Our Present Duty and the Coming Crisis

Capitulation to the Ecumenical Movement

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Great Signs and Wonders

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Editorial

THE battle over the law of God is long standing. For six long millennia the devil has contended that the law is the cause of sin, and that no man can keep it. Immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve, God introduced the sacrificial system to illustrate the terribleness of sin and to show the fallen human race that the plan of redemption is by blood—the blood of the Creator. Jesus was willing to become human and then accept the penalty of death—our eternal death—so that we can have a second chance at living eternally in Eden—the earth made new by the same Creator who was willing to become our Redeemer. The following inspired quotation will help us to appreciate the sacrifice of heaven:

"Christ came to the world to counteract Satan's falsehood that God had made a law which men could not keep. Taking humanity upon Himself, He came to this earth, and by a life of obedience showed that God has not made a law that man cannot keep. He showed that it is possible for man perfectly to obey the law. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour, becoming partakers of His divine nature, are enabled to follow His example, living in obedience to every precept of the law. Through the merits of Christ, man is to show by his obedience that he could be trusted in heaven, that he would not rebel." The Faith I Live By, 114.

The terribleness and magnitude of the sin problem has been responsible for billions of people being born into this sin-cursed world only to suffer the consequences of sin. Old age and death are inescapable. Let us remember that there was only one way in which God could restore fallen man to Eden:

He must send His Son Jesus to pay the penalty for sin, thus atoning for man's transgressions, showing to the world, to angels and to the whole universe that the law can be kept perfectly by the power of the Holy Spirit:

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:1, 8.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

He can save to the uttermost only those who are willing to be made willing to obey without compromise:

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Hebrews 5:9.

His obedience can and must be our obedience by the very same power that He used—the Holy Spirit:

"Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith. He will cleanse them from all defilement if they will let Him. But if they cling to their sins, they cannot possibly be saved; for Christ's righteousness covers no sin unrepented of." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 931.

Tragically, many Seventh-day Adventist pastors, some leaders, and many laymen have bought the devil's lie—you cannot keep the law—which if it is taken to its final conclusion would mean that you could not keep the Sabbath day holy. The devil's lie would do away with the need for a cleansing, for the sanctuary message, and for the three angels' messages, which would all lose their importance. Following these false Evangelical ideas to their conclusion, Seventh-day Adventists could not then be God's remnant people for this final generation.

Desmond Ford, Jack Sequeira, and the 1988 Study Committee have embraced this false Evangelical doctrine. The 1988 Study Committee has tried to marry the right position on the nature of Christ to the wrong position on the nature of sin and the nature of fallen man—to the dismay of Desmond Ford.

Forensic justification is nothing new. It is as old as sin itself. It is a part of the devil's lie. We know that without the cross there can be no salvation for anyone.

Waggoner, Jones and Ellen White made it very clear in all of their writings that sanctification is an important part of justification. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, working in the daily life to hold the sinner in the relationship of justification, that demands obedience to God's holy law.

Those who embrace the forensic view of justification, while undermining sanctification, are perhaps not aware that undermining obedience is a form of forsaking the law and praising the wicked:

"They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them." . . .

"He that turneth away his ear from the hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession." . . .

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:4, 9–10, 13.

"There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. Selected Messages, book 1, 377.

These were the words of Ellen White to A. T. Jones:

"But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." Selected Messages, book 1, 366.

May God help us to perfect our characters by our willing obedience to every known truth—not by what we can do but by what God is willing to do in us. Then and only then will we be cleansed of our sins. Then the righteousness of Christ will be ours! Praise the Lord!

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

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Great Signs and Wonders

In 1976 in the Venezuelan village of Cua in a region called Finca Betania, a lady named Maria received a vision of the “Virgin Mary.” As the series of apparitions progressed, dozens of others also reported seeing “Mary” at Betania. In 1984 “Mary” summarized her reason for appearing:

“My message is of faith, love and hope. More than anything, it brings reconciliation between people and nations. It is the only thing that can save this century from war and eternal death. . . . If a change does not come and a conversion of life, one will perish under the fire, war and death.”

In subsequent apparitions, “Mary” reportedly told Maria that mankind will be facing its hour of decision in the middle of the 1990s. There would arise the grave danger of a massive war involving Asia and the former Soviet republics. Maria was told in the early ’70s that Russia would act in a surprising way when least expected during this period of decision.

Apparitions of “Mary” have been appearing all over the world with increasing and alarming frequency. The apparitions speak of faith, hope and love. They speak of reconciliation. They speak of the need for prayer and devotion to God. Increasingly, they are warning of soon-coming catastrophes and judgments.

In 1961 in the village of San Sebastian de Garabandal in northwestern Spain, four young girls—Mari-Loli Mazon, Jacinta Gonzalez, Maria Cruz Gonzalez and Conchita Gonzalez—reportedly had a series of visions of “St. Michael the Archangel” and the “Virgin Mary.” In all, there were reported to be over 2,000 apparitions spread over a five-year period. Early in this series of purported apparitions, “Mary” reportedly revealed her message to the world:

“Many sacrifices must be made. Much penance must be done. We must pay many visits to the Blessed Sacrament . . . but first of all we must be very good. . . . If we do not do this, punishment awaits us . . . already the cup is filling, and if we do not change, we shall be punished.”

In addition, the visionaries claimed that they were given a series of frightening warnings about the future. In describing the “Great Warning,” Conchita stated, “It would be like fire. It will not burn our flesh, but we will feel it bodily and interiorly.” It seems to be an astronomical phenomena, “like two stars . . . that crash and make a lot of noise, and a lot of light . . . but they don’t fall. It’s not going to hurt us, but we’re going to see it and, in that moment, we’re going to see our consciences.”

In addition to these events, Conchita has stated that she was told by “Mary” in 1962 that after the death of Pope John XXIII “there would be two more popes after Pope Paul VI, and that one of the popes would have a very short reign. Then after that would come the end times, but not the end of the world.” If Conchita had interpreted her vision of “Mary” correctly, it would seem that “Mary” was predicting that Pope John Paul II will be the last of the popes before the end times begin.

The visions in Spain have been reaffirmed by recent apparitions in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The message the purported visionist Gianna Talone Sullivan received on May 2, 1996, was a marked change from the tenor of previ-
ous messages. The message received from “Mary” is of particular interest to Adventists in that it mentions the familiar themes of the sanctuary and the purification of God’s people:

“Time is soon at hand when great trials and tribulations will unfold through God’s mercy. It will seem endless. There will be continual devastations and disasters naturally, manly and spiritually, which will pour out on the world until God is adored in His Sanctuary and His people purified. Pray you will be able to persevere and endure the bowls of purification to be released soon by God’s angels. It will seem that evil has won the battle, but my Immaculate Heart will triumph and will be victorious in the end.”

Across the ocean in Europe, on March 18, 1996, in her annual message to Mirjana Dragicevic Soldo—one of the six Medjugorje visionaries—“Mary” changed emphasis from her previous messages and warned that the time to decide between eternal life and eternal death is now: “Decide, my children, it is the time of decision.”

Christina Gallagher, the Irish stigmatic and mystic, has stated in a message she purportedly received from “Mary” in February of 1996: “The world will soon be delivered in its labor pangs, soon to be delivered into the hands of the Deceiver.”

Ted and Maureen Flynn, in their book Thunder of Justice, reveal that “Mary” is encouraging people to study the book of Revelation. “Mary” speaks of the seal of God, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, the latter rain, the three angels, and the return of Christ. “Mary” interprets the woman of Revelation 12—the one clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and wearing a crown of twelve stars—as being herself. It is as if she is saying, “You have mistaken me. I am the woman of Revelation. You believe this woman to be a symbol of the church. It is not—it is I—‘Mary.’

A Massive Worldwide Hoax

What we are witnessing in these apparitions of “Mary” is the massive deception that Christ predicted would strike the world in the last days. Jesus warned us against believing “great signs and wonders” which would be so close to the truth that even the “elect” would be in danger of being deceived. See Matthew 24:24. We are further warned that right before Christ’s coming, there would be a worldwide deception carried out by demons:

“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.”

“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13-14.

Signs and wonders are being reported with increasing frequency throughout the world. The varied physical phenomena reported at Marian apparition sites can be categorized into four basic types:

Solar phenomena—Pilgrims at various sites report multicolored displays or

pulsations by the sun. This phenomena has been video-taped and photographed.

Physical healings—A number of pilgrims report spontaneous healing of chronic medical problems as well as acute diseases such as cancer. While healing does occur, medical science has been unable to determine the physical agent in a number of cases.

Changes in state—Rosaries of pilgrims have changed color, and statues have been observed crying, bleeding or moving.

Stigmata—A number of visionaries have a visible imprinting of Christ’s crucifixion scars. Markings bleed regularly (usually on Fridays).

Unfortunately, these signs and wonders rarely lead people into a greater study of God’s Word. Rather, they tend to confirm people in the beliefs of the Catholic Church system which have no basis in God’s Word. People are being conditioned to look for answers in signs and wonders, rather than in the Word of God. Over 100 years ago Ellen White warned of the danger of false miracles:

“It was by satanic aid that Pharaoh’s magicians were enabled to counterfeit the work of God. Paul testifies that before the second advent of Christ there will be similar manifestations of satanic power. The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by ‘the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10. And the apostle John, describing the miracle-working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: ‘He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.’ Revelation 13:13-14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan’s

You have mistaken me. I am the woman of Revelation. You believe this woman to be a symbol of the church. It is not—it is I—‘Mary.’

agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.” Great Controversy, 553.

“We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. . . We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel.” Pope John Paul II, Nov. 9, 1976.

Fatima and the Papal Connection

On May 13, 1981, during an open-air papal audience in St. Peter’s Square, the pope, who had dedicated his Papacy to “Mary,” bent down to hug a
young girl who was wearing a small likeness of Our Lady of Fatima. At that precise moment, Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish assassin, fired two shots at his head at close range, but missed. Agca fired again hitting the Pope in the abdomen. Had he not bent down to hug that little girl wearing the picture of “Mary,” those two bullets would probably have ripped through his skull, killing him instantly. As it was, it would take him six months to fully recover from the wounds. As he convalesced at the Policlinico in Rome, John Paul became convinced that it was the direct intercession of Our Lady of Fatima that saved his life. He reread the three Secrets that the Lady of Fatima gave the three children in vision in 1917 in Fatima, Portugal, and then he instructed Bishop Pavol Hnilica, a Slovak bishop, to send all the church’s documents on the events at Fatima for his review. It was while he was in this state of mind at the Policlinico that John Paul reportedly witnessed the inexplicable phenomenon of the sun, first seen at Fatima sixty-five years earlier. Moreover, he reportedly received a vision of the future related to the third Fatima Secret. What were the contents of his vision? Only John Paul knows. However, he consecrated the world and, indirectly, Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of “Mary.”

