberg, M.D. Also we will include a compilation of references documenting Ellen White’s position on aged and unaged cheese. This information on cheese has relevance especially in developing countries where selected animal products may still be part of “the most healthful diet.”

The fact that it has been shown that a certain restrictive dietary program is effective in controlling and/or reversing diabetes, arteriosclerosis and overweight health problems does not make it necessary to promote that same program in the normal prevention or maintenance diet.

“Some may come to the sanitarium in a condition demanding stern denial of appetite and the simplest fare, but as their health improves, they should be liberally supplied with nourishing food.” Counsels of Diet and Food, 207.

Many Adventists tend to be united in their doctrinal beliefs, but have differing positions regarding our health message. It will take the grace of God, along with the humility of Jesus, to bring the final generation of God’s people into the unity of faith necessary for the giving of the full three angels’ messages. It would be well to keep in mind the following counsels:

“We are considered odd and singular, and should not take a course to lead unbelievers to think us more so than our faith requires us to be.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 456.

“The work we have tried to build up solidly is confused with strange things that God has not required.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 206.


—EDITORS
Would you like to have manifested in your life a full and complete display of God's love? That is a promise to God's people before Christ comes. To those who perseveringly seek it with all their heart the promise be fulfilled.

"The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven.

"To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace is to appear in full and final display. The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father's love is as great toward us as toward Himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory. 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' Revelation 19:9." Testimonies to Ministers, 18-19.

There is much evidence that we have come to a point when this predicted experience will become fact. The third angel's message of the everlasting gospel in the setting of the judgment, terminating in the close of our probation, places God's church in a position never experienced before. While the privilege for God's people presents a most glorious experience, there will be deceptive sidetracks on every hand. Already there are many winds of doctrine blowing, and there will be many more.

God has the difficult task of bringing every human being to a final decision for or against Christ. There will be no mediator to forgive sins after probation closes (see Revelation 22:11; Testimonies, vol. 2, 355); therefore, God's people who live beyond the close of probation must have ceased from sinning. Perhaps many of our church family are not familiar with the history of our church in the 1888 era. It was at this time that the light which was to lighten the earth with God's glory began. See Selected Messages, book 1, 235, 363. It was largely the resistance to the latter-rain message that God's purpose for it failed. An article in the Review and Her-

Lowell Scarbrough, an author and retired building contractor, writes from Oroville, California.
Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.

It was in 1976 that Desmond Ford came with a delegation from Australia to meet with church leaders in America at Palmdale, California. Desmond Ford presented justification by faith alone as the gospel, and sanctification as no part of the salvation process. Those church leaders rejected Ford’s position. Afterward, two righteousness-by-faith conferences were held, followed by a large delegation at Glacier View, Colorado. The report came to us that the consensus at these meetings rejected Desmond Ford’s position, and that sanctification is a part of the gospel and has much to do with the salvation process.

The books coming from our presses at present indicate that that position has been reversed by many to the justification by faith alone position. This error presents a grave and major apostasy from the truth of the third angel’s message. The certainty of sanctification in the gospel was documented by Colin Standish in the March 1994 issue of Our Firm Foundation, page 5, with such scripture texts as 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Acts 20:32, 26:18, and other texts.

We will now take a very brief look at the 1888 message position on Christ’s imparted righteousness (sanctification) in relation to the gospel. E.J. Waggoner’s book Christ and His Righteousness, published in 1890, placed Christ’s imparted righteousness in justification by faith (page 57); and justification by faith is the...
core of the gospel. On page 66 he shows that the imparted righteousness of Christ is the new-birth experience. When Ellen White was present in a camp meeting in Rome, New York, in 1889 where E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones were giving their message on justification by faith, she wrote: “The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness.” Selected Messages, book 1, 359. In 1890 Ellen White wrote: “Sev-

Fear not to make a full surrender of yourself to Christ. Place yourself, without reserve, under His control. Learn what it means to cease from sin; what it means to have a new heart, to bear the divine similitude.

eral have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have an-
swered, ‘It is the third angel’s message in verity.’” Ibid., 372. She had reference, of course, to the Waggoner and Jones mes-
sage of justification by faith which presented two aspects to the gospel, imparted righteousness (forgiveness) and Christ’s imparted righteousness (sanctification).

