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The Reward of Unbelief

See page 4
TIME is running out for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the whole human race. The mighty angel of Revelation 10:6 tells us that prophetic time would be no longer. Jesus tells us that any time after 1844, if we were willing to accept the experience of the third angel’s message, the latter rain would have quickly provided the power for the second Pentecost. The everlasting gospel would have quickly circumvented this sin-cursed planet, and Jesus would have come.

Inspiration explains our long delay:

“The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional. . . .

"Had Adventists, after the Great Disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. . . .

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in ‘because of unbelief.’ Hebrews 3:19. Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebelling, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

"For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unseclusion, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.” Selected Messages, book 1, 67-69. See also Testimonies, vol. 2, 194.

We are still here. Why? Because of our worldliness, and our Laodicean condition. What is that condition? We are in a lost condition, and we do not know it. We do not know God’s requirements for salvation. We are increased with the material goods of this world and feel no need. Listen to God’s rebuke to His remnant church:

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wast cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:14-17.

How could it be that we, the church in the final generation of the great controversy, could drift into such a horrible, spiritual state of indifference, lethargy, and worldliness? We have an abundant amount of information—the tragic history of the ancient church, and the warnings of our last-day prophet. See Testimonies, vol. 8, 115-116.

The rebuke of God is upon us because of our neglect—yes, rejection—of the warnings and rebukes in the Testimonies. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 233, 655-680.

“The rebuke of God is upon us because of our neglect of solemn responsibilities. His blessings have been withdrawn because the Testimonies He has given have not been heeded by those who professed to believe them. Oh, for a religious awakening! The angels of God are going from church to church, doing their duty; and Christ is knocking at the door of your hearts for entrance. But the means that God has devised to awaken the church to a sense of their spiritual destitution have not been regarded. The voice of the True Witness has been heard in reproof, but has not been obeyed. Men have chosen to follow their own way instead of God’s way because self was not crucified in them. . . .

“Men who neglect to heed the calls of the Spirit and Word of God, because obedience involves a cross, will lose their souls.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 719-720.

Will we now arouse from our death slumber before it is too late? “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14; see also Testimonies, vol. 5, 10, 50, 136; vol. 1, 608-609.

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3-9.

It is way past time that we Laodiceans bought from Jesus the gold tried in the fire—His faith, His love—realizing that without Jesus we are lost. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13.

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

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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.

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It is important for me to explain the roots of my understanding before launching into this topic. I believe that the Bible, and the Bible only, is our basis of faith and practice. While a strong believer in the Spirit of Prophecy, I believe Sister White’s writings have relevance, as we see them, as part of the Biblical concept of the end-time gift of prophecy as enshrined in Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. We must know the doctrines through the Word of God, for these issues have to be decided on the Bible. In our book, The Evangelical Dilemma, Russell and I have used only the Bible to sustain the transcendent truths of the everlasting gospel. Those whom we seek to lead to Christ from the world must know that ours is a Bible-based gospel.

My understanding of truth has been shaped this way. I believe it was a great privilege for Russell and me to be born into a very dedicated, undivided Seventh-day Adventist home. During our formative years, we had the privilege of attending evangelistic crusades year in and year out. These were not the quick four or five-week crusades of today; they were the six-month crusades in which the minister would preach once or twice a week in the crusade, and spend the rest of the week in visitation. At that time, the Australasian-InterUnion Conferences (as the South Pacific Division was then called) appointed pastors to areas, regions or districts (not to be confused with how we use the word “districts” today). They did not pastor the churches in the area, and had nothing to do with board meetings, business meetings, nominating committees, and so on. The South Pacific Division followed the pattern in which the elders and deacons were responsible for the care of the local churches. It was not until I was almost fifteen years of age that the method of appointing church pastors changed. Thus, though the area pastor would speak once a month in our church, he did not administer to the church. That allowed tremendous strength to the laity, and the effective ministry of the church was far stronger than is currently noted.

The Spirit of Prophecy gives much counsel urging the pastors to leave the churches, and go out into the fields beyond. The pastors were not to hover over the churches. When I was growing up, the pastors ran crusades each year. I lived in the city of Newcastle, and it was called the Newcastle District. The pastor would run crusades in different suburbs in the city. If he was out in the country, it would be in a different country town in the district until he was transferred somewhere else.

In those crusades we learned the great messages of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I have had no need to seriously revise what was learned concerning the truth of the second coming of Jesus and all the attendant end-time events leading up to it—the final establishment of the new earth, the state of the dead, the Sabbath, the perpetuity of the law of God, the great prophetic utterances of Daniel and John, and so on.

However, it was later, thanks to the efforts of Elders Wieland and Short, that I learned the absolute necessity of the centrality of Jesus Christ to these doctrines. That understanding did not change the truths that we learned, but rather brought to me the realization that no doctrine is of saving value unless it is centered upon Christ and His righteousness. That awareness led to a study of the messages of Waggoner and Jones, and to the Spirit of Prophecy’s counsel concerning righteousness by faith.

It has been a tremendous burden to me, and I do not know if I can express in words—the great anguish and sorrow of heart that I have experienced, and continue to experience, in realizing that the men who were so instrumental in bringing this message to my attention have now gone way beyond what was written either by Jones and Waggoner or by Sister White in their understanding of this message. Furthermore, as I study the message, I realize that they have gone way beyond what the Bible teaches also.

Now you are probably aware that I have an intense interest in history. I suppose if it
had not been for circumstances beyond my direct control I would have attempted a doctorate in history, but in the end I had to be satisfied with a major in history at the baccalaureate level. However, that has not limited my continued quest for an understanding of the lessons to be learned from history. I believe that too few Bible students delve into history. I am concerned that many perils have passed, and that continue to face our church, would have been avoided if our people, especially leaders and pastors, understood the historical developments in the religious world. Often many have accepted as beautiful, new light that which is nothing more than ancient, deadly heresy.

While it is wrong to say there are only two streams in Christianity today, for error takes many forms, yet in what we are dealing with here, there are only two distinct streams. There is the authentic stream of the everlasting gospel, as defined in Revelation 14:7, and there is the stream which is to be found enshrined today in the evangelical gospel. The two are absolutely, watertight, logical, and coherent concepts, but, as Sister White says, men start with a wrong premise and bring everything to bear upon it, which is exactly what Evangelical Protestantism has done.

As I study back to the roots of Evangelical Protestantism, they go back to Babylonian paganism and come down through Egyptian, Persian, Greek, and Roman paganism, and into Catholicism. No one did more to systematize these pagan concepts than Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. Luther, as an Augustinian monk, adopted them, and taught them to Calvin. Then Calvin spread them far and wide through his disciples, including Knox and Beza, and then they were taken to the New World by the Presbyterians, the Puritans, and so on. As the distinction between Reform and Evangelical Protestantism blurred, it was hard to tell the difference between either, and these concepts have now plunged into the Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, and even into other more conservative groups. Incredibly, they are now making great inroads into the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

Let me explain the contrast. Augustine started with a number of false premises coming from his Manichaean upbringing. They included that God was in total control, and that it was impossible to ever have victory over sin. On this diabolical, false premise the whole of his theology developed. However, this was true of not only Augustine himself but also of all the Augustinian theologians, as they sought to bring total harmony between these concepts. Man always seeks for logical coherence, and once you have started with the wrong premise, you have to bring in successively more error to sustain the presuppositions. Now let us look at the wholly different gospels of the everlasting gospel of Seventh-day Adventism and the evangelical gospel of Evangelical Protestantism.

Of course, there are other issues, but as we look carefully, we will see that both the everlasting gospel and Evangelical Protestantism individually have consistent and logical concepts that cohere together. Where we are in Seventh-day Adventism today is where the early Christian church was. For example, once having accepted the concept of predestination, the early church was forced to accept the once saved, always saved delusion. Once having accepted original sin, this forced the concept that it was not possible to gain victory over sin. Then

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Reformers and Apostasy

W HY are reformers sent by God to the church? What qualifies one to be a true reformer?

Apostasy and infidelity come into existence when leaders, ministers and members begin to ignore God’s orders and His commandments. They start with a knowledge of the truth, but then they drift more toward accepting human theories and reasoning, which in time becomes presumption and disobedience. Then their minds become opposed to the plain teachings of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Human wisdom becomes their god. Darkness becomes light, and light darkness. Observe what Inspiration says:

"Those who heed the warning of Solomon’s apostasy will shun the first approach of those sins that overcame him. Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy. God has bestowed upon man great light and many blessings; but unless this light and these blessings are accepted, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness. Their entrusted capabilities become a snare.” Prophets and Kings, 83.

“The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and His law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible. The entreaties and promises of God’s Word, its threatenings against disobedience and idolatry—these seem powerless to melt their hearts. A faith such as actuated Paul, Peter, and John they regard as old-fashioned, mystical, and unworthy of the intelligence of modern thinkers.” Prophets and Kings, 178.

In the history of the church through the ages of the great controversy, we find apostasy after apostasy. Tragically, there are only a few bright spots in all of that history.

All true reformers began their work because the Spirit of God called them to rebuke sin. Their calling was founded in the Holy Word of God and the righteousness of the law. They knew that there was no salvation in the deeds of lawkeeping, but they found in the Word that righteousness can only be obtained by the faith of Jesus. His faith gave them power to overcome sin in their lives.

This faith, Jesus’ faith, working in them day by day, produced a willingness to be made willing to be obedient to all known truth, and it separated them from the world and from its entity toward God. This faith gave them a daily relationship with Christ in the battle of overcoming all sin. They then became real sons and daughters of the Most High. They became fearless as they presented truth and opposed error and apostasy in the church.

They became reformers—not by their own choice, but by God’s calling. They were not freed from the weaknesses of the flesh. Their passions and
emotions were always there, ready to take control, but by their persistent determination to follow God’s plans and orders—to be obedient to all known truth without a compromise—their characters could then reflect the image of God. He could then use them to demonstrate His love, His mercy, and His justice before a compromising church and a lost world. They were mortal beings and sometimes failed. History records their failures. However, let us not forget that we must reflect the character of Jesus in order to receive the seal of the living God. “The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 970.

