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Special Insert: More Than a Shade of Difference
T

RAGICALLY, when the word "perfection" is spoken, the speaker is often identified as some kind of fanatic. Is perfection—living a life of perfect obedience to God's revealed will—supported by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy? Yes, a thousand times yes. Holiness and perfection are synonymous. God commands us to be perfect—to be holy:

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48.

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:14-16.

Holiness comes to us by our willing obedience to all known truth. Holiness is a progressive experience in obedience which we know as justification and sanctification.

How do we begin this experience of perfection? The inspired prophets give us the answer:

"What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care, and He has built a hedge—the Ten Commandments—about His subjects to preserve them from the results of transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. He teaches them that the perfection of character He requires can be attained only by becoming familiar with His Word." Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 454.

"[Christ] is a perfect and holy Example, given for us to imitate. We cannot equal the Pattern; but we shall not be approved of God if we do not copy it and, according to the ability which God has given, resemble it." Testimonies, vol. 2, 549.

"We are to represent to the world the beauty of holiness, and we shall never enter the gates of the city of God until we perfect a Christlike character. If we, with trust in God, strive for sanctification, we shall receive it. Then as witnesses for Christ, we are to make known what the grace of God has wrought in us." The Upward Look, 99.

"To every one who surrenders fully to God is given the privilege of living without sin, in obedience to the law of Heaven." Review and Herald, September 27, 1906; see also The Great Controversy, 623.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

Inspired prophets have answered our question, How do we begin such an experience? Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Our success in holiness and perfection is in the Holy Inspired Word of God. We are told that we must search out and imitate the example of Christ's character. As we strive with all our heart and soul for that experience, we shall receive it. God is anxious to bestow it on us. He has been waiting for over one hundred years to pour out this experience—the latter rain—upon His church.

The prophet tells us that everything depends on the right action of our will:

"Many are inquiring, 'How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him." Steps to Christ, 47; see also Temperance, 113; The Desire of Ages, 125.

Satan has used a strange power to keep the message of victory over all sin from God's people:

"The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for Him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency." The Upward Look, 238.

These are the words we must keep in mind as we pray for victory over the devil and all sin. Surrender your will and come to Jesus everyday, striving for holiness and perfection of character which is obedience to all known truth. The key is in the Inspired Word: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

Remember, the only treasure that we will take from this world of sin is a sinless character. See Christ's Object Lesson, 332.

Soon God's holy, perfect, true remnant people will give the loud cry to the world:

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1.

"When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ's Object Lessons, 69.

Ron Spear—Editor
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A Word of Thanks and Apology

We would like to thank you, our subscribers, for your patience during the past several months, as Our Firm Foundation has fallen behind in our ideal production schedule. We have struggled at times with understaffing, press problems, and other difficulties that have tested our patience. However, we know that God is able to help us overcome all of these problems. We have recently dedicated additional help to the production of Our Firm Foundation, and we pray that as funds and qualified individuals are available we may be able to address some other needs relevant to the production of Our Firm Foundation and the ministry as a whole. Again, thank you for your patience, prayers, and financial support.—The Editors.

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Competition in the Church, Part I


In our American culture with its historic emphasis on individualism, there is a very common belief that "it is a dog-eat-dog world out there, and to be adequately prepared we need to teach our children how to compete—to get out there and win." The persistent theme has been that children must be taught to be competitive in order to survive in a competitive world. This pervasive philosophy has been most openly apparent in the emphasis on competitive sports in our schools. The influence of this attitude, however, is by no means limited to sports or athletic activities. Careful observation will reveal that this belief has just as significantly infiltrated into many other areas of our educational system where it may appear less obvious.

The competitiveness value has become so well ingrained into our educational philosophy that for many it has taken on the proportions of a sacred cow. However, notwithstanding the vigor with which some would defend this position, there are still some important questions that must be raised. First, is this concept based upon sound principles?—Is it true? Second, and most important to the Christian, is it in harmony with the teachings and directions of the Word of God—the principles and guidelines articulated in the Bible and through His inspired messenger?

It is of interest that these issues have begun to attract the concern of secular, social scientists who are beginning to bring together a growing mass of evidence that questions the assumed positive role of competitiveness in education.

Dr. M. J. Meadow, in her presidential address to the "Division of Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues" at the recent meeting of the American Psychological Association in Toronto, warned: "We are on the brink of nuclear holocaust because we have been socialized from our cribs to compete." She charged that religious institutions have sold out to competitive, nationalistic and economic interests, teaching universal love with their lips while their own behavior has modeled these divisive activities.

She continued: "We, as psychologists know which lesson will be the better learned—the preached one or the one taught by modeling and reinforcement..." To accomplish this, however, parents and social leaders will have to begin reinforcing cooperative, rather than competitive, behavior from the time children are born. In the classroom, instead of pitting children against each other in a win-lose spelling bee, each child would supply one letter until the word had been spelled correctly, at which point the entire group would be congratulated.

At the same meeting a number of scientists stressed similar concerns, and chided Christians for supporting competitive behavior contrary to their "love ethic" preaching.

Dr. Janet Spence of the University of Texas, and 1984 president of the American Psychological Association, recently presented an address to the Washington State Psychological Association in Spokane in which she reported some significant research that she and her associates have been doing on the factors that relate to achievement. In her study, Dr. Spence defines competitiveness as "the desire to..."
win over others and to be number one, the enjoyment of head-to-head contests; competitiveness differs from mastery in its interpersonal flavor . . . being better than other people versus pitting one’s self against a challenging task.”

*Mastery* is defined as “preference for taking on challenging tasks and meeting internally-prescribed standards of performance.”

Dr. Spence goes on to describe their findings:

“In every instance, the results indicated the significant and often substantial contribution of achievement motives to our performance indicators—but not in quite the way that many would have anticipated. Happily, work and mastery motives are consistently associated with better performance. However, interpersonal competitiveness is associated with poorer performance and is particularly destructive when combined with high levels of work and mastery. Putting the matter another way, the group of individuals high in work and mastery but low in competitiveness was uniformly most successful . . . An additional sidelight on interpersonal competitiveness is its relationship to intrinsic motives, which, to date, we have investigated only in college students. In describing their future goals, highly competitive students place greater importance on attaining prestige and high income than do other students. Further, like competitiveness, high extrinsic motivation is associated with poorer academic performance . . .

“A recent investigation of the performance of the cockpit crews of COMFAA inspectors showed exactly the same pattern as that of the most effective nurses, including being high in expressiveness and low in competitiveness.”

Dr. Spence acknowledges that there are obviously many situations in life that are inherently competitive, but she makes this observation:

“As individuals, we must be willing to compete and to dare to risk failure if we are to gain desired outcomes. However, too many individuals—parents, teachers, employers—believe that in order to become a successful competitor, one must learn to relish and value competition for its own sake—to develop competitiveness as a generalized personal quality. As our data show, this is individualism run amok, likely to hamper the individual and to be destructive to the group.”

What modern psychologists are just discovering about the negative effects of competition is certainly not news to the student of the Scriptures. For replete in Scripture is the continuing emphasis on the virtue of humility. The paradoxical truism of Christ’s ministry and example voiced by the Saviour was, “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be ashamed; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:12. “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:26-28. And again, “For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” Luke 9:48.

It is of interest to note that these statements represent a completely opposite point of view from Dr. Spence’s definition of competitiveness as “the desire to win over others and to be number one.”

The apostle Paul expressed the same anticompetitive perspective of the Gospel when he admonished, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” Romans 12:10. Paul further points to Christ as our ultimate example in stepping down from His throne of glory to share man’s lot in order to save him. See Philippians 2:5-11. Throughout Scripture this theme is presented as the foundation principle of God’s order.

By contrast, the enemy of souls is clearly identified as the author of envy and competitive striving to be first, saying, “I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:14. God said of him, “Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me.” Isaiah 47:10.

It is not surprising that we should see the same principles being pervasively articulated and emphasized by God’s messenger to our church as those expressed by Bible writers. I suspect it is such a common battle for us all to let go of the struggle to be first that the Lord has seen fit to provide us with much instruction and warnings about this problem. There are some 22 pages of references on this and closely related topics in The Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White.

Though it is beyond the scope of this article to review all of this rich and voluminous material, any perusal of these writings leaves one with several distinct impressions. First is an appreciation of the grave importance that the Lord places on this issue, and His concern that we be adequately warned about its seriousness. Second is that the problem permeates every aspect of our lives, and must be continually guarded against as one of the primary avenues through which Satan is determined to seduce us away from God. “It is Satan’s work to excite pride and ambition, selfishness, and love for supremacy.” *Medical Ministry*, 48.

Third, in speaking about this issue, is that the Bible writers and Mrs. White place emphasis on the basic principles involved. These are applied in a wide variety of situations—from competition and rivalry between ministers, physicians, institutions, husbands and wives, in the classrooms, and in sports, to competition in all circumstances—the basic principle is the same. Thus our study should focus on identifying the underlying principle rather than on becoming hung up on specific application.

The fourth impression is that in our personal spiritual life, as well as in the education of our youth, this perspective of the subduing of self is of primary importance. This is the reason that the enemy of souls works so hard to entice us into the mistaken notion that our Christian witness and influence will be greater if we sacrifice our distinctiveness and conform to the world by engaging in competition. See *Testimonies to Ministers*, 472-474.

The reader is urged to study extensively this huge body of precious material, but as an introduction to that study here are just a few of the multitude of comments on this topic by Ellen White:

“While self is unsubdued, we can find no rest.” *The Desire of Ages*, 336. This
observation is made in the context of describing how helpless we are in our own power to overcome the “masterful passions of the heart,” and that it is only through the divine connection that self can be subdued. Again she observed, “Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy.” Ibid., 409.

In speaking about the closing events of Christ’s earthly ministry, Ellen White makes this comment:

**It is seen that the underlying problem of all competitive efforts is to put self first, whether it is applied to individuals or to institutions. God’s messenger makes it very clear what is the origin of this spirit.**

> “While they were contending for the highest place, He to whom every knee shall bow, He whom the angels of glory count it honor to serve, bowed down to wash the feet of those who called Him Lord. He washed the feet of His betrayer.” Ibid., 649.

Another interesting dimension of this problem and its potential effects even upon our theology, is related in connection with the religious leaders of Christ’s time:

> “The hypocrisy of the Pharisees was the product of self-seeking. The glorification of themselves was the object of their lives. It was this that led them to order to be a savor of life unto life. Then there will be no rivalry, no self-seeking, no desire for the highest place. You will have that love which seeks not her own, but another’s wealth.” Ibid., 439.

> “The heaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ’s pur-

chased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 101-102.

> “The salvation of human beings means much more than many realize. It means that we are to choose God’s way rather than our own. The Lord cannot save men while they refuse to humble themselves under the reproofs and warnings that He sends, strenuously asserting their own will, and following their own course of action.” *The Upward Look*, 134.

> It is seen that the underlying problem of all competitive efforts is to put self first, whether it is applied to individuals or to institutions. God’s messenger makes it very clear what is the origin of this spirit. At the same time there is the caution that we are not immune to having this spirit contaminate even our efforts to share the Gospel:

> “Never should the managers of our institutions attempt, in the slightest degree, to take advantage of one another. Such efforts are most offensive to God. Sharp dealing, the effort to drive sharp bargains with one another, is a wrong that He will not tolerate. Every effort to exalt one institution at the expense of another is wrong.” Testimonies, vol. 7, 174.

> “Not consolidation, not rivalry or criticism, but cooperation, is God’s plan for His institutions.” Ibid.

> “There should be no rivalry between our publishing houses. If this spirit is indulged, it will grow and strengthen, and will crowd out the missionary spirit. It will grieve the Spirit of God, and will banish from the institution the ministering angels sent to be coworkers with those who cherish the grace of God.” Ibid., 173-174.

Again, the wish to exalt self is seen as contradictory to our effort to work with Christ in saving souls:

> “He [Jesus] showed what is the principle that bears sway in the kingdom of heaven, and in what true greatness consists, as estimated by the standard of the courts above. Those who were actuated by pride and love of distinction were thinking of themselves, and of the rewards they were to have, rather than how they were to render back to God the gifts they had received. They would have no place in the kingdom of heaven.” *The Desire of Ages*, 436.

We are further told that though there is a continued desire for supremacy that per-

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**Studies in Christian Education**

by E. A. Sutherland

E. A. Sutherland, at the 1899 General Conference Session, started the movement for a worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church school system as he declared: “We call our older brethren out of Babylon; but we let our children attend the Egyptian schools and learn Egyptian ways.” As president of four different colleges—Walla Walla, Battle Creek, Emmanuel Missionary (now Andrews University), and Madison—and a close confidant and student of Ellen G. White, E. A. Sutherland brings a wealth of historical information and present truth on God’s true plan of education.

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sists among God’s people (see Selected Messages, vol. 2, 382; vol. 1, 125), no man should work for God with this kind of ambition (see Testimonies, vol. 7, 198) because his service for God is marred by this spirit (see Christ’s Object Lessons, 52). Pride and ambition which lead to strife for supremacy (see Patriarchs and Prophets, 403–404) are seen as the fruit of a divided heart (see Sons and Daughters of God, 286), and shut men out of God’s kingdom (see Evangelism, 102). It is an attitude that will cease to exist among Seventh-day Adventists when persecution comes. See Testimonies, vol. 6, 401.

It is with this kind of perspective that the warning against conformity to the world is emphasized since Mrs. White says of Satan, “He will use every possible advantage you give him to control minds.” Upward Look, 20. “In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices.” The Desire of Ages, 363. In fact, this truth is articulated even more specifically in her description of a vision of Satan’s plan for defeating the church:

“As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. . . . Says the great deceiver; . . . ‘Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus, they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion.’” Testimonies to Ministers, 472, 474.

This article will conclude in the March issue of Our Firm Foundation.

