Sunday's Coming

How shall we react to the Sunday Laws?

See page 4
SOMETIMES in our efforts to present God's plan of salvation, we unintentionally minimize God's health message to this final generation. However, a definite part of God's final warning message which is to go to all the world is to teach people how they can get well and stay well by practicing the eight natural remedies. We know the fourth angel of Revelation 18 will soon join the third angel's message and swell to a loud cry, but the health and temperance messages are very important parts of the final warning which is to prepare a people for translation.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 2.

"God has shown that health reform is as closely connected with the third angel's message as the hand is with the body. There is nowhere to be found so great a cause of physical and moral degeneracy as a neglect of this important subject. Those who indulge appetite and passion, and close their eyes to the light for fear they will see sinful indulgences which they are unwilling to forsake, are guilty before God. . . . Our bodies belong to Him who made them, and we are duty bound to become intelligent in regard to the best means of preserving them from decay. If we enfeebles the body by self-gratification, by indulging the appetite, and by dressing in accordance with health-destroying fashions, in order to be in harmony with the world, we become enemies of God." Testimonies, vol. 3, 62-63.

The health message places a very important emphasis upon our relationship to our Lord in obedience to all known truth without compromise. It demands our loving obedience to the eight laws of health which govern our compliance with, and use of, pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, water, and trust in divine power. The abuse of the temple of God is a sin.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

And what is the reward to the obedient? "The Creator of man has arranged the living machinery of our bodies. Every function is wonderfully and wisely made. And God has pledged Himself to keep this human machinery in healthful action if the human agent will obey His laws and cooperate with God." Medical Ministry, 221; see also Ibid., 121.

"There are many ways of practicing the healing art, but there is only one way that Heaven approves. God's remedies are the simple agencies of nature that will not tax or debilitate the system through their powerful properties. Pure air and water, cleanliness, a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that the people do not appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises are within the reach of all but little expense; but drugs are expensive, both in the outlay of means and in the effect produced upon the system." Testimonies, vol. 5, 443.

Physicians after the gospel order have a great responsibility to bring the gospel, as well as the natural remedies, to the attention of their patients through the use of literature, prayer, and instruction.

"The work of the Christian physician does not end with healing the maladies of the body; his efforts should extend to the diseases of the mind, to the saving of the soul. It may not be his duty, unless asked, to present any theoretical points of truth; but he may point his patients to Christ. The lessons of the divine Teacher are ever-appropriate. He should call the attention of the repenting to the ever-fresh tokens of the love and care of God, to His wisdom and goodness as manifested in His created works. The mind can then be led through nature up to nature's God and centered on the heaven which He has prepared for those that love Him." Ibid.

Overindulgence of any food is harmful and sinful. In most cases obesity is the result of overindulging and a lack of exercise. Walking is the best exercise. See Testimonies, vol. 2, 530; Ibid., vol. 3, 78. I receive a great blessing as I walk every morning and memorize Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy passages. We are told that gardening and working out-of-doors are the best therapies for healing the mind and body.

A tragedy of our busy lives is that we do not want to take the time to use God's methods. It is much easier and faster to take an aspirin or some other drug for our maladies.

"The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature's process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind." Ministry of Healing, 127.

In case of sickness, many have found the use of simple methods of hydrotherapy to bring relief to sinus infections, headaches, and other symptoms—as well as assisting the body back to health.

Let us remember that the health message is a very important part of the three angels' messages. We must educate ourselves, that we may not fall into Satan's ditches—indulgence or fanaticism. Let us be faithful health reformers. We cannot eat our way into heaven, but we can make ourselves unfit for heaven by our eating.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Ron Spear—Editor
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How Shall We React to the Sunday Laws?


John Wesley knew that the first beast of Revelation 13 was the Papacy. He understood that the second beast would arise at the time when the Papacy would receive its “deadly wound.” He believed that the deadly wound would be inflicted around A.D. 1798.

As early as 1851, those who were part of the Advent movement began to identify the second beast as Protestant America. In 1884 E. G. White wrote that “the image of the beast represents another religious body clothed with similar power. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 278.

In 1888 she wrote, “What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America.” *The Great Controversy*, 440.

What was our world like when we began to proclaim this prophetic message? In the first half of the 1860s, America was involved in a civil war. The nation was split and her young men fell by the hundreds of thousands. Through most of the 19th century America was still fighting Indians. In 1867 Sitting Bull wiped out General Custer’s 7th Cavalry. Yet, the Bible said that the United States would cause “the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast [the Papacy], whose deadly wound was healed.” Revelation 13:12. It seemed an unlikely thing at the time, but our pioneers continued to preach that the papal Sunday was coming.

After World War II, the United States emerged as a world superpower. However, in 1950 the United States engaged in the Korean War which lasted three years and cost 54,000 American lives. Did the United States win? No, it ended in a draw. Why? Because there was another superpower—the Soviet Union.

In the 1960s-1970s the United States was engaged in the Vietnam War. Did we, as a superpower, win the war? No, we recorded a loss. Why? Because there was another superpower—the Soviet Union.

How was the United States going to cause the whole world to wonder after the Papacy with the Soviet bear prowling around the earth? The answer is an easy one. The United States and the Vatican would need to form an alliance to cause the Soviet Union to collapse.

The front cover of *TIME* magazine disclosed the alliance between President Reagan and the Pope. “HOLY ALLIANCE: How Reagan and the Pope conspired to assist Poland’s Solidarity movement and hasten the demise of Communism.” *TIME*, February 24, 1992, 28.

Both the United States and the Vatican found a common enemy in the Soviet Union. The Soviets threatened the Vatican by taking over once-controlled Catholic countries found in Eastern Europe, South America, Central America, and Southeast Asia. President Reagan believed the Soviet Union to be the antichrist of Bible prophecy, and he determined to crush it. Consequently, the Vatican and the United States
became united in order to face a common enemy.

The strategy was for the United States to accelerate the arms race so that the Soviet economy would collapse. The Vatican would zero in on the "underbelly" of the Soviet Union, namely, Poland. By supporting the Solidarity movement and ousting the communist government, they knew that other Eastern European countries would follow. The news media records the following:

"In 1981, the Communist bloc got another shock. A new American President, Ronald Reagan, began fulfilling his promise to challenge the Soviets, not placate them. Over the next few years, he accelerated the military buildup and announced the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a space-based system for protecting against missile attack. He backed anti-Communist rebels in Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia, and Afghanistan. And with American troops, he liberated the island of Grenada from Communist thugs. . . ."

"The Soviets' confidence was shaken. . . . The Western Europeans also pressured the Soviets. NATO forged ahead with military modernization. German voters spurned Soviet 'peace overtures' and elected a government that voted to deploy new intermediate-range missiles. . . . Military pressure from America and its Western allies had caused the Soviets to flinch." Reader's Digest, March 1990. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

"Only President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II were present in the Vatican Library on Monday, June 7, 1982. It was the first time the two had met, and they talked for fifty minutes. . . ."

"In that meeting, Reagan and the pope agreed to undertake a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire. Declares Richard Allen, Reagan's first National Security Adviser: 'This was one of the great secret alliances of all time. . . . Reagan came in with very simple and strongly held views,' says Admiral Bobby Inman, former deputy director of the CIA. 'It is a valid point of view that he saw the collapse (of communism) coming and he pushed it—hard.' During the first half of 1982, a five-part strategy emerged that was aimed at bringing about the collapse of the Soviet economy. . . ."

"[1.] The U.S. defense buildup already underway, aimed at making it too costly for the Soviets to compete militarily with the U.S. Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative—Star Wars—became a centerpiece of the strategy.

"[2.] Covert operations aimed at encouraging reform movements in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

"[3.] Financial aid to Warsaw Pact nations calibrated to their willingness to protect human rights and undertake political and free-market reforms.

"[4.] Economic isolation of the Soviet Union and the withholding of Western and Japanese technology from Moscow. The Administration focused on denying the U.S.S.R. what it had hoped would be its principal source of hard currency in the twenty-first century: profits from a transcontinental pipeline to supply natural gas to Western Europe.

"[5.] Increased use of Radio Liberty, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe to transmit the U.S. Administration's messages to the peoples of Eastern Europe.

"Like all great and lucky leaders, the Pope and President exploited the forces of history to their own ends." Time, February 4, 1992, 29-30.

Then came 1991. The U.S. defeated Iraq, one of the world's most powerful military forces, in six weeks, costing 143 American lives. Why was this military campaign so successful? There were no more Soviets. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1989.

Today, the United States is able to cause the whole world to wonder after the Papacy. "America," wrote Jim Hoagland in the Washington Post, "would now determine all major global events."

"Our first objective is to prevent the reemergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This . . . requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. . . . The U.S."

Today, the United States is able to cause the whole world to wonder after the Papacy. "America," wrote Jim Hoagland in the Washington Post, "would now determine all major global events."

"The Triumph of John Paul II—The tide of freedom washing over Eastern Europe answers his most fervent prayer." Ibid.

"While Gorbachev's hands-off policy was the immediate cause of the chain reaction of liberty that has swept through Eastern Europe in the past few months, John Paul deserves much of the longer-range credit." Time, December 4, 1989.

No matter who gets the credit, the fact remains that we are living in the time described in Revelation chapter thirteen. It describes two superpowers—the United States and the Vatican—which will lead the world against the commandments of God in the enforcement of Sunday legislation.

Melady, former ambassador to the Vatican, said, "I believe that the U.S., as the world's only superpower, and the
Pat Robertson said, "The Ten Commandments set the only order that will bring world peace." He laments that there are no more religious Sunday laws, but only those that "can be shown to have a clearly secular purpose."

Reagan announced the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The announcement gave full recognition to the unique international sovereign role of the pope and his government, not only in Vatican City State but throughout the world where the pope and his government exercised their spiritual and political authority. There was no equivocation. The United States was extending full recognition for the first time to the government of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The announcement implied the acceptance of the international law principle that the Holy See is a bona fide international personality. Thus the announcement by President Reagan acknowledged the Papacy as a religious organ with international rights and duties. This was not a qualified recognition of Vatican City State. In previous times it would have caused a firestorm of protest. But it immediately became evident, both in tone and substance, that there had been a major change in domestic U.S. political opinion. Ibid., 41.

Government officials are not the only ones in America who are forming an alliance with the Vatican.

Leading Evangelical, Chuck Colson said, "It's high time that all of us who are Christians come together regardless of the differences of our confessions and our traditions and make common cause to bring Christian values to bear in our society. When barbarians are scaling the walls, there is no time for petty quarrels."

In March of 1994, forty leading Evangelicals and Catholics signed a document, Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). This document represents a major shift in Protestant and Catholic relations with such signers as Father Richard John Neuhaus (Lutheran pastor turned Catholic priest) to Southern Baptist Dr. Richard Land, from conservative Catholic Cardinal John O'Connor to Protestant charismatic Pat Robertson.

Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, said, concerning ECT, "This is the wave of the future. It is as significant a coalition to the future of American politics as the unification of blacks and Jews during the civil rights struggle."

In his book, Politically Incorrect, Ralph Reed stated, "The future of American politics lies in the growing strength of Evangelicals and their Roman Catholic allies. If these two core constituencies—Evangelicals comprising the swing vote in the South, Catholics holding sway in the North—can cooperate on issues and support like-minded candidates, they can determine the outcome of almost any election in the nation." Politically Incorrect, 16.

