W e have come nearly to the end of all things, and yet it is difficult for some of our church members, and even some leaders, to accept the fact that we are in the final hours of our probation. Some are even planning for the twenty-first century. Are we ready to delay the coming of the Lord by our indifference to the message of warning and reproof given by the angel to the Laodicean church, the last church in the final hour of probationary time?

God knows our work, our spiritual condition: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."


Those who refuse to accept the message to Laodicea will be spewed out: "To those who are indifferent at this time Christ's warning is 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Revelation 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His Word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you." Testimonies, vol. 6, 408.

The signs of the times are now ominous. There are floods and earthquakes. The nations are angry. International revolutions are everywhere. Even in our beloved country internal strife is rampant. If we refuse the message to the Laodiceans there will soon come a time when our High Priest will no longer offer up our prayers. Jesus said that many are called, but few will be chosen. See Matthew 22:14. Why? Ellen White tells us that only a few Seventh-day Adventists will receive the counselor of the True Witness and survive the great shaking now taking place just before probation closes. See Testimonies, vol. 1, 608–609; vol. 5, 10, 50, 136; vol. 8, 41.

God warns us: "Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance. Jesus says, 'I, your Redeemer, know your works. I am familiar with the motives that prompt you to declare boasting in regard to your spiritual condition, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'"

"Those who are in this condition are willfully ignorant. They do not discern the real character of sin. By their wrongdoing they constantly misrepresent the character of Christ and put Him to open shame." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 963.

Laodicea must understand that the message to the Laodiceans carries the admonition to all leaders and laymen to develop the perfect character of Jesus, not by what we can do, but what God can and will do, if we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us.

"Much excellent labor was bestowed upon the Laodicean church. To them was given the exhortation, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' But the church did not follow up the work begun by God's messengers. They heard, but they failed to appropriate the truth to themselves, and to carry out the instruction given them. The result that followed is the result always sure to follow the rejection of the Lord's warnings and entreaties." Ibid., 964.

"Christ sees that which man does not see. He sees the sins which, if not repented of, will exhaust the patience of a long-suffering God. Christ cannot take up the names of those who are satisfied in their own self-sufficiency. He cannot importune in behalf of a people who feel no need of His help, who claim to know and possess everything." Ibid.

"The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world." Ibid.

And so, dear reader, only God knows how much time we have left. But the evidence is overwhelming that the end is at our door. What will we do now? Repent; buy the gold tried in the fire—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Divine love that follows true repentance must be our daily experience. We must respond to all of life's situations as Jesus did. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 233. The character of Christ must be perfectly reproduced in God's faithful people before we can make a demonstration for God in the loud cry movement. The latter rain will fall only on those who have the experience of overcoming all hereditary and cultivated weakness to evil. See Christ's Object Lessons, 69; The Desire of Ages, 311–313, 671; Testimonies to Ministers, 506–508.

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

There is hope for Laodicea; praise God for that! Let us heed the counsel before it is forever too late.

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.

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At Kadesh, manifesting preference for human guidance over the divine, the children of Israel proposed that spies be sent to survey the country. God granted their request, but it was the undoing of Israel. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 387.

Upon the return of the twelve spies, ten of them manifested lack of faith in God's promise to lead them in, by emphasizing the difficulties. Only Caleb and Joshua urged obedience and trust in God's guidance. The traitorous (to God) ten spies listed the well-fortified walled cities and giants as preventing their entrance into Canaan. In reality it was the wicked unbelief of the people in God and His messengers that delayed their possession of the Promised Land:

"The traitors had done their work. If only the two men had brought the evil report, and all the ten had encouraged them to possess the land in the name of the Lord, they would still have taken the advice of the two in preference to the ten, because of their wicked unbelief." Patriarchs and Prophets, 390.

Because of their unbelief God had to tell them that they would continue wandering in the desert for forty years until the rebellious ones died off and a new generation came that would obey God's guidance and directives. This message from God is one of the saddest ever given to His people. See Numbers 14:20–35.

Upon hearing of their fate, the rebellious Israelites experienced a "revival and reformation" that involved a willingness to do what God had originally asked them to do, but by their own human wisdom, strength, and plans, rather than by those of God's directions. They took up arms and engaged the Amalekites in battle but, depending upon the arm of flesh, they were severely defeated. With the failure of human plans to accomplish God's work "Nothing remained for Israel but to fall back from the face of their victorious foes, into the wilderness, knowing that here must be the grave of a whole generation." Patriarchs and Prophets, 394. They had failed to learn the lesson that God's will and work are not accomplished by man's wisdom and ways "but by strict obedience to His commands." Ibid., 392.

At another time and in another place, another time prophecy was coming to a close. The time was fulfilled to gather modern Israel out of spiritual Babylon and Egypt and to take them into the Promised Earth made new. "And he said unto me,}

**Judd Harris** is a pen name.
Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. The Midnight Cry of "Behold, the bridgroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." (Matthew 25:6), was sounded by thousands of voices and reached every missionary station on earth. See The Great Controversy, 611. As every Seventh-day Adventist knows, it was believed that October 22, 1844, marking the end of the 2300-day/years prophecy, was the time Christ was to return to this earth to cleanse it from sin and sinners and to take the saints to heaven. When the time came and went without the return of Christ, we can only imagine the bitterness of the Disappointment in what was not the result of a rebellious heart, but of a misunderstanding heart. Of the approximately 500,000 pre-1844 Adventists, only about fifty remained faithful and formed a "little flock" that entered by faith with Christ within the veil of the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

As this small group came to understand, they were to prophesy again and to give the three angels' messages to the whole world. These messages were to invite every nation, kindred, tongue, and people to enter into with Christ into the experience of the great day of atonement—a time for every soul to participate with Christ in the final putting away of sin, of a full removal of rebellion from the human heart that they might be fitted to then cross over into the heavenly Canaan. Their message was to be:

"The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming." Selected Messages, book 1, 68.

Thus this Disappointment of modern Israel was ordered of God not to end, but to begin the journey of His remnant people—the Seventh-day Adventist Church—through the antitypical day of atonement. This cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and of Christ's people on earth had no prophesied time duration. See Revelation 10:5—6. It was to end, however, with those who participated in the cleansing from sin of remaining within the camp and inheriting life eternal, and those who refused to part with their rebellion against God, of being put out of the camp and of suffering eternal death with Satan and his host.

It was the plan of God that this great day of atonement—this special preparation for entering Canaan—would not take long. It was His plan that the generation of the 1844 faithful would provide the 144,000 who would enter heaven without tasting death. The messenger of the Lord of modern Israel wrote in 1883:

"Had Adventists, after the Great Disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to light of the loud cry that was to have lightened the whole earth was resisted and rejected by us in 1888. See Selected Messages, book 1, 234—235.

"If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory." Review and Herald, October 6, 1896.

Thus, there is not an apparent delay in the entrance of Israel into heaven, it is an actual delay. God tells us that we, as did

Man cannot possibly stretch over that gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the divine Leader. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years.

Their reward." Ibid.

In 1859, the same messenger of the Lord had intimated that modern Israel could have entered into the Promised Land within a few years if the revival started in response to the Laodicean message of 1856 had continued:

"I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts. . . . Nearly all believed that this message would end in the loud cry of the third angel. But as they failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time, many lost the effect of the message. I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel. As this message affected the heart, it led to deep humility before God. Angels were sent in every direction to prepare unbelieving hearts for the truth. The cause of God began to rise, and His people were acquainted with their position. If the counsel of the True Witness had been fully heeded, God would have wrought for His people in greater power." Testimonies, vol. 1, 186—187.

In 1896 Ellen White wrote that the ancient Israel, have had to remain outside of Canaan many more years because of insubordination. He warns us not to add sin to sin by saying that our disobedience has not caused a delay and that Christ's second coming is for a pre-appointed time which we cannot hasten:

"His people have been far behind. Human agencies under the divine planning may recover something of what is lost because the people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans. They have lost to their own disadvantage what they might have gained to the advancement of the truth if they had carried out the plans and will of God. Man cannot possibly stretch over that gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the divine Leader. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action." Spalding-Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 202.

The same sins of ancient Israel at Kadesh Barnea, that caused a forty-year delay in their entrance into Canaan have caused a greater than one-hundred-year delay in our entrance into heaven.

"For forty years did unbelief, mur-
muring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.” Selected Messages, book 1, 69.

Just as did ancient Israel, we of modern Israel have been attempting to force our way into Canaan by using our own human wisdom, strength, and plans. Rather than following God’s directives in how to operate His institutions in order to finish “His work” on earth, we have been operating His health and educational institutions in many ways like the world. We have tended to pattern our dress, diet, and leisure activities after the outward adorning, appetite-gratifying, and competitive sports activities of the world, rather than to obey the counsels of the Lord.

Our spiritual discernment has decreased to the point that we are advertising our pluralism of beliefs in books that describe and promote five versions of the gospel. The new converts among us ask themselves, “Who has the truth?” We are trying to “finish the Lord’s work” by carrying a gospel to the world that too often claims full obedience to God—victory over all sin in this life—is not possible. By our disobedient lifestyles and disobedient methods of operating His institutions and of doing His work, we are saying to potential and to new converts that the gospel allows us to decide which instructions of the Lord need to be obeyed. Thus we are teaching a false gospel in our human-planned, human-wisdom methods of living and working, in our attempts to “finish the Lord’s work.” We have yet to learn the crucial lessons of the gospel—the messages of righteousness by faith and of the three angels:

“The gospel of good news was not to be interpreted as allowing men to live in continued rebellion against God by transgressing His just and holy law. Why cannot those who claim to understand the Scriptures, see that God’s requirement under grace is just the same He made in Eden—perfect obedience to His law. In the judgment, God will ask those who profess to be Christians, Why did you claim to believe in My Son, and continue to transgress My law? Who required this inheritance. Moses, God’s messenger, was dead, but the Lord appeared to Joshua with the message, “Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.” Joshua 1:2. Success in their possessing the Promised Land was dependent upon their strict obedience to God’s counsels given through His messenger Moses, as well as to the present instructions to Joshua. See Joshua 1:7; 3:7–13.

