The Concept of Original Sin: Why It Is So Deadly

Tidings of Trouble

Two-Faced Politics

A Living Church

The 1888 Message: Has Satan Redefined It?
I
t the 13th chapter of Matthew, we
find Jesus sitting by the seaside teach-
ing a large group of eager seekers for
truth. Among the seekers, “there were
priests and rabbis, scribes and elders,
Herodians and rulers, world-loving, big-
otted, ambitious men, who desired above
all things to find some accusation against
Him.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 22.

One of the parables that Jesus used
by the seaside that day was the parable
of the wheat and tares, found in Matthew

Though some of His hearers were search-
ing for truth, their hearts were hardened,
their ears were dull of hearing, and their
eyes were closed, because they had listened
to priests and rabbis teach the traditions
of the fathers: Salvation was for the Jews. You
could and would be saved if you paid the
temple tax, tithe, and rendered obedience
to the leaders of the church.

However, Jesus in His parables tore
away the mask of spiritual deception. Some
of the honest seekers for truth asked them-
soles, Are we wheat or are we tare?

In Selected Messages, book 1, 406,
Ellen White tells us that the very same
conditions and experiences that existed in
the church in Christ’s day will be repeated
at the end of time in God’s last-day rem-
nant church. This means that some leaders,
pastors, and local church leaders will de-
velop attitudes similar to the church leaders
in Christ’s day, which will cause an
apostasy from the truth and will bring
persecution to all who would stand for
truth. The Laodicean condition that now
exists in the church is the result of man
following man’s ideas and not searching
for and following the truth without com-
promise. Consider what our prophet re-
veals to us about our tragic spiritual state:

“The spirit, wisdom, and goodness of
God, revealed in His Word, are to be
exemplified by the disciples of Christ, and
are thus to condemn the world. God requires
of His people according to the grace and
truth given them. All His righteous demands
must be fully met. Accountable beings must
walk in the light that shines upon them. If
they fail to do this, their light becomes
darkness, and their darkness is great in the
same degree as their light was abundant.
Accumulated light has shone upon God’s
people; but many have neglected to follow
the light, and for this reason they are in a
state of great spiritual weakness.

“It is not for lack of knowledge that
God’s people are now perishing. They
will not be condemned because they do
not know the way, the truth, and the life.
The truth that has reached their under-
standing, the light which shines on the
soul, but which has been neglected or
refused, will condemn them. Those
who never had the light to reject will
not be in condemnation. What more
could have been done for God’s vine-
yard than has been done? Light, pre-
cious light, shines upon God’s people;
but it will not save them unless they
consent to be saved by it, fully live up
to it, and transmit it to others in dark-
ness. God calls upon His people to act.
It is an individual work of confessing
and forsaking sins and returning unto
the Lord that is needed. One cannot do
this work for another. Religious knowl-
edge has accumulated, and this has
increased corresponding obligations.
Great light has been shining upon the
church, and by it they are condemned
because they refuse to walk in it. If
they were blind they would be without
sin. But they have seen light and have
heard much truth, yet are not wise and
holy. Many have for years made no
advancement in knowledge and true
holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. In-
stead of going forward to perfection,
they are going back to the darkness
and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are
not exercised unto godliness and true

Tragically, most of us who are church
members are spiritual dwarfs. We are not

studying; therefore, we are not seekers
after truth and righteousness:

“And ye shall seek me, and find me,
when ye shall search for me with all your

We have accepted the idea that by
paying tithe, going to church, and being
loyal to leaders, we will be saved. Jesus
said that we must do these things, but in
the process we must not compromise the
truth:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Phar-
isees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of
mint and anise and cummin, and have
omitted the weigher matters of the law, judg-
ment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye
to have done, and not to leave the other
undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at
gnat, and swallow a camel.” Matthew

Unfortunately, the evangelical ap-
proach to evangelism in our church has
been responsible for developing many of
our converts into tares—and now the
tares are many. They are the ones who
are persecuting the wheat—the believers
who are striving to be obedient to all
truth without compromise.

The shaking of Adventism must go on
until God has a purified people who will
give the loud cry to the world, and by their
experience demonstrate to the world and to
the church the patience and the faith of
Jesus. By Pentecostal power they will re-
spond to every life situation and temptation
just like Jesus did. Jesus said, “For many are
called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

God will not accept tares into His kingdom,
but by His power, He can change tares into
wheat.

The wheat and tares must grow to-
gether until the harvest time. The evi-
dence in the world and in the church
reveals that we stand at the very end of
all things. The harvest is about ready
to be reaped, and probation is soon to close.

If we find ourselves as being tares, may
we ask our Saviour to change us into
wheat is my prayer.

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

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Table of Contents
Vol. 11, No. 10 October 1996

Articles

The 1888 Message: Has Satan Redefined It? Dirk Anderson 4
The consequences of faulty spiritual discernment

The Concept of Original Sin: Why It Is So Deadly Colin Standish 8
Why Satan wants us to be confused on the nature of sin

Two-Faced Politics
Jeff Wehr 12
When the church has political ambitions

Experiencing Character Perfection, Part 2 Vernon Sparks 16
Instinctively imitating the virtues of Christ

Tidings of Trouble
Jeff Pippenger 20
Messages of Christ’s imminent return

The Altering of God’s Purpose
Taylor Bunch 24
Unwillingness to heed true counsel

A Living Church
Ellen G. White 28
Living with Christ after dying to sin

Departments

Editorial ......................... 2 Letters ......................... 11
Medical Missionary Corner ...... 14 An Appeal To the Friends of Truth 19

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Has Satan Redefined It?

The 1888 message is crucial to the future of the Adventist Church. The Spirit of Prophecy confirms that the 1888 message is the third angel's message in verity. "Review and Herald," April 1, 1890. When emphasized in 1888 it was the beginning of the illumination of the entire world by the powerful angel of Revelation 18:1, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."

Sister White writes, "The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth." Review and Herald, November 22, 1892. Satan recognizes that this precious message signals the downfall of his kingdom, and he has been relentless in his attempts to confuse, obscure, and distort it.

After more than a century the Adventist Church has yet to fully grasp the 1888 message. Why does it seem to remain a mystery to us? Have wolves in sheep's clothing carefully weaved counterfeit teachings into the real 1888 message? Do Sister White's writings contain the 1888 message, or should we look to other sources? What can we do to find the truth? These are the questions that we will examine in this article.

Do We Need the Spirit of Prophecy?

What role, if any, does the Spirit of Prophecy play in the 1888 message? Since Mrs. White's writings are the "lesser light," one group of 1888 theologians warns that quoting from them is a "substitute for the mental discipline of deep and thorough Bible study, even in the original languages."

While it is certainly true that we need deep and thorough Bible study, the first question we should ask when we read such statements is: Why is this author directing me away from the Spirit of Prophecy? Is it because I am not studying the Bible enough? Or is it because his theories are contradicted by what is written in the Spirit of Prophecy?

The light in the Spirit of Prophecy was given to complement, not substitute, the light in the Bible. We are under solemn obligation to study and heed the light given in the Spirit of Prophecy: "We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of Prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?" Testimonies, vol. 8, 298. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

God Himself is the Author of Mrs. White's writings: "The Holy Ghost is the Author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy." Selected Messages, book 3, 30. Instead of being fearful of quoting from the writings that the Holy Ghost authored, we should be thankful for the instruction God has given to save us from accepting strong delusions.

Sister White joined Elders Jones and Waggoner in the proclamation of the 1888 message. Her writings are full of the beautiful truths of the 1888 message. Sister White was not only God's messenger, but she was also the greatest author of her time period. To say that her writings, authored by the Holy Ghost, do not contain the light from Heaven on the most important present truth of her time period is more than a lie. It is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost!

How should we regard the light given in the Spirit of Prophecy on the 1888 message?
in his efforts to cause confusion and doubt in the truth of this essential doctrine. Mrs. White writes, "The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point." Faith and Works, 18.

She then asks, "And will heaven be given to those who have a faulty title?" Wait a minute! Someone may ask, How could our title to heaven be faulty if Christ's death on the cross was the event that provided that title? Mrs. White replies, "...no one will be entitled to the heavenly inheritance who has not been purified, refined, ennobled, elevated, and wholly sanctified." Our title to heaven includes our fitness for heaven. The two are inseparable.

The idea that all men are justified and must "reject" the gift in order to be lost was not the teaching of Elders Jones and Waggoner. Dr. Waggoner explains that the free gift must be accepted: "The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it." Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24.

Man's condition is "death"—not eternal life. To say that man has already been justified, and in order to be lost he must "throw it away," is a fantastical delusion. Why would Jesus say a man passes from death to life if that man had already been justified unto life? Jesus says a man must believe in God before he passes from death unto life. See John 5:24.

Jesus told a story to illustrate how a person is justified. Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee prayed "with himself," reminding God of all the good works he had accomplished. The publican prayed in contrition, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13. What was the lesson Jesus taught from this illustration? Did He teach that both men were justified because He was going to die on the cross for them? Absolutely not! He said of the publican, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exaltest himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be

The Greek word for have means, "to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or clinging to." Thayer's Concordance, #2192. Satan is wroth with those who adhere and cling to the Spirit of Prophecy.

There are two paths that lead away from the truth on this subject. One path leads towards legalism and says that salvation and justification are not through Christ alone, but are partly based upon our good works. Mrs. White writes, "There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone." Ibid., 19. Dr. Waggoner writes, "To Jesus we must look for our justification and to Him alone." The opposite path away from truth leads toward fanaticism and can cause a person to act the "slothful servant." This path teaches universal justification, that all mankind was justified on the cross and has already received their "title" to heaven. This teaching, which is popular in the Evangelical churches, has recently been brought to prominence in Adventism by a group called the 1888 Message Committee. They say that Christ's death on the cross provided "nothing short of a legal justification for 'all men,' " and that we are "born and live under a legal 'verdict of acquittal' in Christ." According to their doctrine, justification is an event that took place on the cross and we have already been justified, and the only way people can be lost is for them to "reject the gift' already given them." The Spirit of Prophecy refers directly to this issue in the May 2, 1892, Signs of the Times: "There are some who declare that all men are entitled to a place in heaven, and in the same breath they acknowledge that all men are not fitted for that heavenly abode."
exalted." Luke 18:14. Jesus clearly indicates in this passage that the publican was justified as he recognized his own sinful condition and pleaded with God for mercy, while the Pharisee was not justified. Here we have the true meaning of justification and the conditions for receiving it.