“Every soul in our world is the Lord’s property, by creation and by redemption. Each individual soul is on trial for his life. Has he given to God that which belongs to Him? Has he surrendered to God all that is His as His purchased possession? All who cherish the Lord as their portion in this life will be under His control, and will receive the sign, the mark of God, which shows them to be God’s special possession. Christ’s righteousness will go before them, and the glory of the Lord will be their reward. The Lord protects every human being who bears His sign. . . .

“The Lord would teach man the lesson that, though united in church capacity, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him.” Ibid., 969.

The church has almost always been opposed to the work of reformers. Few of them died a natural death. The disciples all met violent deaths, except John. Many of them died at the hands of the church, including Jesus. The beloved Jesus’ rebuke to the leaders of the church in His day was of a most startling nature. See Matthew 23.

Ellen White states in Selected Messages, book 1, 121, that our greatest need in the church is revival and reformation. Why? Inspiration gives us the answer—because of apostasy:

“Advancement in Christian experience is characterized by increasing humility, as the result of increasing knowledge. Everyone who is united to Christ will depart from all iniquity. I tell you, in the fear of God, I have been shown that many of you will fail of everlasting life because you are building your hopes of heaven on a false foundation. God is leaving you to yourselves, ‘to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart.’ Deuteronomy 8:2. You have neglected the Scriptures. You despise and reject the Testimonies because they reprove your darling sins and disturb your self-complacency. When Christ is cherished sliding and apostasy in the church—which is comparable to the ancient church. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 72–77, 93–94, 99, 160, 217, 226, 297, 456, 535, 601.

“I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backslid-

What is God’s message to the church today? “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

in the heart, His likeness will be revealed in the life.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 49.

“My heart aches day after day and night after night for our churches. Many are progressing, but in the back track. ‘The path of the just . . . shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’ Proverbs 4:18. Their march is onward and upward. They progress from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. This is the privilege of all our churches. But, oh, how different has it been with them! They need divine illumination. They must face square about. I know what I say. Unless they shall become Christians indeed, they will go from weakness to weakness, divisions will increase, and many souls will be led to perdition.

“All I can say to you is: Take up the light which God has given you and follow it at any cost to yourselves. This is your only safety. You have a work to do to come into harmony, and may the Lord help you to do it even if self is crucified. Gather up the rays of light that have been slighted and rejected. Gather them up with meekness, with trembling, and with fear. The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 93–94.

Nineteen times in Testimonies, vol. 5, Ellen White reveals to us our backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

“The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the Testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The Testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His Word and from the Testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 217.

What is God’s message to the church today? “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1.

“In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God’s faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth

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The holiday season is fast approaching with its interchange of gifts, and old and young are intently studying what they can bestow upon their friends as a token of affectionate remembrance. It is pleasant to receive a gift, however small, from those we love. It is an assurance that we are not forgotten, and seems to bind us to them a little closer.

Brethren and sisters, while you are devising gifts for one another, I would remind you of our heavenly Friend, lest you should be unmindful of His claims. Will He not be pleased if we show that we have not forgotten Him? Jesus, the Prince of Life, gave all to bring salvation within our reach. Oh, matchless love! He left His royal home, His high command, and stooped to share our poverty and shame, that we might be exalted to share His riches and His throne. His glorious perfection called forth the admiration of the angelic host; yet He, their adored Commander, came down to a world sunken in sin, that He might give us a perfect example in His life. Step by step, He descended to the deepest humiliation, that He might reach fallen, guilty men, and lift them up to become sons of God. For us He submitted to insult and shameful abuse. For us He denied Himself at every point. He suffered even unto death, that He might give us eternal life.

It is through Christ that we receive every blessing. We may come to Him in our poverty and need, and He will listen to our petitions, and supply our every want. We are dependent upon Him every moment for grace and strength to maintain our integrity and to continue in His love. How often we need to have the Bread of Life broken to our souls! How often we need to be refreshed at the Fountain of Living Waters! Every temporal as well as every spiritual blessing, is a continual witness of His beneficence. The recurring seasons, with the rich and varied blessings which they bring, the refreshing rain and the glad sunshine, every good thing we receive, attests the continuance of our Creator’s gift to man.

Shall not all these precious tokens of His love call forth a response from us in freewill offerings for His cause? Shall not our heavenly Benefactor share in the tokens of our gratitude and love? Come, brethren and sisters, come with your children, even the babes in your arms, and bring your offerings to God according to your ability, Make melody to Him in your hearts, and let His praise be upon your lips. Let us rejoice that our Saviour liveth to make intercession for us in the presence of Jehovah. As a people we have backslidden from God; let us return unto Him, and He will return unto us, and will heal all our backslidings. Let us, upon the coming Christmas and New Year’s festivals, not only make an offering to God of our means, but give ourselves unreservedly to Him, a living sacrifice.

From this time till the opening of the new year, let the theme of our thoughts be, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” You have taxed your inventive powers to prepare something

Ellen G. White
that will surprise and gratify your friends. Let us in these last days of 1882, be as anxious, as earnest, as persevering, to render to God that which is due Him.

While our heavenly Father has crowned our lives with abundance to supply our temporal wants, His mercies have been abused because they were so full and free. Many forget that their obligations to God increase with the continuous manifestations of His love and care, and that all these call for acknowledgment from us in gifts and offerings to sustain the various branches of His work. Such have now a precious opportunity to redeem the past, and to show that God has the first place in their affections. Let not our best thoughts, our most earnest efforts, our most precious offerings, be given to earthly friends, while our Creator is neglected and forgotten. I speak to those who profess to be His dear children: What will you bring to God as a token of your love and gratitude? However small the offering, He will accept it, if it is the best you have to bring, and is given in love and sincerity of heart.

I feel sad as I think how many are so engrossed with thoughts of their friends and the gifts they are preparing for them that they will lose sight of their obligations to God. They will not seek to purify the soul temple from defilement that they may present to the Lord an offering in righteousness. During the past year, Satan has been making a most earnest effort to sow discord and dissension among the brethren. Now, as the old year is passing away and the new year coming in, is a good time for those who have cherished alienation and bitterness to make confession to one another. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. This is the Lord's direction; will we obey Him, or choose to remain in pride, and justify our course of wrong? Oh, that many may seek to have the sins of the past year blotted out, and pardon written against their names in the heavenly record!

We must forgive those who trespass against us, if we would obtain pardon and grace when we approach the mercy seat. Mercy and love must be cherished by all who would be followers of Jesus. When Peter asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus replied, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven." Matthew 18:21-22. He then enforced the duty of forgiveness, by the parable of the two debtors. One was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents, and then refused to show mercy to his fellow servant who owed him a hundred pence. The pardon granted to that hardhearted servant was revoked, and he was delivered to the tormentors. Our Lord makes the application of the parable in these impressive words: "So hearts and homes as will make angels glad.

If all the means that will at this holiday season be expended to gratify unsanctified desire, or that will be needlessly invested, were brought as an offering of gratitude to God, to be used in advancing His cause, what an amount would flow into the treasury! Who are

Will you, by your Christmas and New Year's gifts, acknowledge that all things belong to God, and that all the blessings which we receive are the result of divine beneficence? 

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ties in the cause of God are heavily burdened and seriously crippled in their work for want of means. There are still debts upon some of our houses of worship. If we would this year deny ourselves, and by our offerings clear these from debt, would it not be pleasing to our heavenly Father?

And it is not the wealthy alone that can aid in advancing the work of God. If our young men would but deny self for the truth’s sake, if they were willing to work hard and economize, they might have a capital with which to pay their expenses at college, and thus qualify themselves for greater usefulness, and they might also have a reserve fund to answer the calls for means for the different branches of our work. If our young sisters felt the claims which God has upon them, they would dispose with ornaments and needless trimming, and would earnestly seek for the inward adorning; and instead of expending all their earnings for clothing or in selfish indulgence, they would have something to spare for the cause of Christ.

In every church, however small, special efforts should be made to show our gratitude to God by bringing our offerings for His cause. Let those who desire a Christmas tree make its boughs fruitful with gifts for the needy, and offerings for the treasury of God. And let the children learn the blessedness of giving by bringing their little gifts to add to the offerings of their parents.

The claims of God should take the precedence of any and every other, and should be met at any cost or sacrifice to ourselves. However small our income, we should faithfully reserve for Him that which He claims as His. Saith the Lord, “Them that honour me I will honour.” 1 Samuel 2:30. To withhold our tithes and offerings from the treasury of the Lord, is accounted of Him as robbery. Yet are there not many, even among us, who meet all other claims before the claims of God? Some bring no offerings for His cause, and even withhold the tithe, which He has distinctly reserved for Himself. Some of these persons are yet in apparent prosperity. In His great mercy God is still sparing them that they may see and put away their sin. Others are already feeling His curse upon them.

They are brought into straitened circumstances, and feel less and less ability to give, when if they had made God’s claims first, and had with a willing heart brought their offerings to Him, they would have been blessed with more means to bestow.

“God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7), and if we with a grateful heart bring our gifts and offerings to Him, “not grudgingly, or of necessity,” His blessing will attend us as He has promised, “Prove me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.” Malachi 3:10. And though it may have cost self-denial and sacrifice on our part, the approval of our conscience and the blessing of Heaven will make this holiday season one of the happiest we have ever experienced.

While urging upon all the duty of first bringing their offerings to God, I would not wholly condemn the practice of making Christmas and New Year’s gifts to our friends. It is right to bestow upon one another tokens of love and remembrance if we do not in this forget God, our Best Friend. We should make our gifts such as will prove a real benefit to the receiver. I would recommend such books as will be an aid in understanding the Word of God, or that will increase our love for its precepts.

We should make our gifts such as will prove a real benefit to the receiver. I would recommend such books as will be an aid in understanding the Word of God, or that will increase our love for its precepts.
The mind assimilates to that which it feeds upon. The secular papers are filled with accounts of murders, robberies and other revolting crimes, and the mind of the reader dwells on the scenes of vice therein depicted. But indulgence, the reading of sensational or demoralizing literature becomes a habit, like the use of opium or other baleful drugs, and as a result, the minds of thousands are enfeebled, debased, and even crazed. Satan is doing more through the productions of the press to weaken the minds and corrupt the morals of the youth than by any other means.