As the now trusting and obedient hosts of Israel, led by the priests with the ark, as instructed by the Lord, advanced to the edge of the flooded Jordan, Christ opened the river and the whole host passed over on dry ground. See Joshua 3:14–17. The flooded Jordan was a symbol of disobedience—a barrier to their entrance, only if they disobeyed God. Upon faithful, trusting obedience to every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, the flooded Jordan became dry ground before ancient Israel.

God has brought modern Israel to the borders of the heavenly Canaan on at least three occasions and each time we have held onto man’s wisdom, plans, and methods, rather than strictly obeying the Lord’s counsels and guidance. The great Advent movement has had its culminating goal delayed now for over one hundred years. On at least three occasions our flooded Jordan of disobedience has turned us back from the Promised Land. Not one, but several generations of Seventh-day Adventists have had to die in the wilderness without being able to be part of the 144,000 who are prophesied to walk with full obedience to God’s will into heaven itself. Yes, we have done worse than ancient Israel:

“I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them. Said the angel: ‘Ye have done worse than they.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 129.

God is giving a message to His leaders today for them to give to modern Israel as He gave to Joshua for ancient Israel some 3,400 years ago. Though our prophetess is dead, God calls us to full obedience to His counsels given through her, as well as to His instructions given through the Scriptures. The conditions for entrance into eternal life are the same today as they have always been—full obedience to
every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Disobedience to God is apostasy today just as it was in the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Eliajah, and Moses.

God is calling His leaders today to pass on His message to Israel to "arise, go over this Jordan." God calls us to arise, go over this Jordan of our disobedience. Christ calls us today to come into line.

It is clear that Christ has given us, as a people, at least three previous opportunities to cooperate with Him in cutting short His work in righteousness. The Lord has not delayed His coming, but we have.

The Faithful and True Witness calls Laodicea to put aside her spiritual blindness and her filthy rags of man-made righteousness and allow Him to clothe her with His righteousness, which is full obedience to God. God’s true leaders today will call His people to cease molding their lives and His institutions after the ways of the world.

Let us beware of those who attempt to calm our concerns by relating the apparent success of spreading the gospel as evidence that God winks at our disobedience. A number of fallen, professedly Christian churches are growing just as fast, or faster, than we are. Even those at war with God may have some measure of success:

"You may argue that you have success as you labor. So do many who are at war with God have a measure of success. If some do embrace the truth while the arguments you use are so convincing, it is no evidence you are in a state of even acceptance with God." Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 171.

In reference to Christ’s first advent, which was prophesied to occur, and did occur, at a specific time, we are told: “Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay.” The Desire of Ages, 32.

The time of Christ’s second coming has not been revealed to us: “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 25:13.

We are told, however, that we can hasten Christ’s coming: "It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of the Saviour." The Acts of the Apostles, 600.

It is clear that Christ has given us, as a people, at least three previous opportunities to cooperate with Him in cutting short His work in righteousness. The Lord has not delayed His coming, but we have. If we continue to fail to hasten His coming, we are told that there is an appointed time beyond which Christ will not be delayed: the vision tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry. Although disappointed, our faith has not failed, and we have not drawn back to perdition. The apparent tarrying is not so in reality, for at the appointed time our Lord will come, and we will, if faithful, exclaim, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.’ Isaiah 25:9.” Manuscript Release, vol. 10, 270.

With or without us Christ will finish His work upon this earth. There will be a ripened harvest. Inspiration speaks of a time when Christ will take the reins into His own hands:

“God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” Testimonies to Ministers, 300.

One thing is certain, our personal and corporate Jordan River of disobedience will open up to a dry path to heaven only to those who, by Christ’s pardoning and enabling grace, put away their rebellion against His guidance. Fellow members of God’s remnant people, His message to us today is “Arise, go over this Jordan.”

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The Sin Problem

by Ron Spear

Ron Spear’s latest book, The Sin Problem, arrives while many are continuing to cloud the issues. While some within Adventism are teaching the Evangelical gospel and making decided attacks against the pillars of Adventism, The Sin Problem presents insights into the truths which uphold and strengthen the very pillars that others strongly deny.

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- and the great delay.

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The Sin Problem

April 1995  Our Firm Foundation  7
Have You Oil in Your Vessels With Your Lamps?

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.” Matthew 25:1–7.

Though five of these virgins are represented as wise and five as foolish, all had lamps. They had all been convicted that they must prepare for the coming of the bridegroom, and all had gained a knowledge of the truth. There was no apparent difference between the wise and the foolish until the cry was made, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,” but the true state of things was then developed. The wise had taken precautions to carry oil with them in their vessels, so that their lamps that were beginning to burn dimly might be replenished with oil; but the foolish had not provided for this emergency, and now they made an earnest, distressed petition to those who were wise. “And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.” Verse 8. They had neglected to prepare themselves to meet the bridegroom, and now turned to those who had provided themselves with oil. “But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” Verse 9.

In reading this parable one cannot but pity the foolish virgins, and ask the question, Why is it that the wise did not divide their supply of oil? But as we make the spiritual application of the parable, we can see the reason. It is not possible for those who have faith and grace to divide their supply with those who have not. Nor is it possible for those who have made a thorough heart work to impart the benefit of this to those who have done but surface work. The parable is designed to point out the peril of doing a surface work. Many profess to be Christians, and for a time their halfheartedness is not discerned. The difference between them and those who are truly pious is not made apparent. This parable should awaken solemn reflections. Considering it we should ask ourselves, Are we doers of the words of Christ? Are we building on the Rock? Are we, in our probationary time, making our calling and election sure? We should not soothe our consciences in expectation of heaven, when we are not bearing the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian life. Paul says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” 2 Corinthians 13:5.

All the ten virgins appeared to be ready for the coming of the bridegroom, and yet the test brought out the fact that five were unready. Those who have true piety esteem and revere the law of God. Through the grace of Christ they exemplify the principles of the law in their lives, and will not willfully break any of the commandments of God. They realize that “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” 1 Samuel 15:22. They yield to Christ, who leads men to repentance of sin, who pardons the penitent soul, and clothes him with His own righteousness. The converted soul has a hatred of sin; he does not indulge in self-complacency, self-love, self-sufficiency, nor pass on day after day, claiming to be a Christian, and yet bringing dishonor upon Christ by misrepresenting Him in character. Those who make this mistake, and pass on filled with self-righteousness, have not in reality made the first

Ellen G. White
The foolish virgins do not represent those who are hypocritical. They had a regard for truth; they advocated the truth; they were intending to go forth to meet the bridegroom. They are attached to those who believe the truth, and go with them, having lamps, which represent a knowledge of the truth. When there was a revival in the church, their feelings were stirred; but they failed to have oil in their vessels because they did not bring the principles of godliness into their daily life and character. They did not fall upon the Rock Christ Jesus, and permit their old nature to be broken up. This class is represented also by the stony-ground hearers. Christ said: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth." Matthew 13:3–5. Jesus explains these stony-ground hearers, and says, "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Verses 20–21.

Many receive the truth readily, but they fail to assimilate truth, and its influence is not abiding. They are like the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their vessels with their lamps. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which is brought into the soul through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who earnestly search the Scriptures with much prayer, who rely upon God with firm faith, who obey His commandments, will be among those who are represented as wise virgins. The teachings of the Word of God are not yea and nay, but yea and amen. The requirement of the gospel is far-reaching. Says the apostle, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:17. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31. Practical piety will not be attained by giving the grand truths of the Bible a place in the outer courts of the heart. The religion of the Bible must be brought into the large and the little affairs of life. It must furnish the powerful motives and principles that will regulate the Christian's character and course of action.

Human nature is depraved, and is justly condemned by a holy God. But provision is made for the repenting sinner, so that by faith in the atonement of the only begotten Son of God, he may receive forgiveness of sin, find justification, receive adoption into the heavenly family, and become an inheritor of the kingdom of God. Transformation of character is wrought through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which works upon the human agent, implanting in him, according to his desire and consent to have it done, a new nature. The image of God is restored to the soul, and day by day he is strengthened and renewed by grace, and is enabled more and more perfectly to reflect the character of Christ in righteousness and true holiness.

The oil so much needed by those who are represented as foolish virgins, is not something to be put on the outside. They need to bring the truth into the sanctuary of the soul, that it may cleanse, refine, and sanctify. It is not theory that they need; it is the sacred teachings of the Bible, which are not uncertain, disconnected doctrines, but are living truths, that involve eternal interests that center in Christ. In Him is the complete system of divine truth. The salvation of the soul, through faith in Christ, is the ground and pillar of the truth. Those who exercise true faith in Christ make it manifest by holiness of character, by obedience to the law of God. They realize that the truth as it is in Jesus reaches heaven, and compasses eternity. They understand that the Christian's character should represent the character of Christ, and be full of grace and truth. To them is imparted the oil of grace, which sustains a neverfailing light. The Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer makes him complete in Christ. It is not a decided evidence that a man or a woman is a Christian because he manifests deep emotion when under exciting circumstances. He who is Christlike has a deep, determined, persevering element in his soul, and yet has a sense of his own weakness, and is not deceived and misled by the devil, and made to trust in himself. He has a knowledge of the Word of God, and knows that he is safe only as he places his hand in the hand of Jesus Christ, and keeps a firm hold upon Him.

