Our Firm Foundation

Volume 10, Number 8

August 1995

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
AUGUST 1985 — AUGUST 1995

Desmond Ford and Our Firm Foundation
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Looking Back
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Ten years ago this month, Our Firm Foundation was born. The first edition was off the press in 1985. We were amateurs, but we all had a strong conviction that God was directing us to produce a monthly magazine that would tell our people the present-truth message for the final hours in this great controversy. We look forward now knowing that God will continue to bless the efforts of our editorial staff. We still consider ourselves amateurs, but we are grateful that the Holy Spirit can use those who are dedicated to His cause, and who are willing to be made willing to be used in the very last movements of human probation.

We have watched our beloved church move more decidedly and tragically toward the errors of the Evangelical gospel in these last ten years. Glacier View did not settle the theological problems presented by Desmond Ford. Some of our pastors and theologians had already drunk too long from the polluted springs of the Evangelical, humanistic world. The events of Glacier View, and the defrocking of Ford gave these men great caution. It was evident to these unfaithful stewards of the true gospel and the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines that they must be very careful how openly they spoke about the sanctuary message, the investigative judgment, the three angels' messages, and our prophet Ellen White.

To many it seemed that we had put an end to the heresies of the so-called New Theology, but it was a smoldering fire only waiting for the right moment to again burst into flames. Others claiming to possess the true 1888 message are now fanning these hot coals of apostasy into another raging fire of doctrinal error which has the freedom to openly and insidiously attack the landmarks of our faith so clearly supported by Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.

We were told by our prophet that before the end Satan would attempt to remove the landmarks. There would then be a definite thrust by Satan against the sanctuary message, for this special message is directly related to the three angels' messages, the Sabbath, and the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9. These messages have distinguished us from the churches of Babylon. See Early Writings, 63; Counsels to Writers and Editors, 30.

Our prophet reveals God's warning of Satan's attempt to change our doctrinal beliefs: "Our faith in reference to the messages of the first, second, and third angels was correct. The great waymarks we have passed are immovable. Although the hosts of hell may try to tear them from their foundation, and triumph in the thought that they have succeeded, yet they do not succeed. These pillars of truth stand firm as the eternal hills, unmoved by all the efforts of men combined with those of Satan and his host. We can learn much, and should be constantly searching the Scriptures to see if these are so. God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward,—where He is interceding for His people." Evangelism, 223; see also 224-225, 610. Let us remember that not one pin is to be removed from what the Lord has established. To destroy our confidence in these grand messages so clearly supported by Divine Inspiration, Satan must first destroy our confidence in the Gift of Prophecy and Ellen White as a prophet. With many Seventh-day Adventists today, he has been most successful. Ellen White wrote in Selected Messages, 48, under Divine Inspiration, that the very last deception would be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. She states clearly that the apostasy would grow even worse in the church until the coming of the Lord, and that we have far more to fear from within the church than from without. See Special Testimonies, Series B, #7, 57-58; Selected Messages, book 2, 383; Ibid., book 1, 122, 406, 48; Testimonies, vol. 5, 477, 75-76; Christ's Object Lessons, 304-305.

We are now witnessing the very last deception. The sanctuary message, the investigation judgment, and the Gift of Prophecy are now under heavy attack by the angels of darkness. Probation for the church and the world is soon to close; the last movements are most rapid ones. See Testimonies, vol. 9, 11-13. So very many of our leaders, pastors, and laity are not prepared for this climactic hour. Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen for eternal life." See Matthew 22:14. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." 1 Timothy 4:1-2.

Ellen White wrote a warning that Satan's very last thrust at the church would come in the final hours of the great controversy, the Omega of apostasy. We are now here. "Every conceivable effort will be made to throw doubt upon the positions that we have occupied." Manuscript Release, vol. 7, 195.

The Testimonies Will Be the Key

"Soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the Testimonies of God's Spirit. We must have in readiness the clear, straight messages that since 1846 have been coming to God's people, . . . Some will yield their faith, and will deny the truth of the messages, pointing to them as falsehoods.

"Some will hold them up to ridicule, working against the light that God has been giving for years, and some who are weak in the faith will thus be led astray.

"But others will be greatly helped by the messages. Though not personally addressed, they will be corrected, and will be led to shun the evils specified. . . . The Spirit of the Lord will be in the instruction, and doubts existing in many minds will be swept away. The Testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is continued on 30
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 a firm 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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Desmond Ford and Our Firm Foundation

There can be little question that Our Firm Foundation magazine would never have come into existence if it were not for the aberrant teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford, the Australian theologian. In his early years, enamored by the Scottish theologians, Dr. Ford quickly embraced many of the Evangelical-Protestant concepts that were anathema to the Seventh-day Adventist message. In the early 1960s when Dr. Ford became chairman of the Religion Department of Avondale College, he had a wonderful opportunity to teach his aberrant theology to the unprepared minds of the young men who trained for the ministry at that college. Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that, though others preceded him, in one generation Desmond Ford changed the theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I was chairman of the Education Department at Avondale College (1965-1969) during part of Dr. Ford’s service there. At that time, not recognizing the full impact of what was taking place, I nevertheless knew something was wrong. Therefore, at a staff meeting I once said “What is taught here at Avondale today is preached in the pulpits of our churches tomorrow, and is believed by our people the day after tomorrow.” How prophetic those words proved to be!

For many years Dr. Ford was able to do his work of infiltrating a new theological position into the Seventh-day Adventist Church with little opposition. Only men such as Pastor George Burnside and Pastor John Keith, the faithful New Zealand leaders, along with retired Australian evangelist and administrator Pastor J. W. Kent and a few other retired ministers seemed to clearly see the problems.

But the correct entreaties of these faithful patriarchs were turned aside by the administration in Australia which was able somehow to play down the situation to the brethren in the General Conference.

When Robert Brinsmead, the Australian layman who had for many years strongly upheld the message of 1888 and the sanctuary truth, also capitulated to the Evangelical cause in the early 1970s, there was a deadly union of self-supporting and denominational apostasy that left its scar not only upon Australia, but on the whole Seventh-day Adventist Church. Quickly those who were like-minded gained courage from the success of Desmond Ford and were openly able to bring that same theology into the colleges and universities of America.

One of the greatest mistakes of our General Conference leadership was deciding to bring Desmond Ford to the United States. In 1976, I spoke directly with the vice-president most responsible for this decision. He wholly underestimated Dr. Ford. His answers were very simple. “Desmond Ford is a big fish in a little pool in Australia. He’ll become a little fish in a big pool in America. When he has to sharpen his mind by the bright minds of the men we have at the seminary, and the men we have at our colleges, it will help him understand some of the issues he is overlooking.” My response to the vice-president was “Desmond Ford will become a big fish in a big pool. There is no one in America whose mind is sharp enough to match wits with Desmond Ford.”

It was obvious from the action of that vice-president that he thought I was crazy, and yet that was exactly what took place.

When Desmond Ford was brought to the United States he had a vastly bigger pool in which to promote the nefarious errors of the New Theology. With his charismatic personality, with his photographic memory, and his quick reactions to questions, most listeners were enamored by the brilliance of this man, and assumed that what he was saying was the truth.

Ford’s success was enhanced by the fact that many Seventh-day Adventists had tragically fallen into the pit of legalism, Our Firm Foundation is more than ever needed to combat the errors of the New Theology.
ism, having never been thoroughly taught how to surrender their lives daily, moment by moment, to the power of Jesus Christ. They had been taught that keeping the commandments was necessary for salvation. But not always was that teaching placed within the context of Christ our righteousness, the One alone who can bring victory and salvation to men and women. Even those who have been taught by godly pastors and teachers, somehow often slip into this pit of legalism. Legalism leads to despondency, depression, despair, frustration, neurosis, and even in some isolated cases, suicide.

Desmond Ford came along, not with the wonderful gospel of Christ our righteousness, but with the “sin and live” theology predicated upon the gospel of relationalism. While the true relationship of total submission to Jesus will bring peace and security, Ford taught the common Evangelical form of relational theology, that what we need is a relationship with Jesus. Then His perfect character will cover our imperfect character, and we have the security of heaven. There was euphoria. Myriads claimed that they had never had such an experience; many others claimed that they had never heard such Christ-centered messages.

But soon there were startling revelations. Some were disregarding or even burning the Spirit of Prophecy. This was not a surprise to some of us who had watched the reaction of men and women who had moved one step away from truth. The moment that step is taken, no matter what the profession, it will inevitably lead to a rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy. There is no way that aberrant beliefs can continue to be proclaimed in the clear light of the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. But because the Spirit of Prophecy has been despised, it is inevitable that parts of scripture, and finally all of the Scripture, are brought into question.

Very recently, I was talking to a friend who about fifteen years ago shared with me the anguish of seeing his parents falling into the New Theology, wholly enamored by the teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford. Only recently, he reminded me that at that time I had said, “Your parents are going to join a Good News Church, and then they will move to a Sunday church, and then they will move out of practicing Christianity altogether.” Sadly, this friend revealed that that is exactly what happened to his parents, but not only did this happen to his parents, but to myriads of others.

The telltale signs could be seen; the euphoria of a blessed experience soon passed away. It was not difficult to recognize the carelessness in adornment standards such as the wearing of rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces, which began to become obvious on many of these ‘liberated’ New Theology supporters. Some very quickly found that it was quite appropriate to add alcohol to their intake, and not a few lost their euphoria in the divorce court as moral standards declined.

Today myriads of professed members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are wandering in this terrible pathway of destruction, following the emptiness of carnal security, expecting to be saved.

Our God is a God of love. And that love is wholly predicated upon His law. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15. Even more clearly does Jesus state that, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23.

However, today myriads of professed members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are wandering in this terrible pathway of destruction, following the emptiness of carnal security, expecting to be saved when they are on the broad way that leads to death everlasting. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12.

There is only one message that is relevant to God’s people and to the world today. Only one pathway will lead to eternal salvation, and it is centered upon the righteousness of Christ as presented in the message of righteousness by faith. That message is most clearly defined in Testimonies to Ministers, 89-98; Selected Messages, book 1, 355-405; and Ibid., book 3, 156-204. I would urge every reader to take the time to read these three articles. We will never go astray if we follow in that one pathway.