Let all reading of this character be banished from your houses, let books that are useful, instructive, and elevating, be placed in your libraries and upon your tables, with the Review and Herald, our church paper, and the Signs of the Times, our missionary paper, and the effect upon both parents and children will be good. During these long winter evenings, let parents see that all their children are at home, and then let the time be devoted to the reading of the Scriptures and other interesting books that will impart knowledge and inculcate right principles. Let the best reader be selected to read aloud, while other members of the family are engaged in useful occupations. Thus these evenings at home may be made both pleasant and profitable. Pure healthful reading will be to the mind what healthful food is to the body. You will thus become stronger to resist temptation, to form right habits, and to act upon right principles.

There is in many families professing to believe the truth, a shameful neglect of searching the Scriptures. They are ignorant, when it is their privilege to be wise. All should take time for the daily study of the Word of God, with earnest prayer that they may learn the way of life and salvation. That Holy Word is a sure Guide, and will enable all who search its pages to distinguish between its sacred truths and the false doctrines so widely taught in these times of peril. I urge upon you, my brethren and sisters, the necessity of searching the Scriptures. Your eternal destiny depends upon your understanding and obeying them for yourselves. There the plan of salvation is clearly set forth, God’s claims are plainly stated, and if we are His obedient children we shall search carefully and prayerfully to learn His will that we may do it.

We need to think more of God and less of ourselves. If we would but think of Him as often as we have evidence of His care for us, we would keep Him ever in our thoughts, and would delight to talk of Him and praise Him. We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and our sorrows are bound up with them. Yet we have infinitely greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends; we receive more from Him than from any other friend, and it should be the most

heavens, the beauties of nature, the bounties of His providence, are not for us to worship; they were not given to absorb our thoughts and love so that we should have naught to give to God; they are to constantly remind us of Him, and to bind us in bonds of love and gratitude to our gracious Benefactor. Oh! I entreat you who profess to love God to be less self-caring. Center your affections upon Jesus, your Redeemer. Give up all for Him, be willing to make any and every sacrifice

I urge you, my brethren and sisters, the necessity of searching the Scriptures. Your eternal destiny depends upon your understanding and obeying them for yourselves.

And This Gospel of the Kingdom...

by Vernon Sparks

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A Chinese laundryman visited a charismatic church in which the members were speaking in tongues. One of the elders of the church recognized the Chinese man and visited his laundry business the following week. When he asked the Chinese man how he liked the church service, the man shook his head in disapproval.

The elder said, “What was wrong? I thought I heard a lady speak in tongues that sounded like Chinese.”

The Chinese man said, “She did speak in Chinese, and she was cursing God the whole time.”

This is just one of many such examples, of which I have heard, of individuals who believed that they were praising God, but who were in fact cursing Him.

How could this be? Certainly the Holy Spirit would not lead someone to curse God. Could the devil have a counterfeit of the Biblical speaking in tongues?

For those of you who have never heard of this phenomenon of people speaking in an ecstatic tongue, let me take a brief moment to explain. Today between 7% and 20% of all Christians “speak in tongues” from time to time in a language that is not their mother tongue. The example above, of the lady who spoke in Chinese, is exceptional because usually those who speak in “tongues” speak in a language that linguists say has no systematic resemblance to any human language that is spoken today. It is this most common form of “speaking in tongues” (the nonhuman, nonintelligible language) upon which we will focus our study.

This phenomenon of spontaneously speaking in a language that is generally strange to humanity is of recent origin. While there were several incidents of tongue speaking during the 1800s, the first wave of it occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It began on December 31, 1900, at Bethel College in Topeka, Kansas. When Pastor Charles Parham laid his hands upon some of the students, they began to speak in a form of speech that was not recognizable to anyone. One of those young students was Miss Agnes Ozman.

Six years later, in 1906, Ozman and several other students, who had received this experience, moved to Los Angeles and held meetings which started the “first Pentecostal”.

Since then, this tongue-speaking experience has taken in over 300 million Christians. What phenomenal growth! However, why is it happening now?

Some say it is a sign of the soon coming of Christ, and perhaps it is. Yet, that alone does not explain or prove that it is of God, or of Satan.

We do know that this form of ecstatic speech in an unknown language is not peculiar to Christianity—or even to religious people. This same phenomenon of speech is found among non-Christian religions, especially in Asia and Africa. This ecstatic speech is also found among atheists and agnostics.

Certainly it is not the Holy Spirit who is performing this phenomenon in religions that reject Jesus as the Saviour, and through others who even deny the existence of God, but it is happening.

Research has shown that all of these forms of ecstatic speech in Christian and non-Christian communities is identically the same “cross-linguistically” and “cross-culturally.”

Along with this gift to speak in an unknown tongue has come the gift to interpret these ecstatic utterances. Are these interpreters accurate?

An experiment was performed in which someone speaking in an ecstatic tongue was recorded on tape. They then replayed the tape to several different people who claimed to have the gift to interpret these utterances. However, there was no similarity in the several interpretations. They ranged in their interpretation from saying that the utterances referred to a prayer for the health of someone’s children—to praising God for a recent and successful church, fund-raising effort. It is evident from this example that the interpreters were not accurate. So where are they getting their gift to interpret?

Of course, this phenomenon raises some very serious questions. If it is of the Holy Spirit, why do people misinterpret what is said? After all, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things. See John 14:26. If this is of the Holy Spirit, then why is He manifesting the same gift through different religions that teach contradictory beliefs. After all, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. See John 16:13.

It is easy enough to see that Satan would want to join the world’s religions together through some spiritual manifestation. However, what does the Bible say concerning the speaking in tongues or in a different language?

Mark 16

First of all, Jesus foretold that His disciples would speak with “new tongues.” “And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:17-18.

The context of Jesus’ words is His commission for His disciples to evangelize the world. The speaking with “new...
tongues” was to enable the disciples to speak with people who spoke other languages. The disciples would speak in a language that was “new” to them but understood by their audience.

When Jesus trained His disciples during His three-and-one-half-year ministry, He limited their training to reach out to the Jews living in Israel and Samaria. However, after Jesus ascended into heaven, He desired to send His disciples to every nation, tongue, and people. Consequently, He gifted them to speak in “new tongues” or languages.

Acts 2

In Acts 2:1–13 we have recorded the fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction. The disciples and other fellow believers, 120 in number, gathered together for prayer and consecration in preparation to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost had come, the Holy Spirit came upon every individual, and they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Verse 4.

The speaking in an “other tongue” did not come by man’s own efforts, but it was a gift the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the followers of Christ when they were gathered together. “Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. . . . And they were all amazed and marvelled . . . because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” Verses 5, 7, 6.

Notice that the gift of the Holy Spirit to speak in a foreign and known human language was bestowed upon believers—not upon unbelievers. The purpose of the gift was to give unbelievers an opportunity to hear the gospel in their own language. Consequently, the gift itself would serve as a sign to unbelievers that the message they heard was from Heaven.

The result of Jesus’ followers receiving the gift to speak in a different language was the conversion of “three thousand” precious souls to Christ in one day. Verse 41.

There were also present those who scoffed and mocked the disciples by suggesting that the disciples were drunk. See verse 13. They heard the gospel in their own language, thereby signifying that the gift bestowed upon the disciples was a definite sign that the message had the signet of Heaven. Yet, they rejected the message and the messengers.

Acts 10

The next example of “speaking in tongues” is found in Acts chapter 10. In this passage, the apostle Peter has an opportunity to teach Gentile believers in Caesarea. The Holy Spirit “fell on all them which heard the word. . . . For they heard them speak with tongues.” Verse 44, 46.

On this occasion as well, the Holy Spirit came upon the believers—both Jew and Gentile Christians. The Holy Spirit “fell” upon them suddenly, representing that it was a special endowment from Heaven and not from man. The purpose of the gift was the communication of what God had accomplished through His Son Jesus.

Again we find this gift employed in a large metropolis where many different peoples and languages were represented. When Peter gave his report on the events of Caesarea, he said, “The Holy Ghost fell on them [in Caesarea], as on us at the beginning [in Jerusalem at Pentecost],” Acts 11:15. Of course, what happened in Jerusalem was that every man heard the gospel in his mother language.

It is important to note that Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, did not need to explain the manifestation of “speaking in tongues” in Caesarea. Why? Because he, the author, had already defined the gift in Acts chapter 2. Peter himself confirms that it was the identical manifestation of the Holy Spirit as experienced at Pentecost.

Acts 19

In Acts chapter 19 we see this gift exercised in another major city—Ephesus. Here the apostle Paul met with some believers who had no knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit. Because these disciples in Ephesus were baptized with John’s baptism, Paul instructed them about the true baptism “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Verse 5.

Paul then baptized them in the name of Jesus and laid his hands upon them, and “the Holy Ghost came upon them.” Verse 6.

This practice of the laying on of hands is often represented with the reception of the Holy Spirit, and as a sign that those involved were called to evangelize the world. Of course, the laying on of hands is not necessary for someone to receive the Holy Spirit. See Acts 2:1-4; 9:10-18; 10:46-48. Nor does everyone “speak in tongues” because he received the laying on of hands. See Acts 2:41; 8:38-39; 9:18; 16:15, 33. It was simply a practice in those days as they dedicated themselves to receive God’s Spirit, to accept Jesus as Lord, and to fulfill the gospel commission.

Greek scholars tell us that the Greek form of the verb “to speak” in this passage is in the imperfect tense, indicating that the gift was bestowed for continuous and prolonged use. The believers in Jerusalem and Caesarea also received the same permanent gift to proclaim the gospel far and near.

Commenting on these verses, Sister White wrote, “Thus they were qualified to labor as missionaries in Ephesus and its vicinity, and also to go forth to proclaim the gospel in Asia Minor.” Review and Herald, August 31, 1911.