Character is revealed by a crisis. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," (Matthew 25:6), the sleeping virgins roused from their slumbers, and it was seen who

**How do we conduct ourselves under the test and proving of God? Do our lamps go out? or do we still keep them burning? Are we prepared for every emergency by our connection with Him who is full of grace and truth?**
to the heart. We can give heartfelt sympathy. We can pray with and for one another. By living a circumspect life, by maintaining a holy conversation, we may give an example of what a Christian should be; but no person can give to another his own mold of character. Let us duly consider the fact that we are to be saved, not as companies, but as individuals. We shall be judged according to the character we have formed. It is perilous to neglect to prepare the soul for eternity, and to put off making our peace with God until upon a dying bed. It is by the daily transactions of life, by the spirit we manifest, that we determine our eternal destiny. He who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. If we have made Christ our pattern, if we have walked and worked as He has given us an example in His own life, we shall be able to meet the solemn surprises that will come upon us in our experience, and say from our heart, “Not my will, but Thine, be done.”

It is in probationary time, the time in which we are living, that we should calmly contemplate the terms of salvation, and live according to the conditions laid down in the Word of God. We should educate and train ourselves, hour-by-hour and day-by-day, by careful discipline, to perform every duty. We should become acquainted with God and with Jesus Christ whom He has sent. In every trial it is our privilege to draw upon Him who has said, “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.” Isaiah 27:5. The Lord says He is more willing to give us the Holy Spirit than parents are to give bread to their children. Then let us have the oil of grace in our vessels with our lamps, that we may not be found among those who are represented as foolish virgins, who were not prepared to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. □

Review and Herald, September 17, 1895.

Laodicea
Her Authority, Organization, and Destiny
by Vernon Sparks; Introduction by Ron Spear
Twenty-two chapters; 10 appendices; 384 pages

This new book is a thought-provoking and stimulating discussion of what God says about His remnant church. Issues such as organizational structure, purposes for organization, why the name Laodicea, and the reasons for and the roles of self-supporting ministries.

How can we justify the existence of self-supporting institutions that minister in areas normally carried out by the denomination? When and how is Laodicea shaken? What will be the end results? Will she, or has she, become part of Babylon? How can we know? Will there be another church? How does Laodicea relate to the invisible church? These and other timely questions are specifically addressed.

Many important aspects of God’s remnant people are presented in the light of past, present, and future prophesied events yet to take place in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Inspired solutions are presented for the problems encountered.

Order your copy of Laodicea for just $12.50 plus shipping. Please see page 3 for shipping charges.
Letters to the Editor

Thank you for sending the book Issues Clarified to me. After reading some of it I must confess that there is apostasy among us. As a long-time believer I have wept over “the gods of the Gentiles” slowly, but surely, being invited into our homes and churches.

What is the answer to our great problems? The answer is in Matthew 5. Every one of us (including myself) must fall on our knees with our face to the ground and cry out to God from the depths of our souls. We must hunger and thirst for His righteousness as a drowning man for air. We need to hunger for a pure heart, and come to the place that we would sooner die than sin again. We need to pray every hour that God will take away the pride and self that hides deep in our hearts.

HC, California

Thank you for the very valid articles in Our Firm Foundation. I do believe that we in South Africa have been blessed to a large degree by our isolation and that we have not been subject to apostasy as is the case in the North American Division and Australia. We have, however, not escaped it entirely as it is coming into the churches now, but at least I feel more prepared to meet it as a result of your articles. It has saddened my mother and me, but we are doing more personal study than before.

MS, South Africa

The articles in Our Firm Foundation have been very inspiring and uplifting. I am encouraged to know that the truth is being published without sugar coating.

I know that Jesus is truly on His way back. I look forward to His return. I am praying that the information through your articles will touch many others.

DW, Mississippi

Responses to Earth’s Final Warning

I just got a great blessing from reading Earth’s Final Warning. How inspiring it is! I want the book The Great Controversy, and I would appreciate your free Bible studies and free literature—Rome’s Challenge and Heralds of Peace. This is an answer to prayer. Please continue to send me your literature. AP, California

The pope’s new book, Beyond the Threshold of Hope, seems to contradict much about what is written on the Papacy in the current tabloid Earth’s Final Warning.

The Catholic Church, acknowledging past mistakes and sins through its many ministers, has asked for forgiveness and mercy. It also has opted in many situations today to follow the Holy Spirit and to rebuild the Body of Christ on earth. As an institution and physical power, it seems to no longer enhance itself. But rather for the most part it works for the kingdom of God to embrace all people on earth.

DP, California

Some time ago I received your little newspaper about “A New World Order Is Coming.” I like the news about the New World Order. If I hadn’t read the paper or received it I wouldn’t have known about it. It scared me very much. I am a Christian. I study the Bible on Sunday afternoon with other ladies. I would like your free Bible study course as well as the other free literature offered. WA, Idaho

I found your paper one day in my mailbox. I became very interested in reading about what is coming because we are living in the last days. I want to know more about this Beast. And I want to take up the Bible course. I am requesting Rome’s Challenge and Heralds of Peace.

LT, California

Your newsletter, Earth’s Final Warning, came to my door—thank you. I believe the seventh day is the Lord’s day and that we must worship Him on that day. I have searched the first and second chapters of Genesis regarding the seventh day. How do I get to know the name of that special day? How do we know for sure the first, third, or last? I truly want to obey God by keeping that special commandment. Please send me Rome’s Challenge, Heralds of Peace, and also the Bible studies. Can you also please verify. Is it true that the world as we know it now will end by 2005?

LT, California

A couple of months ago I received one of your publications on my doorknob. I read it through and, being a concerned Christian, was intrigued by what was in the context of your publication. If you could help me out, in an article in U.S.A. Today, they were declaring that prominent church leaders, such as the pope, Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Robert Schuler, and others have been in conference for the last two years to draw up a charter to state that each denomination would not proselytize each others’ members. This would go right along with what the Roman Catholic Church has been wanting for generations—Protestants to stop preaching the gospel of the good news—which the Roman Catholic Church does not do. The word Protestant means to witness for. As a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to teach and make known the truth about God and His kingdom. By your publication I assume you have done a considerable amount of research concerning the Roman Catholic Church and its objectives. If you have any further information about what I have stated I would be thankful for your help.

EO, Oregon

Please send me five copies, if possible, of Earth’s Final Warning. I recently found an issue in my mailbox. After showing it to a friend, he was very interested in what it said. I’d like to give some to others, too. Please add me to your mailing list if you have one.

KF, Washington
During the Annual Councils of 1973 and 1974, the assembled leaders of the world church felt the special presence of the Holy Spirit. These councils were characterized by an atmosphere of repentance, confession, prayer, and recommitment to the task of heralding the Advent message to every kindred, tongue, and people. A special appeal to the church as a whole was published at the close of each of these councils, and they later appeared together, along with an introduction by then General Conference president Robert H. Pierson, in a small pamphlet entitled “Annual Council Appeals.” In his introduction to these earnest words from our world leadership, Elder Pierson said:

“Brethren and sisters, the time is long overdue for this church to move into line and in dead earnest seek the Lord for the experience that will prepare us to receive the latter rain, finish the work, and behold Jesus at His second advent. Compromise and sin must go! Christlikeness in our characters must be our constant goal.

“The experience we need must go deep—very deep. It must be a thorough work of repentance for sin and a forsaking of sin. Consecration and commitment services at Annual Councils and in the churches are but a good beginning. The only power that will be sufficient is the power of the Holy Spirit revealing the scenes of Calvary before us daily so vividly that we hate the sin that placed the Son of God upon the cross. That view of Calvary must be so penetrating that it will lead us not only to hate sin but to loathe it to the extent that we will forsake it.

“Ministers, teachers, medical, educational, and publishing workers, office workers, literature evangelists, and every other denominational worker, every church member, throughout the field—let us ‘come into line.’ We have sinned! Too many of us are not living up to all that we know to be right. Let us confess our sins and in sincere, heartfelt repentance seek forgiveness, reconciliation, and lasting restoration.”

We are thankful for leaders able and willing to clearly call for such decided action. The need of revival and reformation, unfortunately, is even greater twenty years later. In the spirit of those who first penned and circulated these appeals, we reprint them here for the encouragement and blessing of the members of God’s remnant church.—Editors

We believe that the return of Jesus has been long delayed, that the reasons for the delay are not wrapped in mysteries, and that the primary consideration before the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to reorder its priorities individually and corporately so that our Lord’s return may be hastened.

We are not the first leaders in Adventist history to feel the urgency of preparing the church for the fullness of the “latter rain” experience, the “loud cry of the third angel’s message,” and the triumphal return of the awaited Lord. Often God’s special messenger to the remnant people made this appeal. Especially specific were her words written in 1892:

“The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Christ Our Righteousness, 56. This statement is an inspired declaration that the fulfilling of Revelation 18:1-4, in which “another angel” joins the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 in lightening the whole earth with their glory, had begun. In the four years following the historic Minneapolis General Conference, the fresh, compelling emphasis on “righteousness by faith” had aroused
the Adventist Church in such a way that Ellen White could say that the "loudest cry" had begun.

One question, therefore, has overshadowed all other subjects at this 1973 Annual Council: What has happened to the message and experience that by 1892 had brought the beginning of earth's final message of warning and appeal?

Although in our earnest search for answers we have no disposition to blame those to whom the message first came, nor those who have led in the work from then until now, we have been determined to discover any pitfalls in our past history that may be avoided today and to profit by such lessons.

But more than all else we are persuaded that it is the present experience that is of primary concern—the way from past inadequacy to rapid triumph. It has been "latter rain" time for many years.

We are not unaware of the fact that all through our ranks many of our members enjoy a rich, victorious experience. They have received the early rain experience and are rejoicing in the Lord. But this is no cause for complacency or exaltation. As a body the church still is in the Laodicean condition as set forth by the True Witness in Revelation 3:14-19. Therefore, in attempting to find the specific present causes for failure and delay, the council has noted three main factors:

1. Leaders and people have not fully accepted as a personal message Christ's analysis and appeal to the Laodiceans. Revelation 3:14-22.
2. Leaders and people are in some ways disobedient to divine directives, both in personal experience and in the conduct of the church's commission.
3. Leaders and people have not yet finished the church's task.