It was Jesus' prayer that there would be unity among His people. See John 17:21. However, this unity was to be based upon truth—not compromise and politics.

Yet, tragically, they will unite on the two great errors of Sunday sacredness and the immortality of the soul. Are individuals from the Catholic Church and the Protestant world talking about Sunday laws?

Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, said, "In recent months God has been calling me to do more than just pray. He has called me to take action. I have a divine mandate to go right into the halls of Congress and fight for laws that will save America." The Saginaw News, September 11, 1980.

Pat Robertson said, "The Ten Commandments set the only order that will bring world peace." He laments that there are no more religious Sunday laws, but only those that "can be shown to have a clearly secular purpose." The New World Order, 233, 236.

Pat Robertson's university, Regent University, is currently training young men and women to take over politics in America. "The concept behind Regent is hardly a new one. The idea of preparing an elite of religiously trained professionals to exert a spiritual influence on the secular realm has a venerable lineage. Shortly after the founding of the Catholic Society of Jesus [Soror Order] in 1540, its members began to study theology in combination with law, literature, history, and the natural sciences. Jesuits quickly became advisers to kings and tutors to princes, and they founded universities all over the world. . . . Robertson subscribes to a post-millennial eschatology in which Christians—at least the ones who share his views—are called upon to try to assume positions of power wherever they can in order to build a more religious and God-fearing society." Atlantic Monthly, "The Warring Visions of the Religious Right," by Harvey Cox, November 1995.

The following is a letter written to the editor of the Bakersfield Californian, May 5, 1995: "Being witness to the recent horror in Oklahoma City and mourning its losses, I am prompted to think about what has gone so wrong that Americans are now doing these things against themselves.

"And while watching the Sunday memorial, I remembered how I spent my growing up years every Sunday, going to church and being involved with my family, all day long, each week on that day. "My idea is that we can return to that part of our past, and it would be so simple. "The reason that Sunday worked then, with my family worshiping and playing together, was that every busi-
ness was closed on that day to honor the Sabbath.

"We could do that now, and with all retail businesses closed, including movie theaters, we would then have no choice but to invent ways to enjoy the Sunday time we have with our family and friends. "Our families need to make Sunday 'a family activity day.' With all businesses closed, we would have no other choice.

"There is wisdom in the Commandment, 'Honor the Sabbath, to keep it holy.'" David Rhea, Bakersfield.

Then, of course, there is the Papacy pushing for Sunday legislation. "In respecting religious liberty and the common good of all, Christians should seek recognition of Sundays and the Church's holy days as legal holidays." Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, 585.

In the Catholic apocalyptic book, The Thunder of Justice, we find the following quotation supporting the legislation of Sunday: "This is the place where we see many of the root causes of our problems. It is the commandment of 'Keeping the Sabbath Holy.' In the Old Testament, not honoring this day was only one of several sins punishable by death. Although we are not living under the law of the Old Testament, there is widespread abuse all throughout the Christian culture concerning the Sabbath. ... And thus our problems have become so large we no longer even know where to start to find the solutions to our ills. God's intention for the Sabbath was a day of rest honoring God through worship, conversation, teaching and praise. Today if someone even bothers to go to church at all, Sunday will be an endless litany of recreation, television, athletic events, shopping, and errands all crammed together." Flynn, The Thunder of Justice, 389.

While both camps, Catholics and Protestants, are discussing our need for Sunday laws, there is a push for them to come into unity by the year 2000. In a letter issued by Pope John Paul II on November 10, 1994, which was addressed: "To the Bishops, Clergy, and Lay Faithful on Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000," he stated, "The year 2000 will be celebrated as the Great Jubilee. ... Among the most fervent petitions which the Church makes to the Lord during this important time, as the eve of the new millennium approaches, is that unity among all Christians of the various confessions will increase until they reach full communion."

The Sunday laws could easily come before the year 2000. Things in our world could change very quickly, but the question must be asked, How should we react to the Sunday laws?

Sister White wrote, "Whenever it is possible, let religious services be held on Sunday. Make these meetings intensely interesting. Sing genuine revival hymns, and speak with power and assurance of the Saviour's love." Testimonies, vol. 9, 233.

Did the Lord's servant tell us to keep Sunday as the Sabbath? No. She said that we are to hold religious meetings, so that we can reach as many people as possible.

When the Sunday laws pass, there will be very little time left. What better way to spend Sundays than to teach our families from the Word of God, to hold religious meetings for the public, and to go do-to-do sharing God's last-day message to a perishing world?

She says, "Give them no occasion to call you lawbreakers. ... One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense. ... In no case are God's people to pay it homage. But I wish them to understand that they are not doing God's will by bravng opposition when He wishes them to avoid it. Thus they create prejudice so bitter that it is impossible for the truth to be proclaimed. Make no demonstration on Sunday in defiance of the law." Ibid., 232, 233.

At that time we are not to go out and mow our lawn on Sunday. We are not to work on the transmission of our car or to paint the house. We are not to break the Sunday laws. However, we are to still honor God on His holy day—the seventh-day Sabbath.

Even if we do not mow our lawn on Sunday, they will still persecute us. Why? "The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day." Ibid., 229.

"It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath ... and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublemakers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity." The Great Controversy, 590.

In choosing to proclaim the Sabbath more fully, we will be persecuted. By warning the world not to take the mark of the beast, we will face a death decree. By warning them of the impending judgments of God upon those who trample upon His law, the world will say that we are unworthy to buy or sell. So why will we warn them? Because we love them more than life itself. We want them to be part of Christ's kingdom forever. This will become our Gethsemane experience.

In Gethsemane Jesus had to make a decision. Would He drink the cup filled with the iniquity of us all? If He did, He knew that He would go through seven unjust trials, be beaten, spat upon, ridiculed, whipped, and crucified. However, if He did not drink the cup, He knew that no one could be saved. So what did He choose to do? He chose to allow the fury of inhumanity to come against Him.

She says, "Give them no occasion to call you lawbreakers. ... One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense. ..."
AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.” Revelation 18:1.

The loud-cry message will be the most potent message ever given by God to sinners, for it will be accompanied by latter-rain power. It will bear such an enlightenment of our God's truth that it will enlighten every corner of this earth with a brilliance never before attained, for it will be our God's last warning of love to a world steeped in utter darkness. This message will be proclaimed by men and women sealed with the seal of the living God. The same message will be presented worldwide under the most difficult and trying circumstances ever to prevail upon this earth. It will attract the most bitter opposition ever to be vented against God's truth. This will indeed be a grand and awful time in earth's history.

The question facing God's people today is whether we will be among those who will be honored to proclaim this message. The members of God’s church will be the very first of the living to be judged. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” 1 Peter 4:17. In view of this fact it is evident that those of our church who do not proclaim the loud-cry message will receive the mark of the beast. Thus the question posed is not one of minor import. It is one upon which our eternal destinies depend.

The everlasting gospel, as presented by the fourth angel of Revelation 18, is proclaimed in the most strident terms. This is no soft message. Indeed, one could find nowhere in Scripture a more telling indictment of apostate religious practices than in this final call to mankind.

The great declaration is made in bold, unequivocal terms. “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” Revelation 18:2. Here three graphic descriptions of Babylon are asserted:

Babylon is:
1. The habitation of devils.
2. The hold of every foul spirit, and
3. The cage of every hateful and unclean bird.

No man or woman of timid personality, unless yielded to God, would ever dare to present such a message. Yet, it is God's assessment of the utter depravity and blasphemy that the world deigns [sees fit] to offer to Him as worship. It is no wonder that God identifies worship as a key issue in these last days, in the very first of His three angels' messages.

Today men and women are so deceived that, while they imagine in their sin-cursed hearts that they are worshiping God, they are in fact worshiping devils. No wonder Christ will declare of such, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:23.

Christianity today is filled with paganism. Rank idol worship, infant baptism, religious trinkets, belief in the immortality of the soul, all forms of charismatic worship, disgusting worship music, Easter festivals, Sunday worship, the adulation of Mary, the use of human mediators, processions as a form of religious obligation, penance, pilgrimages, the ordination of women, the wearing of religious paraphernalia, and numerous other practices which, at least in part, find their origins in paganism.

Russell R. Standish
These practices are of the devil and are in fact offered to him in worship. They shame a pure and holy God. Tragically, not a few of these practices have found widespread acceptance in the very church which God has specifically established to preach the loud-cry message.

Babylon is the hold of every foul spirit. We need not be in doubt as to the identity of these foul spirits. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” Revelation 16:13. The dragon (spiritualism and paganism), the beast (Roman Catholicism), and the false prophet (apostate Protestantism) are reservoirs of every foul spirit, for they have blatantly and resolutely resisted the pure faith of our God, preferring the concepts of man as designed by the archdeceiver to the purity and sanctity of God’s truth.

That our world is a cage of every unclean and hateful bird is without dispute. The prophet Isaiah describes such a gathering of unclean and hateful birds as “the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” Isaiah 34:11. Never before has such confusion of all forms prevailed upon the earth. That confusion is most striking in the religious world, and in place of stones that cry out in defense of the mighty faith of our Lord, the religious bodies of this earth promote “stones of emptiness.” Men claiming to be ministers of the gospel have lost their voices. Never again will words of stern warning fall from their lips. They have betrayed their sacred trust.

In the present era of permissive religion and the incorporation of sin into religious faiths on the same basis as righteousness, there has developed a milieu [background] of silence in opposition to warnings against commandment desecration and the proclamation of God’s high and holy standards. Indeed, the only voices one hears in some churches are those upholding vile practices and denouncing Christ’s law and His pure faith.

Seventh-day Adventism is permitting itself to be drawn into this prevailing religious ethos. This serves the destroyer of souls admirably. To derail the faith of God’s last church, so that it is utterly impotent to present God’s message of love, is his great design. It is an utter disgrace that we would yield to that design. In this we are evidencing hatred and detestation of our blessed Saviour—whose love alone should be our impera-

tive—while deliberately despising the sacred commission He has laid upon our shoulders. Every act of ecumenism, including joint worship with the fallen churches of Babylon, denies our designated duty to proclaim the everlasting gospel, and to call men and women out of Babylon that they “be not partakers of her sins,” and that they “receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

However, today the ministry of reproof is in a large part reviled—even by some Seventh-day Adventists. This includes not a few who imagine themselves to be “standing for truth.” We have so permitted the worldly churches to influence our thinking that we are quite unprepared to go forth with the greatest ministry of reproof ever to be taken worldwide. If we do not ourselves accept the ministry of reproof in our midst, we shall in no wise be part of those entrusted by our Lord to present the everlasting gospel proclaimed by the four angels of Revelation 14 and 18.

Why is the ministry of reproof so despised in God’s church today? The answer to this vital question may be summed up in one word—SIN! We desire to continue our lives of sin. Thus we conceal our motives by accusing God’s faithful servants of criticism, disloyalty, divisiveness, or any other negative appellation which will serve our purpose to resist the ministry of reproof. Further, we have ceased to be students of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy lest we be aroused by God’s condemnation of our lives of rebellion against Him.

We are not Jesus. We cannot judge our brethren nor can we read their hearts. However, it is mandatory that we judge apostasy, lowered standards, and appalling worship services by the Inspiration of God’s Word and the Spirit of Prophecy.