In order to clear up the confusion as to what Jesus, the Second Adam, accomplished on the cross, we must understand what the first Adam lost. Sister White writes

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We, like Adam, have been given a period of probation during which we have the freedom to choose our destiny.

of Adam, "God, in counsel with His Son, formed the plan of creating man in their own image. He was placed upon probation. Man was to be tested and proved, and if he should bear the test of God, and remain loyal and true after the first trial, he was not to be beset with continual temptations; but was to be exalted equal with the angels, and henceforth immortal." Review and Herald, February 24, 1874.

Notice:
1. Adam was placed on probation.
2. Adam must prove his loyalty to God during this probation.
3. Adam did not have eternal life. Immortality was conditional on his loyalty to God.

The punishment for Adam's disloyalty to God was eternal death. See Genesis 2:17. Condemnation to eternal death would have been irrevocable at that moment had it not been for the plan of redemption. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 60. This plan provided a "second probation," a time during which man would have the opportunity to prove his loyalty to God. Mrs. White writes, "Adam and Eve were placed upon probation in the Garden of Eden, and they were to prove their loyalty to their Creator by obedience to His law of love; but they fell, through the temptation of a wily foe. A great and infinite sacrifice has been made, that man may have another trial. God provides that man may have another probation, and his efforts to keep the law are made acceptable through Christ." Signs of the Times, November 24, 1887.

While Christ's death brought salvation within the reach of all mankind, we need to understand that we have not been given salvation or eternal life. We, like Adam, have been given a period of probation during which we have the freedom to choose our destiny.

A. T. Jones explains, "The first Adam brought men under the condemnation of sin, even unto death; the second Adam's righteousness undoes that and makes ev-

day of Atonement also included the ministry of the priest in the Most Holy Place and the cleansing of the sanctuary. The entire process was necessary for the justification of the Israelites.

While it is true that Christ's death paid the penalty for all the sins of the world (see 1 John 2:2), true justification is not a corporate pronouncement. True justification is a personal and individual event. It occurs when a person is born again "of water and of the Spirit." John 3:5. It reaches into the individual to create a new heart, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:4.

Here is a simple illustration: I am hungry for popcorn, so I get out my hot-air popcorn popper and turn it on. What have I accomplished? I have enabled the process of popping by turning on the popper, but no popcorn is popping. This is "objective" popcorn popping. I will not get any popcorn until I put the seeds into the popper. Likewise, if I had put the popcorn seeds into the popper without turning it on (subjective popping), I would not get any popcorn. I need both the popper running and the seeds in it to produce popcorn.

Justification is meaningless without Christ's death on the cross. Justification is also meaningless without the personal experience of the individual believer. Whenever justification is separated into pieces, there is the danger of fanaticism as one piece is emphasized over the other. When "objective" justification is emphasized, as we find in the Evangelical churches, it can result in the slothful servant who minimizes the personal experience of justification. An overemphasis on "subjective" justification can result in an unhealthy focus on self. The safest approach is that presented by the 1888 messengers, which acknowledges Christ's sacrificial gift on the cross for all humanity, and recognizes that justification occurs when we receive the gift of Christ into our hearts by faith.

Dr. Waggoner understood that "to justify means to make righteous." True justification entails more than the forgiveness of past sins. It is a transformation that is brought about through the power of God alone. Dr. Waggoner explains that justification leads to perfect obedience to the law of God: "Here again we find how the law is guarded at every step in this matter of justification by faith in Christ. Here every possibility is cut off for a person to say—I
am Christ’s and Christ is mine and no matter what I do, it is Christ that does it in me. No, that is not so. We cannot charge any sin to Christ: He is not responsible for any sin, for the law does not justify us in committing any sin. So we see that justification by faith is nothing else but bringing a person into perfect conformity to the law. Justification by faith does not make any provision for transgression of the law.”

Why All the Confusion?

God has not made the all-important message of the righteousness of Christ difficult to find or understand. Our problem is not that we are spending too much time reading Sister White’s writings, for her writings reveal the 1888 message. Our problem is not that we do not understand Biblical Hebrew and Greek. Our problem is not a lack of 1888 conferences and theological books on the subject. Our problem as a church is our lack of spiritual discernment. By worldliness and yielding to sin, we have weakened our ability to discern truth from error. “Will men hear the Word of the Lord, or will they, through yielding to temptation, refuse to hear until it becomes impossible for them to discern between good and evil?” Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, 20.

Our health habits also play a large role in our lack of discernment: “All over the world we see how appetite has controlled the reason, and clouded the perceptions of men, and has taken the foundation from the character. Through the indulgence of appetite, men have come to a position where it is impossible for them to discern the light of God.” Review and Herald, July 5, 1892. It is our own sin and selfish indulgence that has weakened our ability to discern the light of the 1888 message.

Before we can fully appreciate the 1888 message, we need to first understand our own sinful condition. At the 1893 General Conference session, A. T. Jones explains our Laodicean condition: “Now then that is the situation in which we are to be: inefficient, ignorant, poor, unworthy, and blind. Is not that just what the Laodicean message tells us—that we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked and do not know it? Someone was reading that the other day and he touched upon that word ‘blindness,’ and immediately my mind ran to John 9:41. It is at the end of the account of

What we need in order to understand the 1888 message is a humble recognition of our own weakness and blindness. We must draw near to Christ so that we can have a clear vision of His beauty and excellence.

FOOTNOTES:

2 See for example, Steps to Christ (1892), The Desire of Ages (1888), and Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing (1895).
3 E. J. Waggoner, 1891 General Conference Sermons, sermon no. 12.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. 9.
7 E. J. Waggoner, Waggoner on Romans, 102.
9 Called by some “objective” and “subjective” justification—objective being what Christ accomplished on the cross and subjective being the experience of the individual.
10 E. J. Waggoner, Waggoner on Romans, 71.
11 E. J. Waggoner, 1891 General Conference Sermons, sermon no. 11.

October 1996 Our Firm Foundation 7
The concept of original sin did not come from the writings of the apostles, nor from the Old Testament prophets, nor from the words of Christ Himself. We see little development of the teaching of original sin before the end of the fourth century A.D. The concept of original sin was popularized by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 354-431. This concept held that we not only inherit the weakness and nature of fallen Adam, and the natural tendency and inevitable inclination to follow his pathway of sin, but that we are also personally condemned and personally guilty for Adam’s sin—in addition to our own sins.

Louis Berko identifies Augustine as the originator of the concept of original sin: “The early Church Fathers contained nothing very definite about original sin, . . . It is especially in Augustine that the doctrine of original sin comes to fuller development. According to him, the nature of man, both physical and moral, is totally corrupted by Adam’s sin, so that he cannot do otherwise than sin. This inherited corruption of original sin is a moral punishment for the sin of Adam.” Systematic Theology, 244-245.

The concept of original sin has gone so far, that Justo L. Gonzalez wrote, “Natural man has true freedom to choose between several alternatives, although, given his condition as a sinner subject to concupiscence, and as a member of this ‘mass of damnation,’ all the alternatives open to him are sin. The option not to sin does not exist.” A History of Christian Thought, vol. 2, 44.

Dr. Peter de Rosa, a Jesuit professor, has recorded that, “In this, Gregory [Pope Gregory VII] took St. Paul literally: ‘In Adam all have sinned.’ This means from the first moment of a person’s existence there is guilt. This is not a personal taint, but a taint of nature and so unavoidable. The nature derives from the parents. From the beginning the baby’s soul is polluted by this original, this inherited sin. Gregory was not blind to the problems this raised. For example, parents were cleansed from original sin in baptism. How could they hand on original sin to their babies? He answers: Though holy themselves, they handed on corrupt nature by sex, desire galvanized by lust. Babies are born as the damned fruit of the lust of their redeemed parents. From the first, they are the offspring of Gehenna or Hell; they are justly children of wrath because they are sinners. If they die unbaptized, they are condemned to everlasting torments for the guilt of their birth alone. Existence is itself a state of sin; to be born is to be qualified for eternal punishment.” Vicars of Christ, 452.

There is no question that when Adam sinned, death passed upon all men. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. When Adam and Eve sinned, their unfallen nature was changed to a fallen nature in which death was inscribed on every cell of their bodies. That fallen nature has been inherited by all their descendants, so that outside of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the faithful dead, and the transformation that will take place at the Second Coming of Jesus, all humanity is destined to eternal oblivion. It is this sinful nature that is transformed into sinless nature at the return of Jesus. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:53-54.

We hear popular speakers and writers in Adventism declare, “We sin because we are sinners; we are not sinners because we sin.”

Colin Standish
That is the increasingly prevailing belief of many proclaimers of the gospel today in our Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The concept of original sin declares that we are born with inner sin, for which we are responsible. At a recent Annual Council, a prominent Adventist writer and seminary professor had the devotional talks. In his opening presentation, he began with these words, "Eating cheese is not SIN." After a pause he continued, "Neither is eating rattlesnakes nor rats SIN." Further he indicated that even gross sin such as murder and theft was not SIN. This was demonstrated by displaying in large capital letters the word S-I-N. Then the speaker indicated that acts like murder and theft were sini (small letters), but that the great problem was SIN. One wonders how we can escape 1 John 3:4, "Whosoever committeeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." The text does not say, "sins are the transgression of the law;" it says "sin is the transgression of the law." (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

Why would Satan have us believe the concept of original sin? The final result of propagating the concept of original sin is to declare that it is impossible to have a victorious Christian experience. Augustine, unable to control his sexual lust, initially declared that the original sin was the sex drive, though he did broaden it later. While it is likely that most Adventists would adamantly declare that they do not believe in original sin as put forward by Augustine, the concept of inner SIN indeed is perilously close to it when they emphasize that it is that which condemns us, rather than the act of sin itself.

The scripture is plain that our sins which are revealed to us are responsible for our guilt. "Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty." Leviticus 6:4. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." James 2:10–11.