In Testimonies to Ministers, Ellen White calls it a most precious message that God had sent. It contained justification and Christ’s imparted righteousness for keeping all of God’s commandments. It was the third angel’s message, she said, and would be attended by the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. Here we have consistency in God’s Word: “The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It pre-
sented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the command-
ments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human

agent. This is the message that God com-
manded to be given to the world. This is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and at-
tended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” Testimonies to Minis-
ters, 91–92.

She also stated in 1895, “The right-
eousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness

for heaven.” Messages to Young People,
35. We do not go to heaven without a fit-
ess for heaven; therefore Christ’s im-
parted righteousness (or sanctification) has to be in the gospel. From the above statements, it is clearly seen that Christ’s imparted righteousness is an aspect of the gospel—the third angel’s message—and is to prepare a people for the outpouring of God’s love.

“The Lord God is bound by an eternal pledge to supply power and grace to every one who is sanctified through obedience to the truth. Jesus Christ, to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, unites in sympathy with His instrumentalities—the earnest souls who day by day partake of the living bread ‘which cometh down from heaven.’” John 6:33. The church on earth, united with the church in heaven, can accomplish all things.” That I May Know Him, 344.

Those who experience the truths of the third angel’s message will manifest the glory of God’s character in their lives.

“The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.” Christ’s Object Les-
sions, 415–416. The following quotation from Ellen White is a serious one indeed.

“And as we near the close of this earth’s history, we either rapidly advance in Christian growth, or we rapidly retro-

The Work of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not un-
til the soul is conformed to His image. The Desire of Ages, 302.
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 in the Review and Herald, January 16–March 20, 1919, in which John Corliss wrote 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

The one fatal error of those who looked for the Lord’s coming in 1843 and again in 1844, was a misunderstanding of the event to take place. After the passing of the time, many failed to wait the direction of the Holy Comforter divinely promised as the Guide into all truth, and the Revealer of things to come. John 16:13. Like the Jewish nation, which in the days of Christ followed human devising rather than the voice of God through His Son, these independent-minded ones sought a way out of their dilemma of disappointment through their own reasonings. This brought dire confusion to their ranks. Had they waited for the divine note of leading to be graciously sent them, theirs would have been the happy condition of being gathered “as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.” Matthew 23:37.

How true to life, how practical, is the Saviour’s illustration! The hen, with her brood scattered about bent on self-feeding, hears an unnatural sound or sees some shadow of danger. Raising her head, she quickly utters a peculiar warning sound, and the most remote chick at once scrambles toward the mother’s afforded protection, to hide itself under her wing. So God has ever offered to mankind the right of protection, when His directing voice is properly heeded. Psalm 36:7; 91:4.

In fact, when man was made “a living soul” by the breathing of God’s life into his nostrils (Genesis 2:7), there was given him spiritual power to receive intuitively the divine thought. This fact was fully demonstrated when the Creator called Adam to give suitable names to the animal creation. Genesis 2:19. This power was the rightful inheritance of the original man, since he was a son of the Most High. Luke 3:38. But this prerogative was sacrificed through sin, and the result was separation from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18. In order to fulfill God’s “eternal purpose,” it became necessary for His “only begotten” (Christ) to enter flesh as the second Adam, “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10.

The Spirit of God was made to rest on Jesus, as the bestowment of wisdom and understanding in counsel and might, and of reverence due to God. Not only this, but His understanding was made “quick.” By this expression, the Word means to tell us that the heavenly gift to Christ was a holy intuition, by which He could discern the will of God. With this insight He needed not to judge according to natural eyesight or human ear perception. Isaiah 11:1–5. By it only could He and His Father be completely one. John 10:30.

When man by his sinful course separated himself from this direct revelation, his mind could no longer receive divine wisdom, having become dispossessed of its Heaven-bestowed power. But such separation being adverse to divine plan, a way was quickly provided by which man might again acquaint himself with the purposes of God. Psalm 25:9, 14. The knowledge to be thus conveyed was also to be as definite and positive as the throne of the universe, and so the eternal word went forth:

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7.