But what has this to do with Our Firm Foundation magazine? With the increasing influence of Dr. Desmond Ford inflaming the campuses of North America, supported by a plurality of the theology professors, it was a necessity that this terrible crisis be met. I thank God for the privilege that my twin brother, Russell, and I had of being in the vanguard of the challenge to this terrible crisis. When we noted no other luminaries of the church arising as aforetime to give a certain trumpet sound to our people, we put forth in 1980, Adventism Vindicated. Right after this in 1989, we published The Deceptions of the New Theology, and in 1994 The Evangelical Dilemma. These power-
Looking Back

LOOKING back to 1982, I can reflect on the wonderful way God has led me during the last thirteen years that have flown by so swiftly. Leaving the work of our organized church after nearly thirty years was a very traumatic experience for Betty and me. At that time, 1982, I was the field secretary to the Review and Herald. I counted it a great privilege to be associated with our church paper.

The Review and Herald was a tremendous instrument of our beloved church in the pioneers’ hands. From their weekly issues came tremendous articles from our prophet, Ellen White, and from her cherished husband, James White, who was its first editor. Other spiritual giants, like Elders J. N. Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and many more, guided God’s paper, helping our people to understand truth and the individual responsibility of living that truth. The early Review and Herald protected our people from false doctrines and fanaticism which Satan continually attempted to foist upon God’s church during the Alpha of apostasy at the beginning of this century. It became the vehicle that warned our people of the dangers of the pantheistic doctrine taught by John Harvey Kellogg. The leaders of God’s church stood with the living prophet, and the church survived the onslaught of Satan in the Alpha of apostasy. Our prophet declared that the Omega would follow and would be of a most startling nature. See Selected Messages, book 1, 97–206.

It was in May 1982, that I was called into the Editor’s Office of the Review. The editor told me he was retiring. He had recently been elected to be chairman of the White Estate, and he felt that it was time to slow down from the pressures as editor and to preserve his health. He had devoted more than forty years to the Lord’s work. I realized that the church paper was losing the one who had valiantly stood for truth, and I felt that the incoming editor would not have the same understanding of our message and Ellen White’s relationship as the prophet to the remnant church.

After my discussion with the editor, I returned to my office and dictated my own resignation. I felt I could not continue in my position knowing the direction that the church paper would probably take in the future. It seemed to me that the Review would begin to lean toward the liberal theology that was beginning to circulate through the ranks of some of our church theologians.

It was very clear to me that there originally came into existence a paper which told our people the clear messages that God gave to the pioneers, and that was clearly supported by the pen and voice of our prophet. God placed a burden upon me to produce a magazine of the quality and content that would uphold the pure truth as the Review had so wonderfully done for several generations. But I knew I was not editor material, for I am not an intellectual or academic scholar.

After my resignation, Betty and I sold the retirement home we had built in Virginia, and I built a home in Alabama. From there I traveled up and down the United States and Canada preaching the message to the Laodiceans in the churches, adding a call for revival and reformation to prepare a people for eternity. I kept looking for someone to be the editor of the paper that I was burdened to help develop.

I approached some very qualified men who had the talent and experience to be the editor, but was told that if they did, it would destroy their influence and would cut off their writing for any of the church papers.

A Call to Hope

During my traveling and preaching, I found myself holding a series of revival sermons in the old barn at Hope International. A small group of God’s faithful people gathered in what used to be a hayloft for a weekend in 1984. After these meetings, I was asked to attend Hope International’s Board meeting. The Hope Board asked if I would consider being their director.

Hope International has been a nonprofit organization since 1964. Vernon and Beth Jennings were part of the original founding
group that purchased the property by Ohop Lake near Eatonville, Washington. Vernon worked as a space engineer with Boeing for thirty-five years and used his salary to help keep the corporation solvent. The property was maintained through some very difficult financial crises by a few faithful supporters who saw the mighty hand of God intervening to save the place several times, thence they realized that God would one day use this bit of geography in a great way for the finishing of His work.

I agreed to accept the offered position on the basis that Hope International would also accept the same burden that God had placed upon me—to produce a truth-filled magazine that would provide articles of inspiration from Ellen White, and that would also give an opportunity for preachers and writers of truth to enter the Adventist homes by the printed page, presenting an inspiring and compelling call for revival and reformation in God's beloved church.

God had already provided a name for the magazine, Our Firm Foundation. The Board agreed that if I would come as director and editor they would do everything possible to assist in this important venture. A year later, in August 1985, the first edition of the Our Firm Foundation magazine became a reality, and it has been a monthly publication ever since.

The Lord Provided the Workers

God called young men and women with talents. Bob Bresnahan has been our artist since the beginning and has helped give the magazine its professional standing. God brought David and Clarissa Fiedler, Ken and Lois McGaughy, Vernon and Pat Sparks, Harvey Steck, and many others over the years. The present staff consists of about forty workers, both full-time and part-time, who labor faithfully to produce the magazine, which is Hope's main project, a monthly success.

We praise God for His faithful support over the past ten years as we have seen the hand of God working. Our Firm Foundation is now in nine languages, and twice each year we endeavor to mail out over 100,000 copies of the English issue to those on our mailing list. The special May edition, that was sent out for the General Conference session, has been well received by many of our people. For much of the last eight years the ministry and workers of North America, England, Australia, and New Zealand have received Our Firm Foundation free. A good number of workers have responded favorably to our dedicated efforts.

God's Bountiful Blessings

In 1991 Hope published the equivalent of fifty-million (8: by 11-inch) pages of material, half of it orientated to the church and half to the world. Since then our outreach materials, Truth for Today, Health for Today, Heralds of Peace, Earth's Final Warning, and many tracts, are leaving our Shipping and Circulation Departments by the thousands and millions of copies each year. For this we give God the credit.

This message must be borne to a lukewarm church by God's servants. It must arouse His people from their security and dangerous deception in regard to their real standing before God.

The great financial demand to continue this work on a monthly basis is staggering, but with God's blessings we have been able to pay our bills. All employees of Hope International are paid a monthly stipend that meets the needs of our families; Betty and I are paid on the same basis as the rest of the dedicated staff.

The Lord has provided equipment for a modest printing facility, including a four-color, sheet-fed perfecting press and two small presses. There are now twenty-two homes at Hope International, a video studio, office space with adequate and simple equipment, and a Spanish Department with four dedicated workers. Also on campus is the medical missionary educational building and a pavilion we use each year for camp meeting.

For all of these answers to our prayers, we give praise to our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who we sincerely believe has been the inspiration for everything good that has been done in this place. Our Board and Administrative Committee have endeavored to faithfully guide this institution according to the guidelines so clearly provided by the Spirit of Prophecy.

At seventy-one years of age, this editor is grateful to God for the health and strength He gives for continued travel. I have preached the three angels' messages around the world on every continent. The shaking in Adventism is now going on at an alarming pace; fanaticism and heresies are sounding throughout the world in God's beloved church as the devil attempts to deceive the very elect.

We are told as we approach the final hours of the church's probation that many would rise up against the straight testimony which must be given to our people. Inspiration speaks to us:

"It is not the plan of God to have some eased and others burdened. Some feel the weight and responsibility of the cause, and the necessity of their acting that they may gather with Christ and not scatter abroad. Others go on free from any responsibility, acting as though they had no influence." Testimonies, vol. 1, 179.

"Some will not receive the testimony that God has given us to bear, flattering themselves that we may be deceived and that they may be right. They think that the people of God are not in need of plain dealing and of reproof, but that God is with them. These tempted ones, whose souls have ever been at war with the faithful reproving of sin, would cry: Speak unto us smooth things. What disposition will these make of the message of the True Witness to the Laodiceans? There can be no deception here. This message must be borne to a lukewarm church by God's servants. It must arouse His people from their security and dangerous deception in regard to their real standing before God. This testimony, if received, will arouse to action and lead to self-abasement and confession of sins. The True Witness says: 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.' Revelation 3:15. And again, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.' Verse 19. Then comes the promise: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Verse 20. 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' Verse 21.

"The people of God must see their wrongs and arouse to zealous repentance and
The Snares of Satan

As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already hulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ, and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God.

Says the great deceiver: “We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath, reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man’s salvation is now going forward. Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also.

“The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God, and follow custom and tradition.

“I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. The people accept their ministers’ explanations of Scripture, and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to my will.

“But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbathkeepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation. When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish Church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees, and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When death shall be made the penalty of violating our sabbath, ther many who are now ranked with commandmentkeepers will come over to our side.

“But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall.

“Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasure here, and fix their affections upon earthly things. We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God’s cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks. The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. Make them care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God’s people.
"Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us great harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snare. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ, then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion.

"Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandmentkeepers must be untiring. We must be present at all their gatherings. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance, and employ all our seductive arts to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it.

"I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls. I will also have unbelieving ones present, who will express doubts in regard to the Lord's messages of warning to His church. Should the people read and believe these admonitions, we could have little hope of overcoming them. But if we can divert their attention from these warnings, they will remain ignorant of our power and cunning, and we shall secure them in our ranks at last. God will not permit His words to be slighted with impunity. If we can keep souls deceived for a time, God's mercy will be withdrawn, and He will give them up to our full control.

"We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls, and lead them to criticize, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from His presence; and all who follow our example will meet a similar fate."

The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them, not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God. Though hidden from sight, he is working with all diligence to control the minds of the worshipers. Like a skillful general, he lays his plans beforehand. As he sees the messenger of God searching the Scriptures, he takes note of the subject to be presented to the people. Then he employs all his cunning and shrewdness to so control circumstances that the message may not reach those whom he is deceiving on that very point. The one who most needs the warning will be urged into some business transaction which requires his presence, or will by some other means be prevented from hearing the words that might prove to him a savor of life unto life.

"Accusers of the brethren are not few; and they are always active when God is at work, and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth.

Again, Satan sees the Lord's servants burdened because of the spiritual darkness that enshrouds the people. He hears their prayers and power to break the spell of indifference, carelessness, and indolence. Then with renewed zeal he plies his arts. He tempts men to the indulgence of appetite or to some other form of self-gratification, and thus be-numbs their sensibilities, so that they fail to hear the very things which they most need to learn.

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree. Such are Satan's right-hand helpers. Accusers of the brethren are not few; and they are always active when God is at work, and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth. They will represent the most earnest, zealous, self-denying servants of Christ as deceived or deceivers. It is their work to misrepresent the motives of every true and noble deed, to circulate insinuations, and arouse suspicion in the minds of the inexperienced. In every conceivable manner they will seek to cause that which is pure and righteous to be regarded as foul and deceptive. And in this work the agents of Satan have their master and his angels to help them.