In our scorn for the ministry of reproof—a scorn which unites us for endtime service in the army of our Lord—we draw human conclusions which are in violation of the plain evidence of Inspiration. Not infrequently is it charged that God’s servants should remain silent because Christ did so at the time of His trial prior to His crucifixion. Thus Christ’s submission to the will of His Father is misinterpreted to mean that He always demonstrated such restraint. Scripture emphatically testifies otherwise:

Christ’s daily work has been outlined for us in precise terms. “His days were passed in ministry to the crowds that pressed upon Him, and in unveiling the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 102.

It was Christ’s daily duty to warn against the doctrinal errors of the theologians. He did not remain in cowardly silence. Christ certainly was not like the “dumb dogs that would not bark.” See Testimonies, vol. 5, 211. He did not hold back from telling the leaders of His church the reality of their condition. He loved them too much to withhold His testimony from them. He told them the spiritual situation as it was: “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.” John 8:43–45.

We are not Jesus. We cannot judge our brethren nor can we read their hearts. However, it is mandatory that we judge apostasy, lowered standards, and appalling worship services by the Inspiration of God’s Word and the Spirit of Prophecy, and that we boldly speak out against these artifices of Satan.

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but the beginning of His many statements in Matthew 23 of the numerous defects of these men who designed to accept leadership roles in God's church. Since this public expression of Christ's deep concerns for these men and His church were uttered just a little over 48 hours prior to His arrest, the argument asserting that we should remain silent because Christ adopted such a policy at His trial lacks validity.

Over and over God's children are commanded to "Cry aloud" against open evil in the midst of His church. Never once are they exhorted to silence.

Christ is our Example, and in His ministry He both upheld positive truth and roundly condemned unfaithfulness. Sister White set out the balance within Christ's ministry:

"It is God's purpose that the glory of Christ shall appear in His children. In all His teaching Christ presented pure, unadulterated principles. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Constantly there flowed from His lips holy, ennobling truths. He spoke as never man spoke, with a pathos that touched the heart. He was filled with holy wrath as He saw the Jewish leaders teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and He spoke to them with the authority of true greatness. With terrible power He denounced all artful intrigue, all dishonest practices. He cleansed the temple from its pollution, as He desires to cleanse our hearts from everything bearing any resemblance to fraud. The truth never languished on His lips. With fearlessness He exposed the hypocrisy of priest hypocrisy." Luke 12:1. God's servants do well to follow Christ's example.

Only those who have discerned the abominations in God's church will proclaim the loud cry, for only they will be sealed. Such will be identified by their words of warning. None who are sealed will remain silent as error is proclaimed: "These sigling, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated." Testimonies, vol. 5, 210.

"In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings." Ibid.

Those who oppose the ministry of reproof and warning are in effect stating that God's people do not possess an obligation to resist the inroads of Satan within our churches. For such, the work of the devil must remain uncondemned, unresisted, and God's people unwarmed. Incredibly, this is the policy of a large group of our church administrators at all levels of the work. In order to keep God's flock from such divinely ordered warnings, the messengers of warning are designated by such belittling terms as "critical," "divisive," "disloyal," and "unchristlike." Such tactics are successful, for they hush an already Laodicean flock into deeper spiritual somnolence [sleep], and effectively serve to deflect attention from their complicity in the prevailing loss of dedication to the Bible truths espoused by our faith—the holy

"The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, 'You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us.' But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people." Early Writings, 282.

God's people have not learned the lessons of divine history. At Mt. Sinai, following the rebellion of the Israelites against God, the lay people judged the compromising Aaron as a minister to be preferred to the rebuking Moses. Yet, how differently God estimated the characters of the two men!

"When Moses, on returning to the camp, confronted the rebels, his severe rebukes and the indignation he displayed in breaking the sacred tables of the law were contrasted by the people with his brother's pleasant speech and dignified demeanor, and their sympathies were with Aaron. To justify himself, Aaron endeavored to make the people responsible for his weakness in yielding to their demand; but notwithstanding this, they were filled with admiration of his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man seeth. Aaron's yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning. His course in giving his influence to sin in Israel cost the lives of thousands. In what contrast with this was the course of Moses, who, while faithfully executing God's judgments, showed that the welfare of Israel was dearer to him than prosperity or honor or life." Patriarchs and Prophets, 323. Is it not time for each of us to consider divine history and apply it to our day?

We have been called to give the Elijah Message within our church, yet we follow the work of neither Elijah nor John the Baptist. Weigh the words of God's servant: "The forerunner of Christ's First Advent was a very plain-spoken man. He rebuked sin, and called things by their right names. He laid the axe at the root of the tree. He thus addressed one class of professed converts who came to be baptized of him in Jordan: 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of

In order to keep God's flock from such divinely ordered warnings, the messengers of warning are designated by such belittling terms as "critical," "divisive," "disloyal," and "unchristlike."

...and ruler, Pharisee and Sadducee." Review and Herald, May 12, 1910.

He, too, warned the apostles of such apostasy: "In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inso much that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is standards to which we have been called, and the pure worship of the God of heaven.

Most lay people may now assess pastors who refuse to rebuke their worldliness and prevailing sins as being fine ministers. However, a day is not far hence when such lost souls will deliver a very different judgment:
the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matthew 3:7-8, 10.

"In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth things, God will not acknowledge as His shepherds. A fearful wo is upon them." Testimonies, vol. 1, 321.

Are we who are pastors and church elders bearing a more pointed message than John the Baptist? Indeed, we are not! Many of our pastors stand to lose God's acknowledgment as ministers, and stand in danger of receiving His fearful woes. Those who despise and oppose the God-ordained work of God's watchmen, who do "repent, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2), unwittingly seek the wrath of God to be bestowed upon themselves.

What is expected of us? Let us examine two examples. First, "The Gay and Lesbian Christian Alliance, an organization made up of WWC [Walla Walla College] staff and students, seeks to give support to homosexuals and to inform students on issues surrounding homosexuality." Walla Walla College Collegian, November 30, 1995.

No indication is given that the aims of this alliance is to assist homosexuals to have victory over this tendency to sin. Yet, staff members, such as the college vice president of student affairs, two religion professors, the social work professor, an assistant dean of men, and an assistant dean of women, among others, are members of the Board of the Alliance and are named in the article.

Since Scripture strictly prohibits the practice of homosexuality (see Romans 1:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13), and although the Alliance claims that it "is not a dating service and does not promote sexual activity," it does fail to take a definite stand against the practice of this sin, and in this way it provides implicit condonation [acceptance] of this practice of evil. Dating will inevitably take place in the precincts of these meetings as homosexuals meet in a permissive and accepting environment.

How should God's people respond to this matter? With students easily influenced by their professors, would it be the Christian response to remain silent and offer no word of warning to these young people? Should we be careless of their soul salvation and indifferent to their spiritual well-being? Should we permit Satan's sophistries to penetrate young minds while the verities of God's Word are not raised—even in a whisper?

What is the thinking of God's people when such destructive procedures are supported? Have we become a people of whom the Lord has stated: "Thus 'Peace and safety' is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together." Testimonies, vol. 5, 211.

A second article in the same edition of the Walla Walla College Collegian advertised a concert to be held in the college alumni gym on December 3, 1995, by a group called Audio Adrenaline. The report stated that they have "a sound that is an incendiary musical mix of rock, R & B [rhythm and blues], and punk."

A poem describing the performance of Audio Adrenaline was printed in the article:

"I went to this concert, 
the music was real loud; 
they sang about Jesus as I listened 
amidst a dry ice cloud. 
30,000 watts of audio energy was bustin' 
through my ears and 
made me want to be a hard rock roller 
and wild man in the crowd— 
With a silver mic in one hand and a 
guitar to make it loud. 
A man with a mission that needs to be 
heard, a supersonic preacher screamin' 
out the word."

Such a description of the music blasphemes a pure and holy God. Yet, students were encouraged to pay $6.00 to listen to such a diabolical presentation. Should righteous Seventh-day Adventists express no concern? Unchallenged, these college abominations will infect other Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

Where are our pastors to sound the alarm and warn our young people of the peril of seeking an education in such colleges? Why are the lay people so silent? Why do parents endanger the souls of their children? not only in the United States, but in other permissive areas of the world field.

Could Seventh-day Adventists who remain silent about such matters ever proclaim the loud cry? Decidedly not! Yet, where are those who have raised their voices on such matters? Not since Elder Kenneth Wood left the editorship of the Adventist Review has that periodical raised an alarm concerning the fearful trends in our colleges which were originally designed to prepare young people for service in the elevated cause of God. Where are our pastors to sound the alarm and warn our young people of the peril of seeking an education in such colleges? Why are the lay people so silent? Why do parents endanger the souls of their children? Have we not learned from their experiences?

It is time for God's flock to cease their attacks on those of God's children who heed His reproofs in their own lives, and submit to His call to undertake the task of presenting God's urgent messages of warning to both the church and the world. To the church the flock is commanded to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1.

To Babylon we are ordained to deliver the call, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and...

Continued on 27.
Before we enter the little time of trouble, the close of our probation, and the coming of our Lord, the remnant church will enter into a terrible shaking brought on by our apostasy, and “everything is to be shaken, that can be shaken that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” Testimonies, vol. 7, 219.

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

So everything that the church was doing in Christ’s day will be repeated in this end-time, just before probation closes—the same trials, the same attitudes will again be the position of the last-day Seventh-day Adventist Church. It would be the final apostasy—the Omega. See Selected Messages, book 1, 197-205.

Some might say, “You cannot talk that way about our church.” However, let us remember that these are not my words; they came from our prophet, who was inspired by God. She states that God had warned her again and again of what would take place.

How could such apostasy happen? Just before their entrance into the Promised Land, the children of Israel were encamped near Mt. Peor. The Jordan lay before them—beautiful, lush valleys and hills decorated with majestic palms, and vineyards.

The fruit of the Promised Land was everything that God had promised. They had spent 40 years wandering in a dry and dusty barren land because of their apostasy. Manna rained down every day except Sabbath to feed the nearly two million souls. Water gushed from the barren ground to quench their thirst. The pillar of cloud by day shaded them from the burning heat of the desert, and the pillar of fire by night comforted them that God was with them. Yet, after 40 years the children of the Exodus showed that they had inherited the rebellion of their parents, and the tragedy of Baal-Peor became history. It was a history which was written for our admonition, to warn us that just before the close of our probation, the remnant church would experience a second Baal-Peor. This time it would be called the Omega of Apostasy—the very last apostasy before we would enter the Promised Land. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 455; Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 50. Read Numbers, chapters 25-30.

You say it will never be. It cannot happen, but it already has; and it may be the greatest sign of the end of time. However, now we must look at some inspired evidence:

“I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God’s peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord’s displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace, and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 75-76.

“It is a solemn and terrible truth that many who have been zealous in proclaiming the third angel’s message are now becoming listless and indifferent! The line of demarcation between worldlings and many professed Christians is almost indistinguishable. Many who once were earnest Adventists are conforming to the world—to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. Instead of leading the world to render obedience to God’s
law, the church is uniting more and more closely with the world in transgression. Daily the church is becoming converted to the world. How many professing Christians are slaves of mammon! Their indulgence of appetite, their extravagant expenditure of money for selfish gratification, greatly dishonors God." Testimonies, vol. 8, 118-119.