Although the world at large was plunged into mental darkness by alienation from the life of God, those who would listen to the direct counsel of heaven through its chosen agency, God’s selected prophets, in this way learned meekly to submit to divine direction. These messengers were therefore endowed with the Spirit of God’s own Son Jesus. 1 Peter 1:10–11; Acts 7:37–38. Prophets were therefore chosen to be Christ’s under ministers, through whom Jehovah would speak to men. This was a recognized necessity in the rescue of men from their darkened state of mind. For instance, when the seed of Abraham had been in Egyptian bondage for four generations, and had even forgotten who the true God was, as the fulfillment of the heavenly promise in their behalf drew nigh, there was no other way for their relief but to speak to them through one of their own kind. They were therefore led away on the road to liberty by a prophet, and protected in their forty year’s wanderings by the same agency. Hosea 12:10, 13.

Again, about six hundred years after Israel was settled in Palestine, and a little more than one hundred and fifty years after the removal of the ten tribes, Judah was threatened with extinction by a marauding enemy. In their extremity, the Spirit of God rested on one Jahaziel, who dared to say in the name of the Lord: “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” 2 Chronicles 20:15. He then directed them to meet the enemy, but not to lift a hand to fight. They were simply to stand still and see God work their deliverance. Encouraged by this word, the king exhorted his men as they stood in line:

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chronicles 20:20.

This command was virtually to say: God has thus spoken to you; now heed the prophet’s voice, and thus show that you believe that God is directing in this affair. The sequel shows that when the people did as the prophet told them—that is, yielded their natural inclinations for self-defense, and trusted God for deliverance—they were most miraculously preserved to a man, while not one of the enemy escaped alive. Had a different course been pursued, divided counsels would not only have lost them the battle, but the probability is that Satan would have attempted to annihilate the entire nation, in order to wipe from the earth the hated seed of Abraham, to whom the promises of God had been given. Romans 9:4.

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Diet and Spirituality

Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin and will not affect their spirituality. A close sympathy exists between the physical and the moral nature. “Counsels on Health,” 67.

“It is not possible for us to glorify God while living in violation of the laws of life. The heart cannot possibly maintain consecration to God while lustful appetite is indulged. A diseased body and disordered intellect, because of continual indulgence in hurtful lust, make sanctification of the body and spirit impossible.” The Health Reformer, 181.

“We need to learn that indulged appetite is the greatest hindrance to mental improvement and soul sanctification.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 156.

“We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this, the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten, in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. A clogged stomach means a clogged brain. The most precious words may be heard and not appreciated, because the mind is confused by an improper diet. By overeating on the Sabbath, many do more than they think, to unifit themselves for receiving the benefit of its sacred opportunities.” The Ministry of Healing, 307.

“You need clear, energetic minds, in order to appreciate the exalted character of the truth, to value the atonement, and to place the right estimate upon eternal things. If you pursue a wrong course, and indulge in wrong habits of eating, and thereby weaken the intellectual powers, you will not place that high estimate upon salvation and eternal life which will inspire you to conform your life to the life of Christ; you will not make those earnest, self-sacrificing efforts for entire conformity to the will of God, which His Word requires, and which are necessary to give you a moral fitness for the finishing touch of immortality.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 66.

“Anything that lessens physical strength enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong. We become less capable of choosing the good and have less strength of will to do that which we know to be right.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 346.

“Those who bring disease upon themselves, by self-gratification, have not healthy bodies and minds. They cannot weigh the evidences of truth, and comprehend the requirements of God. Our Saviour will not reach His arm low enough to raise such from their degraded state, while they persist in pursuing a course to sink themselves still lower.” Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4, 148.

“What a pity it is that often, when the greatest self-denial should be exercised, the stomach is crowded with a mass of unhealthful food, which lies there to decompose. The affliction of the stomach affects the brain. The imprudent eater does not realize that he is disqualifying himself for giving wise counsel, disqualifying himself for laying plans for the best advancement of the work of God. But this is so. He cannot discern spiritual things, and in council meetings, when he should say Yea and Amen, he says Nay. He makes propositions that are wide of the mark. The food he has eaten has numbed his brain power.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 53.

“Ministers, above all others, should economize the strength of brain and nerve. They should avoid all food or drink that has a tendency to irritate or excite the nerves. Excitement will be followed by depression; overindulgence will cloud the mind, and render thought difficult and confused. No man can become a successful worker in spiritual things until he observes strict temperance in his dietetic habits. God cannot let His Holy Spirit rest upon those who, while they know how they should eat for health, persist in a course that will enfeeble mind and body.” Ibid., 55–56.