But none need be deceived concerning them. It may be readily seen whose children they are, whose example they follow, and whose work they do. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16. They closely resemble Satan, the envenomed slanderer, the accuser of the brethren.

It is Satan's plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance, and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His Word, assent to some principles of truth, and pass as Christians; and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as scriptural doctrines.

The position that it is of no consequence what men believe, is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning, the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the Word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant, found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.

The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world, are the work of our great adversary to so confuse minds that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exists among the churches of Christendom is in a great measure due to the prevailing...
custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory. Instead of carefully studying God’s Word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original.

In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, they seize upon passages of scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the after truth. Said the Lord by the prophet Habakkuk, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2. The Word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. "Light is sown for the righteous." Psalm 97:11. No church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.

Satan has different deceptions prepared to reach different minds, and some who look with horror upon one deception will readily receive another.

remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent, they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the Word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of God’s Word.

Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning. The papal leaders select such portions of scripture as best serve their purpose, interpret to suit themselves, and then present these to the people, while they deny them the privilege of studying the Bible, and understanding its sacred truths for themselves. Unless the whole Bible is given to the people just as it reads, it would be better for them not to have it at all.

The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the Sure Word of Prophecy: angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker.

By the cry of liberality, men are blinded to the devices of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the Word of Truth by human speculations, the Law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free.

To many, scientific research has become a curse; their finite minds are so weak that they lose their balance. They cannot harmonize their views of science with scripture statements, and they think that the Bible is to be tested by their standard of "science falsely so-called." Thus they err from the faith, and are seduced by the devil. Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed through the eternal ages. If men would but search and understand what God has made known of Himself and His purposes, they would obtain such a view of the glory, majesty, and power of Jehovah, that they would realize their own littleness, and be content with that which has been revealed for themselves and their children.

It is a masterpiece of Satan’s deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known, and which He does not intend that we shall understand. It was thus that Lucifer himself was cast out of heaven. He became dissatisfied because all the secrets of God’s purposes were not confided to him, and he entirely disregarded that which was revealed concerning his own work in the lofty position assigned him. By arousing the same discontent in the angels under his command he caused their fall. Now he seeks to imbue the minds of men with the same spirit, and to lead them also to disregard the direct commands of God.

Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible, are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet their consciences. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favor with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the Word of God with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart’s desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the Papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the Word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. The apostle Paul speaks of a class who “received not the love of the truth,” that they might be saved.” He says of these, “For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. With such a warning before us, it behooves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.

Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth. Satan has different deceptions prepared to reach different minds, and some who look with horror upon one deception will readily receive another.

Among the most successful agencies of the great deceiver are the delusive doctrines and lying wonders of Spiritualism. Disguised as an angel of light, he spreads his nets where least suspected. If men would but study the Word of God with earnest prayer that they might understand its teachings, they would not be left in darkness to receive false doctrines. But as they reject the truth, they fall a prey to these deceptions.

Another dangerous heresy is the doctrine that denies the divinity of Christ. Men who have no experimental knowledge of Jesus, will yet assume an appearance of great
And this is the object which Satan seeks to accomplish. There is nothing that he desires more than to destroy confidence in God and in His Word. Satan stands at the head of the great army of doubters, and he works to the utmost of his power to beguile souls into his ranks. It is becoming fashionable to doubt. There are many who seem to feel that it is a virtue to stand on the side of unbelief, skepticism, and infidelity. But underneath an appearance of candor and humility, it will be found that such persons are actuated by self-confidence and pride. It is a terrible thing to lose faith in God or in His Word. Unbelief strengthens as it is encouraged. There is danger in even once giving expression to doubt; a seed is sown which produces a harvest of its kind. Satan will nourish the crop every moment. Those who allow themselves to talk of their doubts will find them constantly becoming more confirmed. God will never remove every occasion for doubt. He will never work a miracle to remove unbelief when He has given sufficient evidence for faith.

God looks with displeasure upon the self-sufficient and the unbelieving, who are ever doubting His promises and distrust the assurance of His grace. They are unproductive trees that spread their dark branches far and wide, shutting away the sunlight from other plants, and causing them to droop and die under the chilling shadow. The lifework of these persons will appear as a never-ceasing witness against them. They are sowing seeds of doubt and skepticism that will yield an unfailing harvest.

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory. He could not, consistently with His own glory, shield them from temptation.

Satan is well-aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted.

for the very object of the trial is to prepare them to resist all the allurements of evil.

Satan is well-aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted. Therefore he seeks to draw away the soldiers of the cross from their strong fortification, while he lies in ambush with his forces, ready to destroy all who venture upon his ground. No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His Word. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually, “Lead us not into temptation.” Matthew 6:13. □


"Christ's righteousness will not cover the unrighteousness of any one. 'All unrighteousness is sin,' and 'sin is the transgression of the law,' therefore, those who are breaking the law of God and teaching others to break it, will not be covered with the garments of Christ's righteousness. He came not to save men in their sins; but from their sins."

Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, July 24, 1888.
The Last Generation—Part 2

God’s Demonstration

The demonstration which God intends to make with the last generation on earth means much, both to the people and to God. Can God’s law really be kept? That is a vital question. Many deny that it can be done; others glibly say it can. When the whole question of commandmentkeeping is considered, the problem assumes large proportions. God’s law is exceedingly broad; it takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It judges motives as well as acts, thoughts as well as words. Commandmentkeeping means entire sanctification, a holy life, unswerving allegiance to right, entire separation from sin, and victory over it. Well may mortal man cry out, Who is sufficient for these things!

Yet, to produce a people that will keep the law is the task which God has set Himself and which He expects to accomplish. When the statement and challenge are issued by Satan: “No one can keep the law. It is impossible. If there be any that can do it or that have done it, show them to me. Where are they that keep the commandments?” God will quietly answer, Here they are. “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

Let us say it reverently: God must meet Satan’s challenge. It is not God’s plan, or a part of His purpose, to subject men to tests that only a chosen few can survive. In the Garden of Eden, God subjected Adam and Eve to the lightest test conceivable. No one can say that our first parents fell because the test was too hard for them. If they fell, it was not because the test was hard or because they had not been provided with strength to resist. The temptation was not held before them constantly. Satan was not permitted to molest them everywhere. He had access to them at only one place, namely, at the tree of knowledge. That place they knew. They could stay away from it if they wanted to. Satan could not follow them everywhere. If they went where Satan was, it was because they wanted to. But even if they went there to examine the tree, they need not have remained there. They could walk away. And even if Satan offered them the fruit, they need not take it. But they took it and ate. And they ate it because they wanted to, not because they had to. They deliberately transgressed. There was no excuse. God could not have devised an easier test.

When God commands men to keep His law, it does not serve the purpose He has in mind to have only a few men keep it, just enough to show it can be done. It is not in line with God’s character to pick outstanding men of strong purpose and superb training, and demonstrate through them what He can do. It is much more in harmony with His plan to make His requirements such that even the weakest need not fail, so that none can ever say that God demands that which can be done by only a few. It is for this reason that God has reserved His greatest demonstration for the last generation. This generation bears the results of accumulated sins. If any are weak, they are. If any suffer from inherited tendencies, they do. If any have an excuse because of weakness of any kind, they have. If, therefore, these can keep the commandments, there is no excuse for anyone in any other generation not doing so also.

But this is not enough. God intends in His demonstration to show, not merely that ordinary men of the last generation can successfully pass a test such as He gave to Adam and Eve, but that they can survive a test much harder than such as falls to the lot of common men. It will be a test comparable to the one Job passed through, and approaching that which the Master underwent. It will test them to the utmost.

M. L. Andreasen
"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

James 5:11. Job passed through some experiences that will be repeated in the lives of the chosen ones of the last generation. It may be well to consider them.

Job's Test

Job was a good man. God trusted him. Day by day he offered sacrifices for his sons. "It may be that my sons have sinned," he said. Job 1:5. He was prosperous and enjoyed the blessing of God. Then came "a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." Verse 6. A conversation is recorded between the Lord and Satan that concerned Job. The Lord says that Job is a good man, which Satan does not deny, but urges that Job is God-fearing merely because it pays him to be so. He states that if God will take away His mercies, Job will curse God. The statement is in the form of a challenge, and God accepts it. Satan is given permission to take away Job's property and otherwise to cause him sorrow, but not to touch Job himself. Satan immediately proceeds to do what he is permitted to do. Job's property is all swept away, and his children are killed.

When this happened, "Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Job 1:20-22.

Satan is defeated, but he makes another attempt. At the next meeting with the Lord, without admitting defeat, he claims that he had not been permitted to touch Job himself. If he had, he claims, Job would have sinned. The statement is again a challenge, and God accepts it. Satan is given permission to torment Job but not to take his life. He immediately departs on his mission.

All that the evil one can do, Satan does to Job. But Job stands fast. His wife counsels him to give up, but he does not waver. Under intense physical pain and mental anguish he remains steadfast. Again it is recorded that Job stood the test. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Job 2:10. Satan is defeated and does not appear any more in the book.

In the succeeding chapters in the book of Job we are given a little insight into the struggle going on in Job's mind. He is greatly perplexed. Why has all this calamity come upon Him? He is not conscious of any sin. Why, then, should God afflict him? He, of course, does not know of the challenge of Satan. Neither does he know that God is depending upon him in the crisis through which he is passing. All he knows is that out of a clear sky disaster has come upon him till he is left without family or property, and with a loathsome disease that nearly overwhelms him. He does not understand, but he retains his integrity and faith in God. This, God knew he would do. This, Satan believed the charges. They ranged themselves on the side of the accuser. One third of the angels—and that must have been millions-faced God with their leader, the highest among the angels, Lucifer. It was no small crisis. It threatened the very existence of God's government. How should God deal with it?

The only way the matter could be satisfactorily settled so that no question would ever arise again, was for God to submit His case to the ordinary rules of evidence. Was, or was not, God's government just?

Heaven's Government on Trial

A serious situation arose in heaven when Satan made his charges against God. The accusations in reality constituted an impeachment. Many of the angels said he would not do. In the challenge, God won.

Humane speaking, Job had not deserved the punishment that came to him. God Himself says it was without cause. "Thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause." Job 2:3. The whole experiment can therefore be justified only by considering it as a specific test devised for a specific purpose. God wanted to silence Satan's charge that Job served God only for profit. He wanted to demonstrate that there was at least one man whom Satan could not control. Job suffered as a result of it, but there seemed to be no other way. A reward was afterward given him.