His actions since his recovery have led some within Catholicism to speculate that he is operating on a timetable established by supernatural agencies. They claim he acts as if what he does and how successful it will be, are dependent on conforming to the sequence of events provided to him by Our Lady of Fatima. A partial confirmation of this is based on the consecration of Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of “Mary” that John Paul performed on March 25, 1984. This act was an attempt to fulfill “Mary’s” request to Sister Lucia, first in 1917 at Fatima, and again at Pontevedra, Spain, on December 10, 1929, during which the apparition of “Mary” told her that God wanted “the Pope, together with all the bishops of the world, to make the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.”

In one reported vision, “Mary” predicted the successful completion of the Fatima visions before the year 2000: “I confirm to you that, by the year 2000, there will take place the triumph of my Immaculate Heart, of which I foretold you at Fatima, and this will come to pass with the return of Jesus in glory, to establish His reign in the world.”

Mohammed said that Fatima would be second only to “Mary” in the kingdom of God. Fatima and “Mary” are the bridge between Catholicism and Islam.

Bishop Hnilica reported at the time of the Pope’s release from the Policlinico, that the Pope told him: “I have come to understand that the only way to save the world from war, to save it from atheism, is the conversion of Russia according to the message of Fatima.”

John Paul II has dedicated his Papacy to “Mary, the Mother of Jesus.” His personal motto, Totus Tuus (Completely Yours), is a term illustrating the consecration of his life to the “Virgin Mary.” The assassination attempt, and the vision that followed it, served to affirm “Mary’s” unique role for this Pope. During a pilgrimage to Fatima in 1982, John Paul conducted a service in which

Mohammed’s daughter? Mohammed said that Fatima would be second only to “Mary” in the kingdom of God. Fatima and “Mary” are the bridge between Catholicism and Islam. This connection is being strengthened by the appearance of signs and wonders in the Arab world.

While all in America were watching the Chicago riots at the Democratic Convention, or viewing live war-zone broadcasts from Vietnam, or were being mesmerized by the Watergate hearings on television, “Mary” was appearing for tens of thousands to be seen in the land of the pyramids. Starting in April 1968, her apparitions of light changed the lives of thousands. Her appearances at Zeitun, Egypt, were astounding. She was seen by more than a million people. The apparitions were broadcast by Egyptian TV, photographed by hundreds of professional photographers, and personally witnessed by Egyptian President Abdul Nasser, an avowed Marxist. The apparitions lasted for three years with numerous unaccountable healings recorded by various medical professionals. Moslems who saw the apparitions chanted from the Koran, “Mary, God has chosen thee. And purified thee; He has chosen thee. Above all women.”

More recently, the appearance of a woman clothed in light has been observed above the roof of the Church of St. Damian in Shoubra, Egypt, a suburb of Cairo. Starting in 1983 and seen with increasing frequency in the mid-1980s, the woman was seen by thousands walking above the church, bathed in light in apparitions lasting up to five hours.

The Protestant Connection

In 1996 several of the Catholic visionaries mentioned an event that will occur within the next three years which can only be described as a “second Pentecost.”

In Protestant, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches, signs and wonders have been successfully substitutes for Bible truth. In these rapidly growing churches we find miraculous signs, such as speaking in tongues and supernatural healings, and yet in these same churches we find an amazing ignorance of the truths of God’s Word. Who is behind these amazing signs and wonders?

Continued on 10
AND because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12. The very atmosphere is polluted with sin. Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers. The promise is, “Them that honour me I will honour.” I Samuel 2:30. Shall we be less firmly attached to God’s law because the world at large has attempted to make it void?

Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in perils by land and by sea. The Great I AM is speaking to those who make void His law. When God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.

The days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and that He soon will thoroughly purge His floor.

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing.

With unerring accuracy, the Infinite One keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when a certain limit which God has fixed is reached, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading for mercy in their behalf.

The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of Heaven’s blessings have been given them; but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude, are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God.

Ellen G. White
But that which causes me to tremble, is the fact that those who have had the greatest light and privileges have become contaminated by the prevailing iniquity. Influenced by the unrighteous around them, many, even of those who profess the truth, have grown cold, and are borne down by the strong current of evil. The universal scorn thrown upon true piety and holiness, leads those who do not connect closely with God to lose their reverence for His law. If they were following the light, and obeying the truth from the heart, this holy law would seem even more precious to them than despised and set aside. As the disrespect for God’s law becomes more manifest, the line of demarcation between its observers and the world becomes more distinct. Love for the divine precepts increases with one class, according as contempt for them increases with the other class.

The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God’s visitations has nearly come. Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily. Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter His people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help.

But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel. Although many still continued the forms of religion, its power and presence were lacking.

In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, the humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which will be expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God’s honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls will be vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They will be powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they will be filled with grief and alarm. They will mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They will lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church.

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions His messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands: “Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” Ezekiel 9:5-6.

Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. This shows us that we must not look to men for example. We need to stay our faith upon God; for there is just before us a time that will try men’s souls. Christ upon the Mount of Olives rehearsed the fearful judgments that were to precede His Second Coming: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.” “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Matthew 24:6-8. While these prophecies received a partial fulfillment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a more direct application in the last days.

John also was a witness of the terrible scenes that will take place as signs of Christ’s coming. He saw armies mustering for battle, and men’s hearts failing them for fear. He saw the earth moved out of its place, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, the waves thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He saw the vials of wrath opened, and pestilence, famine, and death come upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Already the restraining Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the earth. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they may not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of His avenging wrath as no pen can picture.

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. There is soon to open before us a period of overwhelming interest to all living. The controversies of the past are to be revived. New controversies will arise. The scenes to be enacted in our world are not even dreamed of. Satan is at work through human agencies. Those who are making so great efforts to change the Constitution and secure a law enforcing the first day of the week little realize what will be the result. A crisis is just upon us.

But God’s servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John, we see how closely Heaven
He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously.

Lord’s work. We need to trust Him, believe in Him, and go forward. The tireless vigilance of the heavenly messengers, their unceasing employment in their ministry in connection with the beings of earth, show us how God’s hand is guiding the wheel within a wheel. The Divine Instructor is saying to every actor in His work, as He said to Cyrus of old, “I girded thee, though thou hast not known me,” Isaiah 45:5.

Men are not to take credit to themselves for the success of their labors. The clear, sharp thought, the wisdom to plan and execute, are of the ability that God gives. God is the Master Worker; men are only the instruments in His hand. It is His mind that is working through all who yield themselves to His control. While we are to act our part by improving to the utmost every talent committed to us, we have nothing which we have not received of God, and we should give Him all the glory.

The important future is before us. To meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require great faith, energy, and perseverance. But we may triumph gloriously; for not one watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the devices of the enemy. All heaven is interested in our welfare, and waits our demand upon its wisdom and strength. Neither wicked men nor evil spirits can hinder the work of God or shut out His presence from His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises. Every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. If the Lord had a company of workers who would rely wholly upon Him, He would accomplish a great work through them. One could chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. God is just as willing now as anciently to work through human efforts, and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities. We shall not gain the victory through numbers, but through full surrender of the soul to Jesus. We are to go forward in His strength, trusting in the mighty God of Israel.

In the time of trial just before us, God’s pledge of security will be placed upon those that have kept the Word of His patience. If you have complied with the conditions of God’s Word, Christ will be to you a Refuge from the storm. He will say to His faithful ones, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Isaiah 26:20. The Lion of Judah, whose wrath will be so terrible to the rejecters of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of cloud will speak terror and wrath to the transgressor of God’s law, but light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The Arm strong to smite the rebellious, will be strong to deliver the loyal. Every faithful one will surely be gathered. “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:31.

Brethren, you to whom the truths of God’s Word have been opened, what part will you act in this momentous time of the closing scenes of earth’s history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and earth? Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to keep those things that are written therein; “for the time is at hand.” Let none now venture to tamper with sin, or remain in a state of lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know for yourselves that you are fully on the Lord’s side. Let the inquiry go forth from sincere hearts and trembling lips, Who shall
be able to stand? Have you, in the precious hours of probation mercifully granted you, been putting the very best material into you character building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain? Have you followed the light? Have your works corresponded with your profession of faith?

It is possible to be a formal, partial believer, and yet be found wanting, and lose eternal life. It is possible to practice some of the Bible injunctions, and be regarded as a Christian, and yet perish because you are lacking in essential qualifications that constitute Christian character. The destroying angels have the commission from the Lord, "Begin at my sanctuary." And "they began at the ancient men which were before the house." Ezekiel 9:6. If the warnings which God has given are neglected or regarded with indifference, if you suffer sin to be cherished, you are sealing your soul's destiny; you will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. Grace, peace, and pardon will be withdrawn forever; Jesus will have passed by, never again to come within the reach of your prayers and entreaties. While mercy still lingers, while Jesus is making intercession for us, let us make thorough work for eternity.

Review and Herald, January 11, 1887.

Great Signs and Wonders

Continued from 6

"In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he [Satan] will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world." Great Controversy, 464.

How does Satan extend his influence so successfully over the Christian world? By leading people to look to signs and wonders instead of to the Word of God:

"And to take the place of the Word of God he holds out spiritual manifestations. Here is a channel wholly under his control; by this means he can make the world believe what he will. The Book that is to judge him and his followers he puts in the shade, just where he wants it." Great Controversy, 557.