“Eating, drinking, and dressing all have a direct bearing upon our spiritual advancement.” The Youth’s Instructor, May 31, 1894.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who overcame as Christ overcame will need to constantly guard themselves against the temptations of Satan. The appetite and passions should be restricted and under the control of enlightened conscience, that the intellect may be unimpaired, the perceptive powers clear, so that the workings of Satan and his snares may not be interpreted to be the providence of God. Many desire the final reward and victory which are to be given to overcomers, but are not willing to endure toil, privation, and denial of self, as did their Redeemer. It is only through obedience and continual effort that we shall overcome as Christ overcame.

“The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on this point, they would have had moral power to gain the victory over every other temptation of Satan. But those who are slaves to appetite will fail in perfecting Christian character. The continual transgression of man for six thousand years has brought sickness, pain, and death as its fruits. And as we near the close of time, Satan’s temptation to indulge appetite will be more powerful and more difficult to overcome.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 491–492.

“There is no encouragement given to any of the sons or daughters of Adam that they may become victorious overcomers in the Christian warfare unless they decide to practice temperance in all things. If they do this they will not fight as one that beateth the air.

“If Christians will keep the body in subjection, and bring all their appetites and passions under the control of enlightened conscience, feeling it a duty that they owe to God and to their neighbors to obey the laws which govern health and life, they will have the blessing of physical and mental vigor. They will have moral power to engage in the warfare against Satan, and in the name of Him who conquered appetite in their behalf they may be more than conquerors on their own account. This warfare is open to all who will engage in it.” Ibid., vol. 4, 35–36.
In a recent issue of the *Adventist Review* (June 2, 1994) there appeared a very encouraging article entitled “Inverting the Pyramid,” authored by Jack Calkins, marketing director for Adventist Communication Network of the North American Division. Calkins presented a concept of church organization and authority that if followed would bring great vitality to the remnant church. It would begin to reverse the one hundred years of developing an organizational hierarchy. It would place the responsibility of rediscovering the authentic, end-time message largely in the hands of the laity and would also make the laity largely responsible for the worldwide presentation of the gospel.

Calkins’ suggestions, if implemented, would offer an opportunity for the laity to arouse out of their deep Laodicean slumber, and with renewed vigor and diligence, take their God-given role in the finishing of His work. It would lift the heavy oppression of clericalism now so evident worldwide in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The laity, many of whom are just as capable as the ministry, have allowed the pastors to do their thinking for them. They have permitted their ministers to act in a coercive and controlling way so that most laity have reasoned that only the trained pastors and theologians can rightly know the Word of God. In too many churches the pastors exercise absolute authority, even vetoing the decisions of a properly constituted board or business meeting. Such authority enforces an ecclesiastical dominance that removes responsibility from the lay members of the church.

What we see today in terms of 1) truth, 2) church worship forms, and 3) church organization is almost the antithesis of the perfect pattern that God gave through His Word and through the Spirit of Prophecy. There has always been a struggle in these areas. At the inception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, heresies of all kinds flooded into the newly emerging membership. Offshoot after offshoot arose, and, though few came to anything significant, they succeeded in leading many souls away from the truth and almost certainly into eternal destruction. A similar situation is occurring now, but today the reasons are clearer. Because most laity have placed an unwavering faith in the clergy, Satan has found it easy to lead myriads of these laity astray. Especially in the Western World, a majority of ministers have moved in a path away from the clear message delivered to this people. Satan has found a ready access to our colleges and universities, where these preachers are trained, and has made it easy to bring in an influence by a few professors that control the education of a large number of ministers. Many of the young men who entered college with idealism have been changed by the well-honed arguments of unfaithful professors. These young preachers then go out to greatly multiply the errors that they have learned in their false educational training.

The time has come for the laity to arise and exercise their God-given responsibility. In the judgment it will not suffice to say, “Well, my pastor never told me.” To each one is available the full light of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We need a return to the simple organization as seen in apostolic times and in the early Seventh-day...
Adventist Church. The gospel of Mark presents a most direct record of the first Christian ordination service. “And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.” Mark 3:13-15. Thus Jesus Himself ordained the first workers in the Christian church. He ordained them to be apostles with a twofold mission: 1) to preach, and 2) to heal.

Apart from Christ, the disciples were the first medical missionaries of the Christian church. When sending the apostles to preach and to heal, Jesus gave them His very own ministry. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Matthew 4:23.