REFERENCES:
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

Upcoming Meetings

The Evangelism & Revival Department of Hope International presents these upcoming meetings:

FEBRUARY 1997

Walla Walla, WA ................................................ February 1
Senior Center
311 N Main, Milton-Freewater, WA

Portland, OR ................................................... February 8
Mt. Hood Community College Visual Arts Theater (VA22)
26000 SE Stark St., Gresham, OR

San Diego, CA ................................................. February 14–16
Montgomery High School Cafeteria
3250 Palm Ave, San Diego, CA

LaCenter, MN .................................................. February 15
Call for Location

Puyallup (North Hill), WA .......................... February 22
Edgewood Grange Hall
1806 Meridian East, Puyallup

Colton, CA ..................................................... February 21–22
American Legion
1401 Veteran’s Way, Colton, CA

Etonville, WA (Week of Prayer) ....... February 23–27
Hope International

San Diego, CA ............................... February 28–March 2
Montgomery High School Cafeteria
3250 Palm Ave, San Diego, CA

MARCH 1997

Redlands, CA ................................................ March 1
Location to be announced

Look for our “Upcoming Meetings” announcements in future issues. If you need more information please call Hope International, (360) 832-6602, and ask to speak to someone in the Evangelism and Revival (E&R) department.
We are living [in] the closing scenes of the earth’s history, and what is now done for God is accomplished under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Satan has great skill and wonderful ability. Before his fall God entrusted him with power and wisdom. But he became filled with self-exaltation, and thought that he should be first in heaven. Sin entered the world through this self-seeking, this striving for the supremacy.

Satan began his work by doing just as men who ought to know better are doing today. He complained of the supposed defects in the management of heavenly things, and sought to fill the minds of the angels unfallen with his disaffection. Because he was not supreme ruler, he sowed seeds of doubt and unbelief against Christ. Because he was not as God, he strove to instill into the minds of the angels his own envy and dissatisfaction.

Thus the seeds of alienation were planted, afterwards to be drawn out and presented before the heavenly courts as proceeding, not from Satan, but as originating with the angels. So he would show that they thought as he did. Satan whispered his disaffection to the angels.

There was at first no pronounced feeling against God. But the seed had been sown, and the love and confidence of the angels was marred. The sweet communion between them and God was broken. Every move was watched, every action was viewed in the light in which Satan had made them see things.

That which Satan had instilled in the minds of the angels, a word here and a word there, opened the way for a long list of suppositions. In his artful way he drew expressions of doubt from them. When he was interviewed, he accused those whom he had educated. He laid all the disaffection on the ones whom he had led. As one in holy office he manifested an overbearing desire for justice, which was entirely contrary to God’s love and compassion and mercy. It was most difficult to make the deceiving power of Satan apparent. His power of deceiving increased with practice. If he could not defend himself, he must accuse in order to make himself appear just and righteous, and the Lord God arbitrary and exacting.

Just such transactions are taking place today. Many place such confidence in their own ideas that they present their theories as if they could make no mistake. Once their words are spoken they never go back, never repent, never feel that they need forgiveness. They feel that they are simply infallible. Thus it has been in past history; thus it will be again. Religious confidence becomes infallibility. How can these deluded ones think that they are the only ones led and taught of God? When this spirit is manifested, what can be done? You cannot convince them, because they say, “God has led me.” They will not acknowledge that they have acted from wrong principles. They maintain that they have moved rightly. The only course that can be pursued is to leave them to develop their principles. They may never see their errors, but others may be convinced and saved. To attempt to unmask them would be to call sympathy to their side.

Great efforts will be made by those who suppose their own wisdom to be supreme, in exactly the same lines on which Satan worked, and which caused so much mischief in the Paradise of God. The very same working is revealed in 1896. The very same principles are upheld. When a man is elected to a position of trust, to preside over important
interests, large and broad, or interests of less consequence but still important, Satan stirs up the minds of those who are selfish, who are not consecrated to God’s service with an eye single to His glory. He puts into their hearts the spirit of criticizing and accusing. If they are not specially advantaged, they will tell others of the mistakes and errors of the one against whom they are working. This step taken, Satan, whose special business it is to create alienation and strife, will place matters before these persons in a most deceiving way, and they will bring against those in positions of trust the most unjust and false charges, in order to discourage and destroy God’s servants.

The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. These principles were goodness, mercy and love. Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied a position of trust and power. They must accept God’s principles and convince all who were in the service of God, through the presentation of truth and justice and goodness, [that] this was the only power to be used. Force must never come in. All who thought that their position gave them power to command their fellow men and control conscience, must be deprived of their position.

These principles are to be the great foundation of education in every administration on the earth. In every church the rules given by God are to be observed and respected. God has enjoined this. His government is to be moral. Nothing is to be done from compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power. All service is to be done willingly and for love of the service of God. All who are honored with positions of influence are to represent God, for when officiating they act in the place of God. In everything their actions must correspond with the importance of their position. The higher the position, the more distinctly will self-sacrifice be revealed, if they are fit for the office.

Satan’s representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. These murmurings and complaints were groundless. Yet God allowed Satan to work out his theories. He could have handled Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by this He would have given a precedent for the violence of man which is so abundantly shown in our world in the compelling principles. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. All the compelling power is found under Satan’s government. God would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, and cause him mental or physical suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan’s creation.

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon which would not at once destroy Satan’s power, for it was His purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The heavenly universe must see the principles which Satan declared were superior to God’s principles, worked out. God’s order must be contrasted with the new order after Satan’s devising. The corrupting principles of Satan’s rule must be revealed. The principles or righteousness expressed in God’s law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, eternal, perfect.

Every heart that is controlled by these principles in 1896 will be loyal. When those who are in God’s service resort to accusation, they are adopting Satan’s principles to cast out Satan. It never will work. Satan will work. He is working upon human minds by his crooked principles. These will be adopted and acted upon by those who claim to be loyal and true to God’s government. How shall we know that they are untrue, disloyal? “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Matthew 7:20.

The Lord saw the use that Satan was making of his power, and he set before him truth in contrast with falsehood. Time and time again during the controversy Satan was ready to be convinced, ready to admit that he was wrong. But those he had deceived were ready also to accuse him of leaving them. What could he do—submit to God, or continue in a course of deception? He chose to deny truth, to take refuge in misstatements and fraud.

The Lord allowed Satan to go on and demonstrate his principles. God did establish Himself, and He carried the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe with Him, but at a terrible cost. His only

**By causing the death of the Sovereign of heaven, Satan defeated his own purposes. The death of the Son of God made the death of Satan unavoidable.**

begotten Son was given up as Satan’s victim. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed a character entirely opposite to that of Satan. As the high priest laid [off] his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of a common priest, so Christ emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the Priest, Himself the Victim.

By causing the death of the Sovereign of heaven, Satan defeated his own purposes. The death of the Son of God made the death of Satan unavoidable. Satan was allowed to go on until his administration was laid open before the worlds unfallen and before the heavenly universe. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he uprooted himself [from sympathy], and was seen by all to be a liar, a thief, and a murderer.

God sees that the same course of action is being pursued the world over. Men and women come to the place where the road diverges; it is either right or wrong. Thousands upon thousands clothe themselves in what they suppose to be an impenetrable disguise, and choose the wrong. To make their course plain to others by abrupt disclosures would only cause a larger number to choose the side of wrong. Thus the wrongdoers would be sustained and many souls would be ruined. God does not force anyone. He leaves all free to choose. But He says, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn berries and a tree that bears olives.
I beseech of all who engage in the work of murmuring and pitying themselves because something has been said or done that does not suit them, and that does not, as they think, give them due consideration, to remember that they are carrying on the very work Satan began in heaven. They are following in his track, sowing unbelief, discord, and disloyalty, for no one can entertain feelings of disaffection, and keep it to himself. He fection of those he had tempted. He is all prepared to hurl charges through them against those whom God would have stand stilly for the truth.

Satan must deceive in order to lead away. “In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.” Proverbs 1:17. Under-hand work must be done; a deceiving influence must be exerted; false pretenses must be set forth as truth; suspicion must be lulled to sleep. Satan will clothe temptation and sin with the garments of righteousness, and by this deception he will win many to his side. Christ pronounced Satan a liar and a murderer. Oh, that unwary souls would learn wisdom from God!

Cain and Abel are given us in Bible history to represent the two orders in humanity. Abel was faithful and loyal to God, and he was preferred by the Lord. Cain was disloyal; he wished his own ideas to prevail. Abel protested against these principles as disloyal. As the eldest, Cain thought that his methods and plans should have the supremacy. It made him very angry that Abel would not concede to his views, and his anger burned so hot that he killed his brother Abel. Here the two principles of right and wrong are developed.

Test and trial will come to every soul that loves God. The Lord does not work a miracle to prevent this ordeal of trial, to shield His people from the temptations of Satan. If they are tempted severely, it is because circumstances have been so shaped by the apostasy of Satan that temptations are permitted in order that characters may be developed that will decide the fitness of the human family for the home in heaven, characters that will stand through all the pressure of unfavorable circumstances in private and public life, and though tried by every species of Satan’s temptations, through the grace of God grow brave and true, and firm as a rock to principles, and come forth from the fiery ordeal of more value than the golden wedge of Ophir. Those who have such characters, God will endorse with His own superscription as His chosen elect.

The firmness manifested by Daniel must be shown by God’s children. All temptations to depart from pure and holy principles must be unhesitatingly rejected. There must be a firm adherence to right principles. As a people we are to stand unmoved by all Satan’s delusions, even when he comes as an angel of light. Thus may we constantly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

All who love God and are loyal to His government will be tempted to change leaders. But God has said, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Luke 10:27. The Lord accepts no half heart. He demands the whole man. Religion is to be brought into every phase of life, carried into labor of every kind. The whole man is to come under God’s control.

must tell others that he is not treated as he should be. Thus others are led to murmur and complain. This is the root of bitterness springing up, whereby many are defiled.

Thus Satan works today through his evil angels. He confederates with men who claim to be in the faith; and those who are trying to carry forward the work of God with fidelity, having no man’s person in admiration, working without partiality and hypocrisy, will have just as severe trials brought against them as Satan can bring through those who claim to know the truth. Proportionate to the light and knowledge these opposers have, is Satan’s success. The root of bitterness strikes down deep, and is communicated to others. Thus many are defiled. Their statements are confused and untruthful, their principles are unscrupulous, and Satan finds in them the very helpers he wants.

Through dissension and alienation Satan reaps his harvest of souls. He leads those who are ambitious for money, ambitious to be first, too proud to be anything but the highest, to murmur and complain. These poor souls have not overcome their natural and hereditary tendencies, and he leads them into sin.

As the end draws near, Satan will stir up minds, in proportion to their capabilities and knowledge, to sow seeds which will produce a harvest they will not care to garner. He works in so deceiving a way that he himself is not detected, and then he reaps the benefit of the disaffection of those he had tempted. He is all prepared to hurl charges through them against those whom God would have stand stilly for the truth.

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Satan contrives through evil angels to form an alliance with professedly pious men, and thus to levant the church of God. Fallen men and fallen angels are, through apostasy, in the same confederacy, leagued to work against good. They unite in a desperate companionship. Satan knows that if he can induce men, as he induced the angels, to join in rebellion under the guise of servants of God, he will have in them his most successful allies in his enterprise against Heaven. Under the name of godliness, he can inspire them with his own accusing spirit, and charge them with evil. They are his trained detectives. Their work is to create feuds, to make charges which create discord and bitterness among brethren, to set tongues in active service for Satan, to sow seeds of dissension by watching for evil and speaking of that which will create discord.

Christ prayed for His disciples, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be
Behold the Man
by Taylor Bunch

Taylor Bunch is known for his studies in Jewish history. In this book the author focuses our attention on the final scenes of Christ's earthly life. As you read this book you will have a greater understanding of Christ's experience—and of the manner in which Jewish law was violated during His arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

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The Great Second Advent Movement
by J. N. Loughborough

"The experience of William Miller and his associates, of Captain Joseph Bates, and of other pioneers in the advent message, should be kept before our people. Elder Loughborough's book should receive attention." Counsels to Writers and Editors, 145.

As you read The Great Second Advent Movement, you will relive J. N. Loughborough's eyewitness account of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's founding story.

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Order your copy from Hope International for $13. Please see page 3 for shipping and sales and sales tax information.
ONE evening I was driving by a local school where I noticed a recently built complex of baseball diamonds and bleachers behind the school. Out on the field two uniformed teams were struggling for the mastery as fans looked on intensely from the bleachers. What caused me to stop the car and stare for a few minutes was not that some children were playing baseball, but what surprised me was the fact that this was a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school raised up to educate God’s remnant children. Yet, why should I be surprised? Several years earlier the local Adventist college built a baseball complex, and began competing against other local colleges.

Was the assistant editor of one of our church papers correct in extolling the virtues of competitive sports? He stated: “In general, athletics reinforce some of the developmental benefits that Adventists prize—such as discipline, self-control, teamwork, being graceful in defeat (and victory), playing by the rules, and using one’s talents.”1 Could it be that there are some benefits from having sports in our schools? After all, we will no doubt bring more Adventist students into our schools by providing intercollegiate sports programs. With so many good things being said about sports by some church leaders, are those who believe competitive sports to be un-Christian simply out of touch with the times?

Fortunately, we are not left to our own finite, human reasoning to resolve the answers to these questions. God has provided counsel on this subject, and has laid out a perfect blueprint of how our youth are to be educated.

First and foremost, we should look to the example that Christ left us. “I cannot find an instance in the life of Christ where He devoted time to play and amusement. He was the great Educator for the present and the future life. I have not been able to find one instance where He educated His disciples to engage in amusement of football or pugilistic games, to obtain physical exercise, or in theatrical performances; and yet Christ was our Pattern in all things.” Fundamentals of Christian Education, 229.

If Christ and His disciples did not engage in athletic contests, then who invented sports and what is their purpose? “Satan has devised a multitude of ways in which to keep men from serving God. He has invented sports and games, into which men enter with such intensity that one would suppose a crown of life was to reward the winner.” Review and Herald, September 10, 1901.

Yes, Satan is the inventor of sports and games, and their real purpose is to keep men from serving God:

“The public feeling is that manual labor is degrading, yet men may exert themselves as much as they choose at cricket, baseball, or in pugilistic contests without being regarded as degraded. Satan is delighted when he sees human beings using their physical and mental powers in that which does not educate, which is not useful, which does not help them to be a blessing to those who need their help. While the youth are becoming expert in games that are of no real value to themselves or to others, Satan is playing the game of life for their souls, taking from them the talents that God has given them, and placing in their stead his own evil attributes. It is his effort to lead men to ignore God. He seeks to engross and absorb the mind so completely that God will find no place in the thoughts. He does not wish people to have a knowledge of their Maker, and he
is well pleased if he can set in operation games and theatrical performances that will so confuse the senses of the youth that God and heaven will be forgotten.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* 274-275.