"I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous slavish have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

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

Daily we have been converting to the world. We have become paralyzed. Tragically, we have been following the same road as the Jews, and we are now experiencing the same falling away from the truth. What has been the cause of it? Our close association with the idolatrous, unbelieving world. Our unbelief in the Testimonies and our neglect to follow the light that God has wonderfully provided in the inspired Testimonies has brought a fearful woe upon God’s remnant people in this tragic final hour. This apostasy is permeating all through our ranks, with only a very few who remain devoted to God’s truth.

God’s nine million professed Seventh-day Adventists have assented to the truth, but how many are converted to the truth? The majority do not seek for the righteousness of Christ:

"Many who complacently listen to the truths from God’s Word are dead spiritually, while they profess to live. For years they have come and gone in our congregations, but they seem only less and less sensible of the value of revealed truth. They do not hunger and thirst after righteousness. They have no relish for spiritual or divine things. They assent to the truth, but are not sanctified through it. Neither the Word of God nor the Testimonies of His Spirit make any lasting impression upon them. Just according to the light, the privileges, and opportunities which they have slighted will be their condemnation. Many who preach the truth to others are themselves cherishing iniquity. The entreaties of the Spirit of God, like divine melody, the promises of His Word so rich and abundant, its threatenings against idolatry and disobedience—all are powerless to melt the world-hardened heart."

"When God shall work His strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people. Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh, that our people may, as did Nineveh, repent with all their might and believe with all their heart, that God may turn away His fierce anger from them.

"I am filled with pain and anguish as I see parents conforming to the world and allowing their children to meet the worldly standard at such a time as this. I am filled with horror as the condition of families professing present truth is opened before me. The profligacy of youth and even children is almost incredible. Parents do not know that secret vice is destroying and defacing the image of God in their children. The sins which characterized the Sodomites exist among them. The parents are responsible; for they have not educated their children to love and obey God. They have not restrained them nor diligently taught them the way of the Lord. They have allowed them to go out and to come in when they chose, and associate with worldlings. These worldly influences which counteract parental teaching and authority are to be found largely in so-called good society. By their dress, looks, amusements, they surround themselves with an atmosphere which is opposed to Christ.

"Our only safety is to stand as God’s peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices.

"It will require courage and independence to rise above the religious standard of the Christian world. They do not follow the Saviour’s example of self-denial; they make no sacrifice; they are constantly seeking to evade the cross which Christ declares to be the token of discipleship.” Ibid., 76-78.

At Baal-Peor, 24,000 died with the plague. This was the last of the rebellious Exodus generation. Balaam, a one-time prophet, had sold his soul for recognition from the idolatrous King Balaam.

Some leaders, pastors, and lay leaders are responsible for the celebration movement in many of our churches, and for the gospel rock music in some of our youth meetings. We were told that just before probation closes this music would come in among us and be found in some of our churches. See Selected Messages, book 2, 36.

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Furthermore, who is responsible for sending more than 1,000 of our pastors to the seminars of John Savage for lab 1 and 2 of Neuro-Linguistic Programming? This man is a professed hypnotist—a disciple of Erickson, the master hypnotist.

Yes, and now from many of our pulpits the evangelical lie that you can be saved in sin, instead of from sin being preached. See Matthew 1.21. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy clearly state that we must overcome all hereditary and cultivated sins.
by the power of the Holy Spirit. See Desire of Ages, 611, 613, 671-672.

Some of our hospitals have now reached across the gulf to clasp hands with the Catholic hospitals. Furthermore, our college in Colombia, South America, has clapsed hands with the Catholic University in that country. See Testimonies, vol. 5, 451.

Our publishing houses are printing books of a new order as prophesied in Selected Messages, book 1, 203-205.

Our educational institutions have followed the world's curriculum, and as a result there is financial chaos in a number of them. Competitive sports is the order of the day in most of our schools. However, very few of our students who pass through our educational system can defend their faith when it comes to proper Sabbathkeeping (see Daniel 7, 8, 9; Revelation 13, 14, 17), and the 2300-day prophecy. Many students know very little of our important church history. The same drugs, alcohol, and immorality that are found in the schools of the world can be found in some of our own schools. Furthermore, the divorce rate among our people now is nearly that of the world.

Yes, we have come to the Jordan, with Mt. Peor just before us, and we find the very same rebellion—apostasy—that was experienced in the days of Moses before they crossed into the Promised Land. Remember, the prophet told us that we would repeat the experience of the Jews. We are now doing so:

"There is great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led His people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep His law and obey His voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet what was to the Israelites a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp and shedding brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of night."

"So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the depositaries of His law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' Psalm 111:10. Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the Word of God. In keeping His commandments there is great reward, and no earthly inducement should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honor, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's wrath."

"The voice of the Lord bidding His faithful ones 'go forward' frequently tries their faith to the uttermost. But if they should defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty was removed from their understanding, and there remained no risk of failure or defeat, they would never move on at all. Those who think it impossible for them to yield to the will of God and have faith in His promises until all is made clear and plain before them, will never yield at all. Faith is not certainty of knowledge; it 'is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' To obey the commandments of God is the only way to obtain His favor. 'Go forward' should be the Christian's watchword." Testimonies, vol. 4, 27-28.

Our prophet has told us again and again that if we continue to follow in the same track of apostasy as the Jewish church, it is possible that we will have to suffer the same wrath of God that was visited upon the ancient church.

Let us not forget that the Old Testament is a record of the church's apostasy. The record also reveals that in most cases the Bible writers were not under the jurisdiction of the church leaders, but were under the direction of God. See 2 Peter 1:21. These God-send men counseled, reproved, and rebuked the church for its stubborn resistance to God's directions and commands. They were then frequently persecuted or killed for their straightforward testimonies. See Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 23.

The following inspired statements will help to verify our present situation:

"Christ declares to His followers: 'Ye are the light of the world.' Matthew 5:14. To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: 'Behold the worth of the soul. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Mark 16:15.' Notting is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers. . . ."

"There is a terrible amount of guilt for which the church is responsible. Why are not those who have the light putting forth earnest efforts to give that light to others? They see that the end is near. They see multitudes daily transgressing God's law; and they know that these souls cannot be saved in transgression. Yet they have more interest in their trades, their farms, their houses, their merchandise, their dress, their tables, than in the souls of men and women whom they must meet face to face in the judgment. The people who claim to obey the truth are asleep. They could not be at ease as they are if they were awake. The love of the truth is dying out of their hearts. Their example is not such as to convince the world that they have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. At the very time when they should be strong in God, having a daily, living experience,
they are feeble, hesitating, relying upon the preachers for support, when they should be ministering to others with mind and soul and voice and pen and time and money." Testimonies, vol. 5, 456-457.

"There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. The manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. 'Why,' they say, 'should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?'—Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' Revelation 3:17." Review and Herald, December 23, 1890.

There is only one cure for our rebellion against God's orders, His plans for His remnant church, and that is confession of our apostasy. If we will make this confession and repentance now, the church will not have to suffer the wrath of God, which otherwise will surely come soon. Yes, God's church will soon be purified, shaken to its very foundation, and it will go through, although much of the machinery will swiftly disappear. See Selected Messages, book 2, 58; book 1, 175; Evangelism, 700. When the economy crashes, God will then use very simple means to finish His work on this sin-cursed planet. See Evangelism, 63; The Great Controversy, 589-590.

There will soon be a loud-cry movement, but will you and I be a part of it? "Unless those who can help in are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God's work at every point. Workers may make mistakes, but you should give them a chance to correct their errors, give them an opportunity to learn caution, by leaving the work in their hands." Testimonies to Ministers, 300.

Yes, God's church will soon be purified, shaken to its very foundation, and it will go through, although much of the machinery will swiftly disappear.

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The Retreat Toward Egypt

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. Deuteronomy 2:1.

According to verses 14 and 15, the “many days” the Israelites encamped around Mount Seir in the wilderness of Zin was almost 38 years. During this time “the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy from among the host until they were consumed.” This of course is speaking of those who rebelled and “provoked the Lord” at Kadesh. During the whole period of their wilderness wandering they were under the disfavor of God. A study of the map reveals the fact that the hosts of Israel practically retraced their steps as far as the Elanitic Gulf, the western arm of the Red Sea. This return into the wilderness from Kadesh was a retreat, and was so considered by the nations of Canaan who had trembled at their approach.

Went Backwards

“For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.” Jeremiah 7:22-24.

At the very threshold of their goal the Israelites refused to hearken to divine counsel, but walked “in the stubbornness of their evil heart,” and retreated backward toward Egypt, instead of going forward toward Canaan. The rebellion at Kadesh made it necessary for them to turn their backs upon the Promised Land and face again toward the land of their bondage. “In their hearts” they had “turned back again into Egypt,” and had even “appointed a captain to return to their bondage,” so now they were compelled to start an ignominious retreat toward the place of their heart’s desire where they could obtain the things their souls lusted after. They did not return all of the way to Egypt. The next 38 years were spent wandering about in the desert of Zin. They did not return to Egypt, nor did they go forward to the Promised Land. They were practically at a standstill.

Wilderness Wandering

“But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.” Numbers 14:32-34.

“And the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed.” Numbers 32:13.

The wilderness wandering of Israel was the fulfillment of a divine decree or sentence because at Kadesh they “had done evil in the sight of the Lord” and had kindled His anger. There was not even a highway for them to travel on, but they drifted or wandered aimlessly about in a desert or “void place.”—Markin. “They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul faint in them.” Psalm 107:4-5. It was indeed a solitary and desolate way over which they traveled during their wilderness wanderings. “Wander” means “to ramble here and there, without any certain course or object in view, to rove, range, or roam about, to stray, to depart or stay from any settled course or path, to deviate.”

During this period they made no progress toward their final goal. Their punishment was very severe, but their sin at Kadesh was very grievous. They must learn lessons of faith and obedience in the hard school of experience. The Lord could not take rebels into the Promised Land. “Thus saith the Lord unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept
them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.” Jeremiah 14:10.

Material Prosperity

“He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.” Psalm 107:38. While this was doubtless spoken of the experience of the Israelites in Egypt, there can be no question but the Exodus movement continued to increase in membership during the entire course of their journey. See Nehemiah 9:23.

Material prosperity in increasing numbers did not cease during their wilderness wanderings. During this time they doubtless also increased in efficiency of their organization, and from a material viewpoint they appeared to be a prosperous people. This sort of prosperity, however, did not lead them toward the Promised Land. Increased equipment and numbers is not the prosperity that counts most with God. Spiritual progress alone could bring success to the movement, and lead them out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

The Advent Movement

While the Heaven-sent message that began at the Minneapolis Conference in 1888 led the Advent movement out of the wilderness of sin to the very borders of the heavenly Canaan, the rejection of that message resulted in a retreat back into the wilderness again. The movement itself has not gone all the way back to Egypt or the world, but, like Israel of old, has only retreated “toward Egypt.” It is true, however, that many thousands of individual members have completed the journey all the way back to the world. Their retreat has taken them back to Babylon, the place of their former bondage. It is also true that thousands of other Adventists are dangerously near the world, and will soon sever all connections with God’s people and return to spiritual Egypt. But the Advent movement itself has never completely the retreat and never will. Its final triumph is just as certain as was that of the Exodus movement, and all who remain in the movement to the end will reach the heavenly goal.

Hearts in Egypt

The long delay of the Exodus movement was due to the fact that the Israelites did not sever all connections with Egypt and the things of Egypt. “In their hearts they turned back again into Egypt.” They continued to think of and lust after the things of the land of their bondage. This is also the cause of the long delay of the triumph of the Advent movement. Those whose hearts are in the world, and whose affections are set upon the things of the world, will eventually follow their hearts and return to the world.