It must be emphasized that the issue of original sin results in one conclusion—that because of original sin, it is impossible for us to have victory over sin in this life. Therefore, we will continue to sin until Jesus comes. The concept of original sin has contributed greatly to the heresy of the sin-and-live theology. Paul, recognizing that we can only keep the commandments of God by the faith of Jesus, declared, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23.

Nevertheless, God is just. If we sin through ignorance, it is not accounted to us as sin, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17:30–31.

Jesus Himself fully endorsed such a concept. "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." John 9:41. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15:22.

It is important to notice that both James and Jesus use the singular word "sin." If all humanity were guilty of the sin of Adam, then Jesus could never have uttered these words, for surely all would be guilty of sin irrespective of their ignorance. We must be thankful that we serve a compassionate God who will not hold us responsible for our genuine ignorance. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Hebrews 5:2. However, if that ignorance has been the result of deliberate negligence of the principles of God, then we cannot expect the mercy of God. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." Hebrews 2:3.

All members of the human race have wandered away from God and are therefore lost until they accept the provisions of salvation. We would all be lost had not God, through Christ, intervened in our behalf: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." Romans 3:10.

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6. These texts in no wise confirm the concept of original sin; they simply recognize cause and effect of our own participation in sin.

Because we are born with sinful natures, we are destined to rebel against God, choose the way of Satan, and accumulate our own life of sin, requiring the saving grace of Christ to redeem us from the punishment we so justly deserve. All human beings are born with a sinful human nature—a nature that is attracted to sin. Even when converted and surrendered to Christ, we still possess this nature, but through the power of Christ, it is subdued and we live in the power of His Spirit. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Romans 6:6–7. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1–2.

When Christ returns to take His saints to His kingdom, their natures will be transformed into sinless natures. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15:53–54.

It is not the nature that we have that will determine our eternal destiny. Eternal destiny is determined by the acceptance of Christ, His substitutionary sacri-

October 1996 Our Firm Foundation 9
Those with the spiritual mind have daily surrendered their minds and their wills to Jesus Christ, and they have gained the victory over sin. While we retain the carnal mind, we cannot obtain victory.

the day and provide an abiding strength to resist every Satanic deception and temptation. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Contrast the situation of the wicked and the righteous in terms of the carnal mind and the spiritual mind. While both the wicked and the righteous continue to have a sinful nature, those with the carnal mind are slaves to that nature, and cannot in that state, gain victory over sin. Indeed, they do not have the desire to do so. Those with the spiritual mind have daily surrendered their minds and their wills to Jesus Christ, and they have gained the victory over sin. While we retain the carnal mind, we cannot obtain victory. That is why the man of Romans 7 had such a failed experience. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do I." Romans 7:14-15.

In the same passage of scripture, Paul clarifies the destiny of those who retain the carnal mind on the one hand, and those who have allowed Christ to develop within them a spiritual mind on the other. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:6-14.

No texts destroy more quickly the original sin concept than those which declare that not one will be lost for someone else’s sin. When Moses expressed his willingness to be blotted out of the book of life if it could save the children of Israel, God’s answer was explicit. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Exodus 32:31-33.

The prophet Ezekiel brought forth exactly the same principle. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezekiel 18:20.

The human race indeed suffers many consequences because of Adam’s sin, but no one will be punished in the lake of fire merely because of Adam’s sin. Punishment will come only to those who refuse to cease from personal rebellion against God. Each person is responsible for his own sin. He neither bears the guilt of another, nor does another bear his guilt, except it be Christ who bore the guilt of the world upon Calvary. To teach otherwise is to diminish man’s own guilt, and to absolve man from the fullness of the power of the gospel to seek God’s complete restoration of moral strength.

Our personal guilt and our helplessness to do anything about it thrusts us upon Jesus, the all-sufficient Savior, who alone bore our sins upon the cross so that our sins might be absolved, and that we might be partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption of the world through lust. Is it any wonder that the redeemed saints sing the mighty anthem, “Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!”

Note: This article has been modified from a chapter in the book, The Evangelical Dilemma, entitled, “The Dilemma of the Concept of Original Sin.”

THE EVANGELICAL DILEMMA


Order your copies today from Hope International. Only $10.95 each.
Please see page 3 for shipping and sales tax information.
Letters to the Editor

I would be grateful if you could keep on sending me Our Firm Foundation. I express my appreciation for your magazine. It helped me to distinguish the path for these last days, and it also enlightened me in different aspects. I use parts of your articles for my sermons (that I am asked to deliver) or in my work with the youth. May God bless you and your work.

DI, Hungary

Please do not stop sending me the issues of Our Firm Foundation. They are a part of my life, and I so look forward to receiving them!

Please kindly help me with Prophets and Kings, Testimonies, vol. 5, and the Study Bible. My wife is requesting a copy of The Adventist Home—even an old copy.

MM, Zambia

I am very thankful for the books which I received from Hope International through Our Firm Foundation. Here in Zimbabwe we cannot find such important books. Please keep up the good work. Time is not on our side.

One other note: I am working very hard to save money for my subscriptions. I think I will be able to pay for them very soon. My friends are really in need of these books, and I am doing my best for them to know more about Our Firm Foundation. Please send me more magazines so that I can distribute them.

MM, Zimbabwe

You see, I am a missionary in my country, and I run a small video ministry. Hence your help would definitely benefit me. Thank you in advance for your courtesy in responding to my letter. I am earnestly looking forward to your answer.

SB, West Indies

We received the shipment of the materials you sent. Thank you so much for your response to our plea for assistance. All help is invaluable to us when we try to minister to so many diverse men with such varied interests and needs. If at any time in the future you find yourself in a position to donate more materials, we would be most appreciative, and we will do our best to be good stewards of God’s resources by distributing to the men where they will do the most good. Our prayers are for God to bless you and your ministry beyond your greatest dreams. We are convinced that our God is a rewarder of faithfulness.

HA, Chaplain, Gulf Correctional Institution, FL

Greetings in the name of our soon coming King and Lord! Our Lord has given me this golden opportunity to write this letter of request for some religious materials—like books and Bibles for free distribution to our members.

CM, Nigeria

Thank you for the paper you sent me entitled Earth’s Final Warning. I live in a very small town in Kentucky. Having been raised a Baptist, I have to admit of being very skeptical when I started reading the paper. I had it for awhile and showed it to a few of my family members, but no one else believes. I feel very fortunate that I received it, but I thought it was peculiar that none of my neighbors received one. The Bible condemns denominations, but most people believe what they are taught by their families. After reading your paper I got my Bible and looked up everything I had read. Obviously, you made a believer out of me. I am a single parent with two small children. I took them to church about every Sunday, thinking I was doing right. Sure enough, the Bible says the seventh day, and not the first, is the Sabbath.

Anyway, sorry to bore you in getting to the point. I would please like you to send me a free Bible course. I am a high school graduate, but I have problems understanding the Bible. I have heard of some denomination that worships on Saturday, but I do not know the name of it. Could you please tell me? I would greatly appreciate it, so I could go on Saturday also.

I feel very blessed and fortunate by receiving your paper. Thank you so much and God bless you.

LS, Kentucky

I wish to apply for some of your books. I have read some of them with particular reference to The Acts of the Apostles. I was really impressed about the way the writer wrote her books and the way she explained some of the Bible passages.

Please, Sir, can you tell me the name of your church and its doctrines? I am therefore appealing to you to consider my request and send me some of your books very soon.

I hope my humble application will receive the committee’s urgent attention. May God Almighty bless you and let your dreams come true. Amen.

FSB, Ghana

Once more, thank you so much for your faithfulness in sending hope, comfort, and warning to God’s remnant people through your timely magazine. They have been such a blessing to my husband and me, and also to our family! We really appreciate the fact that you have gone to the trouble to post Our Firm Foundation to us regularly for years now, even though we are many thousands of miles apart. We still need your prayers, and maybe one day soon you will have opportunity to visit us in South Africa.

J & V, South Africa

It was almost like a dream when I saw the parcel of the Spirit of Prophecy books, magazines, and the photostats for the Sabbath and other doctrinal topics enclosed. The joy that accompanied the reception of the package was so great! May our correspondence continue unabated as your organization rejuvenated my spiritual zeal!

FO, Sudan
On October 2, 1984, Pat Robertson said to his 700 Club audience, “There is nothing in the U.S. Constitution that sanctifies the separation of church and state.” The Most Dangerous Man in America?, 70. Then just a year later Robertson told the National Press Club in Washington that he believed “in a separation between church and state that is complete and inviolable.” Ibid., 72.

In March of 1994, Robertson offered viewers of his CBN program a fact sheet titled “Church & State: America’s Myth of Separation.” The sheet restated the Christian Coalition’s position against the ‘wall’ of separation of church and state. Then about a year later, the Christian Coalition printed a booklet titled Ten Myths about Pat Robertson and Religious Conservatives. The booklet states, “Robertson repeatedly has stated his belief in the separation of church and state and the evil of an established church.” Ibid.

These are examples of one of the most disappointing characteristics of the Christian Coalition, namely, two-faced politics. One of the most beautiful things about true Christianity is that it is transparent. No one should have to second guess what a Christian believes. If a man holds a certain religious conviction, he should always hold to that conviction regardless of the circumstances, as long as his convictions are founded on the Bible and on the Spirit of Prophecy.

It is sheer disappointment to see Pat Robertson and the Christian Coalition speak out against the principles that provide the freedoms they enjoy. Pat Robertson is able to attend any church that he wants. He can print and distribute his own religious opinions. He can operate his own radio and television ministry. He can establish a university and appoint his professors. He can run his own social service ministry. He has the freedom to proclaim his moral and political views without paying one dime in federal, state, and local taxes. To what principle does Pat Robertson owe all this freedom? He enjoys these freedoms because of the separation of church and state.

Yet, the Religious Right gives the distorted picture that they are the victims of “religious cleansing” in America. They liken this cleansing to the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia and the extermination of six million Jews under Nazi Germany. Keith Fournier said, “Just as ethnic cleansing attempts to rid certain ethnic groups and their influence from public life, so religious cleansing attempts to do the same with religious groups, their beliefs, and their values.” Ibid., 216.