1 Corinthians 12-14

Now the passages that have generated the greatest amount of confusion and controversy are those found in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 through 14. Some have suggested that Acts chapters 2, 10, and 19 do indeed describe speaking in a foreign language known to man, but that the gift represented in Corinthians is different. They argue that this form of ecstatic tongues is an angelic language used for personal prayer and the edification of the church.

However, when we study the terminology found in all of these passages
from Mark 16:17 to Acts chapters 2, 10, and 19, we find that the Greek word for "tongue" is the same. In fact, the verb "to speak" in tongues is the same in all of these accounts. Consequently, there is only one gift of tongues.

Because the gift of tongues had become a permanent gift for those who received it, Paul gave some rules for the exercising of the gift during church. Apparently, many of the Corinthian believers were (1) causing commotion because several were speaking in tongues at the same time, (2) there was no one present who understood what they were saying, and (3) to the unbelievers, who were watching, it seemed awkward, disorderly, and confusing. See 1 Corinthians 14:23.

When one considers that the purpose of "speaking in tongues" was to reach unbelievers, it was disastrous when many of the Corinthian believers were misappropriating the gift. The gift was to be a sign to unbelievers that God had a message of salvation for them personally. See 1 Corinthians 14:21-22.

First, Paul counsels them to speak in order, and then let only one interpret. See 1 Corinthians 14:27. The word for "interpret" means to "translate"—as from one known language to another. Consequently, one man would speak in an intelligible foreign language and then another man would translate it into the local language.

Second, if there is no one to interpret, let the one who speaks in tongues keep silent. See 1 Corinthians 14:28. The gift of tongues was given to communicate truth. If a believer speaks in German, but there are no unbelievers who understand German, then another believer who understands German should translate the message in a language that the others can understand, otherwise, the message is aimless and unintelligible to all. Paul testified that he would rather speak five words that people could understand than ten thousand words that no one could understand. See 1 Corinthians 14:18-19.

However, some have misunderstood the words of Paul when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or as tinkling cymbal." 1 Corinthians 13:1. The Greek conditional clause used in this passage indicates that Paul is speaking hypothetically. In other words, we know that man does not speak in the endowment of this special gift to speak in a foreign "and new tongue," so that the gospel could be preached throughout the world. (2) The very manifestation of this gift was to be a "sign" to unbelievers that the message they were hearing was from Heaven. (3) The gift of tongues is not some ecstatic and unintelligible tongue, but it is indeed a known human language. The purpose of the gift was to communicate the gospel to the world's billions who have spoken thousands of different languages and dialects. (4) There is indeed a counterfeit to the Biblical speaking in tongues. It has taken the world by storm. Satan will use this counterfeit manifestation to communicate error. He endeavors to work upon the senses and the lower nature of man, namely, man's appetite, passions, and desires. This is to keep man from settling into the truth with his higher nature, namely, man's intellect, reason, and conscience.

So often Satan has found success by playing upon the emotions of man and his senses, thereby bypassing his intellect, reason, and conscience. However, God's people must be intelligent upon that which is written in the Word of God. They must choose to do right, because it is right and because right doing is pleasing to God. They must allow their conscience to be woeed only by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. Yet, so many are unsatisfied with the plain words of Scripture. They have a false salvational security because of this spiritual manifestation of tongues. Yet, those who shall make up the kingdom of God must live by faith. Day by day, moment by moment, they must walk with their Lord and Saviour. They must hunger and thirst for righteousness. See Matthew 5:6.

In summary, none of us are saved because we speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues is not even evidence that someone is saved. Many non-Christians and atheists speak in the same ecstatic and unintelligible tongue. Jesus warned the religious world, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." John 4:48. We are not to put our faith in the signs and wonders. They will increase as time draws to a close. We are to trust in the promises of God and prepare to live with our Maker and Redeemer forever and ever. □
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In creating man, God gave him noble qualities. He endowed him with a well-balanced mind, and made every power of his being harmonious. After the Fall there was not given to man another set of faculties. The powers given him before sin entered the world through Adam, were high, and their aims holy; all in perfect harmony with the Divine Mind. The Fall did not create in man new faculties, energies, and passions; for this would have been a reflection upon God. It was through disobedience to God's requirements that these powers were perverted; the affections were misplaced, and turned from the high and holy purpose to a lower aim and to meet a lower standard. When a man is converted, when he comes back to his allegiance to God, he then places himself in a right relation to Him to heed His warnings, to be instructed by Him, by living, not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; and he is in direct communication with Him through Jesus Christ, whereby he will regain the moral image of his Maker. Originally man's affections were in perfect obedience to God's will; but they have been perverted, misused, and degenerated by disobedience. In returning to God, the inclinations, the taste, the appetite, and the passions are brought into higher, holier channels. The bias to evil is overcome through man's determined effort, aided by the grace of Christ. The faculties that have been warped in a wrong direction are no longer misused, perverted, and misapplied. They are not wasted in selfish purposes, or fastened upon perishable things. The truth has been accepted, has convicted the soul, transformed the character, and there is a purification and elevation of all the powers of the being, and the God-given powers are no longer debased.

Through the sanctification of the truth man becomes a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. What may not man become through the grace given him, if he will but be a partaker of the divine nature? What examples of uprightness, of purity, of holiness would be given to our world! But the debasement of man's highest, noblest powers, which causes so much sorrow, crime, violence and suffering in the world, is because the precepts of God are not respected. It is because His law is transgressed. Oh, that all who claim to be standing in defense of the law of God would indeed practice in their daily life the observance of its holy principles! We see men eagerly striving to accumulate property. They put forth all their energies, tact, wisdom, and inventive powers to gain their object, in securing earthly treasures that they will not need, and cannot use for their own profit or for their children's benefit. These persons have not time to devote to prayer, or to seek God, or to place themselves on the side of Christ. Heaven and eternal things have no charms for them. All their moral powers are dwarfed, and their lives are spent for one purpose, the accumulation of wealth. The time, the opportunities granted them of God to secure heaven, are squandered in striving for earthly gain.

Would that it were only to the impenitent that this melancholy picture applied! It is most sad, indeed, when those who profess godliness exhibit to the world such a perversion of their powers.

The desire for laying up treasures upon the earth, of making provision for the unknown future, of centering all interest and effort in the earth, and of laboring for corruptible possessions, which must pass away, is not fitting us by the exercise of our powers, to secure the eternal, immortal treasure. If men who claim to believe the truth were as eager candidates for those treasures that are enduring, and if the concentration of

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Ellen G. White

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their God-given powers were employed in securing the imperishable treasure, what might not they become in the world? What light would be reflected from them! What blessings would be in their flashing the bright beams of light upon the pathway of others! Oh, how many there are who care only for earthly things, and strive only for perishable treasures! All their powers are employed in securing earthly possessions, and time and talents, consequently, are spiritually dwarfed. God sets before man a heaven to gain, a crown to win, and immortal honors to possess. But the powers of his being have been perverted, his object has been changed, and he may be classed with those of whom Paul writes, “who mind earthly things.” Philippians 3:19. Body and soul are given to the securing of earthly treasures.

Satan carried Jesus to an exceedingly high mountain and presented before Him all the glories of the world in a moment of time, and offered it all to Him, if He would worship him. He met the stern rebuke of the world’s Redeemer, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Luke 4:8. Here, then, is the object before us, to worship God, to serve God, and to glorify God. Satan finds those who will give themselves to his service to gain the treasures of the world. He absorbs the mind, and controls the powers so that the service which God demands is given to him. He gains from man all that he tried to secure from Christ. We often see men who stand high in positions of trust, as Christ’s followers, but who have made shipwreck of faith. A temptation comes to them and they sacrifice principle and their religious advantages to secure a coveted earthly treasure. The bait of Satan is taken. Christ conquered, thus making it possible for man to conquer also; but man places himself under the leadership of the god of this world, and steps from beneath the banner of Jesus Christ into the ranks of the enemy. All his powers are devoted to gain, and he worships other gods before the Lord.

The worldly man is not content with a present sufficiency, or with even an abundance. He is always aiming to possess a larger stock, and turns every thought, every power, in this direction. Now he who is seeking for eternal riches should be striving for the heavenly treasure with far greater earnestness and perseverance, and with an intensity that is proportionate to the value of the object of which he is in pursuit. The worldly man is laboring for earthly, temporal things. He is laying up his treasure upon the earth, doing just that which Jesus has told him he must not do. The sincere Christian appreciates the warning given by

ciled to God. He has brought to us knowledge, light, and truth, to open our understanding. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and now it devolves upon man to seek most earnestly to cooperate with the agencies which the Lord has provided for his salvation. He must with earnestness lay hold upon the helps God has placed

Jesus has made the infinite sacrifice in our behalf, and He expects of His followers far more than they give Him—voluntary, zealous, disinterested cooperation.

Jesus, and is a doer of His Word, thus laying up his treasure in heaven, just as the world’s Redeemer has told him he should do. He views an eternity of bliss worth a life of persevering and untiring effort. He is not misdirecting his efforts. He is setting his affections upon things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Transformed by grace, his life is hid with Christ in God. He has not lost by any means, the power of accumulation; but he employs his active energies in seeking for spiritual attainments; then all his intrusted talents will be appreciated as God’s gifts to be employed to His glory. By him property will be prized, not hoarded, valued only inasmuch as it can be used to advance the truth, to work as Christ worked when He was upon the earth, to bless humanity. For this purpose he will use his powers, not to please or glorify self, but to strengthen every intrusted gift that he may do the highest service to God. Of him it can be said, “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” Romans 12:11.