Retreating

“I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the

Those who are living on the very borders of the world are courting tragic failure and eternal ruin. They constitute the “mixed multitude” of the Advent movement.

Only those who make a complete separation from the world, and who “seek those things which are above” and set their “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2), will eventually triumph with the Advent movement. It is dangerous to retreat toward the world and to have our interests centered on the things of the world. Those who are living on the very borders of the world are courting tragic failure and eternal ruin. They constitute the “mixed multitude” of the Advent movement.

Previous Retreat

The retreat worldward after the rejection of the 1888 message was only the repetition of a spiritual retreat that had been in progress previous to the giving of that Heaven-sent message. In fact, a growing conformity to the world was the reason why the Lord sent the message calling for a spiritual revival and reformation. The following are a few of many statements regarding the spiritual condition of God’s people before 1888. “Many have for years made no advancement in knowledge and true holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are going back to the darkness and bondage of Egypt.” Testimonies, vol. 2, 124. “As a people we are not advancing in spirituality as we near the end.” “My heart aches day after day and night after night for our churches. Many are progressing, but in a back track.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 11, 93.

church is flourishing, and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders. The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 217. Just as the Israelites were in the wilderness before they reached Kadesh at the borders of the Promised Land, so the Advent people were in the wilderness of sin before they reached the borders of the heavenly Canaan in 1888.

A Worse Retreat

The worst spiritual retreat in the history of the Advent movement has come as the result of rejecting the 1888 message. “Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting, I have seen the state of the Laodicean church as never before. I have heard the rebuke of God spoken to those who feel so well satisfied, who know not their spiritual destitution. . . . Like the Jews, many have closed their eyes lest they should see; but there is as great peril now, in closing the eyes to light, and walking apart from Christ, feeling need of nothing, as there was when He was upon earth. I have been shown many things which I have presented before our people in solemnity and earnestness, but those whose hearts have been hardened through criticism, jealousy, and evil surmisings, knew not that they were poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. . . . I feel sad when I think how for long years there has been a gradual lowering of the standard. . . . This great spiritual destitution
Spirituality deadened, humility and childlike simplicity gone, a mechanical, formal profession of faith has taken the place of love and devotion. Is this mournful condition of things to continue? . . .

repent,' it will be exhausted; the churches, our institutions, will go from weakness to weakness, from cold formality to deadness, while they are saying, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' The True Witness says, 'And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Revelation 3:17. Will they ever see clearly their condition?' Review and Herald, December 23, 1890. Republished in the Review and Herald November 7, 1918.

Christless Experience

"There are many, many, professed Christians who are waiting unconcernedly for the coming of the Lord. They have not

Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children." Review and Herald, February 25, 1902.

Church Converted to the World

"It is a solemn and terrible truth that many who have been zealous in proclaiming the third angel's message are now becoming listless and indifferent! The line of demarcation between worldlings and many professed Christians is almost indistinguishable. Many who once were earnest Adventists are conforming to the world—to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. Instead of leading the world to render obedience to God's law, the church is uniting more and more closely with the world in transgression. Daily the church is becoming converted to the world."

Testimonies, vol. 8, 118-119. Published in 1904, this statement indicates that not only many individuals but also the entire church or movement has made a retreat worldward. There are scores of other similar statements that might be read.

Material Prosperity

Just as Israel increased in numbers and enjoyed a degree of material prosperity during their retreat and wilderness wandering, so the Advent movement likewise steadily increased its membership, improved its organization, extended its influence, expanded its mission borders, and multiplied its institutions, evangelists and finances, even while it was retreating toward the world and wandering about in the wilderness of sin. But material prosperity is not always an evidence of spiritual progress. It is possible to experience the former without the latter. If material progress constitutes a sure evidence of the blessing and approval of God, what conclusion would be inevitable regarding the growth of the Papacy, Mohammedism, Christian Science, and many other false religions?

Spiritual Retreat

The retreat is in regard to spiritual and not material things. "The work has been extended so that it now covers a large territory, and the number of believers has increased. Still there is a great deficiency, for a larger work might have been accomplished had the same missionary spirit been manifested as in earlier days. Without this spirit the laborer will only mar and deface the cause of God. The work is really
retrograding instead of advancing as God designs it should. Our present numbers and the extent of our work are not to be compared with what they were in the beginning. We should consider what might have been done had every worker consecrated himself, in soul, body, and spirit, to God as he should have done." Testimonies, vol. 6, 420, published in 1900. "But in some respects the work has deteriorated. While it has grown in extent and facilities, it has waned in piety." Testimonies, vol. 7, 217, published in 1902.

True Prosperity

"If numbers were evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the college that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness." Testimonies, vol. 5, 31–32. Following a description of material prosperity and display in religious worship when godliness is lacking, we read: "But in all this God is not honored. He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. . . . A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attractions of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship." Prophets and Kings, 565–566.

Here is the reason for the Laodicean deception. The church has mistaken material prosperity for spiritual progress; as the evidence of the presence of God and the favor of Heaven. The purpose of the Laodicean message is to correct this false impression and to show that God reckons prosperity from the viewpoint of spiritual life and growth. Material prosperity will of course follow the presence and blessing of God as in apostolic days, but it is the result and not the cause of the Divine favor. The history of many ancient and modern false religious movements proves that material prosperity of itself is meaningless. To learn this lesson is one of the greatest needs of the Advent people, for it depends our eternal destiny.
W

HAT should I say or do? That was the question I had to ask myself as I listened to the testimony of Sofia. She was utterly discouraged, perhaps a bit despondent, wandering in the painful land of hopelessness. What had led her to this dangerous wilderness—with a slough of despondency such as the one described in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*?

She went on to share that she had received anonymous letters, apparently from her "straight testimony" friends, "conservative Christians," and "historic Seventh-day Adventists," who were in the business of "uplifting" the standards of the Church against any form of apostasy or infidelity toward God's truth.

To be objective, I had to ask Sofia about the nature of the rebukes and accusations given her by these watchmen on the walls of Zion. Based on our human nature, I expected a form of finger pointing that often is manifested by those who want to defend themselves against personal attacks. To my surprise, Sofia had no arguments in her defense nor did she deny the charges, or the nature of the rebukes. She was very frank with me and shared that she had a weakness in her character to be disorderly and untidy. The complexity of her lifestyle, which included some good causes such as giving Bible studies, Christian witnessing, engaging in community service activities, working at her job to make a living, child raising, and home schooling, just to mention a few, had distracted her to the point that she did not fully accomplish some of her other tasks, specifically her housekeeping duties. She expressed later that she was sympathetic to what had happened to her friend Laura who, like herself, had also received anonymous letters which condemned some of her practices.

Sofia shared with me the letters that she had received. In all fairness, perhaps because I was not the focus of the rebuke, I concluded that the letters were not nasty, disrespectful or offensive. Basically, after detailing Sofia's defects, whoever wrote the letter listed a long series of statements taken from the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy that openly disapproved Sofia's practices.

I must confess that I had mixed feelings when I read the letter. My first reaction was like that of David, who after listening to Nathan's parable, became so indignant as to pronounce a dreadful judgment that eventually fell upon himself. See 2 Samuel 12. I was indignant because I perceived that God's beautiful and straightforward admonitions were being used as a whip (by lacking a friendly approach) to punish the guilty. My second reaction was to act carefully so that my sympathy toward my friend Sofia would not undermine the infallibility and application of divine counsel. Finally, I told my friend that she should rise above what appeared to her to be less than the ideal method in dealing with a very delicate issue. However, she should try to see that behind the painful rebuke might well have been very good and noble intentions. I prayed with Sofia, and provided some practical suggestions on how to improve in that area of concern, and then bade her farewell.

Later in the quietness of my personal devotions, I committed myself to avoid the usage of anonymous letters. Perhaps, at times, writing nameless messages may be a tool to reach someone. Nevertheless, people have the tendency to listen and consider the advice of those that sincerely show themselves as friends.

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly." Proverbs 18:24. Showing yourself friendly perhaps may involve wounding someone's feelings, yet let us remember that "faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Proverbs 27:6.

Some very sincere Adventists are eager to uproot apostasy within God's
church, but they end up making matters worse by breaking the bruised reeds and quenching the smoking flax.

"Speaking through His prophet of the work to be done by Christ in the world, God says: 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.' Isaiah 42:1-4. Christ Himself declared: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Luke 4:18." Review and Herald, April 10, 1900. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

A careful horticulturist would deal tenderly with a bruised stem or twig, and if it was a special plant he might even bandage the twig until it healed. If a man was trying to start a fire and had no more matches, but had succeeded in getting a tiny flame from a flax straw, he would deal tenderly with the little fire and blow gently on it and add the tiniest wood or reed or leaf particles until he obtained an actual fire. To place a heavy piece of wood on top of the weak flame would probably extinguish the fire immediately and permanently. A strong gust of wind would snuff out the flame as well. Just so gently should we deal with weak, discouraged saints. Christ treated most sinners very gently, but overt sinners such as the hypocritical Pharisees received more stern treatment, for they knew better.

Christ's ministry is described by God's prophet as neither breaking the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking flax. I shall now proceed to describe different incidents in the ministry of Christ which beautifully illustrate this aspect of Christ's character.

**Bruised Samaritans**

"The Samaritans had heard of Christ's words of commendation and His works of mercy for men of their nation. They saw that, notwithstanding their rude treatment of Him, He had only thoughts of love toward them, and their hearts were won. After His ascension they welcomed the Saviour's messengers, and the disciples gathered a precious harvest from among those who had once been their bitterest enemies. 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.' Isaiah 42:3, margin. 'And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.' Matthew 12:21. "The Desire of Ages, 488-489.

**A Bruised Heathen**

"The Saviour manifested divine compassion toward the Syro-Phoenician woman. His heart was touched with pitying tenderness, as He saw her woe and grief. He longed to give her an immediate assurance that her prayer was heard, and her request fulfilled; but He desired to teach His disciples a lesson; and for a short period of time He seemed to act out the feelings that prompted them, and neglected the cry of her heart. He acted towards her in the same manner as the Pharisees taught the people to act toward all such so-called heathen. Christ even repulsed her. He knew the heart of the woman. He knew what sorrow pressed upon her soul, and understood her persistent determination not to be driven away until her request was granted. When she made known her request to Christ, he said, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs.' Matthew 15:26. But she had an answer ready, and said, 'The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Verse 27. This is all I ask. Give me the privilege of eating the crumbs that fall from the table.

"Did she go away empty and discouraged?—No, she received her request. The Lord commanded her for her great faith, and sent her away with the precious boon she had asked. He then turned to His disciples and said, 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' Matthew 8:10. Did the disciples ever forget this lesson?—No. This case is placed on record to show what is the result of persevering in presenting our needs to the Hearer of prayer. Of Christ it was written. 'The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.' No soul will be left to perish who asks in faith for the help of Christ. The weakest, the most struggling soul, may live, and find hope and sufficiency in God. When Jesus comes into the storm and the darkness, midnight is as bright as noonday. The faith that recognizes Christ leads the soul to rest implicitly upon the promises, because God is behind them. There is hope for the most despising. Those who take Christ at His Word, who surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace, quietude, and rest. He will impart grace to the needy soul." The Signs of the Times, May 28, 1896.