Soon after the ascension of Christ, other matters besides the preaching of the gospel and the healing of the sick quickly took the attention of the apostles. There were widows, orphans, and the needy—all seeking care and attention. Consequently the apostles became so embroiled in these needs that the work for which Christ had ordained them was greatly compromised. Furthermore, they became involved in solving the jealous disputes of the early members. Soon the apostles perceived the dangerous threat to their God-given mission. They resolutely refused to carry these tasks, and so they instructed the brethren to appoint others to superintend the role of caring for the physical needs of the members. “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:2-4. The deacons were men of “honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.” Acts 6:3. Their role was to care for the needy and to solve the disputes in the church. They also clearly were commissioned to baptize as is exemplified by the experience of Philip the deacon with the Ethiopian eunuch.

Then elders were ordained to care for the local church communities. “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” Acts 14:23.

Thus quickly, three groups of men were ordained: Apostles, whose responsibility it was to preach the Word and to be in the forefront of opening up new work. Deacons were responsible for solving the disputes in the church and caring for the needy. Elders were responsible for the spiritual leadership in the local church communities.

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church began its mission of destiny, the

Our ministers are not to hover over the churches, regarding the churches in some particular place as their special care. And our churches should not feel jealous and neglected if they do not receive ministerial labor.

members came from various churches, and different concepts of the appropriate structure and governance of the church naturally emerged. Quickly the pioneers rejected most of the church governance of that time, including the hierarchical (papal) system, the congregational system, and the episcopal system. God gave a system, established upon a representative form of governance, where the strongest responsibility was given to the local churches. They alone had the responsibility of bringing new members into the church, and they alone could disfellowship members who either fell into doctrinal apostasy or into open, continual sin. Once someone became a local church member, he became a member of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Our early churches did not have church pastors as we understand them today. Rather, the pastors were sent to districts to open up new work and carry on the work of evangelism.

“Our ministers should plan wisely, as faithful stewards. They should feel that it is not their duty to hover over the churches already raised up, but that they should be doing aggressive evangelistic work, preaching the Word and doing house-to-house work in places that have not yet heard the truth. . . . They will find that nothing is so encouraging as doing evangelistic work in new fields.” Evangelism, 382.

The local church and its lay leaders were responsible for shedding the light of truth around the area in which they were located. The issues in the church were handled locally, and the elders were responsible for board meetings, for business meetings, for the operation of the nominating committee, and for the church itself.

It is time for the laity to rediscover their moral courage, recognizing that they alone have the numbers to address the apostasy we have in church organization. The failure of the laity to do this has led to great doctrinal apostasy and worldliness within the church. Some important reforms must
Church members. “All ye are brethren.” Matthew 23:8. An elder must be a man of unquestionable spiritual integrity—one who knows the Advent message, and can teach and preach it with power, who can truly be a spiritual leader within the church. The elders are to conduct the pastoring in the church, seeking to train all members in effective witnessing for the Lord, taking care especially of the needs of the weak and backslidden.

3. Let us reestablish the role of the deacons. They were called in Acts, chapter 6, to be the spirit-filled men of wisdom to solve the disputes that arose in the local churches and to care for the needy within the church. They were to have wisdom to know the difference between the truly needy and those not willing to work honestly for their needs.

4. When the laity truly have the responsibility of caring for the church and its needs and witnessing to the area within their influence, then there will be a new revitalization of spiritual and moral power within each of the local churches. The ineptitude, the impotency, the lethargy that we now see within most local congregations will quickly be reversed, not only for the saving of souls in the local community, but also in the saving of the church member’s souls who now appear to be perishing in spiritual weakness. Every member who is trained and motivated to be a witness for the Lord will become an earnest student of the Word, feeding his own soul as well as the souls of those with whom he is studying.

“Those ministers are hovering over churches, which know the truth, while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them. They should be taught to bring a faithful tithe to God, that He may not to control or rule them, but to act as wise counselors for the needs of the churches, offering advice and suggestions for the development of each local community. Second, the role of the conference was to seek pastors, colporteurs, Bible workers, and others to go into areas of the conference where the witness of Seventh-day Adventism was either weak or nonexistent. This goal certainly would be achieved rapidly if the pastors were released from their baby-sitting of the churches today—a role for which they were never ordained. The directive of those chosen in the conference to lead out in the work of God should be carefully analyzed. Do they truly love the authentic Seventh-day Adventist message? Are they men who show by test and trial that they love the Lord and that they hate to do evil? Have they shown that they are not attracted by worldly temptations of the age?