In war-torn Bosnia, women have been raped, men murdered, children left to suffer the pains of hunger, and families divided. How can anyone compare the court rulings of striking down the displaying of religious symbols on government property to the atrocities of Bosnia? How can anyone compare the murder of six million Jews to asking a high school valedictorian to refrain from turning his graduation speech into a sermon at a mandatory public school audience? Such a comparison is to show a high degree of insensitivity
to the pain and the sorrow of those who have truly faced persecution.

Fournier has even compared the American “wall” of separation of church and state to the Berlin Wall. However, behind the Berlin Wall, all religious expression was illegal. Yet, Mr. Fournier has full freedom to attend his Catholic Church in the United States. These shameful distortions can hardly be said to be Christian.

It is indeed strange for these men to tear down the “wall” that provides their freedom of religious expression. Instead, they highly esteem the times of the Pilgrims during early colonial times in America. Pat Robertson wrote in his book, The New World Order, “The founders of America—at Plymouth Rock and in the Massachusetts Colony—felt that they were organizing a society based on the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. They perceived this new land as a successor to the nation of Israel, and they tried their best to model their institutions of governmental order after the Bible. In fact, the man who interpreted the meaning of Scripture to them, the pastor, was given a higher place than the governor of the colony. These people built an incredible society because they exalted ‘the mountain of the Lord’s house’ above the other mountains.” The New World Order, 246.

What Robertson fails to realize in his exultation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony as an “incredible society” is that his practice and preaching of Pentecostal theology would not have been tolerated. His speaking in tongues would have been considered blasphemous. There was only one form of religious worship in the colony, with no room for two. Is this Robertson’s idea of a “Christian” nation?

In 1991, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba declared his country to be a “Christian nation.” When Robertson interviewed Chiluba on the 700 Club, he lamented that no such declaration had occurred in the United States. Robertson told Chiluba, “Your country is a standard for not only Africa but the rest of the world.” The Most Dangerous Man in America?, 203. After the interview, Robertson asked the audience, “Wouldn’t you love to have someone like that as president of the United States of America?” Ibid.

So what has taken place in Zambia’s “Christian nation”? The country is guided by fundamentalist Christianity. People who belong to the Islamic, Hindu, and animistic faiths, which comprise an estimated 25 to 50 percent of the population, were told that they would have to build their own schools, while fundamentalist Christians can inundate the public school system. The state-run radio and television stations will broadcast only fundamentalist Christian programs. All other religions politics in America. For example, in an average election, only 60 percent of all adults who are eligible to vote are actually registered to vote. Of this 60 percent only about half will actually cast a vote. Therefore, you only need about fifteen percent of all eligible voters to swing an election. For local elections, you can determine the outcome with only 6–7

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must establish their own facilities. Are these the characteristics of a tolerant “Christian nation”?

It is unfortunate that so many commentators today do not see the very real threat of the political ambitions of the Christian Coalition. It is not just an organization with an assortment of rhetoric. Robertson’s CBN ministry successfully brings in $75–95 million each year. This political ministry is sitting on an endowment of one billion dollars, with plans to double that by the year 2000. Of course, CBN represents only a part of the wealth behind the Religious Right’s financial power and influence.

This immense wealth of the Religious Right will go far in influencing percent of eligible voters. Consequently, polls are not a true reflection of what will actually take place in the ballot box.

It is the conviction of this author that Sunday laws are imminent. The likely players who will push for Sunday legislation are already on the scene with power and momentum. Time is short. Our probation will soon close. I pray that we will all be ready to be judged by God. I pray that we will all be prepared to defend the faith, for all will be brought to the test. I pray that we will give all of who we are, and all of what we have, to the finishing of this glorious work. 

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Disease and Its Causes

Part 1
by Ellen G. White

SINCE the Fall in Eden, the race has been degenerating. Deformity, imbecility, disease, and human suffering have been pressing heavier and heavier upon each successive generation, and yet the masses are asleep as to the real causes. They do not consider that they themselves are guilty, in a great measure, for this deplorable state of things. They generally charge their sufferings upon Providence, and regard God as the Author of their woes. But it is intemperance, to a greater or less degree, that lies at the foundation of all this suffering.

Eve was intemperate in her desires when she put forth her hand to take of the fruit-forbidden tree. Self-gratification has reigned almost supreme in the hearts of men and women since the Fall. Especially has the appetite been indulged, and they have been controlled by it, instead of by reason. For the sake of gratifying the taste, Eve transgressed the command of God. He had given her everything her wants required, yet she was not satisfied. Ever since, her fallen sons and daughters have followed the desires of their eyes and of their taste. They have, like Eve, disregarded the prohibitions God has made, and have followed in a course of disobedience, and, like Eve, have flattered themselves that the consequence would not be as fearful as had been apprehended.

Man has disregarded the laws of his being, and disease has been steadily increasing. The cause has been followed by the effect. He has not been satisfied with food which was the most healthful; but has gratified the taste even at the expense of health.

God has established the laws of our being. If we violate these laws, we must, sooner or later, pay the penalty. The laws of our being cannot be more successfully violated than by crowding upon the stomach unhealthful food, because craved by a morbid appetite. To eat to excess, of even simple food, will eventually break down the digestive organs; but to eat too great an amount of food, and that unwholesome, and the evil is greatly increased. The constitution must become impaired.

The human family have been growing more and more self-indulgent, until health has been most successfully sacrificed upon the altar of lustful appetite. The inhabitants of the old world were intemperate in eating and drinking. They would have flesh meats, although God had given them no permission to eat animal food. They ate and drank to excess, and their depraved appetites knew no bounds. They gave themselves up to abominable idolatry. They became violent and ferocious, and so corrupt that God could bear with them no longer. Their cup of iniquity was full, and God cleansed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood. As men multiplied upon the face of the earth after the flood, they forgot God, and corrupted their ways before Him. Intemperance in every form increased to a great extent.

The Lord brought His people out of Egypt in a victorious manner. He led them through the wilderness to prove them and try them. He repeatedly manifested His miraculous power in their deliverances from their enemies. He promised to take them to Himself as His peculiar treasure if they would obey His voice and keep His commandments. He did not forbid them to eat the flesh of animals, but withheld it from them in great measure. He provided them food which was the most healthful. He raised their bread from heaven, and gave them purest water from the flinty rock. He made a covenant with them: if they would obey Him in all things, He would preserve them from disease. See Exodus 15:26.

But the Hebrews were not satisfied. They despised the food given them from Heaven, and wished themselves back in Egypt, where they could sit by the fleshpots. They preferred slavery, and even death, rather than to be deprived of meat. God, in His anger, gave them flesh to gratify their lustful appetites, and great numbers of them died while eating the meat for which they had lusted. See Numbers 11:33.

Nadab and Abihu were slain by the fire of God's wrath for their intemperance in the use of wine. God would have His people understand that they will be visited according to their obedience or transgressions. Crime and disease have increased with every successive generation. Intemperance in eating and drinking, and the indulgence of the baser passions, have benumbed the nobler faculties. Appetite, to an alarming extent, has controlled reason.

The human family have indulged an increasing desire for rich food, until it has become a fashion to crowd all the delicacies possible into the stomach. Especially at parties of pleasure is the appetite indulged with but little restraint. Rich dinners and late suppers are partaken of, consisting of highly seasoned meats, with rich gravies, rich cakes, pies, ice cream, and so forth.

Professed Christians generally take the lead in these fashionable gatherings. Large sums of money are sacrificed to the gods of fashion and appetite, in preparing feasts of health-destroying dainties to tempt the appetite, that through this channel something may be raised for religious purposes. Thus ministers and professed Christians have acted their part and exerted their influence, by precept and example, in indulging intemperance in eating, and in leading the people to health-destroying gluttony. Instead of appealing to man's reason, to his benevolence, his humanity, his nobler faculties, the most successful appeal that can be made is to the appetite.

The gratification of the appetite will induce men to give when otherwise they
would do nothing. What a sad picture for Christians! With such sacrifice is God well pleased? How much more acceptable to Him was the widow 's mite'. Such as follow her example from the heart will have well done. To have the blessing of Heaven attend the sacrifice thus made, can make the simplest offering of the highest value.

Men and women who profess to be followers of Christ are often slaves to fashion, and to a guttonous appetite. Preparatory to fashionable gatherings. time and strength, which should be devoted to higher and nobler purposes, are expended in cooking a variety of unwholesome dishes. Because it is fashion, many who are poor and dependent upon their daily labor will go to the expense of preparing different kinds of rich cakes, preserves, pies, and a variety of fashionable foods for visitors, which only injure those who partake of them; when, at the same time, they need the amount thus expended, to purchase clothing for themselves and their children. This time occupied in cooking food to gratify the taste at the expense of the stomach, should be devoted to the moral and religious instruction of their children.

Fashionable visiting is made an occasion of gluttony. Hurtful foods and drinks are partaken of in such measure as greatly to tax the organs of digestion. The vital forces are called into unnecessary action in the disposal of it, which produces exhaustion, and greatly disturbs the circulation of the blood; and as a result, want of vital energy is felt throughout the system. The blessings which might result from social visiting are often lost, for the reason that your entertainer, instead of being profited by your conversation, is tiring over the cook stove, preparing a variety of dishes for you to feast upon. Christian men and women should never permit their influence to countenance such a course by eating of the dainties thus prepared. Let them understand that your object in visiting them is, not to indulge the appetite, but that your associating together, and interchange of thoughts and feelings, might be a mutual blessing. The conversation should be of that elevated, ennobling character that may afterward be called to remembrance with feelings of the highest pleasure.

Those who entertain visitors should have wholesome, nutritious food, from fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple, tasteful manner. Such cooking will require but little extra labor or expense, and, partaken of in moderate quantities, will not injure anyone. If worldlings choose to sacrifice time, money, and health to gratify the appetite, let them do so, and pay the penalty of the violation of the laws of health; but Christians should take their position in regard to these things, and exert their influence in the right direction. They can do much in reforming these fashionable, health and soul-destroying customs.