Ominous Signs of the Future

Marian Coppi, Michael Cuppi, unveils the reason for the many recent appearances of "Mary," as Mary or preparing us, just as John the Baptist paved the way for Christ's initial entrance into the world."13 How is "Mary" preparing the world for Christ's return? One way is by stressing the importance of "Mary's" role in assisting Catholics in overcoming sin and obeying God's commandments (i.e. the commandments as defined in the Catholic Catechism):

"As an attentive and concerned mother, the 'Blessed Virgin Mary' helps us to flee from sin, to live in the grace of God and to always observe His laws as affirmed by Church teaching."16

Some seers are also proclaiming the importance of obeying the commandments. The question is, will these commandments include worship on God's Sabbath or on the papal day of worship—Sunday? The following ominous messages were received in the northeastern United States by a seer who goes by the pseudonym Sann/Saint:

"My Little Children, Jesus has taken away the sins of the World by becoming a Sacrificial Lamb for all Humanity. Through Him all your sins are forgiven. In Him you shall live forever in His Kingdom of Heaven and Earth. But only if you obey His Commandments, His love."17

John Leary, on Monday, August 19, 1996, had an ominous vision. In this vision he claimed that Jesus instructed Christians that politicians should bring the country back to God:

"Jesus said, 'My people, as your presidential elections get under way, these candidates appeal to the base instincts. Money and taxes are made the issue, instead of the moral decay of your country. The hard decisions on abortion, euthanasia, and drugs are the issues these politicians shy away from for fear of offending someone's likes or dislikes. It is because your people do not want to be disturbed in their sins, that many chas- times are befalling you. It is time your morality should be improved instead of ignored. If your politicians fail to take hard stands in bringing your country back to God, then they will reap the punishment due for your sins.' 18

Can you see where it is all leading? Led on by great signs and wonders, de-

In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he [Satan] will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest.

1 http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian9.htm
2 Ibid.
3 http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian10.htm
4 Ibid.
5 http://web.frontier.net/Apparitions/commitsmsgs.21st96.htm14
6 http://www.medjugorie.org/msg96.htm
7 http://web.frontier.net/cgallagher/continue.html
8 See Thunder of Justice, 40-44, 99-100.
9 http://web.frontier.net/Apparitions/Fatima.htm
10 http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian6.htm
12 http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian7.htm
13 Ibid.
14 See Thunder of Justice, 359-369.
15 http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/2735/coppi.html
17 http://www.sjv.nct/mmp/3rd.htm
18 http://www.frontiernet.net/~y-yper/indexAug96.html

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Disease and Its Causes
Part 14
by Ellen G. White

SOME houses are furnished expensively, more to gratify pride and to receive visitors than for the comfort, convenience, and health of the family. The best rooms are kept dark. The light and air are shut out, lest the light of heaven should injure the rich furniture, fade the carpets, or tarnish the picture frames. When visitors are seated in these rooms, they are in danger of taking cold, because of the cellarlike atmosphere pervading them. Parlor chambers and bedrooms are kept closed in the same manner, and for the same reasons; and whoever occupies these beds, which have not been freely exposed to light and air, do so at the expense of health, and often of life itself.

Rooms that are not exposed to light and air become damp. Beds and bedding gather dampness, and the atmosphere in these rooms is poisonous, because it has not been purified by light and air. Various diseases have been brought on by sleeping in these fashionable, health-destroying apartments. Every family that prides health above the empty applause of fashionable visitors, will have a circulation of air and an abundance of light in every apartment of their house for several hours each day. But many follow fashion so closely that they become slaves to it, and would suffer sickness, and even death, rather than be out of fashion. They will reap that which they have sown. They will live fashionably, and suffer with diseases as the result, be doctored with fashionable poisons, and die fashionable deaths.

Sleeping rooms especially should be well ventilated, and the atmosphere made healthy by light and air. Blinds should be left open several hours each day, the curtains put aside, and the room thoroughly aired. Nothing should remain, even for a short time, which would destroy the purity of the atmosphere.

Many families suffer with sore throat, and lung diseases, and liver complaints, brought upon them by their own course of action. Their sleeping rooms are small, unfit to sleep in for one night, but they occupy the small apartments for weeks, and months, and years. They keep their windows and doors closed, fearing they will take cold if there is a crevice open to let in the air. They breathe the same air over and over, until it becomes impregnated with the poisonous impurities and waste matter thrown off from their bodies through the lungs and pores of the skin. Such can test the matter, and be convinced of the unhealthy air in their close rooms, by entering them after they have remained a while in the open air. Then they can have some idea of the impurities they have conveyed to the blood, through the inhalations of the lungs. Those who thus abuse their health must suffer with disease. All should regard light and air as among Heaven's most precious blessings. They should not shut out these blessings as if they were enemies.

Sleeping apartments should be large, and so arranged as to have a circulation of air through them day and night. Those who have excluded the air from their sleeping rooms should begin to change their course immediately. They should let in air by degrees, and increase its circulation until they can bear it winter and summer, with no danger of taking cold. The lungs, in order to be healthy, must have pure air.

Those who have not had a free circulation of air in their rooms through the night, generally awake feeling exhausted and feverish, and know not the cause. It was air, vital air, that the whole system required, but which it could not obtain. Upon rising in the morning, most persons would be benefited by taking a sponge bath, or, if more agreeable, a hand bath, with merely a washbowl of water. This will remove impurities from the skin. Then the clothing should be removed piece by piece from the bed, and exposed to the air. The windows should be opened, the blinds fastened back, and the air allowed to circulate freely for several hours, if not all day, through the sleeping apartments. In this manner the bed and clothing will become thoroughly aired, and the impurities will be removed from the room.

Shade trees and shrubbery too close and dense around a house are unhealthful; for they prevent a free circulation of air, and shut out the rays of the sun. In consequence of this, dampness gathers in the house. Especially in wet seasons the sleeping rooms become damp, and those who occupy them are troubled with rheumatism, neuralgia, and lung complaints, which generally end in consumption. Numerous shade trees cast off many leaves, which, if not immediately removed, decay, and poison the atmosphere. A yard beautified with trees and shrubbery at a proper distance from the house, has a happy, cheerful influence upon the family, and, if well taken care of, will prove no injury to health. Dwellings, if possible, should be built upon high and dry ground. If a house is built where water settles around it, remaining for a time, and then drying away, a poisonous miasma arises; and fever and ague, sore throat, lung diseases, and fevers will be the result.

Many have expected that God would keep them from sickness merely because they have asked Him to do so. But God did not regard their prayers, because their faith was not made perfect by works. God will not work a miracle to keep those from sickness who have no care for themselves, but are continually violating the laws of health, and make no efforts to prevent disease. When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow; and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health. He will then answer our prayer if His name can be glorified thereby. But let all understand that they have a work to do. God will not work in a miraculous manner to preserve the health of persons who, by their careless inattention to the laws of health, are taking a sure course to make themselves sick.

Review and Herald, December 19, 1899.
with anguish many faithful Seventh-day Adventists around the world reacted to the capitulation of the two German Unions to the ecumenical movement. However, it was no surprise to those who are familiar with the recent history of the Northern German Union that it voted to continue ties with the ecumenical movement. That Union voted in April of this year by a 3-to-1 margin to continue its guest membership in the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen (ACK)—the Council of Christian Churches.

The Northern German Union has for years been taking its stand with the apostate Protestant churches. Further, it is reported that the influence of the charismatic movement can be seen in many of the churches of that Union. However, there was hope among those who are faithful Seventh-day Adventists that the Southern German Union would not follow suit, but to the deep sorrow of God's faithful people, the Southern German Union also voted (129-109) to become a guest member of the ACK. Tragically, as a result, many members feel betrayed.

It is likely that some delegates were deceived by the fact that neither Union became full members of the ACK—rather, they accepted guest membership. But let us look at the strategy of the ecumenical organizations. Organizations such as the World Council of Churches are not ignorant of the fact that many, especially smaller denominations, are resistant to ecumenical ties. Therefore, a special strategy has been developed. First, such churches were invited to be “observers.” During this time our representatives have forged friendly relationships with many of the representatives of the various member churches.

Now they are being asked to accept guest membership (or as it is called in Great Britain and Ireland, associate membership). But step by cunning step they are reaching toward their ultimate goal of full membership. With impaired spiritual discernment, many are voting for the intermediary status, thinking that they can do so with safety, not discerning Satan's wicked plan to derail the destiny of God’s remnant church.

It has also been pointed out that the Unions have agreed to allocate 2,000 Marks (about US $1,130) annually to the ACK—a comparatively small amount, but which, I predict, will increase in the future. Yet dare we donate the sacred means of the Lord to an organization which is certain to be a ringleader in the persecution of God's faithful saints in the near future? Dare we insult God by giving even one pfennig (cent) to such an organization?

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed... And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:15-17.

The German Seventh-day Adventist Church has been through crises in the past—the leadership of Louis Conrad, who rejected the Spirit of Prophecy, and the war question in 1914-1918, which led to the formation of the Reform Churches—but it is my evaluation that the decision to join the ecumenical movement has the potential of becoming the basis of the greatest schism in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany. Such tragedy need not have happened had leadership understood the unique destiny of God’s remnant church.

We must acknowledge the faithfulness of those delegates in both the Northern and Southern German Unions who steadfastly voted against the ecumenical ties. Special acknowledgment must be made to the Baden-Wurttemberg Conference in the Southern German Union which, under courageous leadership, fought nobly against the ecumenical ties and even circulated written materials to

Colin D. Standish
help warn against the dangers of such ties.

It would be tragedy enough if the ecumenical thrust were limited to the two German Unions, but we see a similar trend in other European nations such as Hungary, Sweden, France and Great Britain, to name only a few. Indeed, the ecumenical thrust is not limited to Europe. Even in such remote South Pacific nations as Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has embraced the ecumenical movement.

In Vanuatu our church has united with the Vanuatu Council of Christian Churches, and, indeed, at one point the secretary of the Vanuatu Mission was also the secretary of the Vanuatu Council of Christian Churches. In the Solomon Islands there has been a joining of our people with the Solomon Islands Christian Association. Both of these groups are arms of the World Council of Churches.

Unless decided action is taken by all of God's faithful brethren and sisters around the world, there is sure to be a rapid increase in the development of such ecumenical ties. It is impossible for me to understand how Seventh-day Adventists do not see the warning lights and hear the alarm bells. Surely Paul's admonition has specific application to the ecumenical movement:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 9-11.

With great wonderment many are asking, What has the General Conference leadership done to seek to discourage such moves? Of course, I am not privy to the counsel that has been given from the General Conference concerning these most dangerous affiliations. I was, however, alarmed by the response of the Assistant to the President of the General Conference to an earnest letter sent late last year to the General Conference President by 68 German members. The response curtly said that the members' letter had been referred to the President of the Euro-Africa Division, who is believed to support the ecumenical ties, and that all future correspondence should be addressed to that Division. No encouragement whatsoever was given to these faithful German believers.

Well might we ask, "Where are the faithful guardians of the Lord's flocks? Where are His watchmen? Are they standing on the high tower, giving the danger signal, or are they allowing the peril to pass unheeded?" Selected Messages, book I, 194.