Job's case is recorded for a purpose. While we grant its historicity, we believe that it has also a wider meaning. God's people in the last days will pass through an experience similar to Job's. They will be tested as he was; they will have every earthly stay removed; Satan will be given permission to torment them. In addition to this, the Spirit of God will be withdrawn from the earth, and the protection of earthly governments removed. God's people will be left alone to battle with the powers of darkness. They will be perplexed, as was Job. But they, as did he, will hold fast their integrity.

In the last generation God will stand vindicated. In the remnant Satan will meet his defeat. The charge that the law cannot be kept will be met and fully refuted. God will produce not only one or two who keep His commandments, but a whole group, spoken of as the 144,000. They will reflect the image of God fully. They will have disproved Satan's accusation against the government of heaven.
He has not been arbitrary, that the law is not harsh and cruel in its requirement, but contrariwise, that it is holy, just, and good, and that men can keep it. It is necessary for God to produce at least one man who has kept the law. In the absence of such a man, God loses and Satan wins. The outcome therefore hinges on the production of one or more who keep the commandments of God. On this, God has staked His government.

The most discouraging and most untoward circumstances, God permits Satan in the last generation to try His people to the utmost. They will be threatened, tortured, persecuted. They will stand face to face with death in the issuance of the decree to worship the beast and his image. See Revelation 13:15. But they will not yield. They are willing to die rather than to sin.

God removes His Spirit from the earth. Satan will have a greater measure of control than he has ever had before. True, he may not kill God’s people, but that seems to be the only limitation. And he uses every permission he has. He knows what is at stake. It is now or never.

God, to make the demonstration complete, does one more thing. He hides Himself. The sanctuary in heaven is closed. The saints cry to God day and night for deliverance, but He appears not to hear. God’s chosen ones are passing through Gethsemane. They are having a little taste of Christ’s experience those three hours on the cross. Seemingly they must fight their battles alone. They must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.

But though Christ has finished His intercession, the saints are still the object of God’s love and care. Holy angels watch over them. God provides them shelter from their enemies; He provides them with food, shields them from destruction, and supplies grace and power for holy living. See Psalm 91. Yet they are still in the world, still tempted, afflicted, tormented.

Will they stand the test? To human eyes it seems impossible. If only God would come to their rescue, all would be well. They are determined to resist the evil one. If need be they will die, but they will not sin. Satan has no power—and never has had—to make any man sin. He can tempt, he can seduce, he can threaten, but he cannot compel. And now God demonstrates through the weakest of the weak that there is no excuse, and never has been any, for sinning. If men in the last generation can successfully repel Satan’s attack, if they can do this with all the odds against them and the sanctuary closed, what excuse is there for men’s ever sinning?

The 144,000

In the last generation God gives the final demonstration that men can keep the law of God and that they can live without sinning. God leaves nothing undone to make the demonstration complete. The only limitation put upon Satan is that he may not kill the saints of God. He may tempt them, he may harass and threaten them; and he does his best. But he fails. He cannot make them sin. They stand the test, and God puts His seal upon them.

Through the last generation of saints God stands finally vindicated. Through them He defeats Satan and wins His case. They form a vital part of the plan of God. They go through terrific struggles; they battle with unseen powers in high places. But they have put their trust in the Most High, and they will not be ashamed. They have suffered hunger and thirst, but now “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Revelation 7:16-17.

They “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” Revelation 14:4. When at last the doors of the temple shall swing open, a voice will sound forth: “Only the 144,000 enter this place.” Early Writings, 19. By faith they have followed the Lamb here. They have gone with Him into the holy place; they have followed Him into the Most Holy. And in the hereafter only those who have thus followed Him here will follow Him there. They will be kings and priests. They will follow Him into the Most Holy, where only the High Priest can ever enter. They will stand in the unveiled presence of God. They shall follow Him “whithersoever he goeth.” They will not only be “before the throne of God” and “serve him day and night in his temple,” but they will sit with Him in His throne, even as He also overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne. See Revelation 7:15; 3:21.

The matter of greatest importance in the universe is not the salvation of men, important as that may seem. The most important thing is the clearing of God’s
name from the false accusations made by Satan. The controversy is drawing to a close. God is preparing His people for the last great conflict. Satan is also getting ready. The issue is before us and will be decided in the lives of God’s people. God is depending upon us as He did upon Job. Is His confidence well-placed?

It is a wonderful privilege vouchsafed to this people to help clear God’s name by our testimony. It is wonderful that we are permitted to testify for Him. It must never be forgotten, however, that this testimony is a testimony of life, not merely of words. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4. “The life was the light.” It was so with Christ; it must also be so with us. Our life should be a light, as His life was. To give people the light is more than to hand them a tract. Our life is the light. As we live, we give light to others. Without life, without our living the light, our words abide alone. But as our life becomes light, our words become effective. It is our life that must testify for God.

May the church of God appreciate the exalted privilege given her! “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 43:10. There must be “no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.” Verse 12. May we be witnesses indeed, testifying what God has done for us!

All this is closely connected with the work of the Day of Atonement. On that day the people of Israel, having confessed their sins, were completely cleansed. They had already been forgiven; now sin was separated from them. They were holy and without blame. The camp of Israel was clean.

We are now living in the great anti-typical day of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Every sin must be confessed and by faith be sent beforehand to judgment. As the High Priest enters into the Most Holy, so God’s people now are to stand face to face with God. They must know that every sin is confessed, that no stain of evil remains. The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is dependent upon the cleansing of God’s people on earth. How important, then, that God’s people be holy and without blame! In them every sin must be burned out so that they will be able to stand in the sight of a holy God and live with the devouring fire. “Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” Isaiah 33:13-16. □

The Sanctuary Service, 299-321.

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August 1995 Our Firm Foundation 15
Vindicating God's Character—2

God's laws are a reflection of His character. Christ's earthly life of obedience vindicated the law and character of God. The obedience to God's laws by converted men and women, made possible through the same power of the Holy Spirit that Christ needed to obey His Father, will further vindicate the laws of God and His character.

A life of victory over temptation is possible only through the union of humanity with Divinity.

To work out our own salvation with fear and trembling we must unite our work with that of God:

"Those who leave their work in the service of God for some others to do, freeing themselves from religious responsibility, will not experience the latter part of the assurance, 'For it is God which worketh in you.' I wish to set this matter before every member of our churches. The religious life requires the harmonious action of mind and heart with the divine forces. No man can of himself work out his own salvation, and God cannot do this work for him without his cooperation. But when man works earnestly, God works with him, giving him power to become a son of God." Manuscript Releases, vol. 21, 38.

Transformation requires determined and painstaking human effort with Christ providing the enabling power:

"Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. . . .

"But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed. We have no reason to fear while looking to Jesus, no reason to doubt but that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him; but we may constantly fear lest our old nature will again obtain the supremacy, that the enemy shall devise some snare whereby we shall again become his captives. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." God's Amazing Grace, 302.

"To renounce their own will, perhaps their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires an effort, at which many hesitate and falter and turn back. Yet this battle must be fought by every heart that is truly converted. We must war against temptations without and within. We must gain the victory over self, crucify the affections and lusts; and then begins the union of the soul with Christ. . . . After this union is formed, it can be preserved only by continual, earnest, painstaking effort. Christ exercises His power to preserve and guard this sacred tie, and the dependent, helpless sinner must act his part with untiring energy, or Satan by his cruel, cunning power will separate him from Christ." Ibid., 321.

In the copartnership of humanity with Divinity all the power and all the glory belongs to God for it is Christ's righteousness that accomplishes everything through grace:

"God works and man works . . . There must be a copartnership in which all the power is of God and all the glory belongs to God. The responsibility rests with us. We must receive in thoughts and in feelings, to give in expression. The law of the human and the divine action makes the receiver a laborer together with God. It brings man where he can, united with Divinity, work the works of God. Humanity touches humanity, Divine power and the human agency combined will be a complete success, for Christ's righteousness accomplishes everything." Faith and Works, 26-27.

An Obedience That Purifies

Perfect obedience to God's will, made possible by imparted divine power, purifies and sanctifies the believer:

"The conversion of the human soul is of no little consequence. It is the greatest miracle performed by divine power. Actual results are to be reached through a belief in Christ as a personal Saviour. Purified by obedience to the law of God, sanctified by a perfect observance of His holy Sabbath, trusting, believing, patiently waiting, and earnestly working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall learn that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." Evangelism, 289-290.

Everyone, by placing their will on the side of God's will, can do all things through Christ who strengthens them.

"All things" include having victory over all temptation; even every temptation that arises from our fallen nature.

"Everyone may place his will on the side of the will of God, may choose to obey Him, and by thus linking himself with divine agencies, he may stand where nothing can force him to do evil." Education, 289.

An Obedience That Saves

By His death, Christ first reconciles us to God and then, by His life He saves us:

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:10.
When we die daily with Christ, He lives His life in us:

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

Christ living His life in us is our hope of glory. See Colossians 1:27.

"Jesus Christ is everything to us—the first, the last, the best in everything. Jesus Christ, His Spirit, His character, colors everything; it is the warp and the woof, the very texture of our entire being. The words of Christ are spirit and life. We cannot, then, center our thoughts upon self; it is no more we that live, but Christ that liveth in us, and He is the hope of glory. Self is dead, but Christ is a living Saviour." The Faith I Live By, 150.

We find eternal life in the obedience which Christ works out in us day to day through our faith in His transforming power.

"It is the privilege of every believer in Christ to possess Christ’s nature, a nature far above that which Adam forfeited by transgression. He who sees the Son by faith and believes in Him, is obedient to the commandments of God, and in this obedience he finds everlasting life." The Upward Look, 18. All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.

Our only hope is to cease from sin. Christ’s implicit obedience in us is the condition of salvation.

"It is thought strange by some that our salvation should demand our entire submission to the law of God. But the Lord could not do a more cruel thing than to save man in his rebellion. No man can be saved unless he comes under the rule of Christ. Salvation means to us complete surrender of soul, body, and spirit. Because of the unrighteousness in nature, our passions often gain the mastery. The only hope of the sinner is to cease from sin. Then his will is in harmony with the will of Christ. His soul is brought into fellowship with God. Those who enlist in the army of Christ must in all things submit to His authority and consult His will. Implicit obedience is the condition of salvation. God’s law must be obeyed in every particular. It is our salvation to make His law our rule, His life our pattern, His glory our chief aim. To keep ourselves in the love of God, to be bound to obedience by His requirements, this is to be free in Christ." Signs of the Times, November 15, 1899.