Many indulge in the pernicious habit of eating just before sleeping hours. They may have taken three regular meals; yet because they feel a sense of faintness, as if hungry, will eat a lunch, or fourth meal. By indulging this wrong practice, it has become a habit, and they feel as if they could not sleep without taking a lunch before retiring. In many cases the cause of this faintness is because the digestive organs have been already too severely taxed through the day in disposing of unwholesome food forced upon the stomach too frequently, and in too great quantities. The digestive organs thus taxed become weary, and need a period of entire rest from labor to recover their exhausted energies. A second meal should never be eaten until the stomach has had time to rest from the labor of digesting the preceding meal. If a third meal be eaten at all, it should be light, and several hours before going to bed.

But with many the poor tired stomach may complain of weariness in vain. More food is forced upon it, which sets the digestive organs in motion, again to perform the same round of labor through the sleeping hours. The sleep of such is generally disturbed with unpleasant dreams, and in the morning they awake unrefreshed. There is a sense of languor, and a loss of appetite. A lack of energy is felt throughout the entire system. In a short time the digestive organs are worn out; for they have had no time to rest. These become miserable dyspeptics, and wonder what has made them so. The cause has brought the sure result. If this practice be indulged in a great length of time, the health will become seriously impaired. The blood becomes impure, the complexion sallow, and eruptions will frequently appear. You will often hear complaints from such, of frequent pains and soreness in the region of the stomach; and while performing labor, the stomach becomes so tired that they are obliged to desist from work, and rest. They seem to be at a loss to account for this state of things: for, setting this aside, they are apparently healthy.

Those who are changing from three meals a day to two, will at first be troubled more or less with faintness, especially about the time they have been in the habit of eating their third meal. But if they persevere for a short time, this faintness will disappear.

The stomach, when we lie down to rest, should have its work all done, that it may enjoy rest, as well as other portions of the body. The work of digestion should not be carried on through any period of the sleeping hours. After the stomach, which has been overtaxed, has performed its task, it becomes exhausted, which causes faintness. Here many are deceived, and think that it is the want of food which produces such feelings; and without giving the stomach time to rest, they take more food, which for the time removes the faintness. And the more the appetite is indulged, the more will be its clamors for gratification. This faintness is generally the result of meat eating, and eating frequently, and too much. The stomach becomes weary by being kept constantly at work, disposing of food not the most healthful. Having no time for rest, the digestive organs become enfeebled, hence the sense of "goneness," and desire for frequent eating. The remedy such require is to eat less frequently and less liberally, and be satisfied with plain, simple food, eating twice, or, at most, three times, a day. The stomach must have its regular periods for labor and rest; hence eating irregularly and between meals is a most pernicious violation of the laws of health. With regular habits and proper food the stomach will gradually recover.

Because it is the fashion, in harmony with morbid appetite, rich cake, pies, and puddings, and every hurtful thing are crowded into the stomach. The table must be loaded down with a variety, or the depraved appetite cannot be satisfied. In the morning these slaves to appetite often have impure breath and a furled tongue. They do not enjoy health, and wonder why they suffer with pains, headaches, and various ills. The cause has brought the sure results.

**Review and Herald**, June 6, 1899.
We perfect our character by believing in Christ and by doing His words. It involves a possession by the Holy Spirit with a change of our tendencies toward obedience and a manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit:

"The part man has to act in the salvation of the soul, is to believe on Jesus Christ as a perfect Redeemer, not for some other man, but for his own self. He is to trust, to love, to fear the God of heaven. There is a certain work to be accomplished. Man must be delivered from the power of sin. He must be made perfect in every good work. In doing the words of Christ is his only assurance that his house is built upon the solid foundation. To hear, to say, to preach, and not to do the words of Christ, is building upon the sand. Those who do the words of Christ will perfect a Christian character, because Christ's will is their will. Thus is Christ formed within, the hope of glory. They are beholding, as in a glass, the glory of God. By making Christ the subject of meditation, He will become the subject of conversation; and by beholding, we will actually be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can 'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.' Romans 12:2. How does he prove this?—By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in?—'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' 1 Corinthians 4:9. A real work is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen; just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord's garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. The tendencies, which have been biased in a wrong direction, are turned in a right direction. Wrong dispositions and feelings are rooted out. Holy tempers and sanctified emotions are now the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. An entire transformation has taken place. This is the work to be wrought. We see by experience that in our own human strength, resolutions and purposes are of no avail. Must we, then, give up?—No; although our experience testifies that we cannot possibly do this work ourselves, help has been laid upon One who is mighty to do it for us. But the only way that we can secure the help of God is to put ourselves wholly in His hands, and trust Him to work for us. As we lay hold of Him by faith, He does the work. The believer can only trust. As God works, we can work, trusting in Him and doing His will." Ellen G. White Pamphlets, No. 28, 8-9.

When we have a compelling desire to be like Jesus, our beholding of His character will unconsciously, even instinctively, transform us into His likeness:

"By searching the Written Word we are enabled closely to observe the divine Model. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects of character; his likeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding—'looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,' (Hebrews 12:2)—he becomes changed into the same image. Even un-
consciously we imitate that with which we are familiar. By having a knowledge of Christ—His words, His habits, and His lessons of instruction—we instinctively copy the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, and become imbued with the spirit which we have so much admired. Jesus becomes to us 'chiefest among ten thousand.' (Song of Solomon 5:10) the One 'altogether lovely.' Song of Solomon 5:16." "Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,” October 22, 1894.

Those who abide in Christ will have the character of Christ with the fruits of the Spirit:

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

He who is united to Christ is accepted in the Beloved. That soul is dear to the heart of God. The benefits of this union will be manifest. The child of God, abiding in Christ, will have the character of Christ:

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Galatians 5:22.

Wherever a soul is united to Christ, there is love. Whatever else the character may possess, it is valueless without love. Not love that is soft, weak, sentimental, but such love as dwells in the heart of Christ. Without love, everything else profits nothing; for it cannot possibly represent Christ, who is love.‘ The Signs of the Times,” December 28, 1891.

Through a mental, moral, and spiritual association with Christ, His life is lived out in us:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' John 15:5.

Is this the test? Then is not here given a reason why so little is accomplished by so many laborers? They have not a living connection with Christ. The dry branch is to be united to the living vine, grafted into it. Fiber by fiber, vein by vein, the graft grows into the vine stock, until the life of the vine becomes the life of the branch, and the branch buds and blossoms, and matures its clusters of rich fruit. Jesus says to all, whatever their riches, their learning, their talents, their position, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' There is the soul dead in trespasses and sins, and how is that soul to be made a partaker of the divine nature?

By coming to Christ and connecting with Him, as the dry, sapless branch connects with the vine, and thereby lives, the sinner may unite his ignorance to Christ’s wisdom, his weakness to Christ’s strength, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might; and in this union there is confidence, love, and dependence. When this union is formed, the principle of the law of association takes effect, the will is surrendered to Christ’s will, and the sinner has the mind of Christ. The humanity in Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched Divinity. Thus, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. He then abides in Christ, living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. New and heavenly principles are received through mental, moral, and spiritual association with Christ." Ibid., December 21, 1891.

Correct character development involves a joint work:

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Philippians 2:12-13. The work of salvation is a work of co-partnership, a joint operation. No man can work out his own salvation without the aid of the Holy Spirit. The co-operation of divine and human forces is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make the most strenuous efforts to overcome the tempter, to subdue natural passions; but he is wholly dependent upon God for success in the work of overcoming the propensities that are not in harmony with correct principles. Success depends wholly upon willing obedience to the will and way of God. Character develops in accordance with conformity to the divine plan. But man must work in Christ’s lines. He must be a laborer together with God. He must submit to God’s training, that he may be complete in Christ." Review and Herald, May 28, 1908.

The battle for character perfection is a daily battle and a march:

"Christ has given us no assurance that to attain to perfection of character is an easy matter. It is a conflict, a battle and a march, day by day. It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. In order to share with Christ in His glory we must share in His suffering." Ibid., May 5, 1910.

The ax and the hammer in the workshop of God removes the carnal propensities from the character:

"The mighty cleaver of truth has taken you out of the quarry of the world. You were rough stones with jagged edges, bruising and marring whoever you came in contact with; there is a work to be done to smooth off the rough edges. If you appreciated the value of the work that is to be done in the workshop of God, you would welcome the blows of the ax and the hammer. Your self-esteem will be hurt, your high opinion of yourself will be cut away by the ax and the hammer, and the roughness of your character will be smoothed off; and when self and carnal propensities are worked away, then the stone will assume proper proportions for the heavenly building, and then the polishing, refining, subduing, burning processes will begin, and you will be molded after the model of Christ’s character. His own image is to be reflected in the polished character of His human agent, and the stone is to be fitted for the heavenly building. Angels of God look upon the human agent that thus reflects the brightness and glory of the character of Christ, and proclaim in the heavenly courts: ‘We are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.’ 1 Corinthians 3:9. Here are precious stones growing up into a holy temple in the Lord.’" The Youth’s Instructor, January 3, 1895.

Sin is expelled from the soul by the higher powers of the new heart with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit:

“The expulsion of sin must be the act of the soul itself, in calling into exercise its noblest powers. The only freedom a finite will can enjoy, consists in coming into harmony with the will of God, complying with the conditions that make man a partaker of the divine nature." Our High Calling, 138.

"The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but
A perfect character can be obtained. God never issues a command without furnishing the grace sufficient for its fulfillment. Ample provision has been made that man shall be a partaker of the divine nature.

In the perfection of character there should be constant progress:
"God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest The world has ever known is Jesus Christ. And what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him to reach? 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matthew 5:48. As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character." In Heavenly Places, 141.

Character perfection, holiness, and sanctification are progressive. They involve full surrender to all known light in every aspect of our life. We are not perfect, holy, or sanctified at our level of Christian growth while neglecting light in any other area of our life. We cannot be "working" on one sin in our life to the neglect of other known-to-us sins, and yet be considered by God as perfect, holy, sanctified, or in a saving relationship with Christ. From our perspective, our surrender and obedience cannot be progressive, but they must be full and complete moment by moment for us to remain in a justified and a saved condition. To be "perfect" and "saved" we must, by God's grace, be obeying daily all truth known to us, and even seeking to know more fully God's will. That which makes the Christian walk of character perfection progressive is not a full surrender to God's will, but the same daily, full surrender to a progressive knowledge of His will. Whenever we are neglecting or rejecting full surrender we are in rebellion, which is an imperfect, unholy, unsanctified and an unsaved condition.