God does not condemn prudence and foresight in the use of the things of this life, but the feverish care, the undue anxiety with respect to worldly things is not in accordance with His will. It will not do for us to float along with the current; we are to be laborers together with God. God has imparted to us moral powers and religious susceptibilities. He has given His own dear Son as a propitiation for our sins, that through Him we might be recon-
A worldly spirit has prevailed among the professed servants of God, and the souls of men have not been counted of half as much value as their cattle, their farms, and their business.

recipient of the grace of God. There are many souls in darkness, but what rest, and ease, and quietude many feel in this matter! Thousands enjoy great light and precious opportunities, but do nothing with their influence or their money, to enlighten others. They do not even take the responsibility of keeping their own souls in the love of God, that they may not become a burden to the church. Such ones would be a burden and a clog in heaven. For Christ's sake, for the truth's sake, for their own sakes, such should arouse and make diligent work for eternity. Heavenly mansions are preparing for all who will comply with the conditions laid down in the Word of God. In behalf of the souls for whom Christ has died, who are in the darkness of error, it is enjoined upon all true followers of Christ to be a light to the world. God has done His part in the great work, and is waiting for the cooperation of His followers. The plan of salvation is fully developed. The blood of Jesus Christ is offered for the sins of the world, the Word of God is speaking to man in counsels, in reproofs, in warnings, in promises, and in encouragement, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit is extended to help him in all his efforts. But with all this light the world is still perishing in darkness, buried in error and sin. Who will be laborers together with God, to win these souls to the truth? Who will bear to them the good tidings of salvation?—The people whom God has blessed with light and truth are to be the messengers of mercy. Their means are to flow into the divine channel. Their earnest efforts are to be put forth. They are to become laborers together with God, self-denying, self-sacrificing, like Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

Divine and human agencies are combined in the work of saving souls. God has done His part, and Christian activity is needed now. God calls for this. He expects His people to bear a part in presenting the light of truth to all nations. Who will enter into this partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ? He will prescribe the terms, He will make all the conditions. Has God enlightened you with a knowledge of Himself? Have the treasures of His Word been opened to your understanding, so that you have become intelligent in regard to the truths therein? Then go to work with your ability. If you are only humble, pure in heart, single in purpose, you will see the needs and wants of God's cause. You will see that there are foreign countries to be visited, that missionaries must go forth with the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion, to labor, to deny self, to suffer for Christ's sake. And even in our own country there are thousands of all nations, and tongues, and peoples who are ignorant and superstitious, having no knowledge of the Bible or its sacred teachings. God's hand was in their coming to America, that they might be brought under the enlightening influence of the truth revealed in His Word, and become partakers of His saving faith. How many have felt any interest for these strangers? How many have been stirred with the spirit of the Master to act as missionaries to those brought, as it were, to our very doors? What will arouse our churches to their true condition of sleepiness and inactivity while souls are perishing within their reach? Where there is one laborer there ought to be hundreds receiving every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, and giving it to the people as they can bear it. A hundred-fold more might have been done than has been done. A worldly spirit has prevailed among the professed servants of God, and the souls of men have not been counted of half as much value as their cattle, their farms, and their business. God will hold them accountable for this terrible neglect in the past; but what are they going to do in the future? Will they come into cooperation with our great Benefactor? Will they as men who have had the light of truth, let that light shine forth to those in darkness? God has honored them with the privilege of being co-laborers with Christ in the great harvest field. Will they thankfully, heartily receive all the advantages God has provided, and diligently improve them by exercise, using every ability and every sacred trust in the service of the Master? Their success in advancement in the divine life depends upon the improvement of the talents lent them. Their future reward will be proportioned to the integrity and earnestness with which they serve the Master.

All the enterprises in temporal, earthly things prosper in proportion to the wisdom, tact, and concentration of powers exercised in acquiring the desired object. Just so must it be in our Christian enterprises. We must work according to God's Word. There must be wise planning. There must be selection of men and gifts appropriate for the various branches of the work. God's Word must be our Guide as to the conditions that are specified by which we may become laborers together with Christ. The desire to accumulate wealth is an original affection of our nature, implanted there by our Heavenly Father for noble ends. If you ask the capitalist who has directed all his energies to the one object of securing wealth, and who is persevering and industrious to add to his property, with what design he thus labors, he could not give you a reason for this, a definite purpose for which he is gaining earthly treasures and heaping up riches. He cannot define any great aim or purpose he has in view, or any new source of happiness he expects to attain. He goes on accumulating because he has
turned all his abilities and all his powers in this direction. There is within the worldly man a craving for something that he does not have. He has, from force of habit, bent every thought, every purpose in the direction of making provision for the future, and as he grows older, he becomes more eager than ever to acquire all that it is possible to gain. It is natural that the covetous man should become more covetous as he draws near the time when he is losing hold upon all earthly things.

All this energy, this perseverance, this determination, this industry after earthly power is the result of the perversion of his powers to a wrong object. Every faculty might have been cultivated to the highest possible elevation by exercise, for the heavenly, immortal life, and for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The customs and practices of the worldly man in his perseverance and his energies, and in availing himself of every opportunity to add to his store, should be a lesson to those who claim to be children of God, seeking for glory, honor, and immortality. The children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of the light, and herein is seen their wisdom. Their object is for earthly gain, and to this end they direct all their energies. Oh that this zeal would characterize the toiler for heavenly riches!

Review and Herald, March 1, 1887

Special Publications for Witnessing

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Health For Today

Designed to be a “right arm” evangelistic tool, this 8½ by 11-inch, 32-page magazine contains practical information by some of Adventism’s leading health professionals. It also presents Ellen White as a health promoter who was 100 years ahead of her time.

Price: 1–10 copies, 60¢ ea.; 11–199 copies, 45¢ ea.; 1–6 cases (200 per case), 29¢ ea.; 7 cases+, 21¢ ea.; Bulk Mailing, only 39¢ ea., including the cost of the magazine. Also available in Spanish at the same prices.

Truth For Today

This 8½ by 11-inch, 32-page magazine is a well-rounded overview of the great controversy theme. It uses material drawn from Patriarchs and Prophets, The Desire of Ages, and The Great Controversy.
The Reward of Unbelief

For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you seem to come short of it." Hebrews 3:16-19; 4:1.

There can be no question but these verses have special reference to the Kadesh-Barnea experience when the majority of the hosts of Israel "did provoke" God. In verse 8 this experience is called "the provocation" and "the day of temptation in the wilderness." Not only did this great manifestation of unbelief and rebellion "provoke" God, but He was "grieved" for forty years while they were wandering in the wilderness "under the divine rebuke." It was because of what happened at Kadesh-Barnea that the Lord decreed that their "carcasses" should fall "in the wilderness." It was at that place that they tried to "enter in" to the promised inheritance, but "could not" because of unbelief. We are told that there were "some" or a few who did not provoke and grieve God. Caleb, Joshua, Moses, Aaron and doubtless many others did not take part in the rebellion. Then follows an admonition to those who have part in the Advent movement not to follow their example.

We have already produced the evidence that the Lord was compelled to alter His plan and purpose to lead ancient Israel directly into the Promised Land by way of Kadesh-Barnea because of their unbelief and insubordination. But the Kadesh-Barnea experience of the Exodus movement has had its antitype in the Advent movement. There has been a long delay because of our unbelief. The Lord purposed to finish the work long ago and especially soon after the 1888 revival began. In 1898 the prophet of the Advent people wrote: "Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory." Desire of Ages, 633-634. Several similar statements have been quoted in previous parts in this series.

A Long Delay

"The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the Advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the Great Disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.' Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out." The Great Controversy, 457-458. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)
This delay was foretold in the parable of the ten virgins and the tarrying time during which "they all slumbered and slept." Matthew 25:5.

**Because of Insubordination**

When the calls came through the Spirit of Prophecy to move the college out of Battle Creek, some of the leaders were perplexed. They felt that the end was so near that it was too late to try to establish another college, and in fact would be a denial of their faith in the soon coming of Christ. Dr. P. T. Magon had these convictions and wrote them to Sister White and asked for counsel. Her reply was dated December 7, 1901, and its number in the files is M-184-1901. In the letter were the following statements: "The hand of Providence is holding the machinery. When that hand starts the wheel, then all things will begin to move. How can finite man carry the burdens of responsibility for this time? His people have been far behind. Human agencies under the divine planning may recover something of what is lost because the people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans. They have lost to their own disadvantage what they might have gained to the advancement of the truth if they had carried out the plans and will of God. Man cannot possibly stretch over the gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the Divine Leader." *Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies*, 202.

**Many More Years**

The letter continues: "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action. Now, have men who claim to believe the Word of God learned their lesson that obedience is better than sacrifice? 'He hath shewed thee [this rebellious people], O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Micah 6:8. ... You, nor any other agency, cannot heal the hurt that has come to God's people by neglect to lift up His standard, and occupy new territory. ... But if all now would only see and confess and repent of their own course of action in departing from the truth of God, and following human devising, then the Lord would pardon. Warnings have been coming, but they have been unheeded, but a few who may now seek to bridge the gulf that stands so offensively before God must haste slowly, else the standard bearers will fail, and who will take their place?" Ibid.

**Human agencies under the divine planning may recover something of what is lost because the people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans.**

**Plan Delayed But Not Disannulled**

"The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: ... For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Isaiah 14:24, 27.

The Lord's purpose for Israel was finally fulfilled and He led them into the Promised Land. Satan was able only to delay the carrying out of God's purpose; he could not disannul it. The same is true of the Advent movement. Satan has succeeded in delaying the finishing of the work, but it will be finished triumphantly and the eternal purpose of God will be fulfilled.

"Not by any temporary failure of Israel, however, was the plan of the ages for the redemption of mankind to be frustrated. Those to whom the prophet was speaking, might not heed the message given, but the purposes of Jehovah were nevertheless to move steadfastly forward to their complete fulfillment." *Prophecies and Kings*, 705-706.

"Thus God's purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul. Even amid the working of evil, God's purposes have been moving steadfastly forward to their accomplishment. It was thus with the house of Israel ... it is thus with spiritual Israel today." Ibid., 720.

**A Remarkable Letter**

Neither the retiring nor the newly elected General Conference president were present at the Minneapolis Conference in 1888. Elder George T. Butler was unable to be present because of sickness, and Elder O. A. Olsen was in Europe. Under date of September 1, 1892, Sister White wrote Elder O. A. Olsen a very remarkable letter regarding the cri-

**A Long Journey**

After quoting 1 John 1:5-10; 2:9-11, Sister White continued: "Could any description be more sharp and clear than John has given us? These things are written for us; they are applicable to the churches of Seventh-day Adventists. Some may say, 'I do not hate my brother; I am not so bad as that.' But how little they understand their own hearts. They may think they have a zeal for God in their feelings against their brother if his ideas seem in any way to conflict with theirs; feelings are brought to the surface that have no kinship with love. They show no disposition to harmonize with..."
him; they would as leave be at swords point with their brother as not, and yet he may be bearing a message from God to the people, just the light we need for this time.