Could God be any more clear in His counsel? Satan is “delighted” when he sees uniformed Adventist youth take to the baseball diamond or basketball court to compete in useless contests. While students are playing senseless games, while school administrators look on approvingly, Satan is also playing a game. He is playing the game of life for their souls. How blind are we that we cannot reason from cause to effect? How can we fail to see the terrible harvest that we will surely reap as a result of allowing these activities into our schools? While we extol the benefits of athletic competition in our church papers, Satan is robbing our children of the talents God has given them, and is replacing them with his own evil attributes.

The Spirit of Prophecy identifies sports as a form of idolatry. “I was told by my Guide: ‘Look ye, and behold the idolatry of My people, to whom I have been speaking, rising up early, and presenting to them their dangers. I looked that they should bring forth fruit.’ There were some who were striving for the mastery, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of strife and contention among them as to which should be the greatest. The spirit was similar to that manifested in the baseball games on the college ground. Said my Guide: ‘These things are an offense to God. Both near and afar off, souls are perishing for the bread of life and the water of salvation.’” *Testimonies,* vol. 8, 52.

“A view of things was presented before me in which the students were playing games of tennis and cricket. Then I was given instruction regarding the character of these amusements. They were presented to me as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* 350.

As surely as ancient Israel set up idols and suffered the judgments of God, our educational institutions have established idolatry in our schools.

On pages 210-211 of the book *Education,* the Spirit of Prophecy identifies five powerful reasons not to engage in athletic games:

- “They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement.”
- They foster “a distaste for useful labor.”
- They foster “a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities.”

As surely as ancient Israel set up idols and suffered the judgments of God, our educational institutions have established idolatry in our schools.

- “They tend to destroy a relish for life’s sober realities and its tranquil enjoyments.”
- They open the door “to dissipation and lawlessness.”

As we rapidly approach the end of time, money is needed to quickly spread God’s final message of warning to the world. During this critical time in earth’s history we have some important choices to make. Should we expend money to build churches in Russia, or should we use it to build sports complexes? Should we be buying Bibles for China, or should we be buying sports equipment and uniforms? Should we be paying for more pastors in Africa, or should we be paying coaching salaries? Should we be giving scholarships to worthy theology students, or should we be giving out sports scholarships? Should we be sending out medical missionaries, or should we be paying medical bills for students injured in sports-related activities? Every dollar spent on sports is a dollar utterly wasted. Every dollar spent on sports is one less dollar that could have been spent spreading God’s final message to the world.

Will Godjudge us for wasting money on sports? “God’s money is needed. It is hoarded and buried in the world, while multitudes are starving for temporal food and spiritual knowledge. It is spent in foolish amusements, in dissipating games and sports and idolatrous practices. God says, ‘Shall I not visit for these things?’ Already He is sending His judgments upon the earth. Terrible plagues are visiting our world, in famines, in floods, in calamities by sea and land, in earthquakes in divers places. And because of men’s wickedness the Lord does not restrain the destroying power.” *Review and Herald,* December 8, 1896.

It is not just students who are wasting time and money on sports. How many Adventist adults waste their time and money by joining the world in attending football, baseball, basketball, soc-

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God would rather have us engaged in useful labor, such as cultivating the land, caring for our buildings, and doing missionary work, than wasting ourselves in useless sports.

"Now the same power of exercise of mind and muscle might invent ways and means of altogether a higher class of exercise, in doing missionary work which would make them laborers together with God, and would be educating for higher usefulness in the present life, in doing useful work, which is a most essential branch in education." Notebook Leaflets, 97.

"Young persons are naturally active, and if they find no legitimate scope for their pent-up energies after the confinement of the schoolroom, they become restless and impatient of control; they are thus led to engage in the rude, unmanly sports that disgrace so many schools and colleges, and even to plunge into scenes of dissipation. And many who leave their homes innocent, are corrupted by their associations at school. Much could be done to obviate these evils, if every institution of learning would make provision for manual labor on the part of the students—for actual practice in agriculture and the mechanic arts. Competent teachers should be provided to instruct the youth in various industrial pursuits, as well as in their studies in the schoolroom." Signs of the Times, August 26, 1886.

Every moment devoted to sports is a moment robbed from doing God's service. Will God not hold us accountable for this time? God would rather have us engaged in useful labor, such as cultivating the land, caring for our buildings, and doing missionary work, than wasting ourselves in useless sports. We cannot afford to be playing games with Satan. We are to be using the precious little time we have left on earth to prepare our characters for heaven.

It is worth repeating from the quote above, "many who leave their homes innocent, are corrupted by their associations at school." If sports were added to our schools to attract more Adventist youth to them, what kind of Adventist youth are they attracting? Are these the type of youth that are bringing an uplifting, holy influence to the school? Consider that these are youth who value participating in sports to be of greater importance than getting a Christian education at an Adventist school. What type of evil influence are youth with such perverted priorities bringing into our schools?

Sincere Adventist parents should ask themselves, Do I want my child exposed to the worldly element that is rapidly gaining the advantage in these schools? Am I willing to take the risk of sending my innocent child to a school where they may become corrupted? Do I want my children to attend a school that ignores the clear warnings of the Spirit of Prophecy? If a school is ignoring the Spirit of Prophecy on the question of sports, in what other areas are they also ignoring the Spirit of Prophecy's warnings?

In light of the soon coming of Christ let us eliminate sports, and all other worldly practices, from our schools and from our personal lives. It is too late in history for us to be wasting our time, money, and talents on sports. Instead, let us be an example to the world and make the best use of the little time we have left on this earth by sharing the special truths entrusted to us by God with a lost and dying world.

Satan is playing a game. It is the game of life for the souls of our children.

References:
In his sequel to the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Advise and Consent*, Allen Drury parabolizes the pain of a tortured planet played out on the stage of the United Nations. In Drury's tale this microcosm of global chaos convulses with the schemes of diplomats, legislators, monarchs and presidents, and fumes with the wrath of states and peoples more obsessed with avenging former wrongs and shame than preserving liberty against present dangers. Seeking desperately to rise above the savage quarrels tearing the globe apart, a United States Senator, dying of leukemia, addresses the world community gathered before him at the UN General Assembly, his voice breaking, his words sharp with challenge: "I beg of you, here in this body of which men have hoped so much and for which they have already done so much, let us love one another!"

"Let us love one another!

"It is all we have left." (Emphasis in original.)

The title of Allen Drury's book is *A Shade of Difference*.

Decades before Drury used these words, Ellen White used them in a letter to Uriah Smith regarding his involvement in the post-1888 controversy over righteousness by faith. In her words:

"Have you as a colaborer, one who has had long experience in the work, gone to these men with your soul imbued with the love of God, feeling pained to the very heart to perceive a shade of difference in views and positions, and said to them, 'Brethren, we must be a unit'? Christ prayed that we might be one as He is One with the Father. Let us together bring our ideas to the Scriptures. Let us lay aside prejudice, and be determined we will cherish brotherly love, and in meekness and lowliness of mind try to see eye to eye."
Time and again in the past several years, those involved in the controversy surrounding the 1888 Message Study Committee have endeavored to follow the inspired counsel stated above. However, more and more, as convictions are expressed and correspondence exchanged, it is becoming apparent that more than a shade of difference is involved. The publication of the March-April 1996 issue of the 1888 Message Newsletter has clarified this fact beyond dispute.

The present author has written two books in response to the theology of Jack Sequeira and the 1888 Message Study Committee. One, the reply to Beyond Belief will soon be reprinted in a second edition, with major expansions and revisions. The reader will find in these documents a vast range of inspired evidence conclusively demonstrating the errors of the theology in question. The following reply to the recent 1888 Message Newsletter should be read in conjunction with the two books noted above (see reference 4).

It may be asked why some of us persist in responding to the errors examined in this context. It is because we remain convinced that open minds and searching hearts still abound in contemporary Adventism, and that some such minds have indeed been changed by the weight of evidence from Inspiration as it relates to these issues. Let the purveyors of falsehood and distortion be assured that we will continue to respond until every false gospel in Adventism is vanquished, and until our precious church is united at last on the unambiguous platform of inspired truth.

The Key to the Whole Controversy

Seventh-day Adventist theology differs from that of all other Bible-believing Christians because it is based on the consensus of Scripture. We are not Old Testament Christians, New Testament Christians, Pauline Christians or Johannine Christians—we are Biblical Christians. The Bible declares that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16. Our positions on the Sabbath, the state of man in death, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctuary, and all others are based on the belief that the Bible is one harmonious, consistent, self-interpreting document. No one portion of the Bible is given preeminence over another. Every part is examined and taken into account before a conclusion is reached.

Every disagreement with Adventist theology found in the nominal Christian world is based on a violation of the above principle. It is the selective use of Scripture, often ignorantly done, which causes our evangelical Christian neighbors to keep Sunday sacred, to believe the lost will burn throughout eternity, and to hold to the secret rapture theory of end-time events. It is also this same selective use of Scripture, borrowed largely from Protestant evangelicals, which has produced the various easy versions of righteousness by faith in the contemporary Adventist Church.

Once this point is understood, the vast and seemingly indecipherable confusion on the gospel in Adventism today can be settled with embarrassing simplicity.

However, the 1888 Message Study Committee fails to do that. Like the promoters of other easy gospels among us, as well as the evangelicals beyond our borders, the Study Committee focuses on the New Testament books of Romans and Galatians—to the dire neglect of the rest of Scripture. To be sure, Romans and Galatians are perfectly good books which, when read in their totality, do not in the least proclaim the Study Committee’s cherished doctrine of universal justification, or its equating of salvation by sanctified obedience with the salvation by works Paul condemns. When any portion of Scripture is used to develop a doctrine without the clarification provided by the whole of Scripture, confusion and falsehood are the sure results.

The Study Committee’s newsletter quotes an unsubstantiated Ellen White statement that “we need all of Romans and Galatians we can get.” Few would doubt that this is true, of course, but we need all of the rest of the Bible as well. The Study Committee tries inconclusively to water down the forcefulness of Peter’s statement that Paul’s writings are difficult to understand. See 2 Peter 3:16. While this point need not be overstated, since Paul’s writings on the whole speak far more of sanctification than justification, we still cannot ignore the stark historical reality that Paul has been, and continues to be, the heretic’s favorite Bible writer. Whether Augustine on predestination, John Calhoun on slavery, extreme fundamentalists on the status of women, or the Lord’s Day Alliance on the change of the Sabbath, the perverters of Scripture find Paul’s writings easiest to pervert. While Peter hastens to say that those wrestling Paul do the same to “the other scriptures,” church history bears out why Paul is the only Bible writer to be singled out in this fashion.

Walter Martin reflects his unbalanced attention to Paul’s works when he describes Paul as “the greatest of the apostles”—a distinction which the Bible does not give him. The Desmond Ford—Robert Brinsmade view of righteousness by faith, which gained a wide hearing in the 1970s and was borrowed significantly from Protestant theologians, makes a narrow strand of the book of Romans the exclusive focus of its gospel presentation.

The Study Committee shocks any careful student of recent, Adventist, theo-
logical history by citing as authority the writings of James Buchanan as a means of defining the difference between Catholic and Protestant theology. James Buchanan is a thoroughgoing Calvinistic theologian and predestinarian, whose writings were a favorite of Ford, Brinsmead, and Geoffrey Paxton during the 1970s. I once heard Robert Wieland himself publicly criticize Ford for his reliance on Buchanan at a meeting I attended during my freshman year in college. In a letter written to Ford two years before, Wieland protested Ford’s “undue, even heavy reliance on non-Seventh-day Adventist theologians regarding the meaning of ‘righteousness by faith.’” He then observed, “I see something very dangerous in downgrading Ellen G. White and upgrading uninspired theologians instead.” Reading the recent 1888 Message Newsletter, with its many citations from scholars and its attempt to reduce Ellen White’s role, would seem to offer evidence that the Study Committee leaders need to follow Wieland’s own previously stated good advice.

Most tragic of all, the Study Committee continues to walk the garden path trod before them by too many others in contemporary Adventism—the attempt to reduce the authority of Ellen White in the present doctrinal discussion. Quite obviously, no attention has been paid by the Study Committee to the damning evidence presented some time ago by this writer—the evidence that from Desmond Ford to Martin Weber, modern Adventists who question Ellen White’s doctrinal role do so for the apparent reason that her theology poses a mortal threat to their theological presentations. Recently, the church was confronted by the pathetically absurd suggestion of a leading denominational editor that a one-year moratorium might be advisable on the use of Ellen White’s writings in the pulpits and in the publications of the church. Could it be that if Ellen White’s teachings were fully internalized by this editor, he would be forced to relinquish many of his cherished views and would truly become a full-fledged “historic Adventist”?

The Study Committee, though they disagree with much of this editor’s theology, obviously share his fears of the Spirit of Prophecy. Like Desmond Ford, they insist on wresting from context Ellen White’s statement: “Do not repeat what I have said, saying, ‘Sister White said this’ and ‘Sister White said that’” One of their favorite authors, Leroy Moore, has conclusively demonstrated that this statement was never intended by Ellen White to forbid the quoting of her writings as guidance for the church, but was addressed to persons who were quoting her words, not to encourage wholehearted acceptance thereof, but to further their own political ends. The present writer has pointed this out in a previous publication, but again, the Study Committee does not seem to be listening.

The Study Committee’s Newsletter claims, “We have firm confidence in the full authority of Ellen White’s writings.” If so, why do they flagrantly distort Ellen White’s request that her writings not be used to settle the “daily” controversy—as though this means her writings should be kept out of all doctrinal controversy? The present writer quoted this Ellen White statement in context in a previous book, but obviously it needs to be stated again:

“I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their arguments regarding this question [the daily]; for I have had no instruction on the point under discussion, and I see no need for the controversy.” (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

In no way does this statement deny her stated role “to correct specious errors and to specify what is truth.” The Study Committee does a profound disservice to its readers by quoting the first part of another such statement, while conveniently leaving out the last part, which establishes Ellen White’s corrective role. Here is the part quoted in the Newsletter:

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged.”

Here is the very next sentence, which they left out:

“God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”

Ellen White’s writings are the “lesser light” because none of her theology is original with her. It all comes from the Bible, and she merely amplifies what is already found there.