In the Christian's warfare, Christ and the Holy Spirit continue to raise the standard for character perfection, holiness, sanctification and the saved condition by progressively revealing to us new truths, increased light and new areas of character imperfections. We remain in character perfection, in holiness, in sanctification and in a saved relationship with Christ as we, by His grace, remain (abide) in full surrender (submission) to the progressive revelation of His will and our defects.

God's command that we be perfect is accompanied by enabling grace:
"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Man is to be perfect in his sphere, even as God is perfect in His sphere. How can such a lofty standard be reached? The required perfection is based on the perfection of Christ, 'whosoever is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' 1 Corinthians 1:30. He gave the command requiring perfection, He who was by birth a human being, though allied to Divinity. He has passed over the road we are to tread, and He says, "Without me ye can do nothing." But with Him we can do everything. Thus a perfect character can be obtained. God never issues a command without furnishing the grace sufficient for its fulfillment. Ample provision has been made that man shall be a partaker of the divine nature." The Signs of the Times, July 26, 1889.

If we abide in full surrender to Christ, we are changed from 'glory to glory' in His perfect character:
"The love and honor and perfection revealed in the Gospel are a revelation to man of the character of God. The justice and goodness and benevolence that were seen in the character of Christ are to be repeated in the lives of those who accept the privileges of the Gospel. By a study of the Word, we are to see Him as He is, and, charmed with the view of His divine perfection, we are to grow into the same image. We need to understand that the Gospel fully reveals the glory of the Lord. It is the mirror that reveals the character of God to the converted soul. The likeness of God is revealed in the perfect character of His Son, that we may understand what it means to be made in the likeness of the image of God, and what we may become if by constantly beholding we allow ourselves to be changed from 'glory to glory.' 2 Corinthians 3:18." Ibid., February 24, 1909.

It is my prayer that each of us will have this transforming experience.
An Appeal
To the Friends of Truth
by James and Ellen White

Many of you are well aware that ours is a peculiar work, and that our labors are hard and sometimes very unpleasant. In our travels we find many persons, and sometimes, as in Maine, the majority of Sabbathkeepers, poorly prepared to receive our testimony, simply because they have not read such works as Spiritual Gifts, Testimony to the Church, How to Live, Appeal to Mothers, and Appeal to Youth. Could all such on embracing the Sabbath be interested to read these works, their minds would be prepared to receive our testimony and be benefited by our labors. In Maine not more than one-fourth of the families of Sabbathkeepers have a full set of the above-named books, hence our labors in that state were protracted, unpleasant and wearing.

The work to be done, in which we appeal for help at this time, is to induce all Sabbathkeepers to read these works, and inform themselves as to the things taught in them, and thus be prepared to judge as to the nature of our work. We do not now appeal to those who see no necessity of our peculiar work, therefore have no interest in it. These are the very persons who need help, and for their good we ask you, who are interested in our labors, to help us in our efforts to help this class. And in no way can you assist us so much as in circulating these books.

There is now at our office of publication in Battle Creek, and in the hands of agents, a good supply of this kind of reading, which should be put into the hands of those who have not read these works. With the united efforts of friends, and the blessing of God, this good work could be accomplished in a short time.

It is our opinion that these books should immediately be placed in the hands of all persons who have not read them, not only of those who observe the Sabbath, but those also who attend our meetings with a degree of interest to learn the truth, and we offer the following reasons:

1. The present is a special time of reclaiming the backslidden in heart and life, the erring and the rebellious; and the prejudices of such against the Testimonies, and against our work, form the strongest barrier between these persons and the living body of believers. Most of these persons really know nothing of what is taught in these works, and nothing can remove their prejudices and prepare them to receive our public labors so well as to read the books.

2. From the very nature of the case, considering all the circumstances, persons who do not read these books, and do not feel any special interest in the subject of spiritual gifts, are almost certain to receive prejudice against them, and against our work, indulge in things reproved by them, and finally fall under the influence of our enemies, and separate themselves from the body, and give up the cause.

3. It is much easier to fortify persons against heresy and rebellion than to reclaim them after they have thus fallen. And these persons in their downward course have an influence on others, and sometimes cause trials to the whole church, which calls for hard and anxious labor from the servants of God for weeks. Thus the precious time and strength of our ministers is called for, and much means is expended to remedy that which might have been prevented by the reading of the aforesaid works.

4. The greatest cause of our spiritual feebleness as a people, is the lack of real faith in spiritual gifts. If they all received this kind of testimony in full faith, they would put from them those things which displease God, and would everywhere stand in union and in strength. And three-fourths of the ministerial labor now expended to help the churches could then be spared to the work of raising up churches in new fields.

A general movement should be made upon this subject, in which all our people can manifest their faith and interest. And we feel sure that in a well-directed, general interest, the blessing of God would come down upon us as a people, and great vigor and strength would be given to the cause. This will require a sacrifice, one that will be accepted of the Lord.

In placing this class of reading before those who can be helped, our people can sacrifice of their means, and of their time, in searching out those destitute of these books, and in furnishing them. In this work they can show a commendable zeal and a living interest. Our ministers who labor with the churches can canvass the entire field, and assist our churches and scattered brethren in this work, in connection with their general labor.

How Shall It Be Done?

1. Let our active ministers and brethren each obtain a good supply, and when and where practicable, in a proper manner, urge the sale of them to those who are able to purchase.

2. Let them give them to those who do not feel able to pay for them, provided they are worthy persons, who give evidence of sufficient interest to read them to profit.

If any such should not read them, or should they read them and not become interested in them, they could be gathered up and put into more worthy hands.

3. These persons can keep an account of all they give, and receive credit at the office of publication for the same at wholesale prices.

4. All our people can donate means and forward to the office more or less as they have ability and a willing heart to do, to pay the wholesale prices of these works that are judiciously distributed gratuitously. Let our ministers, elders, and deacons at once bring this matter before our people. Let subscription papers be opened for men, women and children, to donate liberally from ten cents to one hundred dollars. Let none be passed by.

And we would appeal especially to those brethren among us who are in health and in the strength of manhood, who are each aiding hundreds, or perhaps thousands, to their amount of property annually. We need your liberal help in this work, and expect it. Has God blessed you with health, and has He prospered you in your fields, and almost all to which you have put your hands, then use in His cause a portion of that with which He has blessed you, and thus secure His still more abundant blessing. Go to God in prayer with this matter, and do your duty in relation to it.

Continued on 27 October 1996 Our Firm Foundation 19
Tidings of Trouble

This article continues a study of Daniel 11:40-45. If you are not familiar with the previous articles in this series, we encourage you to review them. They may be found in Our Firm Foundation, beginning with the January 1996 issue.

The editors send forth this article with the desire that it will serve to bring out the Berean response of searching the Scriptures daily with all readiness of mind to prove whether these things are so. See Acts 17:11. With our readers, we also look forward to an even clearer understanding of Bible prophecy as the scroll of world events continues to unroll.

—EDITORS

But tides out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.” Daniel 11:44. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

The word translated as trouble in verse 44 is used also in Daniel 5:6, 9:

“Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. . . Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.” In Strong’s Concordance the definition primarily conveyed is to tremble inwardly, or to be suddenly alarmed, agitated, afraid, or dismayed. The king of the north in Daniel 11:44 recognizes a message which brings forth a reaction within himself, which parallels Belshazzar’s reaction when the mysterious writing appeared upon the wall.

“Tidings” represent a message which will greatly disturb the king of the north. The key to the message which alarms and infuriates him is identified in the prophetic symbolism of east and north. These directions are associated with Christ. East symbolizes Christ’s coming, and north is the direction from which the enemies of God’s people launched their attacks, as they were used by God to deliver His retributive judgments against Israel’s apostasy. North symbolizes a judgment message.

“Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man’s hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man.” The Great Controversy, 640.

“The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; the which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, . . . Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.” Jeremiah 25:1-2, 9.

“He who presides over His church and the destinies of nations is carrying forward the last work to be accomplished

Jeff Pippenger
Not only do east and north represent a message of judgment and the return of Christ, but they identify Christ Himself.
and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Revelation 7:2. Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done;" (Revelation 21:6) and waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.

"A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument eighteen hundred years ago was brought against Christ by the 'rulers of the people.' See Acts 4:8. 'It is expedient for us,' said the wily Caiphas, 'that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.

"The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace,... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:3-7." The Great Controversy, 613-616.

The loud-cry message begins to be proclaimed in earnest at the passage of a national Sunday law. Persecution increases from that point forward—eventually including martyrdom:

"When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth." Maranatha, 199.

"The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh-day Adventists, because they will not yield homage to the Papacy, by honoring Sunday, the institution of this anti-Christian power. It is the purpose of Satan to cause them to be blotted from the earth, in order that his supremacy of the world may not be disputed." Review and Herald, August 22, 1893.
The Most Vivid Presentation

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. . . . The time of trouble, such as never was,” (Daniel 12:1) is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.” The Great Controversy, 621–622.

When probation for the world closes there will be no more martyrs:
In verse 44 the pope and his allies go out “to destroy and utterly make away many.”

The Hebrew text indicates an infinitive of these two words, (destroy and make away), leaving the verb shall go as primarily identifying intentions rather than actual actions. The intended actions which never occur during this sequence of events are referring to the worldwide death decree. With this insight we also recognize that the phrase “utterly to make away” comes from the Hebrew word charaim. Strong’s Concordance indicates that it means “to devote to religious uses, especially destruction.” We conclude from this phrase that the king of the north has an underlying religious motivation in attempting to destroy God’s people.

The message from the east and the north, the third angel’s message, comes to a close as probation for the world closes, and the enemies of God’s people are totally brought under the control of the spirit of Satan:

“I was pointed down to the time when the third angel’s message was closing. The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.” Early Writings, 279.

We shall see in the final article of this series that Daniel 11:45 describes where the king of the north, God’s church, and the inhabitants of the earth stand in relation to each other when probation closes. □

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The Altering of God's Purpose

But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." Numbers 14:32-34. "Altering of my purpose."—Margin. "Ye shall know My alienation."—R.V. "The revoking of My promise."—Margin, R.V.