There is evidence of the loss of spiritual discernment by some in the General Conference. When it was decided a few years ago to have consultations with the World Lutheran Federation (which incorporates almost all of the diverse Lutheran Churches around the world), this certainly was a step in the ecumenical direction. Those who have studied the Second Vatican Council and the developments since that time, recognize that a primary goal of the Vatican today is to bring about such consultations to emphasize the similarities of belief and to de-emphasize the distinctiveness of the beliefs of different Christian denominations.

In the second consultation of Seventh-day Adventists with the World Lutheran Federation, the topic of dialogue was "justification by faith." That may not raise a strong alarm in the minds of many people, for it is well known that the Lutheran Reformation began with a central focus upon justification by faith. Of course, as Seventh-day Adventists, we thoroughly believe in justification by faith; however, unlike the Lutherans, we also believe in sanctification by faith. Because Christ preached that doctrine as part of the gospel of salvation:

We must acknowledge the faithfulness of those delegates in both the Northern and Southern German Unions who steadfastly voted against the ecumenical ties.

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts 26:18.

The great difference between Lutherans and Seventh-day Adventists is that we believe that we are saved by grace through faith in the justification and sanctification by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ provided through His blood shed for us on Calvary and ministered in the heavenly sanctuary. The Lutherans believe in a justification-alone salvation, ignoring the powerful statements of Paul. For example:

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

They would seem to overlook the fact that the same blood that justifies us (see Romans 5:9), also sanctifies us. See Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:10; 13:12. They also fail to see how frequently the justification and sanctification principles are linked together in the presentation of the gospel. See 1 John 1:9; Romans 8:1,3-4; Acts 5:31-32; Matthew 6:12-13; Revelation 22:11.

In the minds of faithful Seventh-day Adventists the alarm raised by the dialogue with the World Lutheran Federation was greatly heightened when it became known that the same World Lutheran Federation was dialoguing with the Vatican on precisely the same topic.
of justification by faith. Could it be that the Roman Catholics, aware that too many Seventh-day Adventists would rise up against consultations with the Vatican, were willing to use the World Lutheran Federation as an intermediary to help to discern ways and means of undermining the distinctiveness of God’s remnant church and its unique message to take to every nation, kindred, tongue and people? It is not insignificant that the World

uniting of the world under one religious banner—the Vatican.

In a perceptive document put out by the Christian Advent Community of Hungary, under the title God’s People on the Horns of the Dilemma of Elijah, important developments were recorded. Referring back to the Council of the Parliament of the World’s Religions held in Chicago, August 28 to September 4, 1993, the paper also deals with the very assured that the Vatican is keenly aware of this fact.

It took another hundred years before such a congress would be called—this time celebrating the half millennium of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. Then Karl-Josef Kuschel stated:

“The second Parliament in 1993 . . . was also organized by a ‘council’ of committed men and women. . . . If the first Parliament of the world’s religions was dominated by modernity, the second is dominated by postmodernity. If the first was dominated by the universal idea of the ‘brotherhood of religions,’ the second had to occupy itself with concrete questions of common convictions, values, basic attitudes. . . . The second council of the Parliament of the world’s religions, which met in Chicago from the twenty-eighth of August to the fourth of September in 1993, and in which six thousand five hundred people from every possible religion took part, ventured to work out and present a ‘declaration towards a global ethic.’”

Upon what will this global ethic be established? Will it be established upon the plain sure Word of God? Hardly! It does not take long in reading the materials to recognize the humanistic basis of the attempt to establish uniform world ethics under which all the world and the peoples of the world will be expected to operate. It will be noted that they appealed to all the inhabitants of the world to exert their awakening concepts of spiritual powers through meditation, prayer or positive thinking, claiming that this will lead to a conversion of the heart, claiming that this will move mountains. It is also significant that they invited all men and women, religious or not, to participate in such an exercise. We ask the question, Can men who have no connection with God offer any relevant contribution to discovering the ethics that will bind the world together in unity?

It is not insignificant to recognize that Dr. Robert Muller was one of the main speakers at the assembly. Those who have followed some of the articles that I have presented before in Our Firm Foundation will recall that Dr. Muller is the chancellor of the Peace University, established by the United Nations, and is a former Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations. They will also recall that he was the keynote speaker in San Jose, Costa Rica, at the 1989 New Age Conference in which seven hundred of

The ecumenical movement is a desperate movement. It is a movement that recognizes the chaotic conditions that are in the world—the unrest, the disunity, the conflict, the strife and the global dangers.

Lutheran Federation has headquarters in the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland.

Surely the iceberg of apostasy is upon us. No doubt the response of every faithful Seventh-day Adventist should be the same as the Lord ordered through His servant almost 100 years ago: “Meet it! There was not a moment’s hesitation. It was a time for instant action.” Selected Messages, book 1, 205.

The Parliament of the World’s Religions

The ecumenical movement is a desperate movement. It is a movement that recognizes the chaotic conditions that are in the world—the unrest, the disunity, the conflict, the strife and the global dangers. While claiming to be Christian in its principles, it is determined not only to bring all the diverse Christian communities into one united organization but also to encompass ultimately all the religions of the world. There is no question that this movement will fulfill all the warnings that are presented in the prophetic utterances of Revelation chapter 13. There is no doubt that the goal is to unite all the peoples of the world under the banner of the Papacy. Perceptive worldlings realize that there is no hope for a purely political solution to the issues of this world, and that such a thrust alone to bring about a one-world government is doomed to failure. Thus they are placing their hopes upon the

first such effort one hundred years before in 1893. They quote the words from the ideological leader of the Second Assembly:

“The world Columbia Exposition in Chicago in Autumn 1893, held to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the ‘discovery of America’ by Christopher Columbus. . . . One man, Charles Carol Bonney, had a vision which went beyond the material realm. Bonney was a Chicago lawyer, a member of the Swedenborgian Church (founded in 1787 and going back to the Swedish scientists and theosophist Emmanuel Swedenborg), . . . managed . . . to organize . . . a congress of representatives of the great religions, called the Parliament of the World’s Religions. The initiators were seized with the spirit of understanding among the nations through the religions. With the solemnity of the time, in his words of welcome, Charles Carol Bonney exclaimed: ‘This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress rises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife. This fraternity bears one name . . . the brotherhood of religions.’

It is not insignificant that this nineteenth-century congress coincided with the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. It will be recalled that when Christopher Columbus discovered the New World he claimed it all for the pope. We can rest
the best known leaders of the New Age movement met to set the agenda for the year 2000. Dr. Muller is a Roman Catholic. In his presentation at the council of the Parliament of the World's Religions he said:

"Unless the world has a spiritual rebirth, civilization is doomed... Religions and spiritual traditions: the world needs you very much!... You must again be the lighthouse, the guides, the prophets and messengers of the one and last mysteries of the universe and eternity.... You must give humanity the divine or cosmic rules for our behavior on this planet." The Global Ethic, The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993, 101.

It is not difficult to determine the humanistic concepts presented here by Muller. There is no recourse to the inspired words of the Biblical prophets, but rather to humanity itself with all its fallibility and failures. Surely it cannot be lost upon the leadership of God's people that every effort that has been made to bridge the gap of religious division has been made—not upon the unity that the truth of God brings—but upon the denial of those very truths that alone can unite God's people. We must recognize that there is only one basis for truth, and that key is given in Jesus' prayer for unity: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17.

Unless the truth has been accepted by the minds of human beings and has been translated into the sanctifying power of Christ in the heart of each, there will be no unity. Humanism has proved itself hopelessly inadequate to bring about such unity. Every effort is being made to de-emphasize the great pillars of the Christian faith. We cannot forget the congress that convened in Lima, Peru, in 1981, in which almost all of the Christian communions of the world met, including a representative from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was at this congress that the BEM (Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry) document was established and then sent to all of the religious communions of Christianity seeking their comments and their understanding of this document. The whole basis of the document was to urge all communions to make no issue on the form or time of baptism, to accept every baptismal procedure as of equal worth. The concept of the Eucharist, in itself a wholly Roman Catholic term, is an anathema to those who deny the mystical, blasphemous claims of the Roman Catholic Church that the priest converts the wafer into the very body of Jesus Christ. The idea of the ministry portion of the document was that we should accept any belief in terms of the communion service, and that we do not proselytize those who are members of other Christian communions.

Briefly looking at these three areas, we have to deny fully any part in such compromise. In past ages myths of God's faithful people died because they believed in adult believers' baptism by complete immersion, following in the footsteps of their Saviour, and because they held infant baptism to be wholly unscriptural. How could Seventh-day Adventists ever agree to the equality of one form of baptism, which is predicated upon the words and example of Jesus, and the other one, which has no foundation within the Word of God?

In terms of the Eucharist we deny the very word itself and all that it stands for, recognizing that the wafer and the wine are symbols of the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus, but denying any mystical conversion into the very body of Christ. Also many of God's people in the past lost their lives because they refused to accept such blasphemous claims of the Papacy.

Furthermore, in terms of mission, how could we who have been called to give the loud cry "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4), ever capitulate to agreeing to only minister to and proselytize from the unchurched? While we must work for those who are members of no Christian faith, we have just as earnest a responsibility to minister to those who are God's faithful people who have not heard the full claims of the everlasting gospel. They are to be called out because of God's great love for them. They must be called out so that they will not continue in the sins of Babylon, and so that they will be protected from the plagues that will come after the close of probation.

At the January 1990 North American Religious Broadcasting Convention held in Washington, D.C., a paper entitled "A Proposal for a Joint Worldwide Movement" was distributed to the more than ten thousand participants by Robert Meyers, himself a Roman Catholic. The North American Religious Broadcasting Convention brings together the religious editors of the myths of papers and magazines that are distributed, often worldwide, to the religious television and radio preachers and commentators, and so forth. In 1990 so important was the convention deemed to be that the then President of the United States, George Bush, gave the keynote address. This proposal described the worldwide movement as a joint venture by the three communions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant) and para-church organizations to reach the world for Jesus Christ. It would seem to be a noble goal, but on reading through this proposal we find these words:

"This joint worldwide movement centered in Jesus Christ, would be wholly Catholic, Apostolic and Orthodox.

"The things that separate us cannot be the issue. Theological differences will have to be set aside. The main issue is the truth we find in the Bible and the creeds which we agree upon. As we get

"U"nless the world has a spiritual rebirth, civilization is doomed... Religions and spiritual traditions: the world needs you very much!... You must again be the lighthouse, the guides, the prophets and messengers. ..."