The Study Committee insists, “nothing that she ever said can fairly be used to contradict her crystal clear statement that her writings were ‘the lesser light’ to bring us to ‘the greater light.’” Just what does the Study Committee think Ellen White means by these words? “Lesser,” in what way? Ellen White is clear when she states above that her writings are “not for a new rule of faith,” and when she states elsewhere that: “Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given.”

In other words, as this writer has stated before, Ellen White’s writings are the “lesser light” because none of her theology is original with her. It all comes from the Bible, and she merely amplifies what is already found there. However, the Study Committee’s repeated and distorted use of this language makes it clear that they want “lesser” to mean lesser in its binding claims on the believer’s conscience. Though they assure us that “any new light the Lord may send will be in harmony with past light,” it remains painfully evident that the “gospel,” which perhaps they choose to call new light, is in direct contradiction to past light, both in the Scriptures and in the Spirit of Prophecy. For example:

The Bible is clear that the Spirit’s work in sanctification and inward renewal is part of the means of our salvation. See 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5. These two Bible verses are devastating to the Study Committee’s position, yet they seem to pretend that they are not even in the Bible. Ellen White, of course, agrees with the Bible:
“Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.” 32

However, Jack Sequeira, supported by the Study Committee,33 declares that "the righteousness God produces in us...has no saving value." 34 Who is right—Inspiration—or Sequeira and the Study Committee?

Jesus declared at the start of His ministry, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. Ellen White declares:

“The Lord has given instruction that the gospel is to be carried forward; and the gospel includes health reform in all its phases.”35

“When temperance is presented as a part of the gospel, many will see their need of reform.”36

“The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character.”37

Yet, in direct contradiction to this, Sequeira writes that "the ‘gospel’ is the unconditional good news of salvation for all mankind.”38 Moreover, the Study Committee agrees: “The gospel is not an instruction manual of ‘do-this’ or ‘do-that’ in order to go to heaven.”39 Again, whom shall we believe—Inspiration—or Sequeira and the Study Committee?

Sequeira and the Study Committee maintain that the whole world has been involuntarily reconciled to God at the cross.40 They have twisted the meaning of Paul’s words to state that we were reconciled to God at the death of His Son—rather than by His death. See Romans 5:10.

Ignoring the necessity of comparing scripture with scripture, they leave out those verses which make it clear that this reconciliation is instrumental, not chronological, and applies only to those who have chosen by God’s grace to give up their sins. See Colossians 1:20-23. Commenting on the language of 2 Corinthians 5:19, Ellen White is breathtakingly clear that the reconciliation here described applies to believers only:

“To him who accepts Christ as his righteousness, as his only hope, pardon is pronounced; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The justice, truth, and holiness of Christ, which are approved by the law of God, form a channel through which mercy may be communicated to the repenting, believing sinner. Those who do not believe in Christ are not reconciled to God; but those who have faith in Him are hid with Christ in God.”41

Again we ask, Who is right—Inspiration—or Sequeira and the Study Committee?

By their own stated rule that new light cannot contradict old light, the Study Committee’s theology stands condemned.

Prove that at one time or another Jones and Waggoner did teach some form of this position, it would not prove that position to be right. In two statements Ellen White makes it clear that the Jones-Waggoner teachings were not free of error:

“Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct.”46

“I believe without doubt that God has given precious truth at the right time to Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner. Do I place them as infallible? Do I say that they will not make a statement, or have an idea that cannot be questioned or that cannot be error? Do I say so? No, I do not say any such thing.”47

By contrast, she states concerning the writings of Inspiration:

“The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”48

“There is one straight chain of truth, without one heretical sentence, in that which I have written.”49

Never is such a statement uttered by Ellen White regarding any other body of writings or teachings, including those of Jones and Waggoner.

For this reason, while I do not consider the writings of Jones and Waggoner unimportant, I refuse to enter into controversy over what they did and did not teach, since Ellen White never pronounced their teachings error-free. Contrary to the recent allegations of some,50 Adventists do not need Ellen White’s endorsement of Jones and Waggoner as a means of determining her theology on the nature of Christ, sinless obedience, or any other issue. Her own writings, grounded in the Biblical consensus, are all that is needed.

To summarize, the key to settling the modern, Adventist, salvational controversy is to take human opinion (including Jones’ and Waggoner’s), human scholarship, and human experience out of the discussion, and permit the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to become our exclusive authority. It is the intrusion of the human element, not the supposed ambiguity of Inspiration, which is responsible for the contention and divisiveness we see in our midst today.
The Means of Our Salvation

The Study Committee insists that justification by obedience is the same as the justification by works condemned in both scripture and Ellen White, but no inspired evidence is produced to demonstrate that these are the same.

When we speak of obedience in this context, we mean the forsaking of sin, which the Bible clearly states is necessary in order for forgiveness to take place. See Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7. Here again are two Bible verses completely ignored by the Study Committee in their responses to “historic Adventists.” The call to give up one’s sins as a prerequisite for justification is not an echo of the Council of Trent, as the Study Committee would have us believe. Rather, it is an echo of God’s Holy Word and the teachings of His modern prophet. Because God’s forgiveness “is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin,” we are able to understand why we have to give up our sins in order for God to forgive them. Because God respects our freedom of choice, He will not take from us what we refuse to surrender. Thus the forsaking of sin is not a means by which creature merit procures something from God; it is merely a means by which He honors the free choice He gives to all His creatures. See Joshua 24:15; Revelation 22:17.

The Study Committee tries desperately to explain away Ellen White’s clear statement that “by perfect obedience to the requirements of the law, man is justified. Only through faith in Christ is such obedience possible.” They insist that this statement refers to “Christ’s imputed righteousness, not our own.”

We agree, but as the Study Committee itself acknowledges, imputed righteousness is not forensic only. Ellen White declares, “By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.” She states elsewhere: “His [Christ’s] righteousness is imputed only to the obedient.” This statement is in harmony with Paul’s writing in Romans 2:13: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

No one in this discussion is defending “our own righteousness” as a means of salvation. Yet, the Study Committee insists on the unscriptural contention that our own righteousness and the believer’s converted obedience are one and the same thing. In the following statement Ellen White not only clarifies the practical nature of imputed righteousness but also makes a clear distinction between our own strength and the practical strength provided by Jesus’ righteousness:

“The resolutions you may make in your own finite strength, will be only as ropes of sand; but if you pray in sincerity, surrendering yourself, soul, body, and spirit, unto God, you put on the whole armor of God, and open the soul to the righteousness of Christ; and this alone—Christ’s imputed righteousness—makes you able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The work of every soul is to resist the enemy in the power and might of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise is that the devil shall flee from us.” See James 4:7.

The following statements are even clearer regarding those works which form a part of our salvation and those which do not:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12. What does this mean? Is this a contradiction? Let us see what the last part of it says: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Verses 12–13. Praise God. Now who will be discouraged? Who is going to faint? It is not committed to us, weak, feeble mortals to work out our own salvation in our own strength. It is Christ that worketh in you. And this is the privilege of every son and daughter of Adam. But we are to work. We are not to be idle. We are put here in this world to work. We are not put here to fold our arms.”

“A man is made holy, and acceptable with God, only when his unclean heart is made clean by the grace of Christ, through faith, and by obedience to words of truth and righteousness.”

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. . . . Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works.”

“The future eternal life of each individual depends, not on words, not on profession, but on earnest works. We need to make decided efforts in order to keep the heart with all diligence, while looking to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith. We need to watch over an unruly tongue; we need to watch for opportunities to do good as Jesus did. Ministers of the gospel, preach Christ. Bring His heavenly grace into your lives and thoughts. Be truthful, and ever keep under the discipline of the Word of God. We must be saved in God’s appointed way. We must lean upon His counsel, and unite in His works.”

“A mere participation in religious services and ordinances does not make a sinner a Christian. . . . A man is made holy, and acceptable with God, only when his unclean heart is made clean by the grace of Christ, through faith, and by obedience to words of truth and righteousness. A work of reformation and restoration must take place in every heart. Those who have had great light and many privileges may perform some good works, notwithstanding their impenitence and their refusal to be saved in God’s appointed way. But these good works do not cleanse the soul from corruption. Only those who accept the light of God’s truth, choosing to obey Him, will be cleansed from the defilement of sin.”

Notice how several of these statements speak of our need to be saved in “God’s [or Christ’s] appointed way,” and how is it defined?

“Thank God. He attends us every step of the way through, if we are willing to be saved in Christ’s appointed way, through obedience to His requirements.”

As we ascend Peter’s ladder, God promises we will never fall:
“Christ, who connects earth with heaven, is the ladder. The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity; the topmost round reaches to the throne of God in His divinity. The humanity of Christ embraces fallen humanity, while His divinity lays hold upon the throne of God. We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder. All these graces are to be manifested in the Christian character; and ‘if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.’ 2 Peter 1:10-11.”  

Whenever scripture and Ellen White speak of obedience as a condition of salvation, they are talking about sanctified obedience—not our own. 

Rather than getting their theology exclusively from the weight of inspired evidence, the Study Committee makes the mistake that too many in contemporary Adventism are making. They come to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy with their own definitions of such terms as the blood and righteousness of Christ, the old and new covenants, and legalism. Instead of allowing Inspiration to define itself, they read into the statements of Inspiration what they insist must be the real meaning, in accordance with their own theological presuppositions. Several examples will suffice. 

The recent Study Committee Newsletter quotes the following Ellen White statement: 

“His [the believer’s] perfect obedience to all God’s commandments, opens to him the gates of the Holy City.”

Then they respond: 

“On the surface, this one sentence does sound like old covenant legalism, earning heavenly by creature merit, but the context indicates it is not. The two previous sentences proclaim the gospel: ‘He desires us to seek for a pure, clean soul, a soul washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. It is the white robe of Christ’s righteousness that gives the sinner admittance into the presence of the heavenly angels.’ She does not teach that we save ourselves.” (Emphasis in original.)

The Study Committee’s big problem is their conviction that being made white in the blood of the Lamb, clothed with the white robe of Christ’s righteousness, refers to forensic (legal) righteousness alone—that which Christ did for us 2,000 years ago. While they claim to believe on one page that righteousness by faith does include both justification and sanctification, on the previous page (quoted above) they speak as though the blood and righteousness of Christ do not include sanctification. However, the Bible very clearly defines the fine linen in which the bride of Christ is arrayed as “the righteous deeds of the saints.” Revelation 19:8, R.S.V.

Again, absolutely no one is saying we can save ourselves, but salvation by sanctified obedience is not the same as salvation by self. Whenever scripture and Ellen White speak of obedience as a condition of salvation, they are talking about sanctified obedience—not our own. Indeed, never does Ellen White use the term “our own works” with reference to sanctified obedience. That term refers only to the religious actions of the unconverted heart. This entire controversy might be settled quickly if the Study Committee, and countless others in Adventism today, would simply acknowledge this inspired distinction. 

The Study Committee confuses the reader again by quoting Ellen White’s devastatingly clear statement that “obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life.” Conveniently, they left out the previous part of this sentence, which utterly demolishes their cherished notion that the gospel is unconditional good news, not good advice: 

“The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life.”

The Study Committee comments as follows: 

“Another brief excerpt quoted seems to have Ellen White teach salvation by works: [then the quote above is cited] . . . But the next sentence proclaims the gospel: ‘Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him.’” (Emphasis in original.)

Of course, it is the imparted righteousness of Christ which makes this obedience possible. The true Adventists have consistently said this. Will the Study Committee please produce one—just one—inspired statement that excludes sanctified obedience from saving righteousness, or which equates the salvation by works, condemned by Inspiration, with salvation by sanctification?

Again, the clarity of the Bible on this point is unmistakable: 

“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

The Study Committee speaks as though salvation by sanctified obedience is the same as “creature merit,” and explicitly denies that sanctification is meritorious. Again, why do they insist on the absurd notion that “creature merit” is the same as the Creator’s imparted merit? In Ellen White’s writings, the merits of Christ are just another term for the righteousness of Christ. They are placed to our account in place of our past sins, but they are also imparted to give power for living righteous lives. Can the following statements possibly be misunderstood: 

“Becoming partakers of His divine nature, we are to learn to discern the temptations of Satan, and, in the strength of His grace, overcome the corruptions that are in the world through lust. He who was once a sinful human being may be refined and purified through the imparted merits of Christ, and stand before his fellow men as a laborer together with God.”

“When the law of God is thus implanted in the soul of the believer, he is approaching eternal life through the mer-
its of Jesus. . . . Here in this life is the testing, trying time. The angels of God are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. The whole question is settled in this, Is he obedient or disobedient to the commandments of God? has the sinner been transformed in this world, through the merits of Christ, to an obedient servant, so that he is fitted to join the heavenly society?76

"We must seek to separate sin from us, relying upon the merits of the blood of Christ; and then in the day of affliction, when the enemy presses us, we shall walk among the angels."77

"The more we contemplate these riches, the more we will come into possession of them, and the more we shall reveal the merits of Christ's sacrifice, the protection of His righteousness, His inexpressible love, the fullness of His wisdom, and His power to present us before the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."78

"Through the merits of His blood, you may overcome every spiritual foe, and remedy every defect of character."79

"Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul."80

The Study Committee insists that we are not our "co-saviors."81 It is very dangerous to invent theological expressions not found in the writings of Inspiration. This only confuses people, especially when they read Paul's exhortation to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."82 Philippians 2:12-13. The Study Committee's claim that this merely means to "let this salvation received in Christ flow out from you to others."83 This claim is belied by Paul's statement in Colossians 1:29: "Whereunto [perfection] I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Thus man is exhorted to labor and strive, not merely to avoid "damming up the stream."84 No wonder Ellen White declares that "man is to work out that which God works in."85 Again we cite a statement we quoted earlier:

"The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation . . . Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works."86

We are not our "co-saviors" in the sense that no power or merit originates with man. "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." 1 Chronicles 29:14. Not only the power bestowed at conversion but also the power with which we were born is a gift from God. Thus the converted Christian realizes that his cooperative effort in the saving process is merely an act of returning to God what was His in the first place.

While the above statement (and others) speaks of the need to gain salvation, Inspiration is equally clear that we cannot earn salvation.87 The difference is simple, and flows out of the thought just stated. If a person in great, financial debt comes to me for help, and I in turn give him the means to gain financial freedom, this would be very different from such a person gaining such freedom by means of his own hard-earned dollars. How foolish would it be for such a person to claim that his own sweat and blood had gotten him out of debt! By the same token, how foolish it is to think a person can claim credit from God for his part in working out his own salvation, since the only power available to accomplish this comes from God! So long as this principle is understood, none need fear that boasting is encouraged by true Adventist theology.