"Why do not brethren of like precious faith consider that in every age, when the Lord has sent a special message to His people, all the powers of the confederacy of evil are set at work to prevent the word of truth from coming to those who should receive it. If Satan can impress the mind and stir up the passions of those who claim to believe the truth, and thus lead them to unite with the forces of evil, he is well pleased. If once he can get them to commit themselves to the wrong side, he has laid his plans to lead them on a long journey: through his deceptive wiles he will cause them to act upon the same principle he adopted in his disaffection in heaven. They take step after step in the false way, until there seems to be no other course than for them to go on, believing they are right in their bitterness of feeling against their brethren. Will the Lord's messenger bear the pressure brought against him? If so, it is because God bids him stand in His strength, and vindicate the truth that he is sent of God."

**Determined Opposition**

"Now although there has been a determined effort to make of no effect the message God has sent, its fruits have been proving that it was from the Source of light and truth. Those who have cherished unbelief and prejudice, who in place of helping to do the work the Lord would have them do, have stood to bar the way against all evidence, cannot be supposed to have clearer spiritual eyesight for having so long closed their eyes to the light God sent to the people. If we are to bear a part in this work to its close, we must recognize the fact that there are good things to come to the people of God in a way that we have not discerned; and that there will be resistance from the very ones we expected to engage in such a work."

**Messengers May Fail**

Then follows a statement indicating that the men who preached that message under such great opposition might not be able to stand up under the pressure but become discouraged and fail. If so, it would not effect in the least the truthfulness of the message they preached:

"How long will the Lord have patience with men in their blindness, how long will He wait before leaving them to grope their way to final darkness, we cannot determine. Should the Lord's messengers, after standing manfully for the truth for a time, fall under temptation, and dishonor Him who has given them their work, will that be proof that the message is not true? No; because the Bible is true, . . . Sin on the part of the messenger of God would cause Satan to rejoice, and those who have rejected the message and the messenger would triumph; but it would not at all clear the men who are guilty of rejecting the message of God."

It seems that God's servant was given foreknowledge regarding what happened twelve or thirteen years later to Elders Jones and Waggoner, of whom these statements were written.

**Laodicean Condition**

"If ever a people needed true and faithful watchmen, who will not hold their peace, who will cry day and night, sounding the warnings God has given, it is Seventh-day Adventists . . . . I wish to plead with our brethren who shall assemble at the General Conference to heed the message given to the Laodiceans. What a condition of blindness is theirs; this subject has been brought to your notice again and again; but your dissatisfaction with your spiritual condition has not been deep and painful enough to work a reform. 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Revelation 3:17. The guilt of self-deception is upon our churches. The religious life of many is a lie. Jesus has presented to them the precious jewels of truth, the riches of His grace and salvation, the glistening white vesture of His own righteousness, woven in heaven's loom, and containing not one thread of human invention. Jesus is knocking; open the door of the heart and buy of Him the precious heavenly treasure. Shall His pleadings fall upon ears that are dull of hearing if not entirely closed? Shall Jesus knock in vain?"

**Un-Christlike Spirit**

"I ask, what means the contention and strife among us? What means this hard, iron spirit, which is seen in our churches, in our institutions, and which is so utterly un-Christlike? I have deep
sorrow of heart because I have seen how readily a word or action of Elder Jones or Elder Waggoner is criticized. How readily many minds overlook all the good that has been done by them in the few years past, and see no evidence that God is working through these instrumentals. They hunt for something to condemn, and their attitude toward these brethren who are zealously engaged in doing a good work, shows that feelings of enmity and bitterness are in the heart. What is needed is the converting power of God upon hearts and minds... Cease watching your brethren with suspicion. There are many in the ministry who have no love for God or for their fellow men. They are asleep, and while they sleep, Satan is sowing his tares. The flock of God is in need of help from Heaven, and the sheep and lambs are perishing for food.”

Demand Evidence

"Many have been convinced that they have grieved the Spirit of God by their resistance of light, but they hated to die to self, and deferred to do the work of humbling their hearts and confessing their sins. They would not acknowledge that the reproof was sent of God, or the instruction was given from Heaven, until every shadow of uncertainty was removed. They did not walk out in the light. They hoped to get out of difficulty in some easier way than by confession of sin, and Satan has kept hold of them and tempted them, and they have had but feeble strength to resist him. Evidence has been plied upon evidence, but they have not been willing to acknowledge it. By their stubborn attitude they have revealed the soul-malady that was upon them; for no evidence could satisfy them. Doubt, unbelief, prejudice, and stubbornness killed all love from their souls. They demanded perfect assurance, but this was not compatible with faith.”

What Might Have Been

"If the rays of light which shone at Minneapolis were permitted to exert their convincing power upon those who took their stand against light, if all had yielded their ways, and submitted their wills to the Spirit of God at that time, they would have received the richest blessings, disappointed the enemy, and stood as faithful men, true to their convictions. They would have had a rich experience; but self said, No. Self was not willing to be bruised; self struggled for the mastery, and everyone of those souls will be tested again on the points where they failed then. They will have less clearness of judgment, less submission, less genuine love for God or their brethren now than before the test and trial at Minneapolis. In the books of heaven they are registered as wanting. Self and passion developed hateful characteristics. Since that time, the Lord has given abundance of evidence in messages of light and salvation. No more tender calls, no better opportunities could be given them in order that they might do that which they ought to have done at Minneapolis.

"The light has been withdrawing from some, and ever since they have been walking in the sparks of their own kindling. No one can tell how much may be at stake when neglecting to comply with the call of the Spirit of God. The time will come when they will be willing to do anything and everything possible in order to have a chance of hearing the call which they rejected at Minneapolis. God moved upon hearts, but many yielded to another spirit which was moving upon their passions from beneath. O that these poor souls would make thorough work before it is everlastingly too late. Better opportunities will never come, deeper feelings they will not have. ... God will not be trifled with.”

A Terrible Sin

"The sin committed in what took place at Minneapolis remains on the record books of heaven, registered against the names of those who resisted light, and it will remain upon the record until full confession is made, and the transgressors stand in full humility before God. The levity of some, the free speeches of others, the manner of treating the messenger and the message when in their private stopping places, the spirit that stirred to action from beneath, all stand registered in the books of heaven. And when these persons are tried, and brought over the ground again, the same spirit will be revealed. When the Lord has sufficiently tried them, if they do not yield to them, He will withdraw His Holy Spirit.

Those who claim to know the truth, and yet lay every obstacle in the way, so that light shall not come to the people, will have an account to settle with God that they will not be pleased to meet.

... Those who are commanded to bear a message must move out although obstacles of a forbidding character are in the way. Those who claim to know the truth, and yet lay every obstacle in the way, so that light shall not come to the people, will have an account to settle with God that they will not be pleased to meet. God manages His own work, and woe to the man who puts his hand to the ark of God.”

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November 1996 Our Firm Foundation 23
This article concludes 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. Please also note the advertisement at the end of this article.

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

AND he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” Daniel 11:45.

This verse describes where the king of the north comes to his end. Although the King James Version implies that the Papacy is in the glorious, holy mountain, several other translations indicate that the verse might better be translated to indicate that the Papacy places his palatial tabernacles (war tents) between the seas and the holy mountain:

“And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the seas and the glorious holy mount (Zion); yet he shall come to his end with none to help him.” Daniel 11:45, Amplified Version. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

“And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.” Daniel 11:45, New King James Version. See also the American Standard Version and Young’s Literal Translation.

The “glorious holy mountain,” is God’s church, according to the following verses:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:2–3.

The “seas” are the people of the world:

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Revelation 17:15.

One of the questions most often raised about Daniel 11:40-45, is whether or not the glorious, holy mountain of verse 45 is the same as the glorious land of verse 41. Let us compare them. Both symbols contain the adjective translated as “glorious,” but, if we drop the word “glorious” from both phrases, we see a distinction made between a land and a mountain.

The land of verse 41 is where God’s people and truth were placed in order to facilitate the proclamation of the final message of warning. The church which
was raised up to proclaim this message is the holy mountain of verse 45. Both are “glorious,” in their own way, but a church and the country where the church was raised up are two different entities, though they are closely related.

This verse describes when humanity will finally be divided into two groups. The Papacy is portrayed as being in the middle ground between these two groups of people, for the Papacy has been the primary object used by Satan to prevent the people of the world from hearing the last message of warning. With the Papacy’s position in the middle, the people who reject the last message of warning are on one side while God’s people stand on the other:

“There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment—those who violate God’s law, and those who keep His law. Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.” Review and Herald, May 7, 1901.

Daniel 11:45 describes the dividing line for humanity illustrated by the palatial tents of the man of sin. On one side are those who reflect the man of sin’s character of self-exaltation, while on the other side we see those who reflect the self-sacrificing love of Jesus, their King. In this verse the fundamental principle of the mystery of iniquity—self-exaltation—is symbolized by the king of the north defiantly planting his palatial war tents in full view of the universe, and proclaiming himself king of those represented by the seas, while also preparing to destroy those who make up the glorious, holy mountain. At the height of this arrogant act, the king of the north comes to his end—and none shall help him.

In the Hebrew lexicon found in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, we find the following definitions, which may help us understand some of the key words of verse 45:

“plant—5193: a primitive root; properly to strike in, i.e. fix; specifically to plant (literally or figuratively):—fasten, plant (-er).

“tabernacles—168: from 166; a tent (as clearly conspicuous from a distance):—covering, (dwelling) (place), home, tabernacle, tent.

“166: a primitive root; to be clear:—shine.

“palace—643: apparently of foreign derivation; a pavilion or palace-tent:—palace.”