5. Let us reestablish the true representative government that God had for this church, allowing God to remove the hierarchical attitude and method of work now so prevalent in our ranks. Let us look for leaders who are servants, not rulers.

6. Above all, let each one of us daily, wholly, and completely commit our lives to the things of God so that we will receive the latter rain and take the everlasting gospel to the world. When that happens the shaking can be completed, and those who are faithful will remain to be gathered home in the kingdom of heaven, together with those who have been garnered into the church under the invitation of the loud cry to come out of Babylon.

**Local Church Authority**

**Continued from 18**

Of course, it is within the prerogative of the Conference administrators to afford counsel where deemed appropriate, but they have no authority to dictate to God’s people. The Conference is the servant of the local churches, not their dictators. With its right to direct its meetings and select its officers and workers, the local congregation also has a high and holy duty to follow a scriptural course. In the day of judgment each worker will answer for this God-given stewardship. Conference administrators will find that local churches will best serve the purposes of their God and cooperate with the Conference-wide Sisterhood of Churches when they are permitted to pursue their God-ordained prerogatives.

No minister rightly has any coercive authority over any member or group of members. “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and that they are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:25–28.

In these most troublesome times it is mandatory that each of us ensures that “if in contending for the truth, if in debating on the theory [we have] not lost the tender love of Christ.” Selected Messages, book 1, 370.
E llen White was designated by God to fulfill the requirements of Revelation 12:17 and 19:10: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

These requirements must be fulfilled in the end time to verify God's remnant last-day church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church fulfills these requirements, teaching all Ten Commandments, and being led by the gift of prophecy.

The life and the power of God's remnant church are in verity this faith of Jesus being manifested by obedience to the holy law of God. Experiencing and proclaiming this faith and obeying it is the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14:6.

This gospel is the same gospel given to Adam and Eve and to every succeeding generation that has lived during the great controversy over truth and error. In the history of God's church, those who have experienced the faith of Jesus, by surrendering their will to Christ and receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit, have experienced victory over sin in their lives, and have been living witnesses of the power of the true gospel. See Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 94; Steps to Christ, 47.

Yes, there have been Enoch's in every generation, even in our day. See Christ's Object Lessons, 331-332; Selected Messages, book 3, 146; Gospel Workers, 13.

When we surrender our will to God we receive the mind of Christ. We then have His faith. Without the mind of Christ, we do not have His faith. Without His faith the power of God is absent from the life, and the sinner is left to struggle with temptation in his own strength.

Victory is walking in righteousness, which is received from justification and sanctification: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1.

The 1888 message given to the church was to bring the leaders, pastors, and laity to the understanding of their great need of Jesus and His faith, of which they had lost sight. Their preaching had become as dry as the hills of Gilboa without dew or rain. See Evangelism, 170, 619; Selected Messages, book 2, 126-127.

"Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law. This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message. . . What is the burden of that message? John sees a people. He says, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Revelation 14:12. This people John beholds just before he sees the Son of man 'having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.' Verse 14.

"The faith of Jesus has been overlooked and treated in an indifferent, careless manner. It has not occupied the prominent position in which it was revealed to John. Faith in Christ as the sinner's only hope has been largely left out, not only of the discourses given but of the religious experience of very many who claim to believe the third angel's message." Selected Messages, book 3, 168.

The Laodicean message is the 1888 message. It is the message for the church today, to lead the church to repentance and to guide leaders, pastors, and laity into all truth. It is to direct us to experience victory over all our hereditary and cultivated weakness to sin. In 1888 we were spiritually unable to grasp the true and full meaning of the message of Christ's righteousness and its connection to the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the three angels' messages. See Review and Herald, July 24, 1888; Testimonies, vol. 2, 440-445.
The Laodicean Condition

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” Revelation 3:19.

The Laodicean church is under the divine rebuke because of her spiritual state. The union between Christ and the church is not complete, for He is outside the door knocking and pleading to be invited in. He has not been allowed entrance into the innermost sanctuary of the hearts of His people. He has been refused the right to possess His church.

“Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting, I have seen the state of the Laodicean church as never before. I have heard the rebuke of God spoken to those who feel so well satisfied, who know not their spiritual destitution. . . . Like the Jews, many have closed their eyes lest they should see; but there is as great peril now, in closing the eyes to light, and in walking apart from Christ, feeling need of nothing, as there was when He was upon earth.” Review and Herald, August 26, 1890.

Christ is outside the door of Zion; He is not in the midst of Jerusalem; He has been excluded from His own temple:

“The church is in the Laodicean state. The presence of God is not in her midst. . . . What a terrible thing it is to exclude Christ from His own temple! What a loss to the church! Our Redeemer sends His messengers to bear a testimony to His people. He says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’ Revelation 3:20. But many refuse to receive Him because they fear that He will be an expensive guest. The Holy Spirit waits to soften and subdue hearts, but they are not willing to open the door and let the Saviour in; for they fear that He will require something of them. And so Jesus of Nazareth passes by. He longs to bestow on them His rich blessings and gifts of grace, but they refuse to accept them.” Notebook Leaflets, 99.

We prevented Christ from entering into our hearts and into His church by rejecting the gift of His Spirit, which would have replaced our carnal minds with the mind of Christ. Mrs. White highlights this rejection as an action that took place in our minds:

“An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren.

latter rain. By the power of the Holy Spirit the law will be perfectly kept, the warning message against man’s works will be proclaimed, and then God’s final demonstration of His power to redeem will end in righteousness.

This experience is the third angel’s message in verity. See Evangelism, 190, 196.

Experience and Doctrine

“The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have

Christ is outside the door of Zion; He is not in the midst of Jerusalem; He has been excluded from His own temple.

has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” Selected Messages, book 1, 234–235.

The 1888 message was designed to lift up Christ and His sacrifice as the Source of power in God, and as the Example which we were to emulate.

Satan knows that when this message is clearly presented it will destroy his power over men as they partake of the divine nature and exercise the faith of Jesus. They will then bring the promises of God into their life through the daily searching of the Word and the Testimonies of Jesus. This will produce the obedience of Jesus in their life.

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

This special message has not yet been experienced by most leaders, pastors, and laity. In 1888 God made a desperate effort through the preaching of Waggoner and Jones and the prophet, Ellen G. White, to restore the faith of Jesus to its rightful place in the gospel. The reception of the Spirit of God, bringing the divine mind into the inner sanctuary of the believer’s soul, would have brought, and will soon bring, the church to the experience of the

professed to believe the third angel’s message.” Review and Herald, August 13, 1889.

We desperately need this experience, but we must correctly come to understand the truths connected with it before we can be used to produce the final demonstration.

“All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost.” Evangelism, 196.

“Unless divine power is brought into the experience of the people of God, false theories and erroneous ideas will take minds captive, Christ and His righteousness will be dropped out of the experience of many, and their faith will be without power or life. Such will not have a daily, living experience of the love of God in the heart, and if they do not zealously repent, they will be among those who are represented by the Laodiceans, who will be spewed out of the mouth of God.” Review and Herald, September 3, 1889.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.” Testimonies to Ministers, 456.
The 1888 message is a call to be born again every day, a call to crucify self (ego) moment by moment, if we are to see the kingdom of God.

renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory. . . It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.” Selected Messages, book 1, 396-397.

It is the third angel’s message in verity. “When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relic for sin; for Christ will be working with us. . . A door has been opened, and no man can close it, neither the highest powers nor the lowest; you alone can close the door of your heart, so that the Lord cannot reach you.” Review and Herald, March 18, 1890.

This experience in the third angel’s message was lost sight of in 1888. The animosity of leaders to that message defeated the latter-rain experience, which would have come to the church. Our refusal to accept this message has kept us from the second Pentecost. The faith of Jesus, which is received when we accept the mind of Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit, must now be brought into the experience of every believer who believes that Jesus is soon to come. See The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 984; Testimonies to Ministers, 90-97; Review and Herald Extra, December 23, 1890.

Those who refuse to obey all the commandments of God in every detail without compromise, whether they be leaders, pastors, or laymen will be spewed out of the mouth of God as Laodiceans, unprepared and unworthy to receive the seal of the living God. They will adopt false theories concerning prophecy and the plan of salvation and will adopt a counterfeit gospel.