This point helps us to understand one of the most illuminating truths at last unveiled to penetrate the blindness of contemporary Adventism—that legalism is truly an empty figment of human imagination—the absurd idea that a creature actually has something of his own to give in exchange for something belonging to his Creator.

Legalism is truly an empty figment of human imagination—the absurd idea that a creature actually has something of his own to give in exchange for something belonging to his Creator. on condition of obedience: 'If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.' Exodus 19:5-6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, 'All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient.' Exodus 24:7."

"The terms of the 'old covenant' were, Obey and live: 'If a man do, he shall even live in them;' (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5) but 'cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.' Deuteronomy 27:26. The 'new covenant' was established upon 'better promises'—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's
law. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; ... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." Jeremiah 31:33-34."

Put simply, the difference between the two covenants is not between belief versus obedience as the basis of salvation, but rather, religious activity apart from conversion versus religious activity produced by conversion. While Ellen White says clearly that the Israelites did not perceive the state of their own hearts when they promised to obey God, she is quite clear elsewhere—contrary to one of the Study Committee’s cherished representations—that God’s people are to make this exact promise, with His strength, in these last days. After citing the promise Israel made in Exodus 19:8, she comments:

"This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days. Their acceptance with God depends on a faithful fulfillment of the terms of their agreement with Him. God includes in His covenant all who will obey Him."98

The Study Committee unleashes the most perverse of concepts when it seeks to distinguish belief from obedience, and by the same logic, unbelief from disobedience. The Study Committee describes “historic Adventism” as teaching that “the final judgment of the lost will be because of their sins of disobedience,” and claims that by contrast, the 1888 Message teaches that “the final judgment of the lost will be because of their cherished unbelief.”99 Jack Sequeira teaches the same thing when he states, “The New Testament is absolutely clear: man is not lost because he’s a sinner. Man is lost because he has rejected Jesus Christ."100 This is not the same as once-saved-always-saved, since neither Sequeira nor the Study Committee deny that believers can stop believing. However, none dare miss the point these authors make—that while ceasing to believe will cost us salvation, occasional disobedience will not. It is utterly impossible for such a concept not to encourage carelessness in Christian living.

The difference between the two covenants is not between belief versus obedience as the basis of salvation, but rather, religious activity apart from conversion versus religious activity produced by conversion.

Both Scripture and Ellen White are clear that for the Christian, belief and obedience are identical. “The one believing in the Son has life eternal, but the one disobeying the Son will not see life. John 3:36, Interlinear Bible. This helps us understand just how much is involved in the divine command to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31. Thus Ellen White makes the following statements:

“We hear many say, ‘Believe, believe; all that you have to do is believe in Jesus.’ But it is our privilege to inquire, What does this belief take in? and what does it comprehend? There are many of us who have a nominal faith, but we do not bring that faith into our characters.”96

“To believe on Christ is to have God dwell in the soul and have not merely the acts, but the words, and even the thoughts, brought into subjection to the Spirit of Christ.”97

We noted earlier that because the Study Committee approaches Inspiration with the unscriptural definition of legalism so common in contemporary Adventism—namely, that sanctified obedience is a requirement for salvation—we find it quoting clear inspired statements in this regard, and then asking, “Is Ellen White really a legalist at heart?”98 Using the Study Committee’s definition, Christ Himself is a legalist. For it was He who told the rich, young ruler, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. Ellen White recounts another story in which Jesus gave this answer to a similar question:

“When the lawyer came to Christ, saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ the Saviour did not say, ‘Believe, only believe, and you will be saved. ‘What is written in the law?’ He said; ‘how readest thou?’ The lawyer answered: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.’ Christ said, ‘Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.’ Here the false doctrine that man has nothing to do but believe is swept away. Eternal life is given to us on the condition that we obey the commandments of God."99

In other statements Ellen White is clear that being accepted in the Beloved is conditional on sanctified obedience:

“The life and death of Christ in behalf of sinful man were for the purpose of restoring the sinner to God’s favor, through imparting to him the righteousness that would meet the claims of the law and find acceptance with the Father.”110

“There is no way back to innocence and life except through repentance for having transgressed God’s law, and faith in the merits of the Divine Sacrifice, who has suffered for your transgressions of the past; and you are accepted in the Beloved on condition of obedience to the commandments of your Creator.”110

“Through Jesus there is divine sympathy between God and the human beings who, through obedience, are accepted in the Beloved. Thus humanity conforms to the will of Divinity, fulfilling the words, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ John 14:15. The commandment-keeping people of God are to walk in the sunlight of Christ’s righteousness, their countenances expressing cheerfulness and thanksgiving, joyful in the assurance, ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ Revelation 22:14.”111

“Through obedience to all the commandments of God, we are accepted in the Beloved.”112

In another statement she clearly distinguishes human merit (which does not exist) from the imparted strength which brings acceptance with God:

“The pride of man hinders him from accepting the provisions of salvation. But
human merit will not admit a soul into the presence of God. That which will make a man acceptable to God is the imparted grace of Christ through faith in His name.”

Again she speaks so clearly regarding the means of our salvation:

“We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder.”

The Meaning of the Cross

The Study Committee continues to preach its fervently cherished belief that all men and women were justified on Calvary—whether they like it or not! The best term for this is involuntary justification—a term one Study Committee leader has protested, but which defines their concept all too well.

The Study Committee insists:

“Fallen man cannot obey unless first he believes the good news of his justification in Christ as already his Saviour.”

But we are nevertheless assured:

“God does not force anyone; the sinner can spurn what Christ has already given him.”

I have used this illustration before, and I will continue to use it, because it helps us all to understand just how destructive of free choice this doctrine truly is. The difference between the true Adventist, Inspiration-based belief that Christ has provided salvation for everyone as contrasted with the Study Committee’s belief that Christ has already saved everyone, is as simple as the difference between my being interested in a girl and my approaching her with the “good news” that she and I are already married! Of course, she can go down to the courthouse and file for divorce, if she likes, but unless she does this, our involuntary marriage remains legally intact. Something tells me that not many single women would experience a heart overflowing with love upon hearing these “glad tidings.”

Romans 5, the focal point of the Study Committee’s theology, simply does not teach the involuntary condemnation or justification of anyone. Death (eternal) has passed upon all men because “all have sinned.” Romans 5:12. Nothing here offers the slightest indication that the whole world was “in Adam” in some mystical way when he sinned. Delete the supplied phrases “judgment came” and “the free gift came” from verse 18 (KJV), and one simply has the words found in the Interlinear Bible:

“So therefore as through one offense to all men to condemnation, so also through one righteous act to all men to justification of life.”

Without the supplied phrases, one must stretch the language of this verse to extract the concept that all men have been respectively condemned and justified—through no fault or wish of their own. The verse just before and the verse just after make it clear, as does verse 12, that personal choice is necessary for one either to be condemned or justified:

“For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. . . . For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Verses 17, 19.

Notice it says “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.” This obviously is not the whole world. Notice that it also says, “by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Calvary obviously has not made everyone righteous, legally or otherwise. Many have been made sinners because “all have sinned” (verse 12), and many will be made righteous (see verse 19) because they receive an abundance of grace and of the gift of Christ’s righteousness. See verse 17.

The theme of Romans 5 is breathtakingly simple: Adam led the world into sin, and Christ has offered to lead us back out of it. Condemnation has come upon all because of the choice of all to sin, and justification is available to all through their choice to accept Christ’s righteousness.

In a more recent 1888 Message Newsletter, the Study Committee again demonstrates its disregard for the right and reality of human choice, and the fact that both sin and righteousness cannot exist without this right. In their own words:

“Some present the idea that what Adam did to the race is greater than what Christ did for it. These have universalized sin, while particularizing justification.

“But is sin more universal than Christ’s justification? Did Adam really carve his initials more deeply in the flesh of mankind than did Christ? Has the work of Christ made less of an impact on the fallen race than the fall of Adam?”

The answer to each of the above questions, unfortunately, is a resounding, Yes. Adam’s sin is more universal than Christ’s justification because “all have sinned” (Romans 5:12), while only a few have chosen righteousness.

Adam’s initials have indeed been carved more deeply in the human race because “narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:14. It is not because the power and righteousness of Christ are less available than Adam’s sin, only that the latter is more desired by the unregenerated heart.

The following Ellen White statements clarify this point further:

“Learn from the Word of God how to form characters fitted for the country you are seeking. Know that Christ is to be set forth among you, and that all that was lost in Adam the cross of Christ fully restores to every believing soul.”

“The Lord Jesus came to our world full of mercy, life, and light, ready to save those who should come unto Him. But He can save no one against his will. God does not force the conscience. . . . All this work is after the order of Satan.”

If all men have been justified at the cross, whether they like it or not, that is
certainly against their will, however much the Study Committee might wish to deny
the stark logic of the position they take.

The Study Committee gives as an
illustration of God’s “extravagant gift of
justifying love,” the anointing of Jesus’
feet by Mary Magdalene at Bethany, and
compares the protest of “historic Advent-
ists” against their theology to Judas’
protest against Mary’s gift.112 Ironically, Ellen
White compares Mary’s act to the salvational
provisions Jesus offers, and
in a way totally contrary to the Study Committee’s
position:

“Christ’s offering was
exceedingly abundant to
reach every soul that God
had created. It could not
be restricted so as not to
exceed the number who
would accept the great
Gift. All men are not
saved; yet the plan of re-
 redemption is not a waste
because it does not ac-
complish all that its liber-
ality has provided for.
There must be enough and
spare.”113

Notice, she says all are
not saved, and that
the plan of salvation is not a
failure because it does not accomplish all that its pro-
visions make possible. No hint whatsoever can be found that salvation has
already been accomplished for everyone.
The language Ellen White uses is a
precise contradiction to the Study
Committee’s position.

The Study Committee continues to
insist that Ellen White’s statements about
Christ signing the “emancipation papers”
of the race114 use Abraham Lincoln’s
proclamation as an analogy.115 In the
Study Committee’s own words:

“We cannot deny that at the stroke of
Lincoln’s pen, every slave in the Confed-
erate territories was legally, judicially,
free.”

Not only is this theology contrary to
Inspiration, it is also contrary to Civil
War history. Lincoln’s Emancipation
Proclamation freed no one at the mo-
ment it was signed. This document was
not a legal or judicial measure, but a
military one. Since the Southern states
had seceded from the Union, Lincoln
had no executive authority there. Only as
the Union army reoccupied those states
could the proclamation become legal
there. So this teaching is not only untrue
on the basis of Scripture and Ellen White,
it is also based on an historical event that
never happened.

As we study the writ-
ings of Inspiration, we
must ever bear in mind
the following statement:

“The Testimonies them-
selves will be the key that
will explain the messages
given, as scripture is ex-
plained by scripture.”116

We must let Ellen
White define her own vo-
cabulary. We cannot per-
mit others to define it for
her. At least two of her
statements in which she
uses the word emancipa-
tion in the context of sal-
vation make it clear that
this is a metaphor used to
describe the provisions of-
ferred by Calvary—the
receipt of which are condi-
tional on faith and obedi-
ence:

“God sent His Mes-
senger from heaven, even
His only begotten Son, to
proclaim to all the inhabi-
tants of the world: I have found a ransom. I
have made a way of escape for all the perish-
ing. I have your emancipation papers provided for you, sealed by the Lord of
heaven and earth. You may have free-
dom upon the condition of faith in Him
who is able to save unto the uttermost all
who come unto God by Him. . . It is not
because the mercy, the grace, the love of
the Father and the Son are not ample, and
have not been freely bestowed, that they [sinners] do not rejoice in pardi-
ning love, but it is because of their unbel-
ief, because of their choice of the world,
that they are not comforted with the grace of God. It is their love of disobed-
ience, their pleasure in sin, their enjoy-
ment of rebellion, that have blotted their
perceptions until they fail to discern the
things which make for their peace.”117

“The emancipation papers of our race
were signed by the blood of the Son of
God, and a way was opened for the
message of hope and mercy to be carried
to the ends of the earth. Now, whoever
will, may reach forth and take hold of
God’s hand, and make peace with Him,
and they shall make peace.”118

Notice that she says we may have
freedom (emancipation) on condition of
faith in Him who is able to save. God
cannot free anyone from sin, legally or
otherwise, unless they want to be free.
All He can do is make that freedom
possible, which is what Calvary is all
about. Any theology which teaches in-
voluntary justification or salvation is the
equivalent of involuntary marriage. For
me to contract a marriage with a woman
without her consent would be a brutal
violation of her free choice and the pre-
rogative of her heart, and for God to
legally remove our sins when we want to
retain them is a similar brutal violation
of liberty.

The Study Committee quotes another
person who uses Cyrus’ decree granting
freedom to the Jews as a parallel to what
Jesus did at the cross,119 but never does
Inspiration use this story as an illustra-
tion of what happened at Calvary. No
illustration, Biblical or otherwise, can be
used to teach something not taught by
the inspired consensus.

The Issue That Will Not Go Away

One painful, perverse reality continues
to be ignored by the Study Committee.
Ignorance cannot be pleaded as an excuse,
since the book Those Who Do Not Remem-
ber the Past120 is obviously in their posses-
sion, and is repeatedly quoted in their recent
Newsletter.121 This book demonstrates the
conspicuous flirtation of Jack Sequeira with
Desmond Ford’s denial of the sanctuary
doctrine, and how belief in a completed
salvation at the cross, inevitably and logi-
cally leads to a denial of this cardinal,
Adventist pillar.

Yet, the Study Committee seems to
ignore this point entirely. Every quota-
tion from the book cited above focuses on
the salvational issues—never on the
sanctuary. Indeed, the Study Committee
affirms quite clearly its belief in the
significance of 1844, in contrast to the
New Theology.122
However, the implications of Sequeira’s theology for the sanctuary message cannot be ignored. If our sins have been blotted out already by Jesus on the cross, there is no need for them to be blotted out in heaven. If the whole world was unconditionally saved at the cross, with deliberate resistance on our part necessary to negate this legal fact, the striving for perfect obediencem, which Inspiration says is essential to pass the investigative judgment, ceases to be necessary, since the conditions of our salvation have supposedly been met by someone else. The theology of Jack Sequeira and the Study Committee is as incompatible with the investigative judgment as racism is incompatible with social justice.