"Ever since they left Egypt, Satan had been steadily at work to throw hindrances and temptations in their way, that they might not inherit Canaan. And by their own unbelief they had repeatedly opened the door for him to resist the purpose of God." Patriarchs and Prophets, 423. "God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan." Ibid., 392. Through the ten unfaithful spies Satan succeeded in turning Israel back into the wilderness.

God Dishonored

"Moses faithfully set before them their errors and the transgressions of their fathers. They had often felt impatient and rebellious because of their long wandering in the wilderness; but the Lord had not been chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan; He was more grieved than they because He could not bring them into immediate possession of the Promised Land, and thus display before all nations His mighty power in the deliverance of His people. With their distrust of God, with their pride and unbelief, they had not been prepared to enter Canaan. They would in no way represent that people whose God is the Lord; for they did not bear His character of purity, goodness, and benevolence. Had their fathers yielded in faith to the direction of God, being governed by His judgments and walking in His ordinances, they would long before have been settled in Canaan, a prosperous, holy, happy people. Their delay to enter the goodly land dishonored God and distracted from His glory in the sight of surrounding nations." Ibid., 464.

God Insulted

Of the capture of Jericho we read: "Long had God designed to give the city of Jericho to His favored people and magnify His name among the nations of the earth. Forty years before, when He led Israel out of bondage, He had proposed to give them the land of Canaan. But by their wicked murmurings and jealousy they had provoked His wrath, and He had caused them to wander for weary years in the wilderness, till all those who had insulted Him with their unbelief were no more. In the capture of Jericho God declared to the Hebrews that their fathers might have possessed the city forty years before had they trusted in Him as did their children." Testimonies, vol. 4, 162.

God's Promise Revoked

"God had declared that He would give them the country; and they should have fully trusted Him to fulfill His word. . . . In their unbelief they were limiting the work of God and distracting the hand that had hitherto safely guided them. . . . They distorted the truth in order to carry their baseful purpose. . . . Thus they manifested their disrespect for God and for the leaders He had appointed to conduct them. . . . Moses prevailed with God to spare the people, but because of their arrogance and unbelief the Lord could not go with them to work in a miraculous manner in their behalf. Therefore in His divine mercy He bade them adopt the safest course and turn back into the wilderness toward the Red Sea. He also decreed that, as a punishment for their rebellion, all the adults who left Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, should be forever excluded from Canaan. They had utterly failed to keep their promise of obedience to God, and this released Him from the covenant that they had so repeatedly violated." Ibid., 149-153. "God had purposed better things for them." Patriarchs and Prophets, 428.

Modern Application

"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 10:11. “The history of the report of the twelve spies has an application to us as a people. The scenes of cowardly complaining and drawing back from action when there are risks to be encountered are re-enacted among us today. The same unwillingness is manifested to heed faithful reports and true counsel as in the days of Caleb and Joshua... Satan is wide awake and working warily in these last days, and God calls for men of spiritual nerve and stamina to resist his artifices. The church needs faithful Caleb and Joshua, who are ready to accept eternal life on God’s simple condition of obedience.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 154-156.

History Repeated

“The history of ancient Israel is written for our benefit. Many who, like ancient Israel, profess to keep God’s commandments have hearts of unbelief while outwardly observing the statutes of God. Although favored with great light and precious privileges, they will nevertheless lose the heavenly Canaan, even as the rebellious Israelites failed to enter the earthly Canaan that God had promised them as the reward of their obedience. As a people we lack faith. In these days few would follow the directions given through God’s chosen servant as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy’s camp. God will do marvelous things for those who trust in Him. It is because His professed people trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf, that they have no more strength. God works mightily for a faithful people who obey His Word without questioning or doubt.” Ibid., 162-164.

Kadesh-Barnea Repeated

Speaking of the Kadesh-Barnea experience of ancient Israel, Sister White said: “The lesson of this record is for us. The Lord had prepared the way before His people. They were very near the Promised Land. A little while and they would have entered Canaan. They themselves delayed the entering. In the first place, it was they who requested that spies should be sent up to search the land. The request that the spies be sent into Canaan showed a lack of faith; for God had told the people plainly that they were to take possession of the land. Why then did they need to send spies to search it? Had they put their trust in God, they could have gone straight in. God would have gone before them... Brothers and sisters, from the light given me, I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan.” General Conference Bulletin, March 30, 1903.

The history of the report of the twelve spies has an application to us as a people. The same unwillingness is manifested to heed faithful reports and true counsel as in the days of Caleb and Joshua.

Work of Satan

“Satan’s snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 160. “As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 457. Many times did the servant of the Lord declare that the spirit of opposition to the message of 1888 was inspired by Satan. See Testimonies to Ministers, 77-81. Because the Advent movement was at the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan worked desperately to defeat the purpose of God.

At Minneapolis

Through the efforts of Satan, the glorious message that began in 1888 at the Minneapolis General Conference was made of none effect. It was rejected and despised by many, and while others acknowledged it to be true, they failed to take it to heart and enter into the experience of righteousness by faith. This is paramount to a rejection. “Has not the Lord Jesus sent message after message of rebuke, of warning, of entreaty to these self-satisfied ones? Have not His counsal been despised and rejected? Have not His delegated messengers been treated with scorn, and their words been received as idle tales? Christ sees that which man does not see. He sees the sins of Christ. We thank God that there are souls who realize that they are in need of something which they do not possess—gold of faith and love, white raiment of Christ’s righteousness, eye-salve of spiritual discernment. Now is the day of gracious opportunity and privilege. Let not one be a traitor to holy, sacred trusts, as were the Jews. Resist not grace, abuse not privileges, smother not in your human pride the convictions of the Spirit of God. Despise not warnings, set not down in hardness of heart, in confirmed impertinence, as did Pharaoh, the rebellious king of Egypt. Let every one listen to the voice of the True Shepherd, and not only hear but obey, and it will be well with your soul.” Review and Herald, July 23, 1889.

Ridiculed and Rejected

“The prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis are not dead by any means; the seeds sown there in some hearts are ready to spring into life and bear a like harvest. The tops have been cut down, but the roots have never been eradicated, and they still bear their unholy fruit to poison the judgment, pervert the perceptions, and blind the understanding of those with whom you connect, in regard to the message and the messengers. When, by thorough confession, you destroy the root of bitterness, you will see light in God’s light. Without this thorough work you will never clear your souls. There has been a departure from God among us, and the zealous work of repentance and return to our first love essential to restoration to God and regeneration of heart, has not yet been done... The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that
The souls who love God, who believe in Christ, and who eagerly grasp every ray of light, will see light, and rejoice in the truth. They will communicate the light. They will grow in holiness.

things. Some have failed to distinguish between pure gold and mere glitter, between the substance and the shadow. . . . We should be the last people on the earth to indulge in the slightest degree the spirit of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world. This is the most terrible feature of un-Christliness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting. Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it." Special Testimony, "Danger of Adopting a Worldly Policy in the Work of God." Quoted in General Conference Bulletin, February 7–8, 1893.

False Ideas and Standards

"The false ideas that were largely developed at Minneapolis have not been entirely uprooted from some minds. Those who have not made thorough work of repentance under the light God has been pleased to give to His people since that time, will not see things clearly, and will be ready to call the messages God sends, a delusion." Ibid.

"There are those who have prided themselves on their great caution in receiving 'new light,' as they term it; but they are blinded by the enemy, and cannot discern the works and ways of God. Light, precious light, comes from Heaven, and they array themselves against it. What next? These Spirit and power of God came into our meeting, testifying that God was ready to work for this people if they would come into working order. The brethren ascended to the light God had given, but there were those connected with our institutions, especially with the Review and Herald Office and the Conference, who brought in elements of unbelief, so that the light that was given was not acted upon. It was assented to, but no special change was made to bring about such a condition of things that the power of God could be revealed among His people. . . . Year after year the same acknowledgment was made, but the principles which exalt a people were not woven into the work. . . . We are living in the last time. We are standing as it were on the very borders of the final conflict." General Conference Bulletin, April 3, 1901. To assent to the truthfulness of a message and not act upon it is equivalent to a rejection. A message that is not accepted is rejected even though it may be acknowledged as the truth.

Rejected Light

In the chapter entitled "Rejecting the Light," in Testimonies to Ministers, 89-90, is the following: "God says to His servants, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.'

Only Assented To

"I feel a special interest in the movements and decisions that shall be made at this Conference regarding the things that should have been done years ago, and especially ten years ago, when we were assembled in Conference, and the very ones will accept messages that God has not sent, and thus will become even dangerous to the cause of God because they set up false standards." The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, vol. 2, 722.

Persecution

"To accuse and criticize those whom God is using, is to accuse and criticize the Lord, who has sent them. All need to cultivate their religious faculties that they may have a right discernment of religious teachings."

Isaiah 58:1. But when the plain, straight testimony comes from lips under the moving of the Spirit of God, there are many who treat it with disdain. . . . I inquire of those in responsible positions in Battle Creek, What are you doing? You have turned your back, and not your face, to the Lord. . . . What is the message to be given at this time? It is the third angel's message. But that light which is to fill the whole earth with its glory has been despised by some who claim to believe the present truth. Be careful how you treat it. Take off the shoes from off your feet; for you are on holy ground. Beware how you indulge the attributes of Satan, and pour contempt upon the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. I know not but some have even now gone too far to return and to repent. I state truth. The souls who love God, who believe in Christ, and who eagerly grasp every ray of light, will see light, and rejoice in the truth. They will communicate the light. They will grow in holiness. Those who receive the Holy Spirit will feel the chilling atmosphere that surrounds the souls of others by whom these great and solemn realities are unappreciated and spoken against."

Holy Spirit Departing

"The Spirit of God is departing from many among His people. Many have entered into dark, secret paths, and some will never return. They will continue to stumble to their ruin. They have tempted God, they have rejected light. All the evidence that will ever be given them they have received, and have not heeded. They have chosen darkness rather than light, and have defiled their souls. . . . The only remedy is belief in the truth, acceptance of the light. Yet many have listened to the truth spoken in demonstration of the Spirit, and they have not only refused to accept the message, but they have hasted the light. These men are parties to the ruin of souls. They have interposed themselves between the heaven-sent light and the people. They have trampled upon the Word of God and are doing despite to His Holy Spirit." Ibid., 90–91. Then follows a description of the message of justification by faith as presented at the Minneapolis Conference in 1888.