The action of placing oneself between a message of God and its intended recipients is used in verse 45, and is also a common illustration in the Spirit of Prophecy:

“Though being unable to expel God from His throne, Satan has charged God king of the north to the message of Christ’s righteousness, as symbolized by the “tidings” which come from the “east and north.” That verse identified the fear and anger of the northern king as he recognized the loud-cry message. As he launches forth to “destroy and make away many,” probation closes and the world has been divided into two classes. Verse 45 continues the description by portraying this division, but it also uses prophetic symbols which point to Armageddon, described in Revelation 16.

With the Papacy’s position in the middle, the people who reject the last message of warning are on one side while God’s people stand on the other.

With satanic attributes and has claimed the attributes of God as his own. He is a deceiver, and through his serpentine sharpness, through his crooked practices he has drawn to himself the homage which man should have given to God, and has planted his satanic throne between the human worshiper and the Divine Father.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 7, 215.

“Just prior to the coming of the Son of man, there is—and has been for years—a determination on the part of the enemy to cast his hellish shadow right between man and his Saviour.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, 7.

“He, the great Teacher, was in the world; He was the light of the world; but Satan interposed his hellish shadow between Him and the souls whom Christ came to save.” The Signs of the Times, March 20, 1901.

“We entreat of you who oppose the light of truth, to stand out of the way of God’s people. Let Heaven-sent light shine forth upon them in clear and steady rays.” Review and Herald, May 27, 1890.

“Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between the people and the message of Heaven. The message of God will come to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out.” Counsels to Writers and Editors, 38.

“The Sabbath is the Lord’s test, and no man, be he king, priest, or ruler, is authorized to come between God and man.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 234.

In the previous article we discussed Daniel 11:44, and the reaction of the

Between the Seas

East of the Mediterranean Sea, south-west of the Sea of Galilee, and north of the Dead Sea is Meggido. About 35 miles south of Meggido is Jerusalem, while just about 10 miles northwest of Meggido, we find Mount Carmel. Between Meggido and Jerusalem is Mount Gerizim and Ebal, the mountains of cursing and blessing. In this geographical setting we see the final end of the Papacy set forth symbolically in Daniel 11:45. The Biblical history of these locations is abundant with information symbolically pointing to the battle which ends with the second coming of Christ.

Most Bible commentators locate the king of the north, in Daniel 11:45, in the very middle of this Old Testament geography. This geographic symbolism is, of course, identifying the battle of Armageddon found in Revelation 16. We must be consistent with our application of prophetic rules, and, although the allusion to Meggido is easily seen in Daniel 11:45, we must continue to seek to find the spiritual location of this verse—not the literal.

In Catholicism, Protestantism, and even in Adventism today, we find men interpreting this verse as literal Israel. The geographical and historical information contained within this verse is describing where the entire world is spiritually located when the battle of Armageddon gets underway. To identify the glorious, holy mountain as

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to the signs of the times!

Brothers and Sisters, the final, rapid events portrayed in Daniel 11:40-45 began to unfold 7 years ago in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is high time that we awaken to the signs of the times!

literally, modern Jerusalem would be inconsistent with the previous five verses, for they have all been understood in their modern, spiritual setting. If one chooses to identify the glorious, holy mountain in this verse as present-day Jerusalem, then consistency in prophetic application demands that all the symbols in this sequence should have literal counterparts. This is not possible, for Edom of verse 41 no longer exists as a nation or as a people.

If we were to review this presentation of Daniel 11:40-45 from the first article which began in January 1996 until this final article, we would find that we have consistently applied the symbolic (spiritual) application to the figures and symbols, in agreement with the understanding that these events occur after the cross.

A Wake-Up Call

We also have seen that the sequence of conquests by the Papacy as it returns to its “former position of power,” is the same sequence set forth in the book of Revelation. We also identified this sequence as an accurate repetition of the “history” portrayed in Daniel 11:30-35, which Sister White identified as a pattern by which to compare the final events recorded in Daniel 11.

While noting that the last scenes of prophecy would address the man of sin, we also identified that within the books of Daniel and the Revelation there would be “an increase of knowledge” which would “prepare God’s people to stand” in these last days, and that this increase of knowledge would include a knowledge about “the man of sin.” Not only did we establish some of the connections between these verses with the book of Revelation, but the prevailing theme of these verses can easily be verified by the events which are transpiring in the world today. We considered that our greatest need as God’s people is for revival and reformation, and we noted that Sister White said this needed revival would come from an understanding found in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

We began this study by comparing the events set forth in the first chapter of Testimonies, volume 9, and found there that Sister White identified these final events with the fulfillment of Daniel 11. More sobering though is that as Sister White pointed to these final events of Daniel 11, she then stated that “the final movements will be rapid ones.” Brothers and Sisters, the final, rapid events portrayed in Daniel 11:40-45 began to unfold 7 years ago in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is high time that we awaken to the signs of the times!

“But there is a day that God hath appointed for the close of this world’s history. ‘This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’ Matthew 24:14. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. More, much more, should be said about these tremendously important subjects. The day is at hand when the destiny of every soul will be fixed forever. This day of the Lord hastens on apace. The false watchmen are raising the cry, ‘All is well!’ but the day of God is rapidly approaching. Its footsteps are so muffled that it does not arouse the world from the deathlike slumber into which it has fallen. While the watchmen cry, ‘Peace and safety!’ sudden destruction cometh upon them, ‘and they shall not escape’ (1 Thessalonians 5:3); ‘for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.’ Luke 21:35. It overtakes the pleasure-lover and the sinful man as a thief in the night. When all is apparently secure, and men retire to contented rest, then the prowling, stealthy, midnight thief steals upon his prey. When it is too late to prevent the evil, it is discovered that some door or window was not secured. ‘Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.’ Matthew 24:44. People are now settling to rest, imagining themselves secure under the popular churches; but let all beware, lest there is a place left open for the enemy to gain an entrance. Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one’s interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.” Fundamentals of Christian Education, 335-336.

Prophetic Studies

Have you appreciated the series of articles about Daniel 11 by Jeff Pippenger? You may order from Hope International the following series of prophetic studies, which covers Daniel 11:40-45 and then expands into several related topics. This series was recorded at meetings held at Hope over the past several months. We hope you are stimulated once again to seek that blessing that comes from giving each message the Berean test.

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The Everlasting Gospel Versus the Evangelical Gospel
Continued from 5

it led to the belief that Christ could not have taken upon Himself a nature like ours, and therefore He must have taken an un- fallen nature. This concept led to infant baptism, for this seemed to be the logical way of handling the dilemma of original sin. Finally, the concept of original sin ultimately led to the imma culate conception dogma. One thing we must acknowledge is that the Catholic theologians and their successors in Evangelical Protestantism worked very hard to bring consistency into their theological constructions.

Today we are in no man's land in Seventh-day Adventism if we try to integrate some of these pegan, Augustinian, Catholic, Evangelical, Reformed concepts into Seventh-day Adventism. There is no consistency in having part of one, and part of the other. Such a course would lead to discord, which results in confusion. Therefore, error will increasingly be taken on board to support the errors already accepted. I wish history would support an optimistic view that men would turn back to the truth when they perceive inconsistencies, but history does not smile kindly upon those who have accepted error.

Thus, Desmond Ford and I could agree on one important point: that our brethren at Glacier View were wholly wrong in condemning his eschatology (end-time interpretation) while upholding his soteriology (salvation concepts). Either he was right on both or wrong on both. However, somehow those who were leading out in Glacier View did not have sufficient understanding of the situation to discern that Ford's eschatology and soteriology were wholly inseparable. Once they accepted his soteriology, the inconsistency of his beliefs become painfully apparent. While Ford has not yet adopted the full evangelical concepts, he has inevitably accepted more of them step by step.

There is no way we can safely accept part of the everlasting gospel and part of the evangelical gospel, because error will eventually always win out. We learn from the fact that for centuries, in some places, both Sabbath and Sunday were kept as holidays (holy days). Eventually, the error of Sunday won that battle. I think of Ford telling me that he believed in all three concepts of prophetic interpretation: preterist, historicist, and futurist, but I do not have to tell you that his grip on historicism is virtually zero today. It was inevitable. When truth and error are incorporated together, ultimately error is the victor.

Many Seventh-day Adventist preachers today are presenting a hybrid system of theology, and have an admixture of the everlasting gospel, and Evangelical Protestantism. Because many of our people are vague concerning what they believe, they can have wide-ranging, but different, theological emphases, and yet they can see beauty in these presentations. Those who lean toward an understanding of the everlasting gospel believe that the preacher is supporting that gospel, and therefore some of the more basically inclined Seventh-day Adventists see the message as a beautiful message of salvation, detecting not at all, or if detected, seeing it as minor, those areas in which he clearly deviates into the evangelical camp.

For example, take preachers who support the understanding that Christ took upon Himself our fallen nature, adult believer's baptism, and the possibility of victorious Christian living. These beliefs are all inconsistent with Evangelical Protestant concepts. Yet many of the same preachers will deliver sermons consistent with the evangelicals: a justification-alone salvation; sins do not separate us from God; the belief that the man of Romans 7 is the converted man; evangelical view of the in-Christ motif; and the introduction of forensic justification.

As these preachers attempt to blend their evangelical teachings with portions of the everlasting gospel, they present an inconsistent gospel. It is not logical to have them together. However, most of us are just not sufficiently versed to distinguish such inconsistencies, and so members of widely different understandings receive from the sermons that which they believe, and so declare it all to be—a beautiful gospel.

Such positive responses are likely to be satisfying to the preacher, for they may lead him to conclude that he has found an approach to the gospel that brings both sides of the schism into a unified understanding. I do not think his gospel has done that at all. I believe people still believe what they believed before hearing the sermon. In fact, I know that in some cases this is true, and nothing has really been resolved.

The more we as Seventh-day Adventists neglect the study of God's Word, the greater will be our inability to perceive the lack of consistency in the presentations—either in sermons or books. Nothing can stabilize us more than our own in-depth study of God's Word, which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Let us study the Word.
Disease and Its Causes

Part 2

By Ellen G. White

In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary—temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking.