“The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 19.

CONSTANT SURRENDER

The 1888 message is a call to be born again every day, a call to crucify self (ego) moment by moment, if we are to see the kingdom of God. See John 3:1-6; 1 John 3:6-9.

“Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hardhearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory.” Review and Herald, June 4, 1895.

“When we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven.” Ibid., November 4, 1890.

“When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 610.

“When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is created; and he loves the things that God loves; for his life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises, to the life of Jesus. His heart is drawn out after God. His prayer is, ‘Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.’ In the immutable standard he sees the character of the Redeemer, and knows that though he has sinned, he is not to be saved in his sins, but from his sins; for Jesus is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Review and Herald, June 21, 1892.

“As we near the close of time, the current of evil will set more and more decidedly toward perdition. We can be safe only as we hold firmly to the hand of Jesus, constantly looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is our mighty Helper.” Ibid., October 7, 1890.

“Only those who are clothed in the garments of His righteousness will be able
to endure the glory of His presence when He shall appear with ‘power and great glory.’” Ibid., July 9, 1908.

Brethren, let us now begin the search for that experience which will soon bring the latter rain and the second Pentecost. My heartfelt prayer is that we shall pray, fast, mourn, and study for the experience which has for too long kept Christ outside of His people and outside of His church. Let us not forget:

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive." The Great Controversy, 625.

"The third angel's message is to lighten the earth with its glory; but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it when it shall have swelled into the loud cry." Review and Herald, November 19, 1908.

"Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

"The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness." Christ's Object Lessons, 415-416.

The 1888 message is now sounding again to God's remnant people. We are told that this message to the Laodiceans will again be rejected by the majority. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 10, 50, 136; vol. 1, 609. But there will be a remnant who will receive the message and live it by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

"Many are called but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14.

Victory over all sin by the Holy Spirit's power will be the experience of those who are sealed by the seal of the living God. By living the 1888 message God's people will make the final demonstration of God's love. God's faithful, loyal, obedient, victorious people will vindicate His character before the universe. We must be part of that final demonstration. □

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**Early Experiences**

Continued from 23

The prophets were therefore simply His channels through whom God transmitted His unerring counsel. Animated by the Spirit of Christ, they constantly and unwaveringly bore the "testimony of Jesus." When He whom these represented came into the world, He fulfilled their predictions, and so was the faithful and True Witness (Revelation 1:5), whose testimony was then, as it always has been and must ever be, the Spirit of Prophecy. His earthly work was but the pattern to be followed until Christ comes again.

The supporting, comforting Spirit He left behind on ascending to heaven, was bestowed to lead into all truth, and also to reveal things to come. John 16:12-13. By this same agency Christ is to be with His people to the end of the world. Matthew 28:20. To the remnant church preparing to meet its Saviour, is particularly promised this gift, with which it is to meet the assaults of Satan in the final struggle. Revelation 12:17.

In the days and weeks immediately following the 1844 disappointment, when such confusion abounded that none seemed to know what to say or do, this gift of prophecy was sorely needed. Great danger lay before all those disappointed ones, many of whom were tempted to repudiate their entire experience in the message which had led them to risk all in anticipation of soon meeting the Lord from heaven. Just at this point, however, as the youthful Daniel was given an encouraging view of the future at the time when God's people were cast into Babylonian captivity, so in the later hour of deep trial, a vision of future trials and final victory was given to a frail girl of seventeen, intended to stimulate hope in those who would not cast away their confidence that God had been in the movement to teach an important lesson of faith in His prophetic work, when every human probability seemed to deny its surety.

But the vision mentioned, with another given about a week later, was not kindly received by many, because so many theories were being advanced, and so many tangents followed. Then, too, the report began to be circulated that the demonstrations were produced by mesmerism. This term, then quite common, came from the experience of Franz Mesmer, a German physician, who announced in 1775 that he had discovered how one person could control the thoughts and actions of another, by getting the subject's nervous system wrought up to an extraordinary state of sensation.

The work of God's Spirit on the mind of Ellen Harmon was by many attributed to the spell of human control, and was made the subject of much dispute. As time passed on, she received calls to attend gatherings, first in New England, then in New York and Connecticut. Thus her work became widely known, and was recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit. The gradual establishment of the visions as a fundamental belief, and the definite purpose of them, must be reserved for future studies. □

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