**Bruised Outcasts**

"To the heart of Christ the very presence of trouble was a call for help. The poor, the sick, the desolate, the outcasts, the discouraged, the desponding, found in Him a Compassionate Saviour, a Mighty Healer. 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.' Christ identifies His interests with those of suffering humanity, and He tells us that whatever we do to relieve a sufferer, we do for Him. . . . " Medical Ministry, 121.

"How greatly Christ would be honored and glorified before the world if His followers were what they claim to be—true Christians, the love of Christ constraining them to make Him known, their lives dedicated to unselfish service.

"I see such loftiness of spirit in those who profess to believe in Christ! I am pained, deeply pained, night and day, to see them more like worldlings than like Christ in character and practice. God expects to receive from all who believe in Him the service of a heart filled with love.

"Christ has revealed Himself as a wise, patient, long-suffering Helper, full of divine pity. Be assured that He will not break the bruised reed. He will tenderly lead your steps in safe paths, guiding you into all truth. He will gladden the hearts of all who give themselves without reserve to His guidance. He will impart to them gracious instruction."

"O, how I long to speak these words to those who are not so lofty in their own ideas that they have lost all desire for the precious grace of Christ's love. This is the instruction we so much need, that we may impart it to worn, weary souls. You and I must be where we can feed the souls who are longing to hear words of light and life." Pacific Union Recorder, June 2, 1904.

"Study the life and character of Christ, and seek to imitate His example. The unconsecrated course of some of those who claim to be believers in the third angel's message, has resulted in driving some of the poor sheep into the desert; and who is it that has manifested a shepherd's care for
He who came not to break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax would not repulse this soul while even one desire was reaching toward the light.

A Bruised Disciple

“When Judas joined the disciples, he was not insensible to the beauty of the character of Christ. He felt the influence of that divine power which was drawing souls to the Saviour. He who came not to break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax would not repulse this soul while even one desire was reaching toward the light. The Saviour read the heart of Judas; He knew the depths of iniquity to which, unless delivered by the grace of God, Judas would sink. In connecting this man with Himself, He placed him where he might, day by day, be brought in contact with the outflowing of His own unselfish love. If He would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God.” The Desire of Ages, 294.

Bruised Children

“Many parents deny the children an indulgence in that which is safe and innocent, and are so afraid of encouraging them in cultivating desires for unlawful things that they will not even allow their children to have the enjoyment that children should have. Through fear of evil results, they refuse permission to indulge in some simple pleasure that would have saved the very evil they seek to avoid, and thus the children think there is no use in expecting any favors, and therefore will not ask for them. They steal away to the pleasures they think will be forbidden. Confidence between the parents and children is thus destroyed. If fathers and mothers have not themselves had a happy childhood, why should they shadow the lives of their children because of their own great loss in this respect? The father may think that this is the only course that will be safe to pursue; but let him remember that all minds are not constituted alike, and the indulgence since he has denied it to him. But parents should remember that their children are intelligent beings, and they should deal with them as they themselves would like to be dealt with. “It is true that Christ is to be the model for children. He was subject unto His parents; but Christ is also the father's example, and His tender love should be shown by His human agent. The father should be enabled to say, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.' Psalm 18:35. Christ is the model of perfection, both in outward manner and inward grace, for He was meek and gentle of heart. He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He enjoyed seeing children and youth happy. He never spoke an unkind, discourteous word. Even in His denunciations of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, keen and searching though they were, there was no manifestation of an irritated temper. Divine grace alone can correct our objectionable tendencies.

“When circumstances arise that tempt and irritate us, we must manifest love and sympathy, and cultivate patience under every provocation to anger. Under trying circumstances parents may think it right to manifest sternness; but this is the time when they will need to apply the oil of grace in order to prevent friction in the family. Harseness of temper must be softened and subdued by the love of Christ, in order that parents may be able to deal wisely with their children. When, by the wrong course of some members of the family, a most difficult combination of things comes into existence, which is hard to harmonize, different manifestations of mind will make themselves apparent in those who are to be reproved. Some will be excessively sensitive, others manifest a cold, proud reserve, others be nervous and timid, and others still be excessively irritable. Under such circumstances there will always be need of forbearance, patience, and love. Let all by repentance, forgiveness, and love seek to bring all the sunshine that is possible into the home life, that alienation may be healed, and the family come into unity.

“The Christian must modify his stern traits of character through the grace of Christ, and cultivate that which is gentle and peaceful. Great harm is done to the cause of Christ when Christians permit their unholy traits of character to misrepresent the gentle, courteous spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Old age at times expects too much of inexperienced youth, and youth expect too much of the aged.
Let all take Christ for their example, who never spoke a hasty, discourteous word, or performed a rude action. It is just as much the sacred duty of the aged to grow old gracefully, mellowing in disposition in the autumn of life, as it is for the youth to represent the graces of the character of Christ. Manners are the ex-
pression of character, and divine grace can do everything to sanctify the character. Therefore, 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Philippians 2:5.” The Signs of the Times, May 14, 1894.

Avoid Breaking Bruised Reeds

One key element that is often ignored by the expositors, perhaps because they are not aware of it, is that “the manner in which the truth is presented often has much to do in determining whether it will be accepted or rejected. It is to be regretted that many do not realize that the manner in which Bible truth is presented has much to do with the impressions made upon minds, and with the Christian character afterward developed by those who receive the truth. Instead of imitating Christ in His manner of labor, many are severe, critical, and dictatorial. They repulse instead of winning souls. Such will never know how many weak ones their harsh words have wounded and discouraged.” Evangelism, 168.

The more I dwell upon this subject, the more I am compelled by the Spirit to admit my own errors in dealing with precious souls for whom Christ died. How are we in our own homes? How do we relate to the little lambs? Are we severe and critical with our children or with our spouse, using words such as: “You never . . .” and “You always . . .”? Has the Lord placed us in a position of influence to advance God’s cause? How do we relate to our coworkers? Do we repulse them? Do we use harsh words but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn; but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope. The Sinless One pities the weakness of the sinner, and reaches to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounce, Jesus bids her, “Go, and sin no more.” John 8:11.

“It is not Christ’s follower that, with averted eyes, turns from the erring, leaving them unhindered to pursue their downward course. Those who are forward in accusing others, and zealous in bringing them to justice, are often in their own lives more guilty than they. Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein.” Desire of Ages, 462.

“Jesus has given us in His life an example of pity and love for the erring. While He fearlessly reproved sin, He regarded the sinner with compassion. Looking upon the cross of Calvary, where Christ poured out His life to atone for our sins, let us recall His Words, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you.’ Matthew 15:12. Oh that we all, both ministers and people, might heed the tender entreaty!

“But while the servant of Christ should seek with all patience and love to save sinners, he should on no account give license to sin. He must not allow his perceptions to be dulled by contact with iniquity, or his judgment to be perverted by the world’s opinion. By excusing and palliating sin, we lose a sense of its heinous character. Compassion for the erring should not degenerate into indulgence for transgression. In order to preserve the safe mean, the Christian must add to patience godliness. Then he will see as God sees.” Review and Herald, December 20, 1881.

“True love seeks first the honor of God and the salvation of souls. Those who have this love will not evade the truth to save themselves from the unpleasant results of plain speaking. When souls are in peril, God’s ministers will not consider self, but will speak the word given them to speak, refusing to excuse or palliate evil.” Prophets and Kings, 141-142.

Dear reader, we must keep a balance between withholding reproof to save the bruised reed and obeying the Lord’s command to show “the house of Jacob their sins.” Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit we must do that which is actually best to save the bruised reed for eternity—not merely to save their feelings while here on earth.

Probably we all have been guilty in the past of breaking a bruised reed, but we can repent with the help of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. By His divine grace we can become sincere and honest friends of those who are weak and nearly hopeless, and who are struggling against their inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil. In Christ we can find a perfect balance, restoring bruised reeds with a spirit of meekness. See Galatians 6:1. Sofia, had another friend, Martha, who did not send anonymous notes, but went to visit her, spending time with her, and offering concrete suggestions to help her improve her housekeeping techniques. She worked with Sofia to clean her house. She left joy, hope, peace, and redemption behind her.

The following beautiful prayer was offered long ago, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned. It is in dying [daily in Christ] that we are born to eternal life.” Amen. □

March 1997 Our Firm Foundation 23
Effectual Prayer

MANY prayers are offered without faith. A set form of words is used, but there is no real importunity. These prayers are doubtful, hesitating, they bring no relief to those who offer them, and no comfort or hope to others. The form of prayer is used, but the spirit is wanting, showing that the petitioner does not feel his need, and is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. These long, cold prayers are untimely and wearisome; they are too much like preaching the Lord a sermon.

Learn to pray short and right to the point, asking for just what you need. Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you. Do not offer make-believe prayers, but earnest, feeling petitions, expressing the hunger of the soul for the Bread of Life. If we prayed more in secret, we should be able to pray more intelligently in public. These doubtful, hesitating prayers would cease. And when we engaged with our brethren in public worship, we could add to the interest of the meeting; for we should bring with us some of the atmosphere of Heaven, and our worship would be a reality, and not a mere form. Those about us can soon tell whether we are in the habit of praying or not. If the soul is not drawn out in prayer in the closet and while engaged in the business of the day, it will be manifest in the prayer meeting. The public prayers will be dry and formal, consisting of repetitions and customary phrases, and they will bring darkness rather than light into the meeting.

The life of the soul depends upon habitual communion with God. Its wants are made known, and the heart is open to receive fresh blessings. Gratitude flows from unfeigned lips; and the refreshing that is received from Jesus is manifested in words, in deeds of active benevolence, and in public devotion. There is love to Jesus in the heart; and where love exists, it will not be repressed, but will express itself. Secret prayer sustains this inner life. The heart that loves God will desire to commune with Him, and will lean on Him in holy confidence.

Let us learn to pray intelligently, expressing our requests with clearness and precision. Let us put away the listless, sluggish habit into which we have fallen, and pray as though we meant it. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16. Faith takes a firm hold of the promises of God, and urges her petitions with fervor; but when the life of the soul stagnates, the outward devotions become formal and powerless.

I have listened to testimonies like this: "I have not the light that I desire; I have not the assurance of the favor of God." Such testimonies express only unbelief and darkness. Are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, and that you must be free from sin before you trust His power to save? If this is the struggle going on in your mind, I fear you will gain no strength, and will finally become discouraged. As the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so was Christ lifted up to draw all men unto Him. All who looked upon that serpent, the means that God had provided, were healed; so in our sinfulness, in our great need, we must "look and live." While we realize our
helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged His Word; He will save all who come unto Him. Then let us come confessing our sins, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

Jesus is our Saviour today. He is pleading for us in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, and He will forgive our sins. It makes all the difference in the world with us spiritually whether we rely upon God without doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether we are seeking to find some righteousness in ourselves before we come to Him. Look away from self to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is a sin to doubt. The least unbelief, if cherished in the heart, involves the soul in guilt, and brings great darkness and discouragement. It is saying that the Lord is false; that He will not do as He has promised; and He is greatly dishonored. Some have cherished doubts, discontent, and a disposition to be on the wrong side, until they love doubts, and seem to think it is praiseworthy to be on the side of the doubting. But when the believing ones shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls, the doubting ones, who have sowed unbelief, will reap that which they have sown, and a pitiful, undesirable harvest it will be.