Christ met the claims of the law by His life of perfect obedience two thousand years ago. Christ also meets the claims of the law through the perfectly obedient lives of those He transforms today.

"God has given to the world and to angels the evidence of the changeless character of His love. He would part with His only begotten Son, send Him into the world, clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin and to die upon Calvary’s cross to make it manifest to men that there is provision in the counsels of Heaven for those who believe in Christ, to keep the commandments of God. Aside from Christ, man cannot in spirit and in truth keep one of the commandments of God, but in Christ Jesus the claims of the law are met, because He transforms the nature of man by His grace, creates in the heart a new spiritual life, implants a holy nature, and men become Christlike in character." Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 86.

True Righteousness by Faith

Both justification and sanctification are obtained by grace through faith in the righteousness of Christ:

"The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ." The Desire of Ages, 300.

The sanctifying or transforming righteousness of Christ is actually imparted or given to us:

"The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven." Review and Herald, June 4, 1895.

Admittance to Christ’s kingdom depends upon our receiving Christ’s transforming grace, His imparted righteousness:

"Christ does not acknowledge any caste, color, or grade as necessary to become a subject of His kingdom. Admittance to His kingdom does not depend upon wealth or a superior heredity. But those who are born of the Spirit are the subjects of His kingdom. Spiritual character is that which will be recognized by Christ. His kingdom is not of this world. His subjects are those who are partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And this grace is given them of God. Christ does not find His subjects fitted for His kingdom, but He qualifies them by His Divine power. Those who have been dead in trespasses and sins are quickened from Christ, man cannot in spirit and in truth keep one of the commandments of God, but in Christ Jesus the claims of the law are met, because He transforms the nature of man by His grace, creates in the heart a new spiritual life, implants a holy nature, and men become Christlike in character."

He who sees the Son by faith and believes in Him, is obedient to the commandments of God, and in this obedience he finds everlasting life.

Qualified Through Sanctification

Christ’s mediatorial work in heaven involves not only the obtaining of God’s pardon of our transgressions but also obtaining the Father’s transforming—sanctifying—experience for us, which qualifies us for the immortal inheritance:

"We have an Advocate at the throne of God, which is encircled by the bow of promise, and we are invited to present our petitions in the name of Christ before the Father. Jesus says: Ask what ye will in My name, and it shall be done unto you. In presenting My name, you bear witness that you belong to Me, that you are My sons and daughters, and the Father will treat you as His own, and love you as He loveth Me. Your faith in Me will lead you to exercise close, filial affection toward Me and the Father. I am the Golden Chain by which your heart and soul are bound in love and obedience to My Father. Express to My Father the fact that My name is dear to you, that you respect and love Me, and you may ask what you will. He will pardon your transgressions, and adopt you into His royal family,—make you a child...

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of God, a joint heir with His only-begotten Son. Through faith in My name He will impart to you the sanctification and holiness which will fit you for His work in a world of sin, and qualify you for an immortal inheritance in His kingdom. The Father has thrown open, not only all heaven, but all His heart, to those who manifest faith in the sacrifice of home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny.” *Adventist Home*, 16.

Christ’s glory—His character—is revealed in His law and also in the perfected characters of His saints:

The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.

Christ, and who through faith in the love of God, return unto their loyalty. Those who believe in Christ as the Sin-bearer, the Propitiation for their sins, the Intercessor in their behalf, may through the riches of the grace of God, lay claim to the treasures of heaven. He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Jesus says, ‘Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.’ John 16:24.” *Signs of the Times*, June 18, 1896.

Our eternal destiny is determined by the character produced in us today:

“The character formed in this world determines the destiny for eternity.” *Youth Instructor*, August 17, 1899.

“We are all to be tested here in this life to prove whether, if admitted to heaven, we shall repeat the same course that Satan pursued there. But if the character which we develop during our probation is according to the divine Pattern, it qualifies us to receive the welcome, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Matthew 25:21.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 201.

Reproducing Christ’s Character

If we are to be a saint in heaven we must first be a saint with a perfected character here on earth:

“The character you bear in probationary time will be the character you will have at the coming of Christ. If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your

“The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection.” *God’s Amazing Grace*, 80.

Christ bruised the head of Satan by His life of perfect obedience to His Father. He also gives a fatal wound to Satan through the fully obedient lives of His saints:

“ ‘And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.’ Genesis 3:15.

“Christ was the special One who should bruise the head of the serpent; but the prophecy also includes all those who shall overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. . . . Those who truly unite with Christ will be found doing the same work that Christ did while on the earth—they will be found magnifying the law and making it honorable. . . . Whenever a soul takes a decided stand for truth, the head of the serpent is bruised by the seed of the woman. . . . When the advocates of truth reveal the efficiency of truth in their life and character, a blow is struck against the kingdom of Satan.” *Youth’s Instructor*, October 11, 1894.

The Vindication of God

The honor of God—the vindication of His character—is involved in the perfection of the characters of His people:

“Of the Spirit Jesus said, ‘He shall glorify Me.’ The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.” *The Desire of Ages*, 671.

One of the major issues of the great controversy is Satan’s claim that God’s laws—a reflection of His character—cannot be obeyed or reflected in the lives of His creatures—specifically the sons and daughters of fallen Adam. Satan’s claims will be proved to the whole universe to be totally false as God’s remnant people reflect God’s character and His laws in their own Christlike characters:

“The fact that the law is holy, just, and good is to be testified before all nations, tongues, and peoples, to worlds fallen, to angels, seraphim, and cherubim. The principles of the law of God were wrought out in the character of Jesus Christ, and he who cooperates with Christ, becoming a partaker of the divine nature, will develop the divine character, and become an illustration of the divine law. Christ in the heart will bring the whole man, soul, body, and spirit into captivity to the obedience of righteousness. Christ’s true followers will be in conformity to the mind and will and character of God, and the far-reaching principles of the law will be demonstrated in humanity.” *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1897.

The greatest fear of God’s final generation after the close of probation, during the time of trouble, is that there might be some imperfection of character manifest in them that would bring reproach upon God’s holy name:

“Though God’s people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth’s sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise: ‘I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.’ Revelation 3:10. If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God’s holy name would be reproached.” *The Great Controversy*, 619.
We are promised that eventually the final and full display of God’s love—His character and laws—will be manifest in the lives of His church members when they demonstrate the transforming power of Christ to save man from sin, not in sin: “The church is the depositary of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.” Testimonies to Ministers, 50.

When the character of Christ is perfectly reproduced in His people, then the character of God and His laws will be fully vindicated. The hour of His judgment can then be brought to a close, the sanctuary will be finally cleansed, and Christ can come to take His people home: “When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Mark 4:29. Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 69.

When Christ’s people understand and experience the transforming, saving power of His spiritual kingdom, then the true gospel will quickly go to the whole world and Christ will come: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14.


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**Child Age & Education**

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The True Remedies
No. 3—Abstemiousness

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." 1 Timothy 5:23.

"The Bible nowhere teaches the use of intoxicating wine, either as a beverage or as a symbol of the blood of Christ." Healthful Living, 113.

"Fermented liquor confuses the senses and perverts the powers of the being. God is dishonored when men have not sufficient respect for themselves to practise strict temperance. Fermented wine is not a natural production. The Lord never made it, and with its production He has nothing to do. Paul advised Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and oft infirmities, but he meant the unfermented juice of the grape. He did not advise Timothy to take what the Lord had prohibited." Signs of the Times, September 6, 1844.

"Some who claim to be Christians feel at liberty to use intoxicating drink, and in this particular they claim to be in harmony with Christ. But Christ did not set the example they claim to imitate. Be assured that He did not make intoxicating wine on the occasion of His first miracle. He gave to those present a drink which it is safe to give to all humanity—the pure juice of the grape. Christ never placed a glass of fermented liquor to His lips or to the lips of His disciples. Drunkenness was rare in Palestine, but Christ looked down the ages, and saw in every generation what the use of wine would do for the users, therefore at this feast He set a right example." Ibid.

"Persons may become just as really intoxicated on wine and cider as on stronger drinks, and the worst kind of inebriation is produced by these so-called milder drinks. The passions are more pervers; the transformation of character is greater, more determined and obstinate. A few quarts of cider and sweet wine may awaken a taste for strong drinks, and many who have become confirmed drunkards have thus laid the foundation of the drinking habit. . . . Moderate drinking is the school in which men are receiving an education for the drunkard's career. The taste for stimulants is cultivated; the nervous system is disordered; Satan keeps the mind in a fever of unrest; and the poor victim, imagining himself perfectly secure, goes on and on, until every barrier is broken down, every principle sacrificed." Healthful Living, 112.

"When there has been a departure from the right path, it is difficult to return. Barriers have been removed, safeguards broken down. One step in the wrong direction prepares the way for another. A single glass of wine may open the door of temptation which will lead to habits of drunkenness." Testimonies, vol. 4, 578.

"When temperance is presented as a part of the gospel, many will see their need of reform. They will see the evil of intoxicating liquors and that total abstinence is the only platform on which God's people can conscientiously stand." Ibid., vol. 7, 75.

"True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful." Patriarchs and Prophets, 562.

"Intemperance, in the true sense of the word, is at the foundation of the larger share of the ills of life, and it annually destroys its tens of thousands. For intemperance is not limited to the use of intoxicating liquors; it has a broader meaning, and includes the hurtful indulgence of any appetite or passion." Temperance, 137.

"Wherever we go, we encounter the tobacco devotee, enfeebling both mind and body by his darling indulgence. Have men a right to deprive their Maker and the world of the service which is their due? Tobacco is a slow, insidious poison. Its effects are more difficult to cleanse from the system than are those of liquor. It binds the victim in even stronger bands of slavery than does the intoxicating cup. It is a disgusting habit, defiling to the user, and very annoying to others. We rarely pass through a crowd but men will puff their poisoned breath in our faces. It is unpleasant, if not dangerous, to remain in a railway car or in a room where the atmosphere is impregnated with the fumes of liquor and tobacco. Is it honest thus to contaminate the air which others must breathe?" Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 33-34.