Response to the Laodicean Message

Because the latter rain experience has not yet come, delegates at this Annual Council have been driven to the conclusion that the message of Christ to the Laodiceans has not been clearly understood or adequately heeded. The climax of the sequence of events predicted in the following quotation has not been reached, indicating that there is yet need for a people to fulfill the requirements of the True Witness: "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." Testimonies, vol. 1, 187.

The message to Laodicea involves a personal relationship to Jesus Christ that will produce a quality people, a conquering people, a people who, in Christ's own words, will conquer "as I myself conquered." Revelation 3:21, RSV. This message will produce a people whom God can set forth without embarrassment as exhibits of those who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, RSV), a people who have learned through experience that all goodness is a result of being sustained by divine power. Such people can be entrusted with special power because they will use it the way Jesus used power; indeed, in all aspects of life they will reflect the character of Jesus.

Becoming like Jesus in word and deed is the goal of the process called "righteousness by faith." "The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven." The Desire of Ages, 555-556.

As delegates to this Annual Council we believe that this is the heart of the church's need—understanding and experiencing all that is meant by the phrase "righteousness by faith." Such righteousness is God's will lived out by continual faith in His power. God is waiting for a generation of Adventists who will demonstrate that His way of life can truly be lived on earth, that Jesus did not set an example beyond the reach of His followers, that His grace "is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish." Jude 24, RSV.

Each member of the Laodicean church needs more than a theoretical knowledge, or even a proof-text knowledge, of the Word. He needs a genuine and complete surrender of the life and will to the divine authority of the Bible and of the Spirit of Prophecy—a surrender that may well call for revolutionary changes in personal lifestyles and in denominational policies and practices. Every member must recognize that he has a part in either hastening or delaying the coming of Christ. Says God's servant: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ's Object Lessons, 69.

At this Annual Council small study groups of church leaders have earnestly examined areas of possible failure to follow divine counsel.

Disobedient to Divine Directives

As church leaders at this Annual Council, we have faced honestly the fact that there are inconsistencies between the church's preaching and its practices, and to allow these inconsistencies to continue will automatically delay the completion of the church's mission and the coming of Christ.

God has in love sent to the Seventh-day Adventist Church inspired counsels that illuminate and apply the words of Scripture. These counsels cover about every conceivable facet of Christian experience and witness. As Seventh-day Adventists we cannot plead ignorance of God's will concerning His expectations, either for the individual or for the church. If we ignore or reject God's counsels, this may well be defined as an act of insubordination, which will affect our relation to the coming of the Lord. In the words of God's servant: "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel." Evangelism, 696.

At this Annual Council small study groups of church leaders have earnestly examined areas of possible failure to follow divine counsel. They have pointed out the need for greater care in Sabbath observance, in stewardship of God's gifts, in guarding the avenues of the soul, and in practicing the broad and specific principles of healthful living. On the latter question they have taken seriously the inspired statement: "This is a work that
will have to be done before His [God’s] people can stand before Him a perfected people.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 154.

These study groups also have pointed to evidences of sagging morality, including a more casual attitude toward divorce and remarriage. Concern has been expressed over the increasing tendency to imitate the world in dress and ornamentation. These study groups have examined the whole spectrum of Seventh-day Adventist institutional work and have pointed to evidences that some institutions in various respects are losing their distinctive character as instrumentalities for the furtherance of God’s work on earth. See Fundamentals of Christian Education, 351. While earnest efforts have been made to reform, it is recognized that as institutions grow larger, the difficulty of reforming is greater.

It is recognized that in an age of growing social consciousness and change, Adventist institutions may become involved in worthy endeavors in which the world also participates, while neglecting that work which only the church of the remnant can do. See Review and Herald, November 26, 1970.

One of the greatest threats to our institutions of higher learning is seen in the counterfeit philosophies and theologies that may be unconsciously absorbed in worldly institutions by our future teachers, and brought back as the “wine” of Babylon to Adventist schools. Revelation 14:8–10; 18:1–4.

It is recognized that a constant threat to spirituality grows out of increasing creature comforts, rising standards of living, and a desire for remuneration equal to that offered by the world. Wrote God’s servant: “The cause of present truth was founded in self-denial and self-sacrifice. . . . We need to take heed lest we outgrow the simple, self-sacrificing spirit that marked our work in its early years.” Selected Messages, book 2, 197.

As the Annual Council has reviewed these and other aspects of the lives of God’s people and the institutions of the church, it has raised the question as to whether much of this represents insubordination to the authority and will of God so clearly expressed through His Word and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Without attempting to pinpoint areas of insubordination, the council pleads with God’s people everywhere to respond to the appeal for revival and reformation—to make whatever changes may be necessary to enable the church to represent Christ adequately and fulfill its unique mission.

Finishing the Church’s Task

As delegates to this Annual Council we are much aware of one factor that delays the coming of Christ: the unfinished task of carrying the three angels’ messages to the entire world. Revelation 14 and 18. We believe that Mrs. White made clear that Christ cannot come until the entire world has had a fair opportunity to hear God’s saving message. For example, she wrote: “Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 450.

God was willing to bring His work to a swift triumph following 1844, in 1888, and again in 1901 (among other times). Why then the delay? What can be done now?

In response to this question, the delegates at this 1973 Annual Council extend the following appeal to all workers and members throughout the world. The appeal is threefold and yet it is one:

1. Without further delay open the heart’s door fully to the waiting, pleading Saviour. Revelation 3:20. Admit Jesus as the absolute Ruler of the life. Let Him enter the heart to transform it and to rule. Under the influence of the “early rain,” live up to all the light you have. Put into practice all the counsel God has given you.

2. Forsake the spirit of insubordination that too long has influenced individual and church decisions. This will prepare the way for the renewal of the “latter rain” that has been delayed since the earlier years of our history, for God cannot send the Spirit in His fullness while people disregard the counsels He has graciously sent through that same Spirit, the Spirit of Prophecy.

3. Make a new commitment to the church’s task of reaching earth’s billions with the three angels’ messages. This commitment will call for personal dedication, for personal witnessing, for personal sacrifice. Moreover, it will call for deep intercession with God on the part of each member, a pleading with God for the “latter rain” of the Holy Spirit’s power for effectual, convincing, loving witness in deed and word.

We believe that all Heaven is ready to do great exploits in behalf of the church that hears God’s last call of mercy. We believe that God has wonderful surprises in store for every church member who commits himself completely to Heaven’s plan for a perfected people—a people that will reflect the image of Jesus fully.

That a genuine revival will come is clear from the following statement: “Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children.” The Great Controversy, 464. That Satan will endeavor to prevent this revival is also clear: “The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest.” Ibid. If the fast-spreading, charismatic movement in the world today is the false revival forecast by God’s Spirit, clearly the time must be near for God to pour out the latter rain upon His remnant people.

Therefore, we appeal to our church members everywhere to join hands with conference workers and church officers in a great revival and reformation that will enable God to reveal His power and glory to a needy, desperate world. With all the solemnity that we can command, we appeal to every member to study God’s
The 1974 Appeal

At the 1973 Annual Council the Holy Spirit overshadowed the assembly, refreshing the hearts of the delegates and producing a deep longing for God. A spirit of revival was felt, and the need for reformation was seen. As a result of this solemn experience, the delegates issued an "Earnest Appeal" to the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the world. The appeal acknowledged that the church is in the Laodicean condition (see Revelation 3:14–22), that the character of Christ has not been "perfectly reproduced in His people, (Christ's Object Lessons, 69), "that the return of Jesus has been long delayed, ... and that the primary consideration before the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to reorder its priorities individually and corporately so that our Lord's return may be hastened."

The response to this earnest appeal has been impressive in many parts of the world. Ministers have used the appeal as the basis for sermons; and in some areas workers' meetings have been devoted to a study of the issues raised in this appeal. As a result, members everywhere have joined church leaders in the conviction that the Advent movement's first priority must be spiritual and theological, not organizational. Even if we construct an ideal global enterprise, utilizing the finest of modern business principles, we may fail in our mission if we do not understand clearly how the church is to reach the world with its distinctive message. The church's mission depends on correct theology.

Clear, simple truth will call forth a distinctive Christian experience and lifestyle. When people understand what God expects them to do they are more apt to cooperate and fulfill His desires. As delegates to this Annual Council, we believe that the spirit of individual and corporate repentance that resulted in the call by the 1973 Annual Council for revival and reformation must continue to be felt around the world; also that the condition of the church described in the 1973 appeal is still accurate, and that the need for revival, repentance, and reformation remains.

But if the church is to advance in spirituality to fulfill its divine mission, Christ and His righteousness must be held up continually before our people, and the entire membership must understand clearly that God is seeking to prepare a people who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12, RSV. Such people will have accepted the message to the Laodiceans from the "faithful and true witness." 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. Testimonies, vol. 1, 187.

Such people will have discovered joy and peace in knowing through experience that the Christian's good works are a result of being sustained by divine power, that the "faith of Jesus" produces the character of Jesus.

Such people will have contributed to the vindication of the character of God and the final work of settling the great controversy: "The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people." The Desire of Ages, 671. "The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in submission to God as He was." Ibid., 664. To make this glorious promise a reality in the believer's life "Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." Ibid., 671. The provision is complete. We are not left alone. "God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matthew 5:48. This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning." Ibid., 311.