Issues not to be addressed would include Calvinism versus Armenian doctrine, Biblical inerrancy, predestination, modes of baptism, whether the Holy Spirit comes from the Father alone or the Father and the Son (Filioque), pre-, post-, or a-millenialism, gnosticism, whether or not the pope is infallible and is the sole head of the church, ordination of women, Saturday or Sunday worship, the place

November 1997 Our Firm Foundation 15
An excellent outreach booklet
Just off the press!

Here is an excellent outreach booklet to share with your Sundaykeeping friends. In this booklet you will find a sermon originally preached by a Catholic priest and reprinted in the *Catholic Mirror* in 1897 (and also reprinted in the July 1997 edition of *Our Firm Foundation*).

We believe you will find this sermon, and the accompanying quotations from other Sundaykeeping churches to be an effective tool as you meet the ongoing controversy over the Bible Sabbath.

**Rome's Arraignment of Sabbath-Breakers**

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Germany and in other nations of the world. However, we do know that there has been no clear warning in our denominational papers urging men and women to stand firm against the ecumenical movement and all the devastating consequences of such a union. We call upon our leaders to make a decided stand and warn our people worldwide to stand though the heavens fall, to be as true to principle as the needle is to the pole, to forward the truths of the gospel, to gain a new moral fortitude, to enlighten the world with the everlasting gospel, to warn against the eternally dangerous substitutes that are being offered by the fallen churches of Christendom, and to remain wholly separate from those that which is inconsistent with the pure truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I plead with all ministers and leaders, be they denominational, self-supporting or laymen, to stand courageously at this time, for the warnings are fearful for the unfaithful:

“No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office, will preserve men from sacrificing principle when left to their own deceitful hearts. Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God’s mercies. Their wicked course He will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy.”

“It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the Word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 212.

Let all of God’s people heed Isaiah’s cry:

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” Isaiah 52:1-3.
SEVENTH-DAY Adventists have long understood that no man will enter the kingdom of heaven unless he has the seal of the living God in his forehead. Presently, God is holding back the terrible winds of strife until every man and woman has the opportunity to accept this seal:

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:2-3.

Scripture testifies to the fact that those sealed at the end of time are designated as the 144,000:

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." Revelation 7:4.

The seal of the living God represents the name of the Father written in their foreheads:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads." Revelation 14:1.

God’s name is His character. Those who receive the seal of God will constitute those who possess the character of Christ. This is evident from the testimony of Scripture:

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5.

They have accepted Christ as their example:

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:21-22.

They are also termed the remnant:

"The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zephaniah 3:13.

Those who receive the seal of the living God will be virgins:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4.

The term virgin is used to indicate purity of life and purity of doctrine. Paul desired such purity for the Corinthian believers:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2.

He contrasts chaste virgins with those who are beguiled by false doctrines:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye
receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” 2 Corinthians 11:3-4.

We, as a people, have also recognized that the term “seal” refers to the ancient seals used by the secular rulers in the days when Scripture was written. These seals contained three elements—the ruler’s name, his title or authority, and his area of jurisdiction. Thus, Emperor Augustus’ seal stated: Caesar Augustus (name) Emperor (title) Roman Empire (dominion). The seal of Pilate, used to seal Christ’s tomb in a pathetic effort to prevent Christ’s resurrection, stated: Pontius Pilate (name), Governor (title) Judea (area of jurisdiction).

Isaiah provides the clue as to where the seal of God may be found:

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” Isaiah 8:16.

An examination of the law of God demonstrates that not one of the last five commandments contain a single element of the seal. The second, third, and fifth commandments do contain God’s name, but the other two elements are absent. The first commandment likewise contains God’s name alone in the pronoun me.

Thus those who receive the seal of the living God will be those who manifest Christ’s character by keeping the fourth commandment. Many Seventh-day Adventists today dispute the fact that the seal of the living God is enshrined in the fourth commandment, advancing further to doubt that the Sabbath will be the chief point of issue at the end of time. Such are on the road to peril.

The seal of the living God and the Sabbath are inextricably united. They have ever been the points at issue in the great controversy. The fourth commandment is placed centrally in the law of God for a good reason. It is the central issue in the law. The key to this centrality is found in the first eight words of the commandment—“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (All emphasis added unless otherwise noted).

Many emphasize the need to prepare our Sabbath food, clothing, and toiletries on the preparation day. In this they do well, for such preparation is mandated in the Scriptures and in the Spirit of Prophecy. However, an even greater preparation is also required on the sixth day of the week—the preparation of our hearts in holiness to the Lord. “In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy.” The Desire of Ages, 283.

Our opening of Sabbath worship should contain moments of reflection. If unconfessed and unforsaken sins remain in our lives, these must be brought to the Lord in true repentance of heart. If we enter the Sabbath hours with breaches of any one of the other nine commandments unconfessed and unforsaken, we are not keeping the fourth. We may lustily sing the hymns of Zion; we may pray; we may teach the Sabbath school class; collect the offerings or even preach the divine service, but we are not keeping the Sabbath. We are mere Sabbath keepers—not Sabbathkeepers.

Thus true Sabbathkeeping in holiness of heart involves the keeping of the entire law of God. Truly this does represent His seal. Since the law of God is a transcript of His character, this is the explicit reason why only those who reflect Christ’s character will receive the seal of the living God. It is Satan’s studied aim that none will receive this seal. The great controversy has been over the character of our God. Satan has made the vile accusation that the Biblical claim that “God is love” (1 John 4:8) is false. He convinced one-third of the angels of this diabolical falsehood. Indeed, a further one-sixth of the angels initially accepted his evil suggestion before recognizing their error.

It was because of this accusation that Jesus spent thirty-three years on this earth in order to demonstrate the fact that God could save only those who keep His law—those who received the seal of the living God. Christ demonstrated the falsity of Satan’s claim that God was unjust in requiring perfect obedience to His law from beings with fallen natures. The archdeceiver could hardly claim that beings with unfallen natures could not keep the law—the holy angels and created beings on other planets have amply demonstrated that fact. But fallen man, Satan contended, could never obey God’s law. Thus he indicated that no man could keep the law of God.

“The world’s Redeemer passed over the ground where Adam fell because of his disobeying the expressed law of Jehovah; and the only begotten Son of God came to our world as a man, to reveal to the world that men could keep the law of God after the disobedience of Adam.” Manuscript Releases vol. 5, 112; vol. 6, 334.

A key word in the above statement is the one emphasized—“after.” If Jesus had entered this world with the nature of Adam before the fall, He could never have silenced Satan’s claim that fallen human beings, when filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, could not obey the law of God after the disobedience of Adam. Thus no man would receive the seal of the living God.

Had it not been necessary for Christ in His earthly life to challenge this despicable satanic lie, He could have simply arrived on this earth on the Thursday

The only begotten Son of God came to our world as a man, to reveal to the world that men could keep the law of God. Satan, the fallen angel, had declared that no man could keep the law of God after the disobedience of Adam.

Only the fourth commandment of all the ten contains all of the mandatory three elements of the seal:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: [name] in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord [name] made [title] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them [dominion], and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11.
prior to the crucifixion and fulfilled the sacrificial atonement. However, it was a crucial part of the plan of salvation that from childhood to mature manhood Christ could prove that a man with a fallen nature, when empowered with the Holy Spirit, could keep the law of God and live a life of Christian character perfection. In this demonstration, there was no less an assurance than that we may receive the vital seal of the living God.

Indeed, God’s creatorship is His ultimate title to be acknowledged as the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Ruler of the entire universe. See Deuteronomy 4:32.

As we recognize the fact that the first angel’s message in summary is an urgent call for mankind to receive the Lord’s greatest gift—the seal of the living God, His character as enshrined in the law of God—and the law of nature, and the law of health (“Give glory to Him,” Revelation 14:7; compare with 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31), the magnificent symmetry of the three angels’ messages becomes evident.

The first angel’s message offers freely the seal of the living God. The third angel’s message, by contrast, is God’s last desperate warning to those who have eschewed the reception of the seal, setting out in graphic terms the terror and torment of mind and body awaiting those who would rather accept the mark of the beast. See Revelation 14:9-11. Both messages demonstrate the dictum that “God is love.”

But why has the fall of Babylon and the warning against the drinking of the wine of the wrath of her fornication been placed centrally in this last message? First, we must determine the meaning of this apparently curious second angel’s message. After all, what relevance does an event which occurred two and one-half millennia ago have to the final generation of this earth? Surely the fall of Babylon under the military thrust of Medo-Persia is ancient history rather than present truth. No! Never was this message more relevant than it is today, for the religion of Babylon has spread worldwide. It is the largest religion in this old world. Babylon’s religion is alive and well, and God declares it to be fallen.

In order to understand the meaning of the fall of spiritual Babylon, we must understand the events surrounding the fall of literal Babylon, for the same words were uttered prophetically concerning literal Babylon’s fall as were proclaimed concerning the fall of spiritual Babylon. Thus Isaiah declared, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” Isaiah 21:9. Jeremiah proclaimed the wine of the wrath of the fornication of Babylon’s fall:

“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.” Jeremiah 51:7.

Fortunately, a detailed history of the fall of literal Babylon is found in Scripture. On the last evening of the Babylonian Empire: “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.” Daniel 5:1. That wine was the wine of the wrath of Babylon’s fornication!

This blasphemous King Belshazzar, who well knew all of God’s mercy extended to his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar (see Daniel 5:22), designed to insult the God of heaven: “Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.” Daniel 5:2.

Those holy vessels had been dedicated for the service of God alone. In the temple services they had been designated as receptacles for the symbols of the pure and holy blood which the Son of God was to shed for our sins. They were never crafted in order that alcohol, a symbol of sin, should be placed in them. The unfermented grape juice of the drink offerings and the blood of animals without spot or blemish alone were to enter those vessels. But Belshazzar, in an act of fearful defiance of the God of heaven, contrived to desecrate those holy vessels. He mixed the sacred and the profane—

It was a crucial part of the plan of salvation that from childhood to mature manhood Christ could prove that a man with a fallen nature, when empowered with the Holy Spirit, could keep the law of God.
truth with error, the pure and holy religion of Christ with pagan worship.

This fact is documented by his subsequent worship of idols using these sacred vessels while engaged in a drunken orgy:

"Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Daniel 5:3-4.