Many are so devoted to intemperance that they will not change their course of indulging in gluttony under any considerations. They would sooner sacrifice health, and die prematurely, than to restrain the intemperate appetite. And there are many who are ignorant of the relation their eating and drinking has to health. Could such be enlightened, they might have moral courage to deny the appetite, and eat more sparingly of that food alone which is healthful, and by their own course of action save themselves a great amount of suffering.

Efforts should be made to preserve carefully the remaining strength of the vital forces, by lifting off every overtaxing burden. The stomach may never fully recover health, but a proper course of diet will save further debility; and many persons will recover more or less, unless they have gone very far in gluttonous self-murder.

Those who permit themselves to become slaves to a morbid appetite, often go still further, and debase themselves by indulging their corrupt passions, which have become excited by intemperance in eating and drinking. They give loose rein to their debasing passions, until health and intellect greatly suffer. The reasoning faculties are, in a great measure, destroyed by evil habits.

I have wondered that the inhabitants of the earth were not destroyed, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. I have seen reason enough for the present state of degeneracy and mortality in the world. Blind passion controls reason, and every high consideration with many is sacrificed to lust.

The first great evil was intemperance in eating and drinking. Men and women have made themselves slaves to appetite.

Pork, although one of the most common articles of diet, is one of the most injurious. God did not prohibit the Jews from eating swine’s flesh merely to show His authority, but because it is not a proper article of food for man. It fills the system with scrofula, and especially in that warm climate produces leprosy, and diseases of various kinds. Its influence upon the system in that climate is far more injurious than in a colder climate. But God never designed swine to be eaten under any circumstances. The heathen used pork as an article of food, and American people have used pork freely as an important article of diet. Swine’s flesh would not be palatable to the taste in its natural state. It is made agreeable to the appetite by highly seasoning, which makes a bad thing worse. Swine’s flesh, above all other flesh meats, produces a bad state of the blood. Those who eat freely of pork cannot but be diseased. Those who have much outdoor exercise do not realize the bad effects of pork eating as those do whose life is mostly indoors, and whose habits are sedentary, and whose labor is mental.

But it is not the physical health alone which is injured by pork eating. The mind is affected, and the finer sensibilities are blunted, by the use of this gross article of food. It is impossible for the flesh of any living creature to be healthy when it is its natural element, and when it feeds upon every detestable thing. The flesh of swine is composed of what they eat. If human beings eat their flesh, their blood and their flesh will be corrupted by impurities conveyed to them through the swine.

The eating of pork has produced scrofula, leprosy, and cancerous humors. Pork eating is still causing the most intense suffering to the human race. Depraved appetites crave those things which are the most injurious to health. The curse, which has rested heavily upon the earth, and has been felt by the whole race of mankind, has also been felt by the animals. The beasts have degenerated in size, and in length of years. By the wrong habits of man they have been made to suffer more than they otherwise would.

There are but few animals that are free from disease. Many have been made to suffer greatly for the want of light, pure air, and wholesome food. When they are fattened, they are often confined in close stables, and are not permitted to exercise, and to enjoy free circulation of air. Many poor animals are left to breathe the poison of filth which is left in barns and stables. Their lungs will not long remain healthy while inhaling such impurities. Disease is conveyed to the liver, and the entire system of the animal is diseased. It is killed, and prepared for the market, and people eat freely of this poisonous animal food. Much disease is caused in this manner. But people will not believe that the meat they have eaten has poisoned their blood, and caused their sufferings. Many die of disease caused wholly by meat eating, yet the world does not seem to be the wiser.

Because those who partake of animal food do not immediately feel its effects, is no evidence that it does not injure them. It may be doing its work slowly upon the system, and yet the persons for the time realize nothing of it.

Animals are crowded into close cars, and almost wholly deprived of air and light, food and water, and are carried thus thousands of miles, breathing the foul air arising from accumulated filth; and when they arrive at their place of destination, and are taken from the cars, many are in a half-starved, smothered, dying condition, and if left alone, would die of themselves. But the butcher finishes the work, and prepares the flesh for market.

Animals are frequently killed that have been driven some distance for the slaughter. Their blood has become heated. They are full of flesh, and have been deprived of healthy exercise; and when they have to travel far, they become surfeited and ex-
haunted, and in that condition are killed for market. Their blood is highly inflamed, and those who eat of their meat eat poison. Some are not immediately affected, while others are attacked with severe pain, and die from fever, cholera, or some unknown disease. Very many animals are sold for the city market known to be diseased by those who have sold them, and those who buy them for the market are not always ignorant of the matter. Especially in larger cities this is practiced to a great extent, and meat eaters know not that they are eating diseased animals.

Some animals that are brought to the slaughter seem to realize what is to take place, and become furious, and literally mad. They are killed while in that state, and their flesh prepared for market. Their meat is poison, and has produced, in those who have eaten it, cramp, convulsions, apoplexy, and sudden death. Yet the cause of all this suffering is not attributed to meat. Some animals are inhumanly treated while being brought to the slaughter. They are literally tortured, and after they have endured many hours of extreme suffering, are butchered. Swine have been prepared for market even while the plague was upon them, and their poisonous flesh has spread contagious diseases, and great mortality has followed.

Review and Herald, June 13, 20, 1899.

Footnote
Reformers and Apostasy
Continued from 5

things, God will not acknowledge as His shepherds. A fearful woe is upon them.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 321.

As the church opposed the word of reform in the past and persecuted God’s reformers, so it will be again:

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

May God help His people now to bring revival and reformation to our beloved church by a daily, living revival. Jesus said, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

The last-day prophet has revealed to us these solemn words:

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 136.

Everyone who is saved will be a true reformer. The 144,000 are the reformers of the final generation. They are without guile, without sin, and have demonstrated to the world the true love of God by giving the straight testimony.

The reformed Christian will then have the righteousness of Christ that can be obtained only through obedience by faith, thus establishing the law in the soul. He is sealed and can then give the loud cry—the final message, to a dying world. See Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1161, Testimonies, vol. 5, 208-214.
Letters to the Editor

Because of the tremendous misunderstanding of the work of Our Firm Foundation and Hope International, I have a suggestion which I feel will make an excellent impact upon all of your readers, and those who “shy away” from reading the publication, and it is this:

Near the bottom of page 3 in the September 1996 issue [also in this issue] was a large paragraph which is your declaration of work and calling of and for the Lord.

I personally believe that if this paragraph were to be blown up and placed on the front page of your publication (a few times at least) that it would have an excellent impact upon all who would come in contact with the publication, letting the whole world know exactly where you stand in relation to the denomination in your work for the Lord.

Frankly, I am sick and tired of hearing that you folk and Hartland are a great cause for bringing division and discontent amongst the believers in the denomination. And this I do not believe.

In a few months I will be 90 years of age. I am the son of a preacher, pastor, and minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Best of wishes and I hope you can see fit to give my suggestion some thought. GR, California

Thank you for your commitment to keep truth before us. We are truly fed by your ministry. J & BS, Wisconsin

Thank you for the Our Firm Foundation magazine you have sent me. I read it and send it or give it to others that do not have one. It is my “Sabbath sermons.”

I am 80 years old, on a Social Security fixed income, and do not have savings. I have always been a SDA, and was a missionary in the Far East for many years. I have given freely to our work so I have not saved for a rainy day.

Your magazine has helped me to understand many things I needed to know about our Church which I love. I understand what needs to be done in my personal relationship in this time of the end. I hope to meet you in heaven. OW, Ohio

The more I read your magazine the more I enjoy reading it and the more convinced I become of the truth presented therein. Keep it coming. I appreciate the abundance of Spirit of Prophecy quotations. WH, Oregon

We want to thank you for continuing to send us Our Firm Foundation even though we have not subscribed to it for the past few years. It has been an inspiration to read the many timely articles each month. Thank you for keeping us on your mailing list. P & BN, Hawaii

I am very grateful for the free copies of your message-filled magazine which I have been receiving for the past year.

I am a retired teacher receiving an allowance of about 6400.00 cettes a month, which is less than $50.00. So I am pleading with you to continue to keep my name on the “Subscription Assistance” list. Whenever the procedure to send money becomes clear I shall send my token contribution.

In fact, I love your paper Our Firm Foundation, for it is the only paper I now receive that keeps me alert and gives me the needed comfort and inspiration. May the Lord bless your work.

I have been strongly praying for our aggrieved brethren who have broken away from our remnant church. Those that made them unhappy are not really converted. So they should rather pray for them and not go away. The article “Wither Goeth Our Church” in the December issue gave me a lot of concern for them. Let them all come back, even though their names are not on the Church records, their names are in the records of Heaven and not removed on the recommendations of an unfaithful leadership. Keep to the faith and remain in the fold. Go to Church every Sabbath and don’t break away.

Elder, please call a “Day” or “Week” for all faithful Adventists the world over to pray for our beloved Church. Our Father shall come to our aid and vindicate His Church. It is “the apple of His eye.” “Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come.” SB, Ghana

I do not know how much subscriptions are since I only have old “OFF” magazines.

I hope that this is enough. I put your magazines aside when I first started receiving them because I was so paranoid about “offshoots.” For some reason I did not throw them away. I started reading them (1988-1989 issues) last October, and what a blessing they have been! How wonderful that the “old pillars” are being upheld! I was discouraged with the liberalism in the SDA Church, so the Holy Spirit impressed me to begin reading them just when He knew I was most impressionable. SH, Tennessee

I am interested in taking your Bible course. I am a recent baptized member of the Adventist Church in my village. I read about your offer in a book called Truth in the World. I am willing to learn more about God, and I believe that is what I am learning in my church along with the aid of your Bible study correspondence course. My faith will be strengthened and my knowledge will increase.

Allow me to say that I think you all are doing a remarkable service for the Lord, and I pray that He will bless you in abundance. You are not only reaching out to people but you are also teaching them about God’s message and His salvation.

May God be with you in this wonderful work you are engaged in and I will eagerly be waiting for your reply.

PA, Belize

Thanks for the work you are continuing to do to enlighten our people concerning God’s everlasting truths. Please pray for us also in the organized work where many of our people are so steeped in the “sin and live” theology that they get angry when one speaks of “total victory in Jesus.”

DM, Texas
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