The manner of life of God's people, seen in their home, neighborhood, and occupational circles, will demonstrate that God is all-wise, loving, and just in the way He governs the universe:

"The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles.... The purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt. By beholding the

If the church is to advance in spirituality to fulfill its divine mission, Christ and His righteousness must be held up continually before our people.

goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in the church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth. ... It is His purpose that those who practice His holy precepts shall be a distinguished people. To the people of God today as well as to ancient Israel belong the words written by Moses through the Spirit of Inspiration: 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' Deuteronomy 7:6." Testimonies, vol. 6, 11–12.
And This Gospel of the Kingdom . . . Part 2

The Nature of Sin

It is of the utmost importance that we understand the true nature of sin in order that we may escape its power and its doom.

“A terrible doom awaits the sinner, and therefore it is necessary that we know what sin is, in order that we may escape from its power. . . . It is of the greatest moment that we understand the nature of our fall and the consequences of transgression.” Signs of the Times, June 20, 1895.

In order to more fully understand the true issue and the nature of sin we must have God’s definition.

“The only definition for sin that we have in the Bible is that it is the transgression of the law.” Ibid., March 3, 1890. See 1 John 3:4.

Everything that is contrary to God’s will is wrong, but not every wrong is transgression, and thus not sin. All of the endless deviations from God’s original plan in the creation of the physical earth and in the plant and the animal kingdoms are wrong, and thus evil, and in need of a Restorer. “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Romans 8:20–22.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19–21.

All deviations from God’s will as seen in the natural world will be corrected and restored by the plan of redemption. Thus the deviations from God’s will as seen in mankind’s physical nature of his mind and body, are wrong and evil and in need of a Restorer. They will be corrected by the plan of salvation. “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Romans 8:23.

These deviations from God’s will in our physical being and in the physical world around us, are the results or consequences of sin rather than sin itself.

Transgression or sin is the product of an intelligent mind. Only creatures with reason and choice can disobey, rebel, transgress—sin. “Purity and impurity pertain to the soul. It is the evil deed, the evil word, the evil thought, the transgression of the law of God, . . . that defiles a man.” The Desire of Ages, 397.

The great controversy is a struggle between God and Satan for the allegiance of reasoning minds. By our wills we choose to serve God or Satan.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Romans 6:16.

“There are but two parties in this world. All rank either under the banner of the obedient or the banner of the disobedient.” Signs of the Times, February 22, 1899.

The corrupt, lower powers of themselves cannot act contrary to God’s will.

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words ‘flesh’ or ‘fleshy’ or ‘carnal lusts’ embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God.” The Adventist Home, 127.

Sin is a manifestation of the higher powers of man. We sin when with our will we cherish the desire to sin, or when we choose to allow our perverted desires, appetites, tendencies, passions, and propensities of our corrupt lower nature—the flesh—to be acted out in our life.
"The will is the governing power in the nature of man. If the will is set right, all the rest of the being will come under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the choice, the deciding power, the kingly power, which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or to disobedience." *Temperance*, 113.

"Every mind is controlled either by the power of Satan or the power of God." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, 31.

There are two classes of transgression, or sin—willful and unwillful. Willful sin is knowingly going contrary to God's will. Willful, known transgression is rebellion against God which results in guilt, for which He holds us personally accountable. Unwillful sin—a sin of ignorance—is going contrary to God's will prior to the age of accountability, or ignorantly, after the age of accountability, not knowing that it was sin, or through lack of judgment, or lack of thoughtfulness.

"Men often commit wrong through ignorance or want of judgment. In many instances there is no premeditated wrong; it is caused through a lack of thoughtfulness. The one who treats this as sin is himself a sinner. There is with many a keen imagination that makes them offender for a word or action. But often the one judged is innocent in the sight of God." Ibid., vol. 11, 371.

Too often we commit wrongs impulsively, without planning to, and it may be due to carelessness, lack of discernment, or to thoughtlessness as stated above. When we find ourselves in such a situation, it is wise to take, by God's grace, the path of repentance and reformation. We cannot presume to know whether or not our "sin of impulse" resulted in guilt or not.

"The sin of Moses was not premeditated. He was surprised into it." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, 159.

Even though Moses repented of his sin of impulse, it still kept him out of the earthly Canaan. See *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 312. We are counseled to help each other to recognize and to gain the victory over this type of sin. See *Review and Herald*, June 28, 1887.

Christ makes atonement for the confessed sins, and also for the sins of ignorance of His people.

"The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the Most Holy Place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God's commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts." *Early Writings*, 254. See Hebrews 2:3; 5:2; John 9:41; Acts 17:30.

True unwillful sin is not rebellion against God and His law. A true sin of ignorance does not result in personal guilt or personal accountability, other than the natural consequences of cause and effect. Christ's blood atones, without our participation, for all sins of true ignorance, but God judges us guilty for willful ignorance, just as He does for willful sin.

**Sin which incurs personal condemnation or guilt comes in three ways:**

1. We can choose to do a known wrong deed.

"A man is tempted to sin when some attractive object or indulgence is presented to him, and he is drawn to overstep principle, and to violate his conscience in doing that which he knows to be wrong." Ibid., December 18, 1893.

2. We sin when we choose not to do a known right deed.

"What does the Lord say to those who have had light, and yet have failed to live in accordance with it? "Therefore to him **There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In His sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision made for willful blindness.**

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15:22. Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In His sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision made for willful blindness. . .

"We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, 1145.

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

Also, temptation is not a sin unless we yield to it. Resisting temptation actually strengthens us:

"Temptation is not sin; the sin lies in yielding. To the soul that trusts in Jesus, temptation means victory and greater strength." *Signs of the Times*, December 10, 1902; see also James 1:12.

that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17. *The Youth's Instructor*, February 15, 1894.

3. We sin by cherishing known wrong thoughts or by refusing to accept new light.

"When an impure thought is welcomed, an unholy desire cherished, a rebellious purpose formed, the purity of the soul is stained and its innocence is ruined, temptations prevail, and hell triumphs." *Signs of the Times*, December 18, 1893.

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:28.

"The law is far-reaching in its claims, and we must bring our hearts into harmony with it. . . It condemns every sin, and requires every virtue. Not only does it demand a correct outward deportment, but its principles reach even to the thoughts and affections of the heart. 'Behold,' said the psalmist, 'thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' In the light of the law, covetousness is seen to be idolatry, lust adultery, and anger murder. No wonder that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and not subject to His law." Ibid., March 3, 1890.

Thus sin is the result or product of intelligent, rational beings who surrender their will to the service of Satan. True unwillful sins, or sins of true ignorance, produce guilt which is automatically atoned.
The wages of willful sin—rebellion—consist not in merely eternal death, but in experiencing the wrath of God in the lake of fire, ending in eternal death. The second death will be a most awful experience.

It is difficult for us to understand the balance of justice and mercy and love in the character of God, but His justice requires that the punishment of the wicked be proportional to their guilt. The redeemed, as well as the unfallen universe, will accede to justice being served by such punishment.

"Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, 'The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon."

"Satan and his angels suffered long. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused. Then I saw that Satan and all the wicked host were consumed, and the justice of God was satisfied; and all the angelic host, and all the redeemed saints, with a loud voice said, 'Amen!' " Early Writings, 294–295.

In reference to the wages of sin, God through Ezekiel tells us that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezekiel 18:20. He clarifies that we do not inherit personal guilt. Each person is judged according to his own deeds:

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 18:20, 30.

God describes the mercy and justice relationship in His character with the following words:

"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Exodus 34:7.

Some use this and similar references to sustain the concept that children do inherit personal guilt from the sinful par-
ent. However God has clarified this idea through His latter-day messenger:

"God did not mean in this threatening that the children should be compelled to suffer for their parents' sins, but that the example of the parents would be imitated by the children. ... The effects of a sinful life are often inherited by the children. ... The effects of a sinful life are often inherited by the children. They follow in the footsteps of their parents. Sinful example has its influence from father to son, to the third and fourth generations. If parents indulge in depraved appetites, they will, in almost every case, see the same acted over in their children. The children will develop characters similar to those of their parents; and unless they are renewed by grace, and overcome, they are truly unfortunate. If parents are continually rebellious, and inclined to disobey God, their children will generally imitate their example. ... Thus the influence is seen from generation to generation." The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, 257-258.

God clarifies even further how our personal guilt relates to that of our ancestors with the following thought:

"It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins." Patriarchs and Prophets, 306. Emphasis supplied.

It is true that many of us will suffer the first death and many trials, tribulations, and deprivations because of the sins of Adam, parents, and even strangers about us, but only as we personally participate in sin are we sinners and held personally guilty before God, and thus to be punished for our guilt.

Many professed Christians believe in the doctrine of original sin—that we are born personally guilty for Adam's sin. They conclude that each babe must be baptized soon after birth in order to prevent punishment in the lake of fire if it should die. To the contrary, Seventh-day Adventists believe the scriptural teaching that guilt is the result of intelligent choice and baptism is for those who are old enough to choose to repent and to follow Christ. Only those who knowingly choose to rebel and to remain in rebellion against God incur personal guilt and will be punished in the lake of fire.

The clear distinction between sin of ignorance without personal guilt and willful sin with personal guilt cannot be made by man. We frequently cannot know whether or not a sin of "ignorance" was truly so or not. When a previously committed, but unrecognized sin comes to our attention, only God may be aware of whether we had opportunity to know, but had neglected to know, and are thus personally guilty for what may appear to us as a sin of ignorance. Also what may appear to us as sin with personal guilt in others may actually be the result of true ignorance or innocent thoughtlessness or want of judgment. See Manuscript Releases, vol. 11, 371, quoted above.