Manifestly, the wine of the wrath of Babylon's fornication was the mixing of the undefiled religion of God with pagan worship. This admixture of the sacred and profane, God would not tolerate. Just as sexual immorality was aptly used to illustrate Judah's apostasy, so too with Babylon when Judah turned to the mixture of God's religion with idol worship. See Ezekiel 8. God declared, "thou hast played the harlot with many lovers" (Jeremiah 3:1); "thou hast polluted the land with thy whoresom and with thy wickedness" (Jeremiah 3:2); "thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed" (Jeremiah 3:3); thou "hath played the harlot" (Jeremiah 3:6).

Today God declares that the vast majority of Christians are guilty of the very same spiritual fornication. Both Catholicism and apostate Protestantism have unified our God's pure and holy faith with numerous pagan doctrines, festivals, and practices. God declares such religion to be fallen. His last urgent call is for the true in heart to "come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4.

Thus, the second angel's message is centrally placed in God's last message to the world, for whether we receive the seal of the living God or the mark of the beast is dependent upon our response to the religion of Babylon. If we accept the religion of Babylon, we shall receive the fearful mark of the beast. If we eschew that religion, we shall receive the seal of the living God. God has left this decision of all decisions to us.

This is not an easy decision, for the religion of Babylon will be forced upon the world both by universal economic boycotts and death decrees:

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13:15-17.

Many, in order to escape these dire penalties, will worship in this manner while being fully aware of the falsity of the Babylonian religion. They will receive the mark of the beast by pretense—in their hands. Others will have chosen to accept the false faith, eschewing evidence from Scripture, and they have followed this false faith by conviction. They receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The seal of the living God is never received in the hand (see Revelation 7:3; 14:1), for that seal can never be received by pretense—only by conviction of heart.

Today the religion of Babylon is knocking persistently on the door of Seventh-day Adventism. Many, tragically, are welcoming its entrance into our midst. The sacred and profane are united in new doctrines entering our beloved church from Babylon—including profane "Sabbathkeeping," disobedience to the Decalogue, dismissal of the high priestly ministry of Christ, disregard of the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy, questioning of the imminence of Christ's return, unfaithful stewardship and numerous other breaches of our pure and holy faith.

Our worship services today have introduced pagan charismatic elements, believing that a pure and holy God will accept such an insult to His holiness and majesty. We have adopted pagan standards of entertainment, dress and morality, and often flaunt these before our God presumptively, believing that His great love and mercy will stay us from the wrath of the last days.

We have united in ecumenical contacts, services, and programs, disbuing God's call that we be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"
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.

From time immemorial, this task has been the work of the prophets of God. (Daniel’s assignment, in the court of heathen kings, was a rare exception.) “John the Baptist met sin with open rebuke in men of humble occupation and in men of high degree.” Selected Messages, book 2, 149. His daring testimony to King Herod cost him his life.

The prophetess to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not exempt. “The message we bear,” she wrote in 1897, “must be as direct as was the message of John. . . . There are special duties to be done, special reproofs to be given in this period of the earth’s history. The Lord will not leave His church without reproofs and warnings.” Ibid., 151. “The Lord has been giving messages to His people, through the instruments He has chosen, and He would have all take heed to the admonitions and warnings He sends.” Ibid., 150.

Do we notice that plural word, “instruments”? “Does anyone suppose that the messages of warning will not come to those whom God reproves? The ones reproved may rise up in indignation and seek to bring the law to bear upon God’s messenger, but in doing this, they are not bringing the law upon the messenger, but upon Christ, who gave the reproof and the warning. When men endanger the work and cause of God by their own wrong course of action, shall they hear no voice of reproof?” She goes on to declare that when the wrongdoer’s “course of action is doing positive harm to the cause of truth, and souls are imperiled, God requires that the warning be as broad as the injury done.” Ibid., 152-153.

The writer herself, inspired by God, did it fearlessly when occasion demanded. But now this chosen messenger has long been sleeping in her grave. Must the church be without any such voice today? No indeed! For even in that very same letter of 1897 from which the above words have been taken, notice this urgent call:

“God calls for men of decided fidelity. He has no use in an emergency for two-sided men. He wants men who will lay their hand upon a wrong work and say, ‘This is not according to the will of God.’” Ibid., 153.

As a most challenging illustration of what these words might mean, note what Mrs. White wrote “To Our Leading Physicians” in 1904. It was at a most critical time in the history of this movement, when Dr. J. H. Kellogg, head of the famous Battle Creek Sanitarium, was leading the way into apostasy. Here are a few excerpts:

“Where are His watchmen? Are they standing on the high tower, giving the danger signal, or are they allowing the peril to pass unheeded? . . .

“Will the men in our institutions keep silent, allowing insidious fallacies to be promulgated to the ruin of souls? . . .

“For years our physicians have been trained to think that they must not give expression to sentiments that differ from those of their chief. Oh, that they had broken the yoke! Oh, that they had called sin by its right name! . . .

“My message to you is: No longer consent to listen without protest to the perversion of truth . . .

The late Elder Paul Felt was a retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor at the time he wrote this article.
“Has your obedience to men become rebellion against God?” Selected Messages, book 1, 198.

These were not physicians in private practice, on an independent income. They were denominational employees, directly accountable to the man God was calling upon them to rebuke. As medical missionaries, He intended them to consider their work not a "job," but a sacred calling.

Words of censure spoken regarding the men upon whom rest such weighty responsibilities. Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, 41.

And another solemn warning we need to keep constantly in mind: "Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies to weaken the confidence of brother in brother, and to sow discord among those who profess to be the Lord’s friends in this perilous time."

True, it is all too often the reformer, . . . who becomes the innocent victim of malicious tongues. But he himself needs constantly to beware lest, perhaps in defending himself, he be sucked into rendering evil for evil.

What then, on occasion, may be the responsibility of our conference workers, or of Adventist workers employed in our Adventist Health System, or perhaps of the faculty members in our educational institutions? Is there danger today that "obedience to men" may even now become "rebellion against God"?

To keep our balance in this delicate area, will it not be well for us all to remember "how great are the responsibilities of men in holy office," and be slow to find fault with them in bearing heavy burdens? It has been forty years since I was called to pastor Seventh-day Adventist Churches, working under the leadership of local and higher conference officials. During that time I have known at least some of them to whom, I believe, the following testimony could apply:

"In this perilous time the Lord has given us men of His choice to stand as the leaders of His people." The next words remind me of God’s conditional promises made to Solomon: “If these men will keep humble and prayerful, ever making Christ their confidence, listening to and obeying His words, the Lord will lead and strengthen them. God has chosen Elder Daniels to bear responsibilities, and has promised to make him capable by His grace of doing the work entrusted to him. The responsibilities of the position he occupies are great, and the tax upon his strength and courage is severe; and the Lord calls upon us to hold up his hands, as he strives with all powers of mind and body to advance the work . . . . Let us refuse to listen to the words of censure spoken regarding the men upon whom rest such weighty responsibilities." Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, 41.

And another solemn warning we need to keep constantly in mind: “Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies to weaken the confidence of brother in brother, and to sow discord among those who profess to be the Lord’s friends in this perilous time."

Has the prophetic Voice been contradicting itself? No indeed! It is just that we must ever keep in mind that "impossible" but most necessary partnership in God’s true church, the partnership between separation and unity. This delicate balance is beautifully expressed in the following paragraph:

"As they assimilate their character to the divine Pattern, men will not guard their own personal dignity. With jealous, sleepless, loving, devoted interest, they will guard the sacred interest of the church from the evil which threatens to dim and cloud the glory that God intends shall shine forth through her. They will see that Satan’s devices have no place or countenance in her by encouraging faultfinding, gossiping, evil speaking, and accusing of the brethren; for those things would weaken and overthrow her." Testimonies to Ministers, 406–407. True, it is all too often the reformer, the stalwart defender of the faith who becomes the innocent victim of malicious tongues. But he himself needs constantly to beware lest, perhaps in defending himself, he be sucked into rendering evil for evil.

Sheep Versus Shepherds

"Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Ezekiel 34:2.

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord." Jeremiah 23:1.

A growing number of our most conscientious and intelligent church members consider the church they deeply love to be in a condition of general apostasy. The rapid growth of membership in neighboring and distant lands is small comfort to them. If only God had never spoken with such clarity and power through His chosen messenger to the remnant, they could find encouragement in things as they are, but they have caught a vision of things as they were meant to be, and can never rest content until they see that vision realized.

They would like to give wholehearted support to our educational work, the largest Protestant educational system in the world today. However, when that system, particularly on its higher levels, is measured against the plan given us by Inspiration, they find themselves deeply distressed and perplexed. They cannot help but know that the world’s standards and the world’s plans have come to dominate our schools more and more. Campuses have been built, curricula have been set up, recreational programs have been developed, to resemble those of the world’s institutions. And a large proportion of our church membership, who want what the world has to offer, are only dissatisfied that it is not more so. Most disconcerting of all, perhaps, is the disturbing realization that practically all of the teachers, who for a generation or two have been training our ministers, have secured their advanced degrees in the schools of spiritual Babylon. The memory of what led to the council at Glacier View, and what was learned there of the opinions and beliefs of many of our most influential leaders and scholars, raises questions as to who should be chosen to instruct our children.

These conscientious members are thrilled and thankful for our health message, and for the well-developed program of preventive medicine and treatment with simple natural remedies, developed before the end of the last century. Tragically, before most of us were born, our sanitariums were losing the distinctive features that name was intended to represent, until the name itself became a symbol of hypocrisy and was discarded. Today the scene is dominated by our national Adventist Health System, carefully structured to carry on the world’s medical..."
program under the Adventist name. Because many of its workers are true believers and loving and lovable Christians, meeting the public where and when it hurts the most, it is indeed a means through which souls are being won to Christ and His message for this hour. For this we are deeply thankful. The labors of these consecrated workers are not in vain.

Here again, it is easy for those of us on the sidelines to expound as “armchair generals,” in condemnation of those who for many years have been having to make the hard decisions. Our organized medical work did not become what it is overnight. One step has led to another. Policies become institutions. Administrators must start, not with what they want, but with what exists. As a consequence, it needs to be frankly recognized that the counsel given us by Inspiration was not for this sort of program at all. The principles involved in the divine “blueprint” have gradually become so compromised that they cannot be consistently followed within the structure we now have. We are “unequally yoked” with unbelievers in that system on so many points that no true reform is possible without a most drastic reversal of policy. Our church and medical leadership, therefore, on whom the present responsibility rests, need both our sympathy and our most earnest prayers.