Unless the Study Committee awakens to an awareness of this stark fact, it will continue to walk the garden path of apostasy paved before them by A. F. Ballenger, W. W. Fletcher, Robert Brinsmead, and Desmond Ford. The salvational theology of Sequeira and the Study Committee is a dagger thrust into the heart of Seventh-day Adventism. We can only pray that the Study Committee and its supporters will awaken to this reality before it is too late.

Returning to the illustration with which we began, the Senator in Allen Drury’s book addressing the United Nations wrung from his dying heart the following words, which help us best understand the meaning of the love he believed was the world’s only hope in the midst of chaos, and what we in Adventism today know is our only hope in the midst of the present controversy:

“Though we fly to the moon and far beyond, we shall take with us what is in our hearts, and if it be not pure, we shall slaughter one another wherever we meet, as surely on some outward star as here on earth.”

Here is the bottom line of the whole salvational debate. God cannot risk another revolution. This is why He can take only pure people to heaven, and why sanctified obedience remains the unalterable condition of our salvation. Contemporary Adventism, besotted with an unbalanced fear of legalism, has failed to understand that while unsanctified, hypocritical obedience will save no one, and is in fact the true definition of legalism, sanctified obedience is indeed God’s method of saving us. See Matthew 19:17; Luke 10:25-28; Romans 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 5:9.

Like the Senator before the UN, we long for love and harmony, and, like him, our hearts seem nearly to break in our hunger for it. Yet, only hearts made pure by the grace of God can bring it about. When God’s church is reunited on the unchanging platform of inspired truth, this blessed love and unity will take hold of every heart, and the world will know that we have been with Jesus.

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Books for further study . . .

by Kevin Paulson

Beyond Belief Reviewed
Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged

In Beyond Belief Reviewed, author Kevin Paulson takes a deeper look at the gospel portrayed in Jack Sequeira’s book, Beyond Belief. Cross-referenced with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, this reference work is a tool for the serious seeker for truth.

This book is now available from Hope International for $6.00 each.

Those Who Do Not Remember the Past

To anyone previously exposed to the theology of Jack Sequeira as presented in his books, such as Beyond Belief, Hebrews, and The Sanctuary, or on tapes of his sermons, this new book by Kevin Paulson should be considered must reading. Principal author Kevin Paulson, along with contributors G. Irving Logan, Ralph Larson, Colin Standish, and Ron Spear, provide important and vital information worthy of consideration. We believe the prayerful and diligent student of the Bible and Ellen G. White’s writings will be compelled to reject Sequeira’s theology after reading this enlightening book.

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We are so encouraged to hear how the work of God is going around the world! Our prayers are with all the work.

KK, Texas

Thank you so much! Our Firm Foundation has been a real blessing to my family. We are very thankful to have a paper such as this. We are also thankful for the staff who are allowing the Holy Spirit to work through them in providing these timely articles. We remember you in prayer.

M & G, Oregon

May God be with you in the good work you are doing in these closing days of earth’s history.

KS, Colorado

I am writing to thank you for the wonderful literature I have received! It has helped me tremendously in my Christian walk.

MS, Michigan

I came across a book entitled Steps to Christ for a Sanctified Life, which is very prophetic, and which I had not heard of since I started knowing my Creator. So I ask you kindly if you can assist me by sending me books by Ellen G. White.

RB, Kenya

The main reason that I am writing you this letter is that I have heard about your ministry and your books here in Ghana. Mr. Editor, I would much appreciate it if I had these books (such as Bible Readings, Living the Life of the Lifegiver, and others) in my Bible study library because as a new, young Christian I ought to know more about Christ whom we are serving. Thank you.

KT, Ghana

I wonder if you would help me get out of this rut. I read a book from a friend of mine, and I was deeply impressed that I needed books of this type. I have read many, many books of worldly religions, and they have taught me nothing as compared to those of your SDA Church.

I want to congratulate SDA authors for their well-written books to guide God’s people out of these confusing and misleading, false, religious doctrines.

I had not come across the plain truth until I found it in Our Firm Foundation magazine. This friend gave me to read. It is truly a work guided by the Holy Spirit so as to prepare people for the final judgment. I would like to request that you send me the Our Firm Foundation magazine and other books on the Spirit of Prophecy. May God bless you in this endeavor to fulfill the commission of Jesus Christ.

SP, Kenya

I am grateful to tell you that I benefited a lot from the Our Firm Foundation magazine, though I did not order it, but I borrowed it from my friend. I had been asked by my friends why God did not destroy Satan after he organized a rebellion, but I could not answer them. After reading this, wonderful magazine, I can answer them confidently.

I would like to order some copies (of the magazine), but I do not have money. Also, I need the study Bible, Earth’s Final Warning, and The Great Controversy. I would be grateful if I could get these books sponsored for me, so that I can also tell my schoolmates about the fate approaching the earth.

ET, Kenya

I am glad to write you this letter since it is my first time writing to you. I would like for you to know more about me.

I am a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and I am attending the church school. I am very active in spreading the Word of God to friends and others; I come in contact with. Because of this, I have made more friends who want to become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This has come about through my small efforts. So, sir, I am begging you to give me a hand by sending me some materials like the Holy Bible, Our Firm Foundation, and other religious books. I hope you will do your best to give me the necessary assistance. Thanks.

KB, Ghana

I wish to thank God for the existence of your organization. I want to thank you so much for the books that I received from you. I had been searching for books by Mrs. E. G. White for a long time and I hope they will help me a lot. Thank you so much. May God richly bless you in spirit and wisdom.

JM, Zimbabwe

Thank you for sending me the books. I have received them, and now I will be able to read and utilize them accordingly. I was happy to look at the journals which had the topic of the sanctuary.

Second, I have been chosen to be a chaplain in our secondary school. Please send me books concerning education in Adventist schools. Thank you for hearing my request.

ME, Uganda

Thank you so much for sending Our Firm Foundation to the entire world.

I am a boy of 18 years of age in Zambia. I have developed an interest in studying the Our Firm Foundation magazine. These magazines have done something in my life. I will never lose hope until that day. Yes, very soon Jesus will appear. I am much prepared because of your magazine. I am so well prepared that crisis can come. I shall stand. I am prepared for death, and the second coming of our Christ. This is because I know that I am near Jesus. I have oil in my vessel. Jesus is with me always.

Will you please send me just one "study Bible"? It doesn’t matter to me if it is used before, or a new one, or any color, as long as I have it. Please.

The work you are doing is a great job, and Jesus has a reward for you. Please continue doing the work for Him.

KS, Zambia

I wish to thank you for sending Our Firm Foundation to Africa. The articles in your magazine are so touching that they bring Heaven a little closer to my heart. Through your magazines I have learned that we have so much ground to cover before Jesus comes, especially in character building.

I just love your magazine! Keep it coming. Fling out the banner! Let it float skyward and seaward, high and wide! God bless you as we enter 1997.

TM, Zimbabwe

January 1997 Our Firm Foundation
For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12.

Every Seventh-day Adventist knows that there are demons. We believe that the sin problem began in heaven, and that there was a war. Christ, the Creator General of the universe, and His mighty army defeated Lucifer and his rebels who attempted a coup in heaven. We all understand how the sin problem came to this planet. The Genesis story reveals the tragic failure of Adam and Eve—how Satan wrested the principedom from Adam, and then how the Creator, Christ, was willing to become Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnated into the human family. By His perfect life, death, and resurrection, He provided for all who would accept it—a way of escape from the death penalty.

As the prince of this world, Satan enlarged his rebellion against God and attempted to take over the universe, and be God. See Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28.

Yes, we believe in a real devil, but do we know him as our great enemy? Satan invented what we call the lukewarm condition of Laodicea. Those who become infected with this fatal disease know not that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. See Revelation 3:14–21.

As we approach the end, many will apostatize and join the ranks of Satan’s army. See Testimonies, vol. 8, 41. Leaders, pastors, lay leaders, and members will be among those who will be the accusers of the faithful and loyal in God’s army.

Listen to the prophet of God explain this treachery which will soon be revealed:

“No man can serve God without uniting against himself evil men and evil angels. Evil spirits will be put upon the track of every soul that seeks to join the ranks of Christ, for Satan wishes to recover the prey taken from his grasp. Evil men will give themselves over to believe strong delusions, that they may be damned. These men will put on the garments of sincerity and deceive, if possible, the very elect.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 595; see also Testimonies, vol. 5, 69–83; The Great Controversy, 608.

“Satan is working to crowd himself in everywhere. He would put asunder very friends. There are men who are ever talking and gossiping and bearing false witness, who sow the seeds of discord and engender strife. Heaven looks upon this class as Satan’s most efficient servants. But the man who is injured is in a far less dangerous position than when fawned upon and extolled for a few of his efforts which appear successful. The commendation of apparent friends is more dangerous than reproach.” Ibid., vol. 4, 607.

Once again the prophet explains:

“The multitude of deceptions that will prevail in these last days will encircle you, and you will change leaders, and
not know you have done so." *Review and Herald,* December 16, 1890.

If we are not walking carefully every day in God's way, we can change leaders and not know we have done so. We will not be capable of recognizing Satan as our enemy. Inspiration reveals it to us anew:

"They have to a great extent forgotten his past record; and when he makes another advance move, they will not recognize him as their enemy, that old serpent, but they will consider him a friend, one who is doing a good work." *Testimonies,* vol. 5, 294.

Once more the prophet warns us:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who overcome as Christ overcame will need to constantly guard themselves against the temptations of Satan. The appetite and passions should be restricted and under the control of enlightened conscience, that the intellect may be unimpaired, the perceptive powers clear, so that the workings of Satan and his snares may not be interpreted to be the providence of God. Many desire the final reward and victory which are to be given to overcomers, but are not willing to endure toil, privation, and denial of self, as did their Redeemer. It is only through obedience and continual effort that we shall overcome as Christ overcame." Ibid., vol. 3, 491.

"October 2, 1868, I was shown the state of God's professed people. Many of them were in great darkness, yet seemed to be insensible of their true condition. The sensibilities of a large number seemed to be numbed in regard to spiritual and eternal things, while their minds seemed all awake to their worldly interests. Many were cherishing idols in their hearts and were practicing iniquity which separated them from God and caused them to be bodies of darkness. I saw few who stood in the light, having discernment and spirituality to discover these stumbling blocks and remove them out of the way. Men who stand in very responsible positions at the heart of the work are asleep. Satan has paralyzed them in order that his plans and devices may not be discerned, while he is active to ensnare, deceive, and destroy.

Some who occupy the position of watchmen to warn the people of danger have given up their watch and recline at ease. They are unfaithful sentinels. They remain inactive, while their wily foe enters the fort and works successfully by their side to tear down what God has commanded to be built up. They see that Satan is deceiving the inexperienced and unsuspecting; yet they take it all quietly, as though they had no special interest, as though these things did not concern them. They apprehend no special danger; they see no cause to raise an alarm. To them everything seems to be going well, and they see no necessity of raising the faithful, trumpet notes of warning which they hear borne by the plain Testimonies, to show the people their transgressions and the house of Israel their sins. These proofs and warnings disturb the quiet of these sleepy, ease-loving sentinels, and they are not pleased. They say in heart, if not in words: 'This is all uncalled for. It is too severe, too harsh. These men are unnecessarily disturbed and excited, and seem unwilling to give us any rest or quietude. 'Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them." Numbers 16:3. They are not willing that we should have any comfort, peace, or happiness. It is active labor, toil, and unceasing vigilance alone which will satisfy these unreasonable, hard-to-be-satisfied watchmen. Why don't they prophesy smooth things, and cry: Peace, peace? Then everything would move on smoothly.'

"These are the true feelings of many of our people. And Satan exults at his success in controlling the minds of so many who profess to be Christians. He has deceived them, numbed their sensibilities, and planted his hellish banner right in their midst, and they are so completely deceived that they know not that it is he." Ibid., vol. 2, 439-440.

"The reason why our preachers accomplish so little is that they do not walk with God. He is a day's journey from most of them." Ibid., vol. 1, 434.

Without strong spiritual leadership, the church cannot have on its armor, and is unprepared for the last, great battle.

According to Revelation 12:17, if commandmentkeepers are the special targets of the dragon's wrath; if, while he cannot read our thoughts, he is a close observer and shrewd analyst of everything about us (see *Testimonies,* vol. 2, 172); if he knows the points in our individual characters that are most vulnerable, then you and I must:

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**Men who stand in very responsible positions at the heart of the work are asleep. Satan has paralyzed them in order that his plans and devices may not be discerned, while he is active to ensnare, deceive, and destroy.**

1. Beware! "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

2. The present activity of Satan in working upon hearts, and upon churches and nations, should startle every student of prophecy." *Testimonies,* vol. 5, 537.

3. Prepare! "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11.

"Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a

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**Sunday’s Coming!**

"The substitution of the laws of men for the law of God, the exaltation, by merely human authority, of Sunday in place of the Bible Sabbath, is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself." *Testimonies,* vol. 7, 141.

We are in the final scenes of a detailed prophetic outline. Soon, very soon, we will be asked—commanded—to disobey God. Come with Ed Reid as he presents proof from prophecy and current events—proof that Sunday's coming. Get your copy for only $14.99.

Please see page 3 for shipping and sales tax information.
If he [Satan] is a diligent student of the Bible and well versed in its prophecies, then how much more earnestly you and I should be studying the Word!

allegiance to his principles as “god of this world” (see Testimonies, vol. 5, 192-193); and if he has also at his command uncounted thousands of demons—one-third of the original host of heaven—then you and I need angel reinforcements continually to guard us:

“Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard.” The Great Controversy, 589.

“Evil angels are upon our track every moment.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 302.

“We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder and torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims and yield to Satan’s temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits. But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them.” The Great Controversy, 517.

If Satan can forecast future events with uncanny accuracy because he can control the thoughts of all whose minds are not controlled by the Holy Spirit (see Testimonies to Ministers, 79); if he [Satan] is a diligent student of the Bible and Great Controversy, 601), then God helps us, by every means at our command, to get out of that condition quickly that all might “recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.” 2 Timothy 2:26.

“While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord’s people may not have mercy or justice.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 452. Some of us might be surprised to learn how he uses even good, respectable, orthodox church leaders and members as his agents.

There are other means besides those we have mentioned that our adversary employs. “Satan delights in war.” The Great Controversy, 589. The “only delight” of evil angels “is in misery and destruction.” Ibid., 517. “Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power.” Ibid., 589-590.