Only God can determine the age of accountability in a child. But since Christ gives to every son and daughter of Adam, at birth, a measure of spiritual power, of desire for good, and some ray of divine light, the conflict between good and evil, therefore, begins from the earliest moments of reason and only intensifies at the time of conversion. We are told, "Eternal vigilance must be manifested with regard to our children. With his manifold devices Satan begins to work with their tempers and their wills as soon as they are born." The Adventist Home, 202. Thus the ability to choose—submission to divine authority—or wrong—rebellion against authority—and thus to incur personal guilt or innocence begins at an early age. Because of these many factors and our inability to know whether guilt is accounted by God for previously unrecognized sins, it behooves us to repent for all previously unknown sin as it comes to our attention.

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

"Some will plead that they lived up to the best light that they had, and did not know that they were sinners before God. Therefore they claim that they were guiltless, and have nothing to repent of. But the Word of God was plain, and all who had a prayerful, anxious desire to understand it might have known what was true; and for this sin of ignorance God will demand an offering as truly as in the days of Moses—even the offering of a broken and contrite heart. With the Bible in our hands we ought all to know and practice the truth." Signs of the Times, July 22, 1880.

The only clear example given by Inspiration of humanity that never exercises any power of free choice, and thus never generates any personal accountability for sin or guilt, is that of slaves who have been kept on, or lower than, the spiritual, moral, and mental levels of the dumb beasts. They will not be resuscitated from the first death for any punishment for their transgressions. They will be as though they never were:

"God cannot take to heaven the slave who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash, and holding a lower position than the brutes. But He does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. He permits him to be as if he had not been." Early Writings, 276.

For a discussion of how God deals with infants and children before the age of accountability, and also with imbeciles, see "J ustification Without Conditions?" Our Firm Foundation, March 1994.

Summary

Against our will, all sons and daughters of the first Adam inherit from him consequences of his sin which include a fallen-nature, bent toward disobedience to God. Our lower natures—the flesh—consist of a mixture of evil, as well as of good, such as appetites, desires, passions, tendencies, and propensities. Our higher powers of reason, conscience, and will or choice are lacking in

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The Judgments of God

The persecution of God's people in Egypt brought upon the persecutors the wrath of God, which was manifested in ten plagues, which were poured out just before the deliverance of Israel. "And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go." Exodus 3:20. These plagues were not only to punish the persecutors, but to prove that the God of Israel was mightier than the gods of the Egyptians. Harach was the supreme pontiff, or the Pontifex Maximus, of the pagan religion of Egypt. All idolatrous nations attributed their success in war to the superiority of their gods over those of their enemies. Pharaoh challenged the God of the Hebrews. "And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." Exodus 5:2–3. The Egyptians had doubtless taunted the Israelites regarding the weakness of their God because He was not able to deliver them from bondage. They boasted that their gods had brought victory and prosperity to the nation.

God's Answer

God's answer to the challenge of Pharaoh was the ten plagues, which were punishments of the gods of Egypt. "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." "For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had slain among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments." Exodus 12:12; Numbers 33:4.

Each plague was designed by the Lord to destroy the confidence of the Egyptians in the power and protection of their gods, and to reveal to them the Creator as the God of the Hebrews, that even the creature-objects of their worship were under His control. "The Lord would give the Egyptians an opportunity to see how vain was the wisdom of their mighty men, how feeble the power of their gods, when opposed to the commands of Jehovah. He would punish the people of Egypt for their idolatry, and silence their boasting of the blessings received from their senseless deities. God would glorify His own name, that other nations might hear of His power and tremble at His mighty acts, and that His people might be led to turn from their idolatry and render Him pure worship." Patriarchs and Prophets, 263.

The First Miracle

"And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." Exodus 7:10–12.

When Moses and Aaron appeared in the court of Pharaoh claiming to be the spokesmen of the God of the Hebrews, he demanded a miracle as the evidence of their office. Miracles are the usual credentials of a prophet or a messenger of God. The magicians of Egypt, as agents of Satan, performed counterfeit miracles to prove their claim. Their rods were doubtless charmed and stiffened serpents which looked like rods. This was a common trick of the magicians of Egypt. See Descriptions de l'Egypte, vol. 1, 159. They were jugglers and tricksters of the first class, and their "miracles" were counterfeits and "lying wonders" as are all of Satan's miracles. "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

The greatest tricksters of the world today are found in Cairo, Egypt. Only God can create. The final result of this test proved the superiority of Israel's God. When God began to work for the deliverance of His people, Satan performed miracles to deceive the Egyptians and to counter the work of God for the salvation of His people. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 264–265.
The First Plague

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood." Exodus 7:19-20.

The Egyptians considered the Nile as sacred, and Pharaoh probably went out to it each morning to worship it as a god—Keil. It was known as “the Nile-god” and was identified with Ammon-Ra. It was said to be “self-created” and was sometimes called “the father of all the gods” and “the chief of the waters.” The whole nation depended on the River Nile for their water supply, and the very existence of the kingdom was dependent on its yearly overflow. “The beneficent Nile, the very life of the state of the people.”—Stanley. It is only natural therefore that a pagan people who worshiped the powers of nature should make a god of this great river. Even many of the creatures that lived in its waters were considered sacred and were objects of worship. The Egyptians bathed in and drank its waters with reverence and delight believing them to have healing virtues.

The first plague covered “all the land of Egypt.” The “streams” doubtless refer to the branches of the Nile in its delta, of which there were seven according to Herodotus. The “rivers” probably refer to the canals, the “ponds” to the natural and artificial lakes and reservoirs and cisterns. A partial remedy was found in digging for clear water in the sand, and no one could have lived through the seven days the plague continued. The death of the fish of the river cut off one of their chief food supplies. According to Birch, the Egyptians lived to a large extent on fish. See Egypt from the Earliest Times, 45. This was one reason that the river was worshiped. That which they looked upon as their greatest benefactor was turned into a curse.

The Plague of Frogs

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.” Exodus 8:5-6.

Frogs were regarded as sacred by the Egyptians because they lived in the River Nile and were considered the emblem of creative power. One of their gods was called “Heka,” and was a frog-headed goddess. The description of these frogs is identical with a species in Egypt today called “Rana Mosaiaca.” They are very loathsome creatures that crawl instead of hop, and which croak constantly. During the plague they were everywhere and could not be killed because they were sacred. They even entered the “ovens” or baking pans. In Egypt the young frogs come out of the Nile in September, and are sometimes so numerous as to be a menace even today. There are historical records of communities where frogs became such a menace that the people had to flee the country to escape them.

The Third Plague

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.” Exodus 8:16. “Mosquitoes.”—Sept. “Gad-flies.”—Fenton.

Many Bible students believe that the weight of the authority is in favor of rendering the original word, “kinnim,” “gnats,” or “mosquitoes.” Geikie says the original word means various kinds of poisonous insects. Herodotus, Philo, Wilkinson, and others tell of the great mosquito pests of Egypt, especially in the fall, usually in October, when the reeding waters of the Nile leaves pools of water over the lowlands. They also annoy the beasts. Kalisch wrote of the mosquitoes in Egypt: “Mosquitoes molest especially beasts as oxen and horses, flying into their eyes and noses and the priests, to guard against the slightest risk of contamination, wore only linen garments, and shaved their heads and bodies every day.”—Gleik. “Every third day.”—Herodotus. The first two plagues came from the water and the third came from the earth, which was also worshiped. The magicians who had imitated the first two plagues now give up the contest and acknowledge their defeat.

The Plague of Flies

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground wherein they are. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.” Exodus 8:20-22.

“He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.” Psalm 105:31. “A mixture of noisome beasts.”—Margin. “The dog-fly.”—Sept. This is not the common housefly but a species that constituted a terrible affliction in Egypt—Philo. They may have included a kind of...
beetle which at times appear in the Nile in great numbers and "inflict very painful bites with their jaws; gnaw and destroy clothes, household furniture, leather, and articles of every kind, and even consume or render unavailable all edibles."—Kalisch. They sometimes drive people out of their houses and they devastate crops. Beetles were sacred to Ra, the sun-god, and one form of Ra was a man with a beetle head. The Egyptian fly-god, Beelzebub, was revered as the protector from ravenous swarms of insects which infested the land at certain seasons. This plague demonstrated the impotence of the fly-god to protect the Egyptians, and Pharaoh begged Moses and Aaron to entreat Jehovah to remove the curse.

Beginning with the fourth plague, the land of Goshen was severed from the rest of Egypt and Israel was protected. The first three were universal and the last seven of the ten fell upon the Egyptians only. See Exodus 8:22-23; 9:6, 26; 10:23. "The severance is a new feature, and one distinguishing the latter from the former plagues."—Pulpit Commentary. The swarms of flies of divers sorts "filled the houses and swarmed upon the ground, so that 'the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.' These flies were large and venomous, and their bite was extremely painful to man and beast. As had been foretold, this visitation did not extend to the land of Goshen." Patriarchs and Prophets, 266.

The Egyptian fly-god, Beelzebub, was revered as the protector from ravenous swarms of insects which infested the land at certain seasons.

The Fifth Plague

"Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain. And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel." Exodus 9:1-4.

The fifth plague was a "grievous murrain" upon the livestock of the Egyptians. "A dead pest."—Moffatt. This judgment was aimed at the entire system of Egyptian brute-worship as representatives of the sun, moon, and stars. They worshiped the sacred bull Apis, the calf Nilevis, and also heifers, rams, goats, and other animals. In those days wealth was reckoned mostly in livestock. The Israelites were especially pastoral people and the severance of the land of Goshen was an evidence to Pharaoh that it was a divine judgment demonstrating the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt.

The Sixth Plague

"And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boil; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians." Exodus 9:10-11.