Even without the peril of our present indebtedness, we have abundant cause to tremble. “Sanitariums were to reform the medical practices of physicians.” Medical Ministry, 27. What these words could reform has meant sixty or more years ago is being remarkably demonstrated today in small “self-supporting” institutions such as Weimar, Wildwood, and Uchee Pines. It is to such as these that a surprising number of prominent church leaders have had to turn in recent years for help that standard medical practice is not equipped to provide.

This same class of faithful church members are deeply concerned with the tide of worldliness that has been sweeping into the church now for many years. It has come to be regarded as “legalistic” and definitely out of style to preach on Christian standards, such as dress, recreation, and even diet. Our children generally are so influenced by TV watching that such members often prefer teaching their own children at home to subjecting them to the constant influence of even their “Adventist” peers. This course of action should not be interpreted as snobishness, but as faithful stewardship of the priceless faith of our fathers. Unless our children, like Jesus, can be raised sufficiently “separate from sinners,” their lives and influence can never be a true and lasting benefit to a sinful and perishing world. It is not enough today to get out of the city. The spirit and the lifestyle of the “city” must be gotten out of the home at any cost. Too few today are willing to pay that price.

What then are these “laymen” to do, in the face of predominant trends in today’s Seventh-day Adventist Church? The best solution many of them have been able to find is to go “self-supporting.” In practice, over a period now of many years, this expression has come to be understood in more than merely financial terms. It means a degree of institutional independence sufficient to permit free experimentation with policies and practices patterned after God’s revealed will. There may not be a divine “blueprint” that continues unaffected by changes of time and circumstance. But beyond question there are principles, broad and firm outlines, that were intended to govern the policies of our schools and medical institutions, as well as of individual and family life.

One gifted leader in this “self-supporting” work went into it after fifteen years as a successful evangelist. Central to his whole ministry has been an inflexible determination to build, and not tear down, the general work and organization of the church. Though viewed with suspicion and sometimes with disdain by many church administrators, enterprises of this type have made remarkable progress.

It is of interest that this “self-supporting” leader, though he had entered upon his work in counsel with church leaders, was thought of by many as being a “former minister.” Because of technicalities of official policy, he served without ministerial credentials for many years. In practice, however, this fact made no difference to those who believed in his ministry and appreciated the fruitfulness of his labors. Had he not been called by God, and that calling publicly recognized by His church in formally ordaining him to the gospel ministry? Most certainly. Had he not continued to faithfully pursue that calling, even when no longer directly supervised by church officials and supported by tithe? Indeed. Then was he not truly a Seventh-day Adventist minister during the years when a mere technicality of church policy prevented him from being granted credentials? Those who have heard him preach, whether in the Wildwood Chapel or on the camp meeting circuit, have never, or hardly ever, questioned whether or not to call him “Elder” W. D. Frazee.

There are others, however, who have felt conscience-bound to follow a more radical approach. Most of these have been “laymen.” A few have been veteran ministers and educators. They see that the revival and reformation, so earnestly called for in the early 1970s have not materialized. They are convinced that something more than a loving, loyal, constructive example is needed. Without minimizing the great blessing that has come through our self-supporting institutions, they believe it is long past time for someone to “cry aloud.”

God’s prophet to Seventh-day Adventists is sleeping in Jesus. When it comes to these perplexing issues, what counsel has been left us through this inspired channel? Here believing students of this literature are not now fully agreed. The calls for both separation and unity are so evenly balanced, and so inseparable, that our emphasis may well depend on our experience. Is our sighing and crying to be done only in the secret of our prayer closet? From one point of view that seems to be the only answer. How can we hope to effectively win souls, gathering them into the fellowship of the church, without showing respect for its leadership and loyalty to its policies and institutions? “We must keep before the world a united front. Satan
will triumph to see differences among Seventh-day Adventists.” *Counsels to Writers and Editors,* 76.

“There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong.” *Selected Messages,* book 2, 390. It is not surprising, therefore, that “self-supporting” workers under the influence of Wildwood leadership do their best to combine loyal co-operation with church leadership with their own re-form-minded standards and policies. Though deeply distressed by what they believe to be downward trends in the church, they confine their protests to a positive example.

There is a danger here, however, that has long brought concern to some in and out of this movement. This danger is that too often the little institutional family becomes satisfied with its own correctness, washing its hands of responsibility for the conduct of the rest of the church and its institutions. The thought surfaces, “Well, if that’s what they want to do, let them do it. It’s not our business.”

But it is our business! Every church member has a share of responsibility for the management of the church organization and its institutions. We have a representative government, and a share in electing at least the local conference officers. The conference academy is our academy. The union conference college is our college. Even the Adventist Health System and all its hospitals and business enterprises belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its North American membership. When our study of the counsel of God convinces us that our church is in a deepening condition of apostasy, what does He want us to do? Preach the truth where we are; live exemplary lives; run our little schools, our health-care and other projects as faithfully as we know according to God’s counsel. These certainly come first, and are indispensable. Then what? No more? The “shaking,” by which the purification of the remnant church is to be accomplished, is to be “caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. . . . Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” *Early Writings,* 270. It is a John-the-Baptist ministry, “in the spirit and power of Elijah.” The very “destiny of the church” hangs upon it. Though given in Heaven-born love, it will require some very plain speaking, for “the Lord will not leave His church without reproofs and warnings.” “God calls for men of decided fidelity. He has no use in an emergency for two-sided men. He wants men who will lay their hand upon a wrong work and say, ‘This is not according to the will of God.’” *Selected Messages,* book 2, 151-153.

More than seventy years ago the courageous editor of our church paper dared to stand up for some whom others must have been calling “critics.” “We need to be careful,” he counseled, “that while we decry extremes, we do not refrain from advocating right, consistent standards. A thousandfold more honor to the simple-minded believers who in their lack of experience and possibly their ignorance, take extreme positions while they are endeavoring to cry out against the growing license and evil of the present day; than to the intelligent and liberal-minded Seventh-day Adventists who hold their peace because they fear that they will be classed with the radical and the extreme.” *Review and Herald,* May 26, 1926.

There are among us today some who have given up the comfort and security of denominational employment in the hope of setting a good example and crying out against what they believe to be wrong. Should all of these be banned from our pulpits and shunned by loyal church members? This is certainly a most delicate matter. Discernment is needed if we are to know what spirit is working through such a person.

“Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action.” There are “devoted souls” who “consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man’s say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan’s special work to lead men to feel that it is God’s order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course independent of their brethren.” *Testimonies to Ministers,* 29.

Perhaps the secret is found in the following counsel: “When the Lord gives a man a message, He gives with it something whereby His people may know that the message is from Him. God does not ask His people to believe everyone who comes to them with a message. The Lord sends warnings to His people, not to destroy them, but to correct their errors.” *Selected Messages,* book 2, 71. In the words of Jesus Himself, “By their fruits shall you know them.”

We have seen that, as important as unity is to the success of God’s cause, truth is even more so. “We are to unify, but not on a platform of error.” *Manuscript Releases,* vol. 15, 259. “The ministry, the pulpit, and the press demand men like Caleb, who will do and dare, men whose eyes are single to detect truth from error, whose ears are consecrated to catch the words from the faithful Watcher.” *Testimonies to Ministers,* 407.

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. . . . In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the Word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands. They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Ibid., 411.

Down through all the ages, this call to reformation has been the work of the prophetic voice. And God will choose any individual He can best use to give it, regardless of occupation, gender, race, rank in His church, or degree of education. “When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord,” there are some who “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. . . . 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.” Ibid., 300.

Separation and unity—an impossible partnership! Whatever our position in God’s true church, may He give us grace to humble our hearts, to put away our sins and petty differences, to pray for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit, and to follow at whatever the cost, “all the counsel of God.” Paul did not shun to declare it. See Acts 20:27. We dare not refuse to obey. Then, and then alone, can we ever be truly one. □
Words of Warning—Part 3

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matthew 24:23-27.

Here, again, the warning regarding the destruction of Jerusalem is blended with the warning of the Second Advent. The disciples heard Christ’s words, but they did not then fully understand them. It was necessary for the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, bringing to their remembrance all things that Christ had said to them. They could not understand why He connected the perils of the overthrow of Jerusalem with the perils of the last days. But those who live in this age may understand Christ’s warning, and should place it in the period where it belongs. The gospel must be carried to every kingdom under heaven, and then shall the end come.

Christ knew that the disciples could not comprehend the instruction He had given them in answer to their question, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3. He knew the terrible future of the once-chosen people of God; but He knew, also, that His disciples could not then fully understand His description of the fearful scenes to be enacted at the destruction of Jerusalem. In His answer, the two events—the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world—were merged into one. It was in mercy to His disciples that Christ blended these events, leaving them to study out the meaning for themselves.

Christ had made every effort to keep His disciples informed in regard to the truth. He had given them every opportunity to know the truth. He had invited them to put their confidence in Him as the Messiah, and in His mission and work, but they had not yet a proper understanding of the nature of His kingdom. They were thrilled with distress as they listened to His lamentation over Jerusalem; but they did not realize the true meaning of His words. Had Christ opened the future to them as He saw it, they would have been unable to endure the scene. To the last, they looked for a temporal kingdom, to be established at Jerusalem. Christ’s revelation of the scenes to take place at the destruction of Jerusalem, they associated with His personal coming, when He Himself would punish the Jews, but would also free them from Roman bondage. He had told them definitely that He would come a second time, and they thought that probably His judgments would fall upon those who had rejected His love. He would then, they thought, lay low every stone in the temple; for they believed that no earthly power could do this.

But long before Christ’s Second Coming, retribution fell upon the apostate nation, which was still further to show its hatred against Christ by its treatment of His followers.

From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on to a much greater event—the last link in the chain of this earth’s history—the
coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," He said, "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, when they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24:29–31.

Christ gave special directions in regard to this event. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree," he said; "when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation [the generation that saw the signs] shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:32–35.

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matthew 24:36. Christ plainly said that He Himself could not make known the day or the hour of His Second Appearing. Had He been at liberty to make this time known, what need would there have been for Him to exhort His followers to maintain an attitude of earnest watchfulness, living, working, and waiting as if their time was not their own, but the Lord's; cultivating fidelity, faith, and love; and purifying the soul through the truth?

Christ told His disciples that the time of His coming was involved in secrecy; yet notwithstanding this, there have been and will be those who claim to know when this great event will take place. Very earnest they are in trying to map out the future, which the Lord has placed in a thick cloud; and notwithstanding their failures, they continue all are to prepare for eternity. He tells us that as it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes.