"The infant lungs suffer, and become diseased by inhaling the atmosphere of a room poisoned by the tobacco user's tainted breath. Many infants are poisoned beyond remedy by sleeping in beds with their tobacco-using fathers. By inhaling the poisonous tobacco effluvia, which is thrown from the lungs and pores of the skin, the system of the infant is filled with poison. While it acts upon some infants as a slow poison, it affects the brain, heart, liver, and lungs, and they waste away and fade gradually, upon others, it has a more direct influence, causing spasms, fits, paralysis, and sudden death." Temperance, 58-59.

"Men and women have many habits that are antagonistic to the principles of the Bible. The victims of strong drink and tobacco are corrupted, body, soul, and spirit. Such ones should not be received into the church until they give evidence that they are truly converted, that they feel the need of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The truth of God will purify the true believer. He who is thoroughly converted will abandon every defiling habit and appetite. By total abstinence he will overcome his desire for health-destroying indulgences." Evangelism, 264.

"Tea and coffee do not nourish the system. The relief obtained from them is sudden, before the stomach has time to digest them. This shows what the users of these stimulants call strength is only received by exciting the nerves of the stomach, which convey the irritation to the brain, and this in turn is aroused to impart increased action to the heart and short-lived energy to the entire system. All this is false strength that we are worse for having. They do not give a particle of natural strength." Testimonies, vol. 2, 65.

"Tea is poisonous to the system. Christians should let it alone. The influence of coffee is in a degree the same as tea, but the effect upon the system is still worse. Its influence is exciting, and just in
the degree that it elevates above par, it
will exhaust and bring prostration below
par.” Counsel on Diet and Foods, 421.

“Coffee is a hurtful indulgence. It
temporarily excites the mind to unwonted
action, but the aftereffect is exhaustion,
prostration, paralysis of the mental, moral,
and physical powers. The mind becomes
enervated, and unless through determined
effort the habit is overcome, the activity
of the brain is permanently lessened.” Ibid.

“All these nerve irritants are wearing
away the life-forces, and the restlessness
caused by shattered nerves, the impatience,
the mental feebleness, become a warring
element, antagonizing to spiritual progress.
Then should not those who advocate temper-
ance and reform be awake to counteract
the evils of these injurious drinks? In some cases
it is as difficult to break up the tea-and-coffee
habit as it is for the inebriate to discontinue
the use of liquor. The money expended for
tea and coffee is worse then wasted. They
do the user only harm, and that continually.
Those who use tea, coffee, opium, and
alcohol, may sometimes live to old age, but
this fact is no argument in favor of the use of
these stimulants. What these persons might
have accomplished, but failed to do because
of their intermperate habits, the great day
of God alone will reveal.” Christian Temper-
ance and Bible Hygiene, 34-35.

“Those who make a change and leave
off these unnatural stimulants will for a
time feel their loss and suffer considerably
without them, as does the drunkard who is
wedded to his liquor. Take away intox-
cating drinks and he suffers terribly. But if
he persists he will soon overcome the
dreadful lack. Nature will come to his aid
and remain at her post until he again
substitutes the false prop in her place.
Some have so benumbed the fine sensi-
bilities of Nature that it may require a little
time for her to recover from the abuse she
has been made to suffer through the sinful
habits of man, the indulgence of an ac-
quired, depraved appetite, which has de-
pressed and weakened her powers. Give
Nature a chance, and she will rally and
again perform her part nobly and well.”
Testimonies, vol. 1, 549.

“The use of unnatural stimulants is
destructive to health and has a benumbing
influence upon the brain, making it impos-
sible to appreciate eternal things. Those
who cherish these idols cannot rightly value
the salvation which Christ has wrought out
for them by a life of self-denial, continual
suffering and reproach, and by finally
yielding His own sinless life to save perishing
man from death.” Ibid.

“Intemperance commences at our tables
in the use of unhealthful food. After a time,
through continued indulgence, the digestive
organs become weakened, and the food
taken does not satisfy the appetite. Unhealthy
conditions are established, and there is crav-
ing for more stimulating food. Tea, coffee,
and flesh meats produce an immediate effect.
Under the influence of these poisons the
nervous system is excited, and, in some
cases, for the time being, the intellect seems
to be invigorated and the imagination to be
more vivid. Because these stimulants pro-
duce for the time being such agreeable
results, many conclude that they really need
them and continue their use. But there is
always a reaction. The nervous system, hav-
ing been unduly excited, borrowed power for
present use from its future resources of
strength. All this temporary invigoration of
the system is followed by depression. In propor-
tion as these stimulants temporarily
invigorate the system will be the letting down
of the power of the excited organs after the
stimulus has lost its force. The appetite is
educated to crave something stronger which
will have a tendency to keep up and increase
the agreeable excitement, until indulgence
becomes habit, and there is a continual
 craving for stronger stimuli, as tobacco,
wines, and liquors. The more the appetite
is indulged, the more frequent will be its de-
mands and the more difficult of control. The
more debilitated the system becomes and the
less able to do without natural stimulus, the
more the passion for these things in-
creases, until the will is overborne, and there
seems to be no power to deny the unnatural
craving for these indulgences.” Testimonies,
vol. 3, 487-488.

“The food is often such as to excite a
desire for stimulating drinks. Luxurious
dishes are placed before the children—
spiced foods, rich gravies, cakes, and pas-
tries. This highly seasoned food irritates
the stomach, and causes a craving for still
stronger stimulants.” Counsel on Diet and
Foods, 235.

“When the message comes to those
who have not heard the truth for this time,
they see that a great reformation must take
place in their diet. They see that they must
put away flesh food, because it creates an
appetite for liquor, and fills the system with
disease.” Ibid., 268-269.

“Many parents educate the tastes of
their children and form their appetites.
They indulge them in eating flesh meats
and in drinking tea and coffee. The highly
seasoned flesh meats and the tea and
coffee, which some mothers encourage
their children to use, prepare the way for
them to crave stronger stimulants, as to-
bacco. The use of tobacco encourages the
appetite for liquor, and the use of tobacco
and liquor invariably lessens nerve

“The only safe course is to touch not,
taste not, handle not, tea, coffee, wines,
tobacco, opium, and alcoholic drinks.”
Ibid., 488.

“If anything is needed to quench
thirst, pure water drunk some little time
before or after the meal is all that nature
requires. Never take tea, coffee, beer,
wine, or any spirituous liquors. Water is
the best liquid possible to cleanse the
tissues.” Temperance, 101.

“We are health reformers, seeking to
come back, as far as possible, to the
Lord’s original plan of temperance. Tem-
perance does not consist merely in ab-
staining from intoxicating liquors and to-
bacco; it extends farther than this. It must
regulate what we eat.” Counsel on Diet and
Foods, 406.

“The principles of temperance must be
carried further than the mere use of spiritu-
ous liquors. The use of stimulating and
indigestible food is often equally injurious
to health, and in many cases sows the
seeds of drunkenness. True temperance teaches
us to dispense entirely with everything
hurtful and to use judiciously that which is
healthful. There are few who realize as they
should how much their habits of diet have
to do with their health, their character, their
usefulness in this world, and their eternal
destiny. The appetite should ever be in
subjection to the moral and intellectual
powers. The body should be servant to the
mind, and not the mind to the body.”
Patriarchs and Prophets, 562.

“Intemperance in eating, even of food
of the right quality, will have a prostrating
influence upon the system and will blunt the
keener and holier emotions. Strict temper-
ance in eating and drinking is highly essential
for the healthy preservation and vigorous
exercise of all the functions of the body.
Strictly temperate habits, combined with
exercise of the muscles as well as of the
mind, will preserve both mental and physical
vigor, and give power of endurance to those
engaged in the ministry, to editors, and to all
others whose habits are sedentary. As a
people, with all our profession of health
reform, we eat too much. Indulgence of
appetite is the greatest cause of physical
and mental debility, and lies at the foundation
of the feebleness which is apparent every-

To be continued.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We have been reading the literature accusing the independent ministries of dividing the church. We who love the historic Adventist message know that this is not true. These accusations are Satan’s attack on the Remnant Church. We want you to know that we and many lay people are praying for you. Your articles and writings have given us hope and courage. We know that our church has been infiltrated with the New Theology which puts doubt on the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy. We thank God for you and we know that the true, historic Adventist message will triumph. So be strong and of good courage.

JC, California

My dad sent me the January issue last month, and I must say it was a wake-up call for me. It was as if I had been asleep, or just going through the motions. I felt that something was missing.

When I got the magazine, I started reading the editorial and soon found myself weeping. Thank you for such timely material. I cannot wait to get my subscription. I’ve been telling others about it and showing them my copy. I look forward to reading more from Hope International.

PL, Texas

Just a note to say we attended your meetings and heard the type of messages that we have been starving to hear in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which, sorry to say, we just don’t hear anymore.

Keep up the good work, and shortly you will receive your reward.

TC, Georgia

Someone had given me an old copy of Our Firm Foundation to read. I enjoyed and learned a great bit from it. The articles were so well written and the messages in the articles were so helpful.

At this time I am unable to pay for a subscription. When the money becomes available, I will send it. I am asking if you would please start a subscription for me now. Thank you.

LF, Kentucky

Your magazine has blessed my heart. I have longed for the time when our people would tell it like it is, as it really is, regardless of the results. When I picked up your magazine I did not put it down until I was finished. The article on the nature of Christ was great. It cleared up my ignorance and doubt. A friend gave me the issue; now I want my own supply, so please respond as quickly as you can.

Another friend told me to be careful about what I read and from who, but I know that you are full-fledged Adventists, and, by your articles, you are preparing the believers to stand in the end-time and to eventually be saved.

Even though it would not change my attitude toward you or the articles, I would like to know if your ministry is an independent one.

MB, New Jersey

I am so happy to always receive material from your organization. Wish I could come and help you and give you free labor. I pray for your ministry. My husband and I can hardly wait to receive Our Firm Foundation every month.

SH, Oklahoma

I never signed up for the magazine Our Firm Foundation or requested any subscription. I get it, but someone else must have done it. If so, thanks to them and to you. I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for many years. I am now 91 years old.

DR, Vermont

Responses from Earth’s Final Warning

I found a copy of your newspaper along the road. Have read through it and am interested in receiving the free copies of Rome’s Challenge and Heralds of Peace.

JL, North Carolina

After reading your articles about earth’s final warning, it woke me up to a lot of interesting things. A new reading lesson for me which I will never forget. Please send me the free material. You have changed my life, and I am so happy about it. I feel as if I have been set free!