The boils of the sixth plague broke out in blains or blisters. This is doubtless what is referred to in Deuteronomy 28:27, as "the botch of Egypt" which caused an itching sensation and was incurable. It may have been something like elephantiasis or the black leprosy. In Egypt there were several altars on which human sacrifices were offered in times of plague and disease, the victim being burned alive. The ashes were gathered by the priests and thrown into the air and wherever they fell they were supposed to stop the ravages of the disease by propitiating Typhon, or the "Evil Principle." "The victims after being burned alive on the high altar, their ashes were scattered in the air by the priests in the belief that they would avert evil from all parts whither they were blown."—Geikie. The furnace was the emblem of the bitter slavery and sufferings of the Hebrews in Egypt. "And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." "But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." Genesis 15:17; Deuteronomy 4:20.

This act of Moses in sprinkling the ashes toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh indicated that the plague came as the result of the cruel bondage which consumed the Israelites in the furnace of affliction. Fire is the greatest of all germ destroyers and the Lord demonstrated His power by producing disease germs from the ashes or "soot of the furnace."

The Seventh Plague

"And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation." Exodus 9:23-24.

This plague was a severe hailstorm mingled with electricity and thunder. An electric storm often comes with hail. The cattle and people who were unprotected were wounded and many were killed. The flax and barley crops, which were almost ready for the sickle, were destroyed. They matured in March while the wheat and rye harvests came more than a month later. Flax was used in making garments, and according to Herodotus, the Egyptians preferred them to clothing made from any other material. See Psalm 105:32-33.

The Eighth Plague


The plague of locusts is also described in Psalm 105:34-35: "He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground." They destroyed everything in the vegetable kingdom that was left by the hail. See Joel 2:3, 5. Many writers tell how locusts bark the trees after stripping them of the leaves. "Over an area of 1,800 square miles the whole surface might literally be said to be covered with them."—Barrow. "When their
swarms appear everything green vanishes instantaneously from the fields, as if a curtain were rolled up; the trees and plants stand leafless, and nothing is seen but naked boughs and stalks.”—Volney. During 1932 in South Africa, swarms of locusts 500 miles wide and 1,500 miles long devastated portions of the country.

"They shall fill thy houses." Verse 6. "They entered the inmost recesses of the houses, were found in every corner, stuck to our clothes, and infested our food."—Morier in Second Journey, 100. "They overwhelmed the province of Nedjd sometimes to such a degree that, having destroyed the harvest, they penetrate by thousands into the private dwellings, and devour whatsoever they can find, even the leather of the water vessels."—Burckhardt, Nekes, vol. 2, 90. The Egyptian windows were latticework which made it easy for the locusts to enter.

Came With East Wind

"And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts." Verse 13. Inroads of locusts are not common in Egypt and they come from other countries and usually from Arabia and Asia to the East. North Arabia is noted for its locusts and they generally travel with the wind. A French traveler in Egypt wrote of a swarm of locusts visiting Egypt and they came with an east wind. Verse 14 tells us that the plague covered "all the land of Egypt." Egypt was about 520 miles long and only about 20 miles wide in the delta. Swarms of locusts much larger than this have been described by travelers in different countries. According to verse 19, the locusts departed out of Egypt with a west wind. They left as suddenly as they came, which is a characteristic of these insects. This judgment was directed at Serapis, whose office was to protect the country from locusts. Forty-two temples had been erected in honor of this deity. At the command of Moses the locusts came, and at his command they departed, and Serapis was powerless.

The Ninth Plague

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Exodus 10:21-23.

The ninth plague was the darkness that could be felt. Egypt was sometimes visited during the vernal equinox by the "wind of the desert" which was sometimes accompanied by weird darkness caused by clouds of sand and dust, which was worse than "the most gloomy night." They could not see one another during this plague. "While it lasts no man rises from his place: men and beasts hide themselves; the inhabitants of towns and villages shut themselves up in their houses in underground apartments or vaults." These visitations of darkness usually last two or three days. The darkness could be "felt," indicating the intensity and oppressiveness of the darkness when the air was filled with sand and dust. There was light in the dwellings of the Israelites. This plague was directed at Isis and Osiris, representing the sun and moon, who were supposed to control the light and the elements. Jehovah in this plague summons nature to proclaim Him the true God.

The Last Plague

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." Exodus 12:12; see also verses 29-32.

The slaying of the firstborn of man and beast was the most terrible of the ten plagues. The firstborn of man and beast were given special privileges and were considered sacred. Pharaoh in his palace was more or less protected personally from the other plagues, but this one entered the royal palace and slew the crown prince and heir to the throne. It caused Pharaoh to acknowledge the defeat of his gods by a superior God, before whose power he yields. He tells Israel to go, and asks for a parting blessing. See verse 32.

The Antitype

The wrath of God will be poured out upon wicked Babylon because of her persecutions of the remnant and for her idolatries in worshipping the beast and his image instead of God. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Revelation 14:8-11; 16:19.

As in Egypt, God's wrath will be manifested in plagues, which will be poured out just before the final deliverance of modern Israel. "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Revelation 15:1; see also Revelation 15:6-8; 18:4-6.

They will be similar to those of Egypt. "The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel, were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." The Great Controversy, 627-628.
Seven Last Plagues

See Revelation 16.
(1) A noisome and grievous sore. Verse 2.
(2) The sea turned to blood and the death of its creatures. Verse 3.
(3) The rivers and fountains become blood. Verse 4.

(5) The seat of the beast filled with darkness “and they gnawed their tongues for pain.” Verse 10.
(7) The great earthquake and heavy hail that leaves the whole world desolate. Verses 17-18.

The plagues on Egypt were of brief duration, probably falling within a year. The seven last plagues will also be of brief duration. “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God which judgeth her.” Revelation 18:8; see also Revelation 18:10, 19; Jeremiah 4:23-27.

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. . . . But in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.” Ibid., 628-629.

Test of the True God

The plagues of Egypt proved to Pharaoh and the Egyptians that their gods were false and that Jehovah was the true God. “And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” Genesis 7:5; “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.” Exodus 5:2; 8:19; see also Exodus 7:17, 22, 9:14.

“The nation had worshiped Pharaoh as a representative of their god, but many were now convinced that he was opposing himself to One who made all the powers of nature the ministers of His will.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 271-272.

The seven last plagues will convince the wicked that the God of the remnant is the true and only God. See Revelation 19:1-3; Ezekiel 38:16, 18-23; 39:1-8.

The purpose of the seven last plagues, like those of Egypt, is to expose the sin of creature worship, and prove to all that the Creator is the true and only God. The plagues cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess the true God, whom the persecuted saints have worshipped “even unto death.” Those who worship the beast will find that the beast cannot protect them, for the very object of their worship is smitten by the plagues.

Plagues Cause Confession

The plagues caused the Egyptians to confess their guilt. “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.” Exodus 9:27, 10:16-17.

Even the magicians acknowledged that “This is the finger of God.” Exodus 8:19. Thus will the seven last plagues humble the wicked and cause them to confess their guilt and acknowledge that God is with the despised remnant. “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.” Isaiah 60:14-15; see also Isaiah 49:23; Revelation 3:9-10.

“Every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess.” Romans 14:11. “Men whom the world has worshiped for their talents and eloquence now see things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression, and they fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided, and confess that God has loved them.” The Great Controversy, 655. See also Early Writings, 124.

Israel Protected

Just as ancient Israel in Egypt escaped the seven last of the ten plagues, so will modern Israel escape the seven last of the plagues that fall on modern Babylon. See Psalm 91:1-11; Isaiah 33:14-16. The statement “seven last plagues” indicates that there will be others before them that will be universal. We do not know whether there will be just three or more of these universal plagues. The influenza epidemic was a plague and so were the world wars. But the seven last plagues will fall upon the wicked only.

Bible Worker Needed

Location: Tri-Cities, Washington

The Waldensian Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship is seeking a full-time Bible worker. They would prefer a husband-and-wife team, but they will consider all responses. A reasonable salary is supplied. Please contact Doug Newton at (509) 586-8212 or the Waldensian S.D.A. Fellowship at (509) 586-1854.
A Representative of the Class

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a new form of law was instituted in the United States known as the Public Interest Law. The basic purpose is to allow private persons and groups to vindicate the public interest. The term “public interest” may also imply a large body of people identified as a “class.” In other words, it allows one to vindicate, or justify, a class of persons. The most effective way of pressing this course of action is by the use of a test case. But the test case must be brought to court by a “representative of the class” who then invites others of the class to join in. A representative is simply “one who represents or stands in the place of another,” a substitute. This type of suit is known as a Class Action suit and is most appropriate for situations where no lawsuit could be brought if each member of the class had to act independently. In other words, it is “An action brought on behalf of other persons similarly situated.” Another important factor is the merits by which the case is presented. Class Action suits have failed to be heard because “the plaintiff lacks standing to sue;” that is, the party does not have the strong adversary interest to meet the requirement of the law that places limits on what can be heard. In other words, because of the person’s position with the law, the law is preventing him from being able to present his case. A person must show that he has suffered actual aggrievement or injury, and that the interest he seeks to protect is within the protective scope of the statute.” A statute is “a positive law . . . [that owes its] binding force to a positive command or declaration of the supreme power.” It is also interesting to note that a practical obstacle to this form of action is the costs involved. Once the class action has been won, then all people in the class may claim the victory for themselves.

What does this fact have to do with the law of the ga’al, and with the plan of salvation? Let us examine what the Scriptures say about Christ:

The person bringing the class action to the court must:

1. Be a member of the class (or family) represented, one who is similarly situated. Anything else would be considered a “fiction of law.”

“We, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:6–7.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4.

Jesus was born into the human race, fully God and fully man. This He did after the race had experienced four thousand years of sin. He was fully a member of the class.

2. Not lack the ‘standing to sue’ by having a strong adversary interest to meet the requirement as limited by the law. With the sin of our first parents our inheritance of life was lost. We inherited the tendency to sin. We inherited a principle that works in us to separate us from God. So each one has come under condemnation of the law, and therefore has no rights under the law.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23.