Intercepting Light

The charge that the men who rejected the message of righteousness by faith were intercepting the light and keeping it from God's people, was also made in a letter written by Sister White to the Miller Broth-
An Appeal  
To the Friends of Truth  
Continued from 19

Blank subscription papers will immediately be forwarded to many of you, which you are requested to circulate and obtain pledges to be paid before the General Conference in May, 1868. Collect, as far as possible, and as fast as you can, forward to the office.

In past times we have had the pleasure of leading off in such enterprises. We can hardly be denied the privilege at this time, especially as our friends during our last twenty-weeks' tour, West and East, have been so liberal with us. God has opened their hearts and hands, and they will allow us to dedicate especially to Him a portion of their liberalities to us for the above-named object.

In our future labors we design to take with us a full supply of this kind of reading matter, and place in every family interested in our faith and hope, full sets of Spiritual Gifts and How to Live, and in the hands of every Sabbath-school scholar and youth, Appeal to Mothers, Appeal to Youth, and Sabbath Readings, either bound, pamphlet, or tract form.

Dear brethren, we shall still appeal to you to do your duty in this matter, both through the Review, in the congregations of the saints, and by your firesides. You will hear us as we speak for the Lord and His cause. Be not fearful of being too liberal. Should more be received than needed in this branch of the work, it can be used for the circulation of tracts.

Servants of the church.

James White
Ellen G. White

Review and Herald, January 14, 1868

A Present Day Appeal

Dear Reader,

This appeal by our prophetess and her husband some 128 years ago speaks clearly of the burden that has come upon us here at Hope International. Though some may feel that greater unity and harmony would result from placing a moratorium on the writings of Ellen G. White, we are convinced that the opposite is true. Real unity can be based only on truth. The primary reason for the various versions of the gospel being

preached among us, for the difficulties in our health and educational institutions, for the worldliness and lukewarmness of Laodicea, and for the rise of many self-supporting ministries and publications, is because of our lip-service without heartsurrender to the counsels and guidance of the Holy Spirit as found in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. "The very last deception of Satan . . . to make of none effect the

out knowing that it was indeed the antitype of the Kadesh-Barnea experience of ancient Israel that delayed their entrance into the Canaan land for many years and turned them back to wander in the wilderness. Here is the real cause of the tarrying time.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Hope International

October 1996, Our Firm Foundation
Please mark contributions
"Spirit of Prophecy Assistance."
A LIVING church will be a working church. Practical Christianity will develop earnest workers for the advancement of the cause of truth. There is a great lack of this practical religion among us as a people. Worldliness and pride, love of dress and display, are steadily increasing among those who profess to be keeping God's commandments, and to be waiting for their Lord.

The great sin of ancient Israel was in turning from God to idols. This is also the great sin of modern Israel. The apostle Paul said to the Gentile churches that he had raised up, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. He could truly say to many of them, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." 1 Corinthians 4:5. When he saw them becoming indifferent, the ardor of their faith chilled by backslidings, he exclaimed, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2-3. He entreats them to be followers of God as dear children, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Again, he exhorts them to walk in Christ Jesus, even as they had received Him, that they might be rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith. He reminds them, "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12. To the Thessalonians he writes, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us [the ministers of Christ] how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

We long to see the true Christian character manifested in the church; we long to see its members free from a light, irreverent spirit; and we earnestly desire that they may realize their high calling in Christ Jesus. Some who profess Christ are exerting themselves to the utmost to so live and act that their religious faith may commend itself to people of moral worth, that they may be induced to accept the truth. But there are many who feel no responsibility, even to keep their own souls in the love of God, and who, instead of blessing others by their influence, are a burden to those who would work and watch and pray. These careless, indifferent ones are a dead weight upon our churches everywhere. Their principal study is not how they can let their light so shine that others will be drawn to God and the truth, but how they will manage, by affectation and display, to attract attention to themselves. Those who are seeking in humbleness of mind to exalt the truth of Christ by their exemplary course, are represented in the Word of God as fine gold; while the class whose chief thought and study is to exhibit themselves, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The latter class are far more numerous in our churches than the former. These idle, frivolous persons will never be anything better than driftwood unless there is a decided change in their life and character. They are Christians only in profession; their life, their deportment, is a constant testimony to the world that they know nothing of experimental godliness, of a self-denying life of cross-bearing for Christ's sake. They are ever studying their convenience, ever planning for their own comfort, their amusement or gratification. They are as salt without the savor. In the day when the Judge of all the earth shall balance the accounts of men, this class will be pronounced wanting.
What the church needs is to be cleansed of those who defile it. The spirit of reformation must be kindled among us, and this class must be converted or be separated from the church. We entreat those who have a connection with God to pray earnestly and in faith, and not to stop here, but to work as well as pray, for the purification of the church. The present time calls for men and women who have a moral fixedness of purpose, men and women who will not be molded or subdued by any unsanctified influences. Such persons will make a success in the work of perfecting Christian character through the grace of Christ so freely given. For those who are ready to be discouraged at every unfavorable circumstance, the great enemy of souls will so shape circumstances as to give them abundant reason to be always discouraged.

Oh that I could speak in language so plain and convincing as to move souls from their position of careless ease and worldly conformity! A genuine experience alone will qualify us to join the throng who come up out of great tribulation, having washed our robes of character, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. I am alarmed because of the indifference and inactivity of those who profess the truth. Satan is uniting in his efforts; he is on the alert continually, to delude and ensnare. How are the watchmen on the walls of Zion doing their work? Are they watching for souls as they that must give account? Are they awake? Are they in earnest? and do they show that they are in full faith of the doctrines they hold?

No man can succeed in the service of God unless his whole soul is in the work, and he counts all things but lose for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Whoever makes any reserve, whoever refuses to give all that he has, cannot be the disciple of Christ; much less can he be His co-laborer. The consecration must be complete. Father, mother, wife and children, houses and lands, everything which the servant of Christ possesses, must be held subject to God’s call—bound upon the sacred altar. He must be earnest, he must be willing to deny self and lift the cross, to do and suffer cheerfully and with fortitude whatever may be required of him to push forward the great work of reform. The glory of God and the salvation of souls will be his grand aim and purpose of life. He will not go here and there to please himself; but, when duty calls, he will be found, if need be, in the thickest of the fight, and will suffer without reluctance, without repining, irrespective of worldly interest or personal consequences. All this we pledge ourselves to do when we accept the name of Christian, and more especially when we consent to take upon ourselves the work of Christ’s ambassadors.

I think of the many cities and towns, even in our own country, that have never heard a discourse upon present truth, and have no knowledge of our faith, or of us as a people. The solemn warnings for this time have never fallen upon their ears or convicted their consciences. My burdened heart goes up to God in the wakeful hours of the night that He would work by whom He will, to warn the world of their coming doom. Who are living out their faith? Who, with singleness of purpose, are lifting up to the view of the imperient, Jesus Christ and His matchless love? Where is the living zeal that will make the impression upon minds paralyzed with sin, that we believe what we profess, that the end of all things is at hand, and that what is done in the work of preparation must be done quickly?

The people of God should awaken to a keen perception of the grievous character of transgression. Sin is disguised, and many are deceived in regard to its nature. Satan has planned it thus, that the understanding may be clouded, the spiritual vision obscured, the perceptive faculties of the soul blunted. But God would not have one of us to be ensnared, therefore the nature of sin is faithfully portrayed in the inspired pages—its offensive character before God, its corruption, its shame, and its results. Everything has been done that God could do to save man from the power of sin, which defaces the divine image, frustrates God’s purpose in man’s existence, degrades his God-given powers, narrows his capacity, leads to unholy imaginations, and gives loose rein to unsanctified passions. Sin! how hateful in the sight of God! Holy angels look upon it with abhorrence.

What is sin? The transgression of God’s law. God wants all connected with Him to loathe sin, to hate anything that approaches to it. Transgression is a serpent with a deadly sting. Grant it no indulgence, for it will imperil the soul. Rather, choose privation, suffering, hunger, reproach, imprisonment, and death, than the indulgence of sin.

Will the professed followers of Christ cleanse the soul-temple of its defilement?

They are Christians only in profession; their life, their deportment, is a constant testimony to the world that they know nothing of experimental godliness, of a self-denying life of cross-bearing for Christ’s sake.

Will those who profess to be His representatives sacrifice anything and everything rather than offend God? A deep-settled conviction is needed in every soul to strengthen the abhorrence of sin. Meditation should be encouraged. We should view ourselves as ever in the presence of God, Whose eye searches the soul and reads the most secret thoughts. Since we know this to be true, why is there such a careless disregard of God’s claims? Why such thoughtlessness in regard to the solemn realities of life?

I call upon you, my dear brethren and sisters, to cultivate spirituality, to put away your idols, and in the fear of God, to work for time and for eternity. Again and again have our sisters been warned against indulging pride of dress, which is idolatry; yet they pass on, making no change, and their example is leading others away from Christ, instead of leading to Him. Why is it so hard to arouse the conscience upon this subject, when the inspired apostle has spoken so explicitly upon this point? Will my sisters dress plainly for Christ’s sake? for the love of souls for whom He died? Will they remember that they must meet their life record at the bar of God, and must answer for the money and the time squandered in needless adornment?

Those who seek by earnest study of God’s Word and fervent prayer the guidance of His Spirit, will be led by Him. The pillar of cloud will guide them by day, the pillar of fire by night; and with an abiding sense of God’s presence it will not be possible to disregard His holy law. The reason why there is so much transgression is
that little time is devoted to meditation and prayer. Dress and display and sinful gratification put God out of the thoughts, and sin does not appear exceeding sinful. Satan's angels are at hand to gloss it over with a semblance of righteousness. If the light from the burning glory of the throne of God should shine forth upon the sinful practices of professors of religion, how terrible would sin appear, how perilous would seem its indulgence! Oh, how soon the desire for

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Hope International is happy to announce a special project for the wide distribution of the Spirit of Prophecy writings—those that were given especially for the benefit of the church. We are committed to doing all we can to help counteract Satan’s final deception for God’s remnant people.

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