JD

Please allow me to confirm in this way the inexpressible joy that the discovery of the recent distribution of the paper entitled Earth’s Final Warning in the Bahamas has given me.

It will be appreciated if you would send me further information about Heralds of Truth. I am familiar with all of the literature you are offering, and I am a Seventh-day Adventist. SD, The Bahamas

A man that I work with in the Post Office came up to me and gave me your news article called Earth’s Final Warning and asked me to read it and let him know what I think about it. I am not a Seventh-day Adventist, but I have researched out the truth about the Saturday Sabbath and about the soul, and found that Saturday is truly God’s day of rest and that the soul is only eternal when God grants eternal life in heaven. The information that is contained in the article I found to be outstanding.

The man who gave me your article said that it was going to offend a lot of people. I told him, “So did Jesus.”

I would like to know how I could purchase about 75 of these news articles to send to people on our newsletter mailing list. I believe that many are ignorant of our past history and the deception that has taken place.

CN, California

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Desmond Ford and O.F.F.  
Continued from 5  
chosen to be the editor of a paper that would take up the challenge of confronting the New Theology. I was chosen as one of the associate editors, but immediately it was clear that there was quite a difference in expectation for this magazine. There were those who believed that it should have a strongly theological content to make an impact upon the intellectuals and theologians of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I did not support this approach, for I believed that it was much more likely that the common people of the church would be willing to investigate the dangers of the New Theology. At first, it was thought that we had the support of the General Conference president, but very quickly it was made clear that that was not the case. The president felt it best that there be no further stirring of the controversy.

I believe that this decision was a very unfortunate misjudgment by the General Conference president, for the magazines of error were making a mighty impact upon the church. Hardly any publications were standing for the great message of the everlasting gospel. When a little later Elder Kenneth Wood retired as editor of the Review, it seemed that the floodgate was opened. For some time prior to this Elder Spear was an associate in the Review office in charge of circulation. He soon realized that with this change of leadership in the Review, it was impossible to expect a strong thrust to counter the New Theology teachings, for it became obvious more than that the Review was reflecting, rather than rejecting, the New Theology.

With great concern and earnestness Elder Spear looked for men with editorial experience to take up the banner. Though he found three men of strong editorial experience, none accepted the responsibility. I believe that this development was in the providence of God. Eventually, Elder Spear came to the conclusion that God was calling him, a man with no editorial experience, no background in putting out a magazine, but with a fervent passion to stand for truth and righteousness, to warn and to enlighten the people of God. And thus, recognizing his limitations, he was willing to move forward, praying for the Lord to guide him and to bring to him those men who could help him put that magazine together. I was honored to be asked to be an associate editor, and later a contributing editor of Our Firm Foundation. I believe that it is an excellent magazine and that it is preparing God’s people to inherit eternal life. I thank the Lord that He chose a man without skill and without experience to lead this magazine, for in so doing He chose a man that had to depend wholly and completely upon Him for His leading and His guidance.

The rest is history. For the last ten years this magazine has been the flagship of upholding the message of salvation that will lead men and women toward the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy in which the principles of truth can be found.

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Divine Leadership

The Guiding Pillar

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." Exodus 13:21-22; see also Nehemiah 9:12.

The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night was the outward and visible sign of the divine leadership of the Exodus movement. It hovered over the camp when they rested, and went before them when they marched. Israel kept their eyes on the cloudy chariot and it indicated when they should march and which way they should go. That Christ was the occupant of the cloudy and fiery chariot is evident from several texts:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. See also Isaiah 63:8-9, 12; Nehemiah 9:6-15.

It was Christ who led and preserved the Exodus movement, and the pillar was the visible sign of His presence and leadership. It was Christ who furnished Israel with both physical and spiritual food; who gave the law and all the instructions concerning the sanctuary and its services.

The Advent Movement

Christ is likewise the Leader of modern Israel in the Advent movement. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. . . . Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:9, 11.

Those who sin in this movement are tempting Christ the Leader. God's remnant people are likewise guided and protected by a pillar of cloud and fire, or light. "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Isaiah 4:5-6; see also 49:1-12, 22-23.

"I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty." Early Writings, 43.

What is the light that guides and the covering and shield that protects God's remnant people on their journey to the heavenly Canaan?

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Psalm 91:1-4; see also verses 9-12.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105.

"When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awaketh, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Proverbs 6:22-23.

"I am the light of the world." said Jesus, John 8:12; see also John 1:4, 9-10.

The Visible Sign

The outward and visible sign that modern Israel is under divine Leadership is their obedience to the Law and the Scriptures. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Isaiah 8:20; 1 John 2:3-4.
The Sabbath as the seal of the law and the mark of loyalty to the true God, is the sign of sanctification. "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them... And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

"There is great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led His people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep His law and obey His voice. . . So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the depositories of His law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation." Testimonies, vol. 4, 27.

"Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to man. . . If studied and obeyed, it would lead God's people, as the Israelites were led, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night." Patriarchs and Prophets, 504.

The Human Agent

"And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved." Hosea 12:13. The Exodus movement was led and preserved by Christ through the human instrumentality of Moses, his prophet and spokesman. Moses was assisted by Aaron and Miriam. "Thou ledest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." Psalm 77:20; Micah 6:4.

The movement would have gone to pieces on many different occasions had it not been for the spirit of prophecy that held it together. Without this divine gift the Israelites never would have left Egypt, and after leaving Egypt they never could have reached Canaan, but would have returned to Egyptian bondage. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the gift of prophecy, but this gift was withdrawn during the time Israel was in bondage and darkness because they had forgotten God and His law. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." "Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD." Proverbs 29:18; Lamentations 2:9.

Character of Moses

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Numbers 12:3. Meekness is one of the chief qualifications for leadership and has characterized all of God's prophets. Moses did not seek leadership. "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow

Estee ming others better and more qualified than themselves has always been the attitude of those whom God chooses to do special service for Him.

tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart." Exodus 4:10-14; see also 3:10-11.

Estee ming others better and more qualified than themselves has always been the attitude of those whom God chooses to do special service for Him. But Moses did not shirk responsibility. He was afraid that Israel would not believe him or accept him as their prophet and leader. "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee." "And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." Exodus 4:1, 29-31.

Israel was soon convinced that Moses was chosen of God to be His spokesman and their leader. As the end of the prophetic period was approaching the Lord began to prepare His agencies for the deliverance of His people. Moses was born on time and trained for the task. "But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young

One-Prophet Movement

Not "by prophets," but "by a prophet" was Israel led and preserved during their journey from Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land. Moses, the prophet of the Exodus movement, died a short time before Israel entered Canaan. Before his death, Moses was given a vision of the Promised Land, including the new earth. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mount of Nebo, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I
God chooses “holy men” to speak for Him. And yet His prophets have all been human beings subject to all the mistakes and frailties of mankind. They must get the victory and develop characters in the same way that others do.

Before Moses died he was given all the instruction needed to take the children of Israel into the Promised Land and establish them there. He wrote out this instruction and Joshua simply carried it out as the appointed leader of Israel. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face." Deuteronomy 34:9–10.

Test of Prophetic Gift

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD thy God proveth thee, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." Chapter 13:1-5.

The Lord told ancient Israel how to test the claim of the gift of prophecy. The performing of a miracle or the fulfilling of a prediction do not in themselves constitute sufficient evidence. The magicians of Pharaoh performed signs, and the witch of Endor foretold the death of Saul. Through conjecture based on his knowledge of this past, through the wonders of modern science, and because of his ability to carry out his own predictions or plans, Satan, through his human mediums and false prophets, is able to perform wonders and reveal future events. God alone can actually see the future. The only safe test is the life and teachings of the prophet. Both must be in harmony with the Word and character of God. See Isaiah 8:20.

God chooses “holy men” to speak for Him. And yet His prophets have all been human beings subject to all the mistakes and frailties of mankind. They must get the victory and develop characters in the same way that others do. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” James 5:17.

Deuteronomy 18:9–15 is a timely warning for both ancient and modern Israel: “When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

The Advent Movement

The gift of prophecy played and important part in the apostolic church. But during the “falling away” the spirit of prophecy, with all the gifts of the Spirit, gradually
diminished in their operations. During the Middle Ages of darkness and apostasy the
gift of prophecy was divinely bestowed only occasionally and then temporarily.
With the dawn of the Reformation spiritual gifts began to return. At times the Lord
gave visions and dreams to Savonarola, Wycliffe, Luther, Huss, Jerome, John
Wesley, and other godly reformers to help them through emergencies. But not until the
Advent message started and began to bring

Mrs. Ellen G. White was the prophet of the
Advent movement for 71 years and still is,
through her written Testimonies. In harmony with
the type there will doubtless be no other regular
prophet, and indeed, there is no need of one.

The Instrument Chosen

In 1842, the gift of prophecy was given to J. B. Finlay, a godly young man who
believed the Advent message. He was
given a vision to prepare the church for the
Disappointment, and because he did not
understand its meaning he refused to follow
instructions to relate it. Later in the same
year the same vision was given to William
Foy, a young Baptist who was preparing for the
ministry. For the same reason he refused to
relate it to the Advent people. The vision
was contrary to their teachings and expecta-
tions regarding the future, and he was sure
they would not believe him. Early in 1844,
the same vision was given to Hazen Foss
who was instructed to relate it so as to
prepare the Adventists for the Bitter Disap-
pointment soon to take place. He too re-
fused and the Lord told him that the gift
would be given to “the weakest of the
weak.” It was bestowed upon Ellen G.
Harmon, who at the age of seventeen was
given the same vision, which she faithfully
related.

Her Experience

“After I came out of this vision, I was
exceedingly troubled. My health was very
poor, and I was but seventeen years old. I
knew that many had failed through exalt-
a tion, and I knew that if I in any way
became exalted, God would leave me, and
I should surely be lost. I went to the Lord
in prayer and begged Him to lay the
burden on someone else. It seemed to me
that I could not bear it. I lay upon my face
a long time, and all the light I could get
was, ‘Make known to others what I have
revealed to you.’

In my next vision I earnestly begged of
the Lord that, if I must go and relate
what He had shown to me, He would keep
me from exaltation. Then He showed me
that my prayer was answered, and if I
should be in danger of exaltation His hand
would be laid upon me, and I would be
afflicted with sickness.” Early Writings,
20-21. The prophet of the Advent move-
ment was as meek and humble as Moses.
Just as Moses was afraid to tell Israel that
the Lord had appeared to him, so the instru-
ment chosen to be God’s spokesman in
these days hesitated to relate his vision
to modern Israel.