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed before they can claim His blessing. But these dear souls may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the spirit of Christ to help their infirmities, or they cannot form Christian characters. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are—sinful, helpless, dependent. We claim to be children of the light, not of the night nor of darkness; what right have we to be unbelieving?

Some obtain answers to prayer, a little freedom, and they become elated. They do not increase in faith, do not grow in strength and courage, but they depend on feeling. If they happen to feel well, they think they are in favor with God. How many stumble here, how many are overcome! Feeling is no criterion for any of us. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. We are to examine our characters in God's mirror, His Holy Law, to detect our errors and imperfections, and then to remove them by the precious blood of Christ.

Jesus, who died for us, loves us with a love that is infinite; and we must love one another. We must put away all selfishness, and work together in love and unity. We have loved and petted ourselves, and excised ourselves in our waywardness; but we have been unmerciful toward our brethren, who are not as faulty as ourselves. The Lord loves us, and bears with us, even when we are ungrateful to Him, forgetful of His mercies, wickedly unbelieving; but consider, brethren, how relentless we are to one another, how pitiless; how we hurt and wound one another when we should love as Christ has loved us. Let us make a complete change. Let us cultivate the precious plant of love, and delight to help one another. We must be kind, forbearing, patient with one another's errors; we must keep our sharp criticisms for ourselves, but hope all things, believe all things, of our brethren.

When we have cultivated a spirit of charity, we may commit the keeping of our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator, not because we are sinless, but because Jesus died to save just such erring, faulty creatures as we are, thus expressing His estimate of the value of the human soul. We may rest upon God, not because of our own merit, but because the righteousness of Christ will be imputed to us. We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb of God, who did no sin; and by looking to Him in living faith, we shall become like Him. There are rich promises for us in the Word of God. The plan of salvation is ample. It is no narrow, limited provision that has been made for us. We are not mind in regard to doctrine. All these things are essential; but how much God can do for us in sending light and convincing power to hearts in answer to the prayer of faith! The empty seats in our prayer meetings testify that Christians do not realize the claims of God upon them; they do not realize their duty to make these meetings interesting and successful. They go over a monotonous, wearisome round, and return to their homes unfreshed, unblessed.

If we would refresh others, we must ourselves drink of the Fountain that never becomes dry. It is our privilege to become acquainted with the Source of our strength, to have hold of the arm of God. If we would have spiritual life and energy, we must commune with God. We can speak to Him of our real wants, and our earnest petitions will show that we realize our needs, and will do what we can to answer our own prayers. We must obey the injunction of Paul, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ephesians 5:14.

Luther was a man of prayer. He worked and prayed as though something must be done, and that at once, and it was done. His prayers were followed up by venturing something on the promises of God; and, through divine aid, he was enabled to shake the vast power of Rome, so that in every country the foundations of the church trembled.

Luther was a man of prayer. He worked and prayed as though something must be done, and that at once, and it was done. . . . through divine aid, he was enabled to shake the vast power of Rome.

and communes with Him. Pray when you are faint-hearted. When you are desponding, close the lips firmly to men; keep all the darkness within, lest you shadow the path of another, but tell it to Jesus. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith, that you may see light in His light, and rejoice in His love. Only believe, and you shall surely see the salvation of God.
Disease and Its Causes
Part 6
By Ellen G. White

The mother frequently sends her children from her presence because she thinks she cannot endure the noise occasioned by their happy frolics. But with no mother’s eye over them to approve, or disapprove, at the right time, unhappy differences often arise. A word from the mother would set all right again. They soon become weary, and desire change, and go into the street for amusement; and pure, innocent-minded children are driven into bad company, and evil communications breathed into their ears corrupt their good manners. The mother often seems to be asleep to the interest of her children, until she is painfully aroused by the exhibition of vice. The seeds of evil were sown in their young minds, promising an abundant harvest. And it is a marvel to her that her children are so prone to do wrong. Parents should begin in season to instill into infant minds good and correct principles. The mother should be with her children as much as possible, and should sow precious seed in their hearts.

The mother’s time belongs in a special manner to her children. They have a right to her time as no others can have. In many cases mothers have neglected to discipline their children, because it would require too much of their time, which they think must be spent in the cooking department, or in preparing their own clothing, and that of their children, according to fashion, to foster pride in their young hearts. In order to keep their restless children still, they have given them cake or candies, almost any hour of the day, and their stomachs are crowded with hurtful things at irregular periods. Their pale faces testify to the fact that mothers are doing what they can to destroy the remaining life forces of their poor children. The digestive organs are constantly taxed, and are not allowed periods of rest. The liver becomes inactive, the blood impure, and the children are sickly and irritable, because they are real sufferers from intemperance; and it is impossible for them to exercise patience.

Parents wonder that children are so much more difficult to control than they used to be, when in most cases their own criminal management has made them so. The quality of food they bring upon their tables, and encourage their children to eat, is constantly exciting their animal passions, and weakening the moral and intellectual faculties. Very many children are made miserable dyspeptics in their youth by the wrong course their parents have pursued toward them in childhood. Parents will be called to render an account to God for thus dealing with their children.

Many parents do not give their children lessons in self-control. They indulge their appetite, and form the habits of their children, in childhood, to eat and drink according to their desires. So will they be in their general habits in their youth. Their desires have not been restrained; and as they grow older, they will not only indulge in the common habits of intemperance, but they will go still further in indulgences. They will choose their own associates, although corrupt. They cannot endure restraint from their parents. They will give loose rein to their corrupt passions, and will have but little regard for purity or virtue. This is the reason there is so little purity and moral worth among the youth of the present day, and is the great cause why men and women feel under so little obligation to render obedience to the law of God. Some parents have not control over themselves. They do not control their own morbid appetites, or their passionate tempers; therefore they cannot educate their children in regard to the denial of appetite, nor teach them self-control.

Many mothers feel that they have not time to instruct their children; and in order to get them out of the way, and get rid of their noise and trouble, they send them to school. The schoolroom is a hard place for children who have inherited enfeebled constitutions. Schoolrooms generally have not been constructed with reference to health, but with regard to cheapness. The rooms have not been arranged so that they can be ventilated, as they should be, without exposing the children to severe colds. And the seats have seldom been made so that the children can sit with ease, and keep their little, growing frames in a proper posture to insure healthy action of the lungs and heart. Young children can grow into almost any shape, and can, by habits of proper exercise and correct positions of the body, obtain healthy forms. It is destructive to the health and life of young children for them to sit in the schoolroom, upon hard, ill-formed benches, from three to five hours a day, inhaling the impure air caused by many breaths. The weak lungs become affected, and the brain, from which the nervous energy of the whole system is derived, becomes enfeebled by being called into active exercise before the strength of the mental organs is sufficiently matured to endure fatigue.

In the schoolroom the foundation has been surely laid for diseases of various kinds. But, more especially, the most delicate of all organs, the brain, has often been permanently injured by too great exercise. This has often caused inflammation, then dropsy [swelling] of the head, and convulsions, with their dreaded results. And the lives of many have been thus sacrificed by ambitious mothers. Of those children who have apparently had sufficient force of constitution to survive this treatment, there are very many who carry the effects of it through life.

The nervous energy of the brain becomes so weakened that after they come to maturity, it is impossible for them to endure much mental exercise.

* Note: The image contains a colorful illustration with text, which is not transcribed here.
The force of some of the delicate organs of the brain seems to be expended. And not only has the physical and mental health of children been endangered by their being sent to school at too early a period [an age], but they have been the losers in a moral point of view. They have had opportunities to become acquainted with children who were uncultivated in their manners. They were thrown into the society of the coarse and rough, who lie, swear, steal, and deceive, and who delight to impart their knowledge of vice to those younger than themselves. Young children, if left to themselves, learn the bad more readily than the good. Bad habits agree best with the natural heart; and the things which the children see and hear in infancy and childhood are deeply imprinted upon their minds; and the bad seed sown in their young hearts will take root, and will become sharp thorns to wound the hearts of their parents.

During the first six or seven years of a child’s life special attention should be given to its physical training, rather than the intellectual. After this period, if the physical constitution is good, the education of both should receive attention. Infancy extends to the age of six or seven years. Up to this period [age], children should be left, like lambs, to roam about the house, and in the yard, in the buoyancy of their spirits, skipping and jumping, free from care and trouble.

Parents, especially mothers, should be the only teachers of such infant minds. They should not educate from books. The children generally will be inquisitive to learn the things of nature. They will ask questions in regard to the things they see and hear, and parents should improve the opportunity to instruct, and patiently answer these little inquiries. They can, in this manner, get the advantage of the enemy, and fortify the minds of their children, by sowing good seed in their hearts, leaving no room for the bad to take root. The mother’s loving instruction at a tender age is what is needed by children in the formation of character.

Review and Herald, August 1, 1899.

**The Loud Cry:**
Continued from 11

that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:4-5.

The greater number of church administrators, pastors and lay people have already rejected such obligations. We shrink from telling God’s people their sins and crying out in love for our Lord and His blood-bought heritage against the transgressions of those in positions of responsibility. For most, job security, power, and hateful bird”? The answer seems obvious.

Dear pastors, church administrators, church elders and lay people, surely the Holy Spirit is convicting each one of us of the terrible peril of our church and our own personal salvation. “Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” Luke 23:30-31. The Spirit of Prophecy makes these strange words of our Lord clear with striking application to our own lives:

**It is because of the love that He has placed in our hearts for our brothers and sisters, and those outside our faith, that we continue to preach and write as we do.**

position, and popularity in the church, are far more vital to self-comfort and ego than is duty to God.

Could those who designate the faithful watchmen in God’s church as agents of Satan, and, who would far prefer to have Roman Catholic cardinals preaching in their churches than the faithful workers for God who faithfully present the truth, ever be expected to designate apostate Christianity, in God’s words, as “the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean

"The innocent were represented by the green tree. If God suffered His wrath because of the sins of the world to fall upon the Redeemer, in that He was permitted to suffer death by crucifixion, what might be expected to come upon the impenitent and unbelieving, who had slighted the mercies of God, purchased for them by the death of His Son? The mind of Jesus wandered from the destruction of Jerusalem to a wider judgment, when all the impenitent would suffer condemnation for their sins; when the

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William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore and President of the National Conference of (Roman) Catholic Bishops, spoke on October 19, 1995, at our College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, (see Lincoln Star Journal, October 21, 1995); and a Roman Catholic speaker took a college Week of Prayer at Pacific Union College (see the Pacific Union College Campus Chronicle, October 6, 1995).

Because competition is an ever-present issue, it is appropriate that special attention be given in the training of our children to combat its particularly insidious influence. As we would expect, this warning has been repeatedly articulated by the Lord's messenger to the church. "One of the characteristics that should be especially cherished and cultivated in every child is that [of] self-forgetfulness which imparts to the life such an unconscious grace. Of all excellences of character this is one of the most beautiful, and for every true lifework it is one of the qualifications most essential." Education, 237.

"Character-building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before was its diligent study so important as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today.

"At such a time as this, what is the trend of the education given? To what motive is appeal most often made? To self-seeking. Much of the education given is a perversion of the name. In true education the selfish ambition, the greed for power, the disregard for the rights and needs of humanity, that are a curse of our world, find a counterpart... in God's plan there is no place for selfish rivalry." Ibid., 225-226.