Moreover, besides delusions and temptations, and the above disasters, there are personal tragedies:

“The enemy will contend for the life or the usefulness of the servants of God, and will seek to mar their peace as long as they remain in the world.” Review and Herald, April 10, 1894.

All this has not been a pleasant picture to draw, or to look at. None are going to say to me that they enjoyed this message. The cry of “Fire!” in the night to people who are sleeping, the warning of unrealized or forgotten danger that lurks to destroy, is disturbing. However, dear friends, if up to this point our contemplation of the activities of the enemy has startled us (and I hope it has), let me say that we have not seen anything yet compared to what is coming!

What is taking place in our world? The New Age movement, the Christian Coalition, the Religious Right and their impact upon our senators and congressmen, the Sunday laws hanging ominously over the horizon, the rank liberalism and worldliness running through some of our beloved churches—all this tells us that the devil has come down with great wrath upon those who keep the commandments of God, believe in the Spirit of Prophecy, and have the faith and the power of Jesus.

Our civilization and physical world have come into a new and different era through the splitting of the atom. In like manner the intensity of the spiritual struggle just before the remnant people will increase in unbelievable proportions.

There must be an intensity as we prepare for the final conflict, for the devil’s agencies are at work. Inspiration speaks again:

“He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.” The Desire of Ages, 636.

That means us, too. We may not be deceived by false doctrines, but we can be occupied with things that, in the light of eternity, are of minor importance. Come what may, “Satan will go to the extent of his power to harass, tempt, and mislead God’s people.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 341.

Light Is Stronger Than Darkness

The earnestness of this message today has been in proportion to our peril from the malignent power of our enemy. The dark, stark peril has been presented in warnings; but, against it the light of God’s promises is all the brighter.

In this last minute of time, as probation is about to close for the remnant church and the world, let us arise to the occasion of this fateful hour and arm ourselves. Paul counseled the Christians in the Ephesus church:
“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:10-11.

Let us give our will to Jesus every day, for our salvation depends upon it. See Steps to Christ, 34, 39, 47. Study and pray. Walk through each day in the attitude of prayer, communing with our Heavenly Father.

The reason so many of us fail is that Jesus is not our close, dear Companion. Listen to God speak to us through Inspiration:

“The Word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s Word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.

“When Satan presses his suggestions upon our minds, we may, if we cherish a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ be drawn into the secret pavilion of the Most High.

“Many fail of imitating our Holy Pattern because they study so little the definite features of that character. So many are full of busy plans, always active; and there is no time or place for the precious Jesus to be a close, dear Companion. They do not refer every thought and action to Him, inquiring: ‘Is this the way of the Lord?’ If they did they would walk with God, as did Enoch.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 393.

“Christ and His righteousness—let this be our platform, the very life of our faith.” Review and Herald, August 31, 1905.

“Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” Amos 4:12.

It is time—way past time—for every Seventh-day Adventist to stand up with the full armor on, ready for “that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:14.

Quicker than a lightning flash, He will come. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1. All the powers of evil cannot conquer that soul who relies upon the sufficient grace of Jesus for victory. Stronger is He than the “strong man armed.” Luke 11:21. “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4. God help us to know and recognize the enemy, and defeat him. □

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**Attractive outreach tools from Family Heritage Books**

These six volumes are especially illustrated and designed for gifts or for sale to those not of our faith, as well as for making excellent additions to Adventist libraries. They have very attractive, high-gloss, full-color covers, and are liberally supplied with full-color illustrations throughout. These are books that Seventh-day Adventists can proudly share. Each paperback book is 8 by 10 1/2 inches.

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You can obtain a copy of any of these six volumes for only $5.50 each. We are sure you will agree that their importance and quality far exceed these low prices. Please see page 3 for shipping and sales tax information.
Imagine yourself living in Oklahoma, and a special report rings out over the radio airwaves that a violent tornado is in your vicinity. The sky is dark and the winds are fierce. You look out and notice that you are in the direct path of the tornado! What will you do? You have to do something! You have to do it immediately! Do you have a designated place to go? Where are your children? Do you have a survival kit? The Bible says, "A prudent man foreseth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." Proverbs 27:12. A storm is coming! "Prepared or unprepared, we must all meet it." Sketches from the Life of Paul, 252. Do we have our spiritual survival kits? Do we know how to avail ourselves of divine protection in the coming hour of crisis? In this article we will look at our defense in the approaching storm.

When we speak about the "time of trouble," we are really referring to two different times. There is the short (or little) time of trouble, which is followed by the close of probation, which is then followed by the great time of trouble.

The saints will suffer during both times. While there will be many martyrs during the short time of trouble, there will be none during the great time of trouble. This almost sounds like a contradiction, except when we remember that martyrdom, during the time when probation still lingers, will be like seed cast out into the world to convince the unrepentant to make peace with God. However, the death of the righteous would serve no purpose after the close of probationary time. Therefore, God prevents them from seeing death.

Study in the Word

Between now and the little time of trouble, which commences with the passage of the Sunday laws, we should spend much time in the study of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy. My favorite Spirit of Prophecy books are The Great Controversy and The Desire of Ages. These two volumes contain a wealth of information about what is coming, and the kind of life we need to be living to meet it. I recommend the reading or rereading of these books.

We are especially encouraged to study the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. "To John the Lord opened the subjects that He saw would be needed by His people in the last days. The instruction that He gave is found in the book of Revelation. Those who would be coworkers with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will show a deep interest in the truths found in this book. With pen and voice they will strive to make plain the wonderful things that Christ came from heaven to reveal." Testimonies, vol. 8, 301; see Revelation 1:1-3.

"The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention." Ibid., 302.

The Lord's servant wrote, "The people of God need to study what characters they must form in order to pass through..."
the testing and proving of the last days. Men are living in spiritual weakness and backsliding. They know not what they believe. Let us read and study the twelfth chapter of Daniel. It is a warning that we shall all need to understand before the time of the end.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, 228.

Then, of course, we should be spending a thoughtful hour each day contemplating the life of Christ. As we head into these troublous times we need the patience, longsuffering, temperance, love, and courage of Jesus. By faithfully commingling with our Maker with the attitude of following and obeying, we will progressively become like Him. Then, and only then, can we truly be prepared to honor Him in these last days.

**Disposing of Property**

We need to be prepared to move quickly if we are still living in the cities. When the Sunday laws come, it will be our last chance to leave the larger cities for smaller towns and villages, preparatory to taking our flight to solitary places in the country. The Lord’s servant wrote, “It is no time now for God’s people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 464-465.

Of course, when we move to the country in the last days, we are not to be building expensive dwellings there either. “We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be *getting things into as compact a compass as possible.*” Ibid., 152. This suggests that these places will be very simple, and perhaps smaller than what we are likely accustomed to now.

My wife and I recently bought a small, remote piece of land, and a single-wide trailer which needed some fixing. We planted our fruit trees this fall, and prepared our grow boxes for spring planting. Our prayer is that our blessed Lord will return before we receive any fruit on the trees. Consequently, we also plan to plant a “poor man’s orchard”—many berry bushes.

Some have often asked about when they should dispose of their property? Sister White wrote, “Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs,” and then “their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down.

“I saw that if any held on to their property and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: ‘The cause was languishing, God’s people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. Oh, that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!’ I saw that a sacrifice did not increase, but it decreased and was consumed. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell.” *Early Writings*, 56-57. (Emphasis in original.)

Of course, the time will come when we will have to flee to a place in the mountains that our Lord has prepared for us, as He had prepared Brook Cherith for Elijah. When we must leave our gardens behind, the Lord promises, “He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be

**When the Sunday laws come, it will be our last chance to leave the larger cities for smaller towns and villages, preparatory to taking our flight to solitary places in the country.**

**Having a Sound Body**

We are not able to disregard the subject of health in these last days. The Lord’s servant wrote, “We need not say: The perils of the last days are soon to come upon us. Already they have come. We need now the sword of the Lord to cut to the very soul and marrow of fleshly lusts, appetites, and passions.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 315.

What comes with a healthy body is not only physical stamina and endurance, but mental clarity, clear judgment, alertness, and courage. The simple diet given to our first parents, that was practiced by John the Baptist, and that is emphasized for the remnant church, is not simply a nice alternative, but a necessary part of our preparation for these last days.

We are living in the time of earth’s harvest, and the Bible says, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” *Galatians* 6:7-8. If we sow bad health habits we will reap sluggishness, depression, and disease.

Of course, having a sound body means more than what we put on our plate. It includes all the eight laws of health, namely, trust in God and His Word, fresh air, rest, sunlight, water, exercise, nutrition, and temperance.

Continued on 39
Disease and Its Causes

Part 4

by Ellen G. White

CHILDREN in this age are suffering, with their parents, more or less, the penalty of the violation of the laws of health. The course generally pursued with them, from their infancy, is in continual opposition to the laws of their being. They were compelled to receive a miserable inheritance of disease and debility, before their birth, occasioned by the wrong habits of their parents, which will affect them in a greater or less degree through life. This bad state of things is made every way worse by parents continuing to follow a wrong course in the physical training of their children during their childhood.

Parents manifest astonishing ignorance, indifference, and recklessness, in regard to the physical health of their children, which often results in destroying the little vitality left the abused infant, and consigns it to an early grave. You will frequently hear parents mourning over the providence of God, which has torn their children from their embrace. Our Heavenly Father is too wise to err, and too good to do us wrong. He has no delight in seeing His creatures suffer. Thousans have been ruined for life because parents have not acted in accordance with the laws of health. They have moved from impulse, instead of following the dictates of sound judgment, constantly having in view the future well-being of their children.

The first great object to be attained in the training of children is soundness of constitution, which will prepare the way in a great measure for mental and moral training. Physical and moral health are closely united. What an enormous weight of responsibility rests upon parents when we consider that the course pursued by them before the birth of their children has very much to do with the development of their character after their birth!

Many children are left to come up with less attention from their parents than a good farmer devotes to his dumb animals. Fathers, especially, are often guilty of manifesting less care for wife and children than that shown to their cattle. A merciful farmer will take time to devote especial thought as to the best manner of managing his stock, and will be particular that his valuable horses shall not be overworked, overfed, or fed when heated, lest they be ruined. He will take time to care for his stock, lest they be injured by neglect, exposure, or any improper treatment, and his increasing young stock depreciate in value. He will observe regular periods for their eating, and will know the amount of work they can perform without injuring them. In order to accomplish this, he will provide them only the most healthful food, in proper quantities, and at stated periods. By thus following the dictates of reason, farmers are successful in preserving the strength of their beasts. If the interest of every father, for his wife and children, corresponded to that care manifested for his cattle, in that degree that their lives are more valuable than the dumb animals, there would be an entire reformation in every family, and human misery be far less.

Great care should be manifested by parents in providing the most healthful articles of food for themselves and for their children. And in no case should they place before their children food which their reason teaches them is not conducive to health, but which would fever the system, and derange the digestive organs. Parents do not study from cause to effect in regard to their children, as in the case of their dumb animals, and do not reason that to overwork, to eat after violent exercise and when much exhausted and heated, will injure the health of human beings, as well as the health of dumb animals, and will lay the foundation for a broken constitution in man, as well as in the beasts.

If parents of children eat frequently, irregularly, and in too great quantities, even of the most healthful food, it will injure the constitution; but in addition to this, if the food is of an improper quality, and prepared with grease and indigestible spices, the result will be far more injurious. The digestive organs will be severely taxed, and exhausted nature will be left a poor chance to rest and recover strength, and the vital organs will soon become impaired, and break down. If care and regularity are considered needful for dumb animals, they are as much more essential for human beings, formed in the image of their Maker, as they are of more value than the dumb creation.

The father, in many cases, exercises less reason, and has less care, for his wife, and their offspring before its birth, than he manifests for his cattle with young. The mother, in many cases, previous to the birth of her children, is permitted to toil early and late, heating her blood, while preparing various unhealthful dishes of food to suit the perverted taste of the family and of visitors. Her strength should have been tenderly cherished. A preparation of healthful food would have required but about one-half the expense and labor, and would have been far more nourishing.

The mother, before the birth of her children, is often permitted to labor beyond her strength. Her burdens and cares are seldom lessened, and that period, which should be to her, of all others, a time of rest, is one of fatigue, sadness, and gloom. By too great exertion on her part, she deprives her offspring of that nutrition which nature has provided for it, and by heating her blood, she imparts to it a bad quality of blood. The offspring is robbed of its vitality, robbed of physical and mental strength. The father should study how to make the mother happy. He should not allow himself to come to his home with a clouded brow. If he is perplexed in business, he should not, unless it is actually necessary to counsel with his wife, trouble her with such matters. She has cares and trials of
her own to bear, and she should be tenderly spared every needless burden.

July 18, 1899

The mother too often meets with cold reserve from the father. If everything does not move off just as pleasantly as he could wish, he blames the wife and mother, and is indifferent to her cares and daily trials. Men who do this are working directly against their own interest and happiness. The mother becomes discouraged. Hope and cheerfulness depart from her. She goes about her work mechanically, knowing that it must be done, and this soon results in a loss of both physical and mental health. Children are born to them suffering with various diseases, and God holds the parents accountable in a great degree; for it was their wrong habits that fastened upon their unborn children the disease under which they are compelled to suffer all through their lives. Some live but a short time with their load of debility. The mother anxiously watches over the life of her child, and is weighed down with sorrow when she is compelled to close its eyes in death; and she often regards God as the author of all this affliction, when in reality the parents are the murderers of their own child.

The father should bear in mind that the treatment of his wife before the birth of his offspring will materially affect the disposition of the mother during that period, and will have much to do with the character developed by the child after its birth. Many fathers have been so anxious to obtain property quickly that higher considerations have been sacrificed; some have been criminally neglectful of the mother and her offspring, and too frequently the life of both has been sacrificed to the strong desire to accumulate wealth. Many do not immediately suffer the heavy penalty for their wrongdoing, and are asleep as to the result of their course. The condition of the wife is sometimes no better than that of a slave; and sometimes she is equally guilty with her husband, of squandering physical strength to obtain means to live fashionably. It is a sin for such to have children; for their offspring will often be deficient in physical, mental, and moral worth, and will bear the miserable, close, selfish impress of their parents, and the world will be cursed with their meanness.