But One Prophet

“By a prophet” has modern Israel been
led and preserved, not by “prophets.” Mrs. Ellen G. White was the prophet of the
Advent movement for seventy-one years and still is, through her written
Testimonies. In harmony with the type
there will doubtless be no other regular
prophet, and indeed, there is no need of
one. Like Moses she died on the borders
of the heavenly Canaan without enjoying
the privilege of translation, but before her
death all the instruction for the entire
journey of the Advent people was written
out in detail. While the gift will doubtless
be temporarily given to various persons
during the very closing days to help God’s
people through emergencies and crises,
there is really no need for another regular
prophet. See Joel 2:28-30. The duty of the
leaders now is to carry out the instruction
given in such abundance. Before her death
God’s servant was given visions of the
heavenly Canaan to cheer on the Advent
people to the end of their pilgrimage. She
was promised a part in the inheritance.

Led and Preserved

This movement would have gone to
to pieces long ago had it not been for the
guidance of God through the Gift of
Prophecy. Through this means the plans
of Satan for the disrupting of the move-
ment have been disclosed, and his false
doctrines and deceptions have been re-
vealed. In times of crisis, instruction has
come to guide the church safely through
and time has abundantly demonstrated
that the instruction was of divine origin.
Through this gift perplexing problems have
been solved and hidden truths re-
vealed. Our success or failure as individu-
als or as a church depends upon our
attitude toward the instruction given
through this medium.

Satan’s Anger

“And the dragon was wroth with the
woman, and went to make war with the
remnant of her seed, which keep the com-
mandments of God, and have the testimony
of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17; 19:10. See also 1 Corinthians 1:6-8;
12:1-28; Ephesians 4:8-11.

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Shall We Be Found Wanting?

Our position in the world is not what it should be. We are far from where we should have been had our Christian experience been in harmony with the light and the opportunities given us, had we from the beginning constantly pressed onward and upward. Had we walked in the light that has been given us, we would have known the Lord, our path would have grown brighter and brighter. But many of those who have had special light are so conformed to the world that they can scarcely be distinguished from worldlings. They do not stand forth as God’s peculiar people, chosen and precious. It is difficult to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.

In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: “Found wanting.” By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.

God’s Purpose for His People

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

“Repent, and Do the First Works”

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

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

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

One who sees beneath the surface, who reads the hearts of all men, says of those who have had great light: "They are not afflicted and astonished because of their moral and spiritual condition." "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that and increased with goods, in need of nothing.

Who can truthfully say: "Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world"? I saw our Instrctor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: "Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? How is the faithful city become an harlot." Isaiah 1:21. My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.

A Call for Reformation

Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives.

The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife.

in which I delighted not." "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," "but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Isaiah 66:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 10, 12.

The heavenly Teacher inquired: "What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah? Oh, it is a great deception, a fascinating delusion, that takes possession of minds when men who have once known the truth, mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof; when they suppose that they are rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, while in reality they are in need of everything." See Revelation 3:17.

God has not changed toward His faithful servants who are keeping their garments spotless. But many are crying, "Peace and safety," while sudden destruction is coming upon them. Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich.

Testimonies, vol. 8, 247-251.

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Cliff Kemberling, Narrator

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Looking Back

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a putting away of those sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of poverty, blindness, wretchedness, and fearful deception. I was shown that the pointed testimony must live in the church. This alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. Wrongs must be reproved, sin must be called sin, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people.” Ibid., vol. 3, 259-260.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.

“The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” Ibid., vol. 1, 181.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. 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.” Ibid., 187.

These inspired quotations reveal to us the message that must be given to the church. The Laodiceans and laity will rise up against this God-directed message that must be given in this final crisis hour. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 136-150, vol. 1, 608-609; and Testimonies to Ministers, 409-410.

God raised up Hope International and the Our Firm Foundation magazine to help give the trumpet a certain sound in this final hour. The Seventh-day Adventist Church will go through to the end, shaken and purified. There will not be another church. God is purifying this one. It is the prayer of the editorial staff of this magazine that all the workers and supporters of Hope International will remain faithful to our God and to His great warning message until the end. We plan to see Jesus face to face very soon. □

Editorial

Continued from 2

plain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture. Many will read with eagerness the messages reproving wrong, that they may learn what they may do to be saved. . . Light will dawn upon the understanding, and the Spirit will make an impression on minds, as Bible truth is clearly and simply presented in the messages that since 1846 God has been sending His people. These messages are to find their place in hearts, and transformations will take place.” Selected Messages, book 1, 41-42.

“Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 136.

Those who have fastened themselves in error, when error has irrevocably taken possession of their minds, can never again be trusted. They have become blind to all spiritual things; darkness has become light and light darkness, and they now can believe a lie. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

Again, God has given us the evidence for such spiritual blindness that will continue to overcome many of our people. Yes, even some of our pastors and leaders.

“The mind in which error has once taken possession can never expand freely to truth, even after investigation. The old theories will claim recognition. The understanding of things that are true and elevated and sanctifying will be confused. Superstitious ideas will enter the mind, to mingle with the true, and these ideas are always debasing in their influence. . . .

“Cleave to the Word, ‘It is written.’ Cast out of the mind the dangerous, obtrusive theories which, if entertained, will hold the mind in bondage so that the man shall not become a new creature in Christ. The mind must be constantly restrained and guarded. It must be given as food that only which will strengthen the religious experience.” Medical Ministry, 89.

“God will not entrust the care of His precious flock to men whose mind and judgment have been weakened by former errors that they have cherished, such as so-called perfectionism and Spiritualism, and who, by their course while in these errors, have disgraced themselves and brought reproach upon the cause of truth. Although they may now feel free from error and competent to go forth and to teach this last message, God will not accept them.” Early Writings, 101-102.

We now stand at the very gates of the eternal world; probation is soon to close for all of us. Let us now study to show ourselves approved unto God and pray without ceasing, that we might have the character of Jesus.

God demands holy people, holy pastors, and holy leaders for this final hour. It is our desire that Our Firm Foundation will continue to serve to alert our people to present truth and to prepare them for the time of trouble before the coming of our Lord, our King. May God help us now to hasten that glorious day. □
If you had made God's Word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard to attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies.

Meets the Test

The most modern of all God's prophets meets all the tests of a true prophet. “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:19-23. This shows that there will be prophesying in the remnant of God's church that will stand the test of proof and investigation, and that this gift will be instrumental in perfecting a people for translation.

Wherever there is the false, there must be the true. Satan never counterfeits what does not exist. There will be many false prophets in the last days. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 13:13-14; 16:14.

The test of a true prophet is not on the basis of appearance or miracles, or even the fulfillment of predictions. The important questions are, first, does the life of the prophet harmonize with the Scriptures? and second, are the instructions in harmony with the law and the testimony of the other prophets? When Canright was making his attacks against Sister White and her writings he was publicly asked if he thought anyone would be saved who followed the example of her life and obeyed the instructions of her writings. His answer was, “Yes.”

A Human Being

No prophet of God was ever fully accepted as a prophet by all the members of the church to whom he or she ministered. It always has been true that, “a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” Mark 6:4. The great prophet Elijah “was a man subject to like passions as we are,” and so were all the other prophets, including Sister White. The bestowing of the gift of prophecy or any of the other spiritual gifts does not insure perfection. A prophet, like an apostle, pastor, teacher, or evangelist, must develop character in the same way as the humblest member of the church. Having a gift of the Spirit does not insure perfection or victory over sin. It does add to one's responsibility to live a careful Christian life. When the Lord selected Ellen G. Harmon, she was “the weakest of the weak,” both physically and intellectually, and then He demonstrated what He could do through such a weak instrument.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.” 1 Corinthians 1:27-29. We must learn to take our eyes off of the weak human instrument and fix them upon the Divine Gift. The human instrument was subject to the mistakes and frailties of human flesh, but the Gift itself is Divine and therefore infallible.

Reason Necessary

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai, or graven upon table of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 364. In other words, most of the instruction to ancient Israel through the Gift of Prophecy would have been unnecessary if they had faithfully obeyed the law and the instructions previously given.

In Advent Movement

The same is true today. The Spirit of Prophecy among God's remnant people does not reveal additional light, but calls us back to neglected Scriptures. “If you had made God's Word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. . . The written Testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. . . Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given, and in His own chosen way brought them before the people, to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.” Life Sketches, 198-199.

Further Testimony

“I referred them to ancient Israel. God gave them His law; but they would not obey it. He then gave them ceremonies and ordinances, that in the performance of these God might be kept in remembrance. They were so prone to forget Him and His claims upon them, that it was necessary to keep their minds stirred up to realize their obligations to obey and honor their Creator. Had they been obedient, and loved to keep God's commandments, the multitude of ceremonies and ordinances would not have been required.

If the people who now profess to be God's peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His Word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty, and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the Word of God. Consciences have been blunted, because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised.” Ibid., 200-201.
Those Who Do Not Remember the Past

The common problem shared by the ten virgins was that they were all asleep. We are all asleep. We are told, "God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat." Testimonies, vol. 5, 707.

Over the past thirty years, we have been sifted by the teachings of Robert Brinsmead and Desmond Ford. Presently, we are being shaken by new teachings spearheaded by Jack Sequeira, author of a book appropriately entitled Beyond Belief. Unfortunately, too many readers, even leaders, think the book’s theology is believable.

To anyone previously exposed to the theology of Jack Sequeira as presented in his books, such as Beyond Belief, Hebrews, and The Sanctuary, or on tapes of his sermons, this new book by Kevin Paulson should be considered must reading. We believe that the prayerful and diligent student of the Bible and Ellen G. White’s writings will be compelled to reject Sequeira’s theology after reading this enlightening book.

Those Who Do Not Remember the Past provides important and vital information worthy of consideration. If inspired writings are the criteria, Sequeira’s books are merely a collection of incredible human theories interspersed with truth. Countless texts and inspired references strongly contradict much of the theology presented by Sequeira. We urge you to carefully study this book before discarding any established truths.

Principal author: Kevin Paulson; other contributors: G. Irving Logan, Ralph Larson, Colin Standish, and Ron Spear. It contains 157 information-packed pages.

Order your copy today from Hope International. Only $8.50 each. See page 3 for tax and shipping information.

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