But Jesus, “who knew no sin,” was not limited by the law to present our case. How did He present our case? He condemned sin by His life.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

3. A person must show that he has suffered actual aggrievement in presenting his case and is within the protective scope of the statute. Christ came...
to show that should man be restored to the inheritance lost, he could live in harmony with God's law in righteousness.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15. God created us in His image, even in His likeness. It was, and is still is His desire that all be saved. And through His Son He has provided a way and calls for all to return to Him.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:29–30.

It is a sad reality that “many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

(4) Be willing to pay the high cost.

“Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:8.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:3.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Hebrews 2:9. All emphasis supplied.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

The Inheritance Reclaimed / Claiming the Victory

Christ is the Victor. He has won the class action. By His life He condemned sin, thus releasing from bondage all who will partake in that victory.

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Romans 5:18.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hageth on a tree.” Galatians 3:13.

“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” Ephesians 2:16.

It was the separation from the Father caused by sin that brought Christ to die on the cross. It was the sin of a fallen race for all time that crushed His spirit. But the awful results of sin had to be revealed to the court of the whole universe for all to see and judge. By His life of obedience and faith that resulted in His death on the cross, Christ condemned sin in the flesh, while at the same time He vindicated the become, as it were, adopted into the divine-human family. For He said, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:22–23.

The inheritance of the union between Boaz and Ruth was the lineage that begat Jesus; the antitypical go'ael:

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21.

Christ condemned sin in the flesh, while at the same time He vindicated the law of God. The reality of what Christ did in His life is the reality of what He wants to do in each of our lives—condemn sin in the flesh.

for Christ is the end [the ultimate goal, not the termination] of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4.

It is only through the merits of Christ, by faith, that man can condemn sin in the flesh thereby keeping the moral law:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

“Believeth on him”—the word translated in the King James as believe, is the verb form of the same root, the noun form of which is translated faith, and means to have faith. It is by faith that we stay on the path. It is faith that enables the power of God to work in our lives. It is faith that enables His grace to change us.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:18–19.

“If we confess our sins, he is faith-ful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever,
yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” Hosea 2:19.

Summary

"It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Romans 8:7. But 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' (John 3:16) that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.' John 3:3." The Great Controversy, 467.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:3, 5–6.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1–4.

As we study what Christ did in our behalf, we can get just a glimpse of the magnitude or completeness of what He did. Even in our limited understanding we can know that His life of sacrifice for us is sufficient; a whole, efficacious offering to God. Just as His sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is also to be complete in Him.

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

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April 1995  Our Firm Foundation  27
Early Experiences
No. 8 — Divine Providences

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

A n age-old maxim, fervently sung by saintly people of the olden time, “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform,” has been fully verified over and over in the work of the third angel’s message. At times incidents have occurred which, on their face, would be reckoned unfortunate, but which in the end clearly proved the verity of the inspired thought that “all things work together for good to them that love God,” (Romans 8:28), and are really acting out the purpose of His will regarding them.

At various times there had been shown in vision dangers attending the common habits of diet, and the necessity that the people learn simple rules of caring for themselves in times of physical indisposition. But the full light was reserved for future needs. After a strenuous siege of labor in the spring General Conference [session], followed by a continuous strain in Wisconsin and Iowa during the summer of 1865, Elder White and his wife returned to their Battle Creek home for a rest. One morning, a few days later, while they were taking a daybreak walk in the garden, he was suddenly stricken with paralysis, which temporarily deprived him of speech, and also of the use of his right arm.

Knowing of Dr. Jackson’s “Home on the Hillside,” in Dansville, New York, and having confidence in the use of water for remedial purposes, Mrs. White decided to remove her husband thither for rest and treatment. Three months later, after he had been somewhat relieved, they left for Rochester, on the way to Battle Creek. While there, a vision was given to Mrs. White, December 25, in which she was shown that a home for the afflicted should be provided, wherein those who wished to learn how to care for their health could be accommodated. These were the words of instruction received from the Lord:

“Our people should have an institution of their own, under their own control, for the benefit of the diseased and suffering among us who wish to have health and strength that they may glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are His. Such an institution, rightly conducted, would be the means of bringing our views before many whom it would be impossible for us to reach by the common course of advocating the truth.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 492–493.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that while the servant of the Lord had been given some knowledge of healthful living, no one seemed to know just how to act in the matter until an experience was permitted that would demonstrate some method of operation. This came when the time was ripe for action and a place was open for occupation. The culmination of the whole matter was the purchase of the spacious home of Judge Graves, which was situated on Washington Street in Battle Creek, and its transformation into treatment-rooms and restrooms.

When we take into consideration the closing reason offered in the foregoing quotation, as one motive for the establishment of a health resort, it must appear plain to all just why God, who sees the end from the beginning and tempers His work to meet emergencies, wanted such a movement to start at that particular time.

Starting a School

Up to that point no attempt had been made to establish schools of any grade by our denomination, and this was proving a reproach to our work. But God’s watchcare for the prosperity of His work was providing a remedy for this breach in our wall of defense. Among the first patients to patronize the newly-opened “Health Institute” was a physically broken-down schoolteacher from near Muskegon, Michigan, by the name of Goodloe H. Bell. After a helpful sojourn at the place, and when his mind began to absorb the religious truth with which he was there brought in contact, he made inquiry about the location of our schools. Upon learning that we had made no concentrated effort in that direction, he seemed inclined to pity the oversight, and appeared anxious to help remedy the situation.

As no one stepped forward to assume the initiative in the responsibility of starting a school, Professor Bell began to look about for some place where he could open a private place of education. In an old one-story, wooden building back of the Review and Herald office, which had once done duty as the denominational print shop, but was then a dumping place for castoff material, Brother Bell found a place of interest to him. By inspection of this building, he discovered that the attic could be fitted up for a boys’ school.

A visit to the place soon after the school opened, disclosed to the writer six or eight lads from about sixteen to twenty years of age, who were patrons of the effort. The methods of teaching were so unique, without the usual commitment to memory of dry book rules, that every boy gave diligent attention to lesson work, and the word was soon heralded about, that Professor Bell was the very best kind of teacher.

In due time, agitation began for the building of a denomination school. So in the spring of 1872 the General Conference was induced to take the suggestion under consideration. After some delay, the solicitation of funds for the enterprise was entered upon at the camp meetings of 1873, by Elders Butler and Haskell, and the net sum of $54,000 was subscribed. As the pledges matured, a plot of twelve acres of land was purchased in Battle Creek, and a brick building three stories high was completed in the autumn of 1874. The school opened with Professor Sydney Brownberger as president, and with about one hundred students in attendance. In a short time it had a registered patronage of nearly five hundred.

After Professor Brownberger was transferred to Healdsburg College, several
other good men, in succession, stood at the head of the institution, until the transfer of the school property to the Battle Creek Sanitarium. But the influence of that school spread, and schools of various grades, from primary church schools up to those of college rating, were established, and invited students to enter their portals and prepare for usefulness in the Master’s work.

As truly as God makes great oaks grow from little acorns, when properly planted, so we must conclude that the same Divine Power has made to grow, from such providential beginnings, the wonderful system of education now developed under the third angel’s message. Just as truly too, should all recognize that God’s original plan for the proclamation of His last message to earth’s nations must have included an educational system for its fulness; otherwise the Deity would be placed on the same level with finite man, whose plans need frequent revision. Believing so much, it is legitimate to think that God knew just when His Spirit should move the adoption of that part of the plan, and how to secure cooperation for the execution of His purpose.

The consummation of this part of the plan was unquestionably in view when the camp-meeting system was inaugurated under the direction of the Spirit of Prophecy, else how could the people have been taught to work as a unit in missionary directions, if continued indefinitely as separate, local companies, to be educated by those holding widely differing sentiment? It is not enough simply to remember when and through whom the truth reached us; but let us receive as made to ourselves, the admonition of Moses to Israel near the close of their wilderness wanderings, when he was about to take leave of them: “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.” Deuteronomy 8:2. Emphasis added.

Unless we, too, shall heed these words, and call to mind God’s thoughtful dealing with us through all the past, we may face the dilemma that overtook Nebuchadnezzar when he beheld with human pride the beauty of his empire capital, and exclaimed: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” Daniel 4:30. It is indeed a great and blessed privilege to be connected with a work and people that God has been signally leading throughout the years, to unite one’s own interests with the movement divinely planned to prepare the world for the Master’s coming. ☐

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**The Seventh-day Sabbath and a National Sunday Law**

by Jacob Teske

*The Seventh-day Sabbath and a National Sunday Law* is the most recent book to be published at Hope International. It is a witnessing tool you will not want to be without.

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We solemnly appeal to our church leaders and members everywhere to think carefully as to whether they are hindering or hastening the return of Jesus.
happiest, kindest, most trustworthy people on earth.

The urgency of this very late hour, the distress of our world, the fact that many are "looking wistfully toward heaven," and the dwindling days of each person's own probation cry out for a people who will arise to its task and shine. The challenge of God, issued through the prophet Isaiah, is: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah 60:1–3.

As delegates to this 1974 Annual Council, we believe that the Laodicean message is addressed in a special way to leaders of the church. Therefore, with all the earnestness that we can command, we appeal to all whom God has placed in positions of leadership in the General Conference, in the world divisions, unions, conferences, missions, institutions, and in our churches to lead workers and members into the kind of deep spiritual experience that will enable them "to reflect the image of Jesus fully." This experience will make leadership truly effective in the proclamation of the "everlasting gospel...to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. When the Lord's servants thus bind themselves "to live as Christ himself lived" (1 John 2:6, NEB), the day when the Holy Spirit shall be felt in total latter rain power will be hastened, the earth will be lightened with the glory of the angel of Revelation 18, and Jesus will come according to His blessed promise. □

As delegates to this 1974 Annual Council, we believe that the Laodicean message is addressed in a special way to leaders of the church.

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