It is the duty of men and women to act with reason in regard to their labor. They should not exhaust their energies unnecessarily; for by doing this, they not only bring suffering upon themselves, but, by their errors, bring anxiety, weariness, and suffering upon those they love. What calls for such an amount of labor?—Intemperance in eating and in drinking, and the desire for wealth, have led to this intemperance in labor. If the appetite is controlled, and only healthful food is eaten, there will be so great a saving of expense that men and women will not be compelled to labor beyond their strength, and thus violate the laws of health. The desire of men and women to accumulate property is not sinful if in their efforts to attain their object they do not forget God, and transgress the last six precepts of Jehovah, which dictate the duty of man to his fellow man, and so place themselves in a position where it is impossible for them to glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are His. If, in their haste to be rich, they overtax their energies, and violate the laws of their being, they place themselves in a condition where they cannot render to God perfect service, and are therefore pursuing a course of sin. Property thus obtained is gained at an immense sacrifice.

Hard labor and anxious care often make the father nervous, impatient, and exacting. He does not notice the tired look of his wife, who has labored with her feeble strength just as hard as he has labored with his stronger energies. He suffers himself to be hurried with business, and through his anxiety to be rich, loses in a great measure the sense of his obligation to his family, and does not measure aright his wife's power of endurance. He often enlarges his farm, requiring an increase of hired help, which necessarily increases the housework. The wife realizes every day that she is doing too much work for her strength, yet she toils on, thinking the work must be done. She is continually reaching down into the future, drawing upon her future resources of strength, and is living upon borrowed capital; and at the period when she needs that strength, it is not at her command, and if she does not lose her life, her constitution is broken past recovery.

If the father would become acquainted with physical law, he would better understand his obligations and his responsibilities. He would see that he had been guilty of almost murdering his children, by suffering so many burdens to come upon the mother, compelling her to labor beyond her strength before their birth, in order to obtain money to leave for them. They nurse these children through their suffering life, and often lay them prematurely in the grave, little realizing that their wrong course has brought the sure result. How much better to shield the mother of his children from wearing labor and mental anxiety, and let the children inherit good constitution, and give them an opportunity to battle their way through life, not relying upon their father's property, but upon their own energetic strength! The experience thus obtained would be of more worth to them than houses and lands purchased at the expense of the health of mother and children.

It seems perfectly natural for some men to be morose, selfish, exacting, and overbearing. They have never learned the lesson of self-control, and will not restrain their unreasonable feelings, let the consequences be what they may. Such men will be repaid by seeing their companions sickly and dissipated, and their children bearing the peculiarities of their own disagreeable traits of character.

It is the duty of every married couple studiously to avoid marring the feelings of each other. They should control every look of fretfulness and passion. They should study each other's happiness in small matters as well as in large, manifesting a tender thoughtfulness in acknowledging kind acts and little courtesies. These small things should not be neglected; for they are just as important to the happiness of man and wife, as food is to sustain physical strength. The father should encourage the wife and mother to lean upon his large affection. Kind, cheerful, encouraging words from him to whom she has entrusted her life-happiness will be more beneficial to her than any medicine; and the cheerful rays of light that such sympathizing words will bring to the heart of the wife and mother, will reflect their own cheering beams upon the heart of the father.

The husband will frequently see his wife careworn and debilitated, growing prematurely old, in laboring to prepare food to suit its vitiated taste. He gratifies the appetite, and will eat and drink those things which cost much time and labor to prepare for the table, and which have a tendency to make those who partake of these unhealthful things nervous and irritable. The wife and mother is seldom free from headache, the children suffer from the effects of eating unwholesome food, and there is a great lack of patience and affection with parents and children. All are sufferers together, for health has been sacrificed to lustful appetite. The offspring, before its birth, has had transmitted to it disease and an unhealthy appetite. The irritability, nervousness, and despondency manifested by the mother will mark the character of her child.

Review and Herald, July 11, 18, 1899
BECAUSE sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11.

Century after century of transgression has swept over our world, and although God has given examples of what will overtake those who do evil, and has sent warnings and reproofs and entreaties to mankind, yet, because His forbearance has lengthened the opportunities and probation of sinners, and He has not executed His sentence of condemnation, they have presumed upon His mercy, and have walked after the imagination of their own hearts. They have not regarded the counsels of God, nor given heed to His reproofs. They have said, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” They have acted as if the Creator of the heavens and the earth had no power to behold their ways, no law to govern His creatures, and no regard for justice and righteousness.

If those who contemplate the committal of crime were positive that they would be speedily detected and punished, fear of exposure, disgrace, and suffering would restrain them from outbreaking and revolting deeds; but the tempter has led men to believe that they may cover the knowledge of their guilt from the eyes of God and man. How diligently the guilty one seeks to disguise his real character! He assumes the appearance of innocence and guilelessness. Every avenue that might lead to the discovery of his sin is carefully guarded. Transgressors make their paths in secrecy and darkness. They hate the light, and will not come to the light, because their deeds are evil. They are under the constant necessity of devising means to hide the defilement of their souls, and they may succeed in escaping detection among men; but they have no device that will shield them from the gaze of the all-seeing eye of the Eternal One. The Word of Truth declares, “There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.” Matthew 10:26.

This spirit of deception in evildoers is the spirit of their father, the devil. Even in heaven, before the light and glory of God, Satan thought to hide his secret thoughts and rebellious counsels. He employed such consummate wisdom in covering his real character and aims that legions of the angels of heaven were deceived, and they fell from their loyalty to the God of the universe to serve the prince of darkness. The same art of deception is displayed by those who partake of the enmity of Satan, and follow in his course of rebellion against the commandments of God. To cover the enormity of sin with the garment of light and innocence, has been the practice of the evil one from the beginning. Thus it is that he has been successful in alluring souls to transgression and destruction.

There are many who profess the name of Christ whose hearts are not engaged in His service. They have simply arrayed themselves in a profession of godliness, and by this very act they have made greater their condemnation, and have become more deceptive and more successful agents of Satan in the ruin of souls. Those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God are not all loyal servants of Heaven. They honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. Do they think that they can hide their ways from Him who tries the secret thoughts of the heart and searches the motive of every word and action?

Let no one seek to excuse himself from taking these words to heart, on the plea that he is not guilty of outbreaking sin. Have you not been guilty of committing sins which, in your finite judgment, you regarded as of little conse-
quence? Says the Inspired Word, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14. There is need of every soul humbling himself before God, and seeking for the righteousness of Christ. The least regard for iniquity cherished in the heart will sever us from the communion and help of Heaven. When we seek God with all the heart, then His promise is, “I will be found of you.” Jeremiah 29:14.

“The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be persisted in only at the cost of eternal life. What is not overcome will overcome us, and work out our destruction. We must wash our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb until they are white and stainless.

Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit, there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was sin, the transgression of God’s immutable and holy law, and it opened the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world. Age after age there has gone up from our earth a continual cry of mourning, and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain as a consequence of man’s disobedience. Heaven itself has felt the effects of his rebellion against God. Calvary stands as a memorial of the amazing sacrifice required as a propitiation for the transgression of the divine law. Let us not esteem sin as a trivial thing. Are not the hands and feet and side of the Son of the infinite God, to bear an eternal testimony before the universe of its untold malignity and curse?

Oh, that a right impression might be made upon the minds of young and old in regard to the exceeding sinfulness of sin! Oh, that all might have a just realization of its offensiveness to God, and its injury to mankind! The Word of Truth declares, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Numbers 32:23. The real character of every act of your life will be made known. It may be even in this life that through the providence of God, some unexpected circumstance will uncover your secret deeds of evil; but should you succeed in hiding your real character from the eyes of men, there is an inevitable day of exposure reserved for every soul who does not repent of his sins and forsake all evil through the strength of Christ, who has died that we might live. The Scriptures declare, “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. There is not a shadow of doubt about this matter. All sin that has not been repented of and forsaken, will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God.

He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were opened and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed their sin, and registered it in the unerring records. Men who do not repent will not fail to receive according to their works. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates. No one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. David had some appreciation of this fact when he exclaimed, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. . . . If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” Psalm 139:7–8, 11–12.

The Lord beheld Adam and Eve as they took of the forbidden tree, in their guilt they fled from His presence, and “hid themselves” (Genesis 3:8), but God saw them; they could not cover their shame from His eyes. When Cain slew his brother, he thought to hide his crime by denial of his deed; but the Lord said, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.” Genesis 4:10. The sins of the inhabitants of the world before the flood, were noted and registered in heaven; and because they did not repent at the preaching of Noah, they were visited with destruction. God saw the corruptions of licentious Sodom, and, after hurrying Lot and his family from its borders, He rained fire upon the city, and it was turned to ashes, making it “an example unto those that after should live ungodly.” 2 Peter 2:6. When the world’s Redeemer walked among men, bearing insult, reproach, and scorn, the Father beheld each indignity. Every word of mockery, every sneer, every act of contumely [contempt] and hate, was marked in the books of remembrance. The Jewish nation suffered terrible judgments, because they rejected the Lord from heaven; but their deeds were not fully requited. Those who mocked and crucified the Son of God will come forth from their graves, and the deeds done in secrecy and darkness, as well as those done in the light of day, will be presented before them as they appear before the infinite Father. Every transgression will receive its just recompense of reward in the day of final retribution.

All sin unrepent of and unconfessed, will remain upon the books of record. It will not be blotted out, it will not go beforehand to Judgment, to be canceled by the atoning blood of Jesus. The accumulated sins of every individual will be written with absolute accuracy, and the penetrating light of God’s law will try every secret of darkness. In proportion to the light, to the opportunities, and the knowledge of God’s claims upon them, will be the condemnation of the rejecters of God’s mercy.

The day of final settlements is just before us. In that solemn and awful hour the unfaithfulness of the husband will be opened to the wife, and the unfaithfulness of the wife, to the husband. Parents will then learn, for the first time, what
was the real character of their children, and children will see the errors and mistakes that marked the lives of their parents. The man who robbed his neighbor through false representations, is not to escape with his ill-gotten gains. God has an exact record in His books, of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. The secret doings of the licentious man are all known to God. God is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes even the best of men; but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence. Oh, that we each might become a savor of life unto life to those around us!

There is great need of a deeper appreciation of the holy truth of God. If all had a realization of the solemnity and weight of the message, many sins that were now carelessly committed would cease from among us. Is there not too often the common thought and communication mingled with the sacred themes of truth? Wherever this is done, the standard is lowered. Your example leads others to regard the truth lightly, and this is one of the greatest sins in the sight of God.

It is the privilege of everyone to so live that God will approve and bless you. You may be hourly in communion with Heaven; it is not the will of your Heavenly Father that you should ever be under condemnation and darkness. It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so that you will be approved by your own conscience, and before men and angels. It is not an evidence of true humility that you go with your head bowed down, and your heart filled with thoughts of self. It is your privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame and remorse. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1. While we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought, the Word of God does not condemn a proper self-respect. As sons and daughters of God, we should have a conscious dignity of character, in which pride and self-importance have no part.

Let faith lay hold on the promises of God. Jesus is mighty to save His people from their sins. Light from Heaven has illumined our pathway. Sin has been revealed to us by the Word and the Spirit of Truth, that we may not be found transgressors of the divine precepts; and there is no opportunity to plead the excuse of ignorance. The command is, "Depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2:19. We must urge the principles of truth upon old and young. We must reach a higher plane. We must hunger and thirst after righteousness. Let the cry go up to God for wisdom, for light, for divine power. "Ask, and it shall be given you." Luke 11:9. We are in the perils of the last days. The Judgment is before us, and how shall we appear who have had light from the heavenly Sanctuary, unless we "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and perfect "holiness in the fear of God?" 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Review and Herald, March 27, 1888

The Sanctuary
by James White

The doctrine of the sanctuary is one of the most unique doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism. The Sanctuary is a very thorough and inspiring presentation on the subject of the heavenly sanctuary, including our High Priest and His ministry therein. This 68-page book is a reprint of a series on this subject by James White which appeared originally in the Review and Herald from July 15 through September 8, 1863.

Would you like to gain a more thorough knowledge of this important doctrine? Order a copy for yourself and one for a friend today—for only $3.00 each. Please see page 3 for shipping and sales tax information.
Preparation for the Last Days
Continued from 33

Preparing Our Heart Toward Others

"We are to do all we can to remove the prejudice that exists in the minds of many against our work and against the Bible Sabbath." Testimonies, vol. 9, 238.

"With hearts melted in tenderness let the Word of Truth be spoken. Let all who are in error be treated with the gentleness of Christ. If those for whom you labor do not immediately grasp the truth, do not censure, do not criticize or condemn. Remember that you are to represent Christ in His meekness and gentleness and love.

"We must expect to meet unbelief and opposition. The truth has always had to contend with these elements. But though you should meet the bitterest opposition, do not denounce your opponents. They may think, as did Paul, that they are doing God service; and to such we must manifest patience, meekness, and long-suffering.

"Even when abused and falsely accused, make no complaint; speak no word of murmuring; let no thought of reproach or discontent enter your mind.

"In the advocacy of truth the bitterest opponents should be treated with respect and deference.

"The influence of your teaching would be tenfold greater if you were careful of your words.

"Every sermon you preach, every article you write, may be all true; but one drop of gall in it will be poison to the hearer or the reader. Because of that drop of poison, one will discard all your good and acceptable words." Gospel Workers, 372-375.

While it is our duty to expose the aims of the Papacy, we should be careful not to make sharp thrusts at the Catholics. The Lord's servant said, "All sharp thrusts will come back upon us in double measure when the power is in the hands of those who can exercise it for our injury... We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at the Catholics... Let everyone bear in mind that we are in no case to invite persecution... Let all be guarded in their words, lest they place those not of our faith in deadly opposition against us and give Satan an opportunity to use the unadvised words to hedge up our way." Testimonies, vol. 9, 241-244.

"It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in opposition to the civil authorities... We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order... Let all beware lest by reckless expressions they bring on a time of trouble before the great crisis which is

In summary, we should do all we can to meet people. Time is running out. Yet, we must learn to drop words of kindness, and to direct our conversations to heavenly things. Oh, that we might see our great need to study the Word every day! Oh, that we may lay all our possessions at the feet of Jesus!

Oh, that we may glorify God in all that we do—whether we eat, drink, or whatsoever we do! Oh, that we may learn to use words that will win hearts and convince them of the truths for these last days!

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