"But how widely different is much of the education now given! From the child's earliest years it is an appeal to emulation and rivalry; it fosters selfishness, the root of all evil.

"Thus is created strife for supremacy; and there is encouraged the system of 'cramming,' which in so many cases destroys health and unfit's for usefulness. In many others, emulation leads to dishonesty; and by fostering ambition and discontent, it embitters the life and helps to fill the world with those restless, turbulent spirits that are a continual menace to society." Ibid., 226.

We must conclude that careful attention needs to be given to structure everything in our educational system in such a way that we do not foster or encourage these attitudes and values that we are warned are deceptively designed to abort the salvation of our children. This responsibility requires that we must look critically at each area of instruction. How does it measure up to this standard?

Mrs. White was not unmindful of the particular problems presented in the area of recreation and physical culture. Her messages are clear in emphasizing the importance of appropriate exercise. "Vigorous exercise the pupils must have. Few evils are more to be dreaded than indolence and aimlessness." Ibid., 210.

At the same time she recognizes that providing such exercise can be a real dilemma for parents and teachers. She goes on to observe:

"Yet the tendency of most athletic sports is a subject of anxious thought to those who have at heart the well-being of the youth. Teachers are troubled as they consider the influence of these sports both on the student's progress in school and on his success in afterlife. The games that occupy so much of his
time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness. . . . They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement, thus fostering a distaste for useful labor, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities. They tend to destroy a relish for life’s sober realities and its tranquil enjoyments.” Ibid., 210-211.

Throughout her writings Mrs. White made every effort to strike an appropriate balance. Recognizing the need for physical exercise and recreational activities, she was always concerned with what effect the activities we choose have upon our spiritual welfare. She observes, “I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone.

“I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for self-pleasing, which lead on step by step to self-glorying, and the educating in these games for pleasure produce a love and passion for such things that is not favorable to the perfection of Christian character . . .

“There are threads leading out through the habits and customs and worldly practices, and the actors become so engrossed and infatuated that they are pronounced in heaven lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God . . .

“Is the eye single to the glory of God in these games? I know that this is not so. There is a losing sight of God’s way and His purpose . . . The Lord God of heaven protests against the burning passion cultivated for supremacy in the games that are so engrossing.” Adventist Home, 499-500.

Again, though there is not a blanket condemnation of all sports activities, the basic principle of caution is there to guide us in defining the nature and the limits of these activities. In general, the conclusion seems to be in placing greater emphasis on the kind of physical exercise that comes from productive labor.

“The greatest benefit is not gained from exercise that is taken as play or exercise merely. There is some benefit derived from being in the fresh air and also from the exercise of the muscles; but let the same amount of energy be given to the performance of helpful duties, and the benefit will be greater, and a feeling of satisfaction will be realized; for such exercise carries with it the sense of helpfulness and the approval of conscience for duty well done.” Ibid., 506.

Again, it would be well to keep in perspective that we are dealing with a fundamental principle that has a wide application in every aspect of our lives. Not only in sports but also in the home, business, school, and the church, we must be on guard lest this Satan-inspired attitude of striving for personal supremacy be nurtured. What about competition for first chair in musical organizations, contests of all kinds, competition for grades, academic honors, and scholarships? What about temperance oratorical contests, ingathering campaigns, or for the bigger church by pastors, or for the higher church office? The list is endless, for it is not as much the activity as it is the basic value, the attitude that motivates. However, the way we structure these activities can have an important influence upon the kind of attitude we encourage—whether that of competitive self-seeking or the cooperative self-sacrificing love of the Saviour. As the Lord’s messenger emphasizes:

“The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love, . . . love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and to labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity.” The Desire of Ages, 549.

How then shall we decide how to structure our activities so that we will avoid this seductive error? What kind of safeguards can we use? Fortunately, this guideline has also been provided. “Any habit or practice that would lead into sin, and bring dishonor upon Christ, would better be put away, whatever the sacrifice. That which dishonors God cannot benefit the soul.” Ibid., 439. If we can take Jesus with us and maintain a prayerful spirit, we are perfectly safe. “Any amusement in which you can engage asking the blessing of God upon it in faith will not be dangerous. But any amusement which disqualifies you for secret prayer, for devotion at the altar of prayer, or for taking part in the prayer

Not only in sports but also in the home, business, school, and the church, we must be on guard lest this Satan-inspired attitude of striving for personal supremacy be nurtured.

meeting is not safe, but dangerous.” Adventist Home, 513. Again, though in another context, this fundamental principle should always apply. “This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians.” Ibid., 517.

With all this array of admonition, what shall we say? It is interesting to observe the inventive variety of responses we may make when we read a “Thus saith the Lord” that is contrary to something we hold dear. The common tendency is to attempt to rationalize ourselves out of the target area. Most of these exercises are so familiar that they have become trite and threadbare with overuse, it may be well to look at some of them lest we become deceived thereby:

1. Of course, we can simply ignore the instruction or respond with indifference or neglect. This is probably the most used defense of all. However, by this neglect we are saying that we consider the issue unimportant, and we will do as we please regardless of the warning.

2. Yet, for many the Lord’s message gets through and pesters us with a conviction that we resist. This reaction gives rise to efforts to discredit the message by such charges as, “That was taken out of context.” The speaker, however, rarely goes back to the context for fear of finding more instruction and warning that is uncomfortable to hear. Or he may willingly ignore the underlying principle that is being taught.

3. Another approach is, “That applied only to the conditions that existed
when that was written." It seems to make little difference that the conditions and the principles discussed are identical with, or are very applicable to, the current situation that is being argued. Rationalizations do not have to be foolproof; it is sufficient that they just have the appearance of being valid.

4. "The writer copied some things from other writers, so I don't know whether this statement is inspired." It is basic use is to see competition as strain- ing to be first, and thus contrary to a Christlike spirit.

6. If these devices do not adequately serve to defend us from the continued appeals of the Holy Spirit, we can always resort to discounting the messenger. A method that has gained considerable notoriety in recent years is to declare that whatever authority Ellen White's messages have is pastoral and not canoni-cal. Translated, this means that Mrs. White's admonitions and warnings have no more authenticity or authority as a message from God than those of my pastor. Hence, the attitude, "I don't have to pay much attention to him either."

Undoubtedly, there are many defensive maneuvers that we may use to avoid the corrective consequences of heeding God's warning messages to us. Yet, we resist God's directions and warnings at our soul's peril. So often we view these messages as constrictive do not or as unpleasant impediments to our freedom and enjoyment of life. Yet God's intent is just the opposite. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Jeremiah 29:11, KJV. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Matthew 7:11, KJV. "In face of all this, what is there left to say? He who did not grudge His own Son but gave Him up for us all—can we not trust such a God to give us, with Him, everything else that we can need?" Romans 8:31-32, Phillips Version. God's continuing concern is for our welfare. As good parents warn their children away from danger that they can be assured of safety and greater happiness, God has made every effort to guide us away from the snares of the enemy that would result in the eternal destruction of our happiness, and that of our children.

The question is, Shall we ignore the warnings, or will we take them seriously and reexamine and restructure our programs and activities with these cautions in mind? May we respond to God's messages with an open heart in which we are willing to put aside our own cherished ideas, and also be willing to pray with Jesus, "My Father . . . it must not be what I want, but what You want." Matthew 26:39, Phillips Version.

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Phone #: (360) 832-6602
Letters to the Editor

I am fourteen years of age, and shortly I will be fifteen. It is not easy to be a teenager nowadays because TV, worldly music, and fashions are consuming time. . . . I have been an Adventist since I was four years old. I was baptized at age eight in ____, I was a faithful believer and filled with the Holy Spirit, but soon we moved to ____ from ____. I started to change and started to adapt myself with the people. Believe me, it was hard.

After a long time I started to not read the Bible. Instead I read magazines like: Seventeen, Bop, Allure, and so forth. I was devoting my time to hearing rock music and seeing too much TV. My lifestyle started to change, and I became just an "empty believer," going to church and filling a seat. My friends are not any good. It was hard for me to talk to my friends about God. I was confused . . . . Then my mother and I had a serious talk about my relationship with God. . . . She told me that I cannot serve both God and the devil. I was shocked, ashamed and I felt useless.

My eyes were opened. She told me this was a temporary life. The world in only a short time is going to end, and she told me if I keep on like this that I am not going to see God nor heaven. It was true what she said. I want to change. I really do feel the call of God. I want to learn more and make time to read the Bible.

So I took a garbage bag and threw all my C.D.s away. I had almost $100.00 dollars worth in C.D.s. In magazines I had $200.00 dollars. I threw them all away - makeup, even some clothes that are not appropriate for church. All my closets and drawers were empty . . . .

There are many teenagers like me in the church . . . . These teenagers, like me, need prayers and need to be encouraged. I see teenagers in my church. It is such a pity to see them sleeping in the bench while the preacher gives his sermon. It is all vanity and selfishness. I think we need more work on young people because we are the future of tomorrow.

Please, I do not have any money to buy your books, but if you want, could you please send books you think I need? I am praying for you and please pray for me.

AR-Puerto Rico

Note From the Editor: "There is no class of persons capable of accomplishing more in the warfare against intemperance than are God-fearing youth. In this age the young men in our cities should unite as an army, firmly and decidedly to set themselves against every form of selfish, health-de- stroying indulgence. What a power they might be for good! How many they might save from becoming demoralized in the halls and gardens fitted up with music and other attractions to allure the youth! Intemperance and profanity and licentiousness are sisters. Let every God-fearing youth gird on the armor and press to the front. Put your names on every temperance pledge presented. Thus you lend your influence in favor of signing the pledge, and induce others to sign it. Let no weak excuse deter you from taking this step. Work for the good of your own souls and for the good of others." The Youth Instructor, September 24, 1907.

I write to thank you for the splendid job you did for me. For many years I was a lost sheep until a friend of mine gave me your magazine Our Firm Foundation. I read these magazines from you every month and I was soon converted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To be precise, I was experiencing a changed life. In the world I was doing all sorts of things you can imagine. I used to gamble to earn a living because I am from a very, very poor family. However, thank God that He introduced me to your ministry and I was helped up to now and still am being helped spiritually. You have crowns waiting for you in heaven for doing this.

Because of your spiritual guidance through your magazines, I have decided completely to devote my life to God. May you please by God's grace donate to me a Bible with a concordance and if possible, any other spiritual books you may find to be of good help to Christian character.

PC-Zimbabwe

Responses From Outreach Literature:

Thank you very much for your enlightening, informative, well-composed booklet, Earth's Final Warning. It helped me to decipher many of the misconceptions — or better, the outright deceptions of the existence of such a thing as a "Christian Sabbath," as Sunday is defined by my dictionary. It also helped me to see just how the pope is viewed by the underlings of the Catholic faith, proving all the more so, that the position of the pope is purely evil in nature, origin and being. I would like to request the 28-page booklet, Rome's Challenge, and if possible, as quickly as possible, because I am completing a project, I am in dire need of its material as represented by the Roman Catholic Mother Church. (Mother of Harlots). Also, please send to me, the Heralds of Peace booklet and other material that you wish. When I become financially able, I will send to you a sizeable donation so your ministry can continue to bring truth to this deceived world.

JW—New York.

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

HA—Chaplain, USA

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The Foundation of Our Faith

"THY WAY, O GOD, IS IN THE SANCTUARY" — PSALM 77:13

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.” Evangelism, 221.

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