How was it in Noah's day?—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. Had man co-operated with God, there would have been no Cain worshipers. Abel's example of obedience would have been followed. Men might have worked out the will of God. They might have obeyed His law, and in obedience they would have found salvation. God and the heavenly universe would have helped them to retain the divine likeness. Longevity would have been preserved; and God would have delighted in the work of His hands. But the inhabitants of the antediluvian world turned from Jehovah, refusing to do His will. They followed their unholy imagination and perverted ideas. "God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah... Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch... And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die." Genesis 6:12–17.

Remember the warning, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." It was because of the wickedness of the inhabitants of the old world, that they were destroyed; and today the world is following in the same way. No flattering signs of millennial glory are to be seen. Human lawmakers open their law books, and pronounce sentence against those who do not keep their laws. But those who frame and enforce these laws are themselves transgressors of God's law, and their transgression is filling the earth with wickedness. Betting, horse-racing, gambling, dissipation, lustful practices, untamable passions, are fast filling the earth with violence and moral pollution. Bank failures ruin thousands of families. Widows and orphans are left to starve. Every species of indulgence prevails. Men have become so infatuated with vice that they will not listen to warnings or appeals. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:42–51.

This is the day of the Lord's preparation. He says: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Revelation 16:15. The great work from which the mind should not be diverted, is the consideration of our safety in the sight of God. The storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? Are our feet on the Rock of Ages? Are we one with Christ, as He is one with the Father? □

*Review and Herald*, December 27, 1898.
The Promised Land

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Matthew 19:27-29.

Jesus did not rebuke Peter for inquiring about their future reward. In answer to his question He assured the disciples of a compensation that far exceeded their expectation and comprehension. In the kingdom of glory they would be kings ruling over the twelve nations of the saved. The “exceeding great and precious promises” of a “great recompense of reward” occupy a large place in the Scriptures and has been one of the chief factors in leading men and women to decisions for righteousness and against iniquity. The promises of “the inheritance of the saints in light” have made buoyant the spirits of the Christian pilgrims in all ages as they have journeyed through the enemy’s country toward their homeland. Faith is declared to be “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. Most of the hopes of God’s people center in the divine promises of rewards that are unseen because invisible except through the eye of faith.

Vision of Future

It was the promise of the restored dominion that buoyed up the drooping spirits of Adam and Eve after they were driven from Paradise: This was also the secret of Enoch’s 300-year walk with God which ended in his translation. “But Enoch’s heart was upon his eternal treasures. He had looked upon the celestial city. He had seen the King in His glory in the midst of Zion. The greater the existing iniquity, the more earnest was his longing for the home of God. While still on earth, he dwelt, by faith, in the realms of light.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 330-331.

The vision of the future reward was also one of the secrets of Christ’s Calvary victory. “What sustained the Son of God in His betrayal and trial? He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He caught a view of the expanse of eternity and saw the happiness of those who through His humiliation should receive pardon and everlasting life. . . . His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” Ibid., 43-44. See also Hebrews 12:2.

The Exodus Movement

It was his “respect unto the recompense of the reward” that influenced Moses to make the momentous decisions that resulted in his being chosen by the Lord to become the visible leader of the Exodus movement. See Hebrews 11:24-27. Moses was able to endure all the privations and hardships of the journey from Egypt to Canaan because he kept his eyes on “Him who is invisible” and his faith centered on the promised rewards that were out of sight. It was the promises regarding the land of Canaan that made it possible to persuade the Israelites to leave Egypt and make the long and weary journey through the barren wilderness. The oft repetition of these promises helped keep the movement together and furnished inspiration for the marching multitudes. In time of crisis and discouragement the hope of reward prevented them from returning to the land of their bondage.

A Goodly Land

“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey: unto the place of the Canaanites, and the

The statement: “A land flowing with milk and honey” is a symbol of fertility and prosperity and is repeated twenty different times. The promised inheritance of the Hebrews is further described in that when the promise was made to Abraham it embraced the whole earth. See Romans 4:13.

**Vision of Moses**

Just before his death Moses was given a vision of the Promised Land from which he was to be excluded because of his sin of impatience. “And now a panoramic view of the Land of Promise was presented to him. Every part of the country was spread out before him, not faint and uncertain in the dim distance, but standing out clear, distinct, and beautiful to his delighted vision. In this scene it was presented, not as it then appeared, but as it would become, with God’s blessing upon it, in possession of Israel. He seemed to be looking upon a second Eden. There were mountains clothed with cedars of Lebanon, hills gray with olives and fragrant with the odor of the vine, wide green plains bright with flowers and rich in fruitfulness, here the palm trees of the tropics, there waving fields of wheat and barley, sunny valleys musical with the ripple of brooks and the song of birds, goodly cities and fair gardens, lakes rich in ‘the abundance of the seas,’ grazing flocks upon the hillsides, and even among the rocks the wild bee’s hoarded treasure. It was indeed such a land as Moses, inspired by the Spirit of God, had described to Israel.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 472.

This vision of God’s prophet was then merged into a view of the whole earth when restored to its Edenic beauty and inhabited by the redeemed.

**Land Occupied**

The Promised Land was already occupied by thirty nations, each of which was greater in numbers than that of the Hebrews. These nations had been given opportunity to know Jehovah, but they had rejected Him for the worship of false gods and had sinned away their day of grace. The Lord could not give the Promised Land to His people till these nations and their inhabitants had filled up the cup of their iniquity. This would happen in a specified generation. See Genesis 15:13–16.

The nations and people occupying the Promised Land were to be “utterly destroyed. See Deuteronomy 7:1–2. The destroying would be done by the Lord through His destroying angel who would “cut them off.” See Exodus 23:23; 33:1–2. As weapons of destruction the Lord would use “hornets,” “plagues” and “hailstones.” See Exodus 23:28; Joshua 10:11.

**Heavenly Canaan**

The Promised Land of the Advent movement is the heavenly Canaan which is the whole earth redeemed and restored to its original state.


In Psalm 106:24 Palestine is called “the pleasant land” or “the land of desire.”—Margin. The angel Gabriel describes the homeland of the Jews as “the glorious land” or “the goodly land.” See Daniel 11:16, margin. When the twelve spies returned from a forty-day tour of the Promised Land they reported that it was all that the Lord had promised and they brought samples of its fruit. Caleb and Joshua declared that it “is exceeding good land.”

**An Inheritance**

The Lord told the Israelites that the Promised Land would be an inheritance so they would not feel that they had obtained it on the basis of purchase or conquest. They were to inherit the Land of Promise. See Exodus 6:4, 8; Numbers 34:2; Psalm 105:44.

The fact that the land was a gift on the basis of inheritance was commemorated in a song. See Psalm 44:1–3. The size of this inheritance is given in Numbers 34:1–12. The territory of the two and one-half tribes on the east side of the Jordan was to reach to the River Euphrates. “To the heights of Lebanon in the far distance, to the shores of the Great Sea, and away to the banks of the Euphrates in the east—all was to be theirs.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 482.

The promise was that it would be “a good land and a large.”

That the Lord planned to gradually expand the Land of Promise to embrace the whole earth is evident from the fact
Lord cannot give the earth to His chosen people till the inhabitants of the earth have sinned away their day of grace. When "the times of the Gentiles" are "fulfilled," probation will close and the final preparation will be made for the saints to inherit the earth.

Utterly Destroyed

The Lord has promised to destroy utterly all earthly nations and all sinners:

"Thou sawest that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45.

"I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingsblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord. . . . The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole

land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zephaniah 1:2-3, 14-18.

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isaiah 13:9.

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:1-5.

This destruction will be accomplished by "plagues" and "great hailstones."

"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's

sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood, and I will rain upon him, and upon his hands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Ezekiel 38:18-22.

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits

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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. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessèd is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." Revelation 16.

The wicked will be burned up root and branch and shall "be ashes under the soles" of the feet of the righteous who inhabit the land. See Malachi 4:1-3. This destruction has been delayed in the mercy of God till the cup of iniquity is filled to the brim, and there is every evidence that the day of vengeance is at hand.

"Evil workers have been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; and when the time fully comes that iniquity shall have reached the stated boundary of God's mercy, His forbearance will cease. When the accumulated figures in heaven's record books shall mark the sum of transgression complete, wrath will come, unmixed with mercy." Testimonies, vol. 5, 524.

A Goodly Land

The heavenly Canaan is indeed a goodly land. The earth will be completely restored to its original Edenic state. "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:20-21.

"Restitution" means to bring back to a former state or condition. The earth will be made "like Eden" and "like the garden of the Lord." See Isaiah 51:3.

Paul declared that when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." 1 Corinthians 13:10. This perfect state of things is described in many texts. See Isaiah 11:4-9, 35:3-10; 60:18-21; 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Revelation 21 and 22.

After viewing the earthly Canaan from the summit of Mount Nebo, Moses was given a vision of the new earth: "Still another scene opens to his view—the earth freed from the curse, lovelier than the fair Land of Promise so lately spread out before him. There is no sin, and death cannot enter. There the nations of the saved find their eternal home. With joy unutterable Moses looks upon the scene—the fulfillment of a more glorious deliverance than his brightest hopes have ever pictured. Their earthly wanderings forever past, the Israel of God have at last entered the goodly land." Patriarchs and Prophets, 477.

Original Purpose

In the heavenly Canaan God's original purpose will be carried out "as if man had never fallen." Eden, which means "a delightful region" will be restored, and we can again enter Paradise, "the garden of all delights."

"As the earth came from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, interspersed with noble rivers and lovely lakes; but the hills and mountains were eye at every turn. The heights were crowned with trees more majestic than any that now exist. The air, untainted by foul miasma, was clear and healthful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace." Ibid., 44. All this is to be restored.

Highest Ambitions Realized

"There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On these peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power; the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of the redeemed." The Great Controversy, 675, 677.
Source of Encouragement

Just as contemplations and conversations concerning the Promised Land cheered the Hebrew pilgrims on their journey through the wilderness, so the Advent people are encouraged to press on and not cast away their confidence because of the glories of the heavenly Canaan at the end of their journey.

"There are revealed in these last days visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these should be dear to His church. . . . We must have a vision of the future and of the blessedness of heaven." Testimonies, vol. 8, 43-44.

"Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray." Steps to Christ, 86. See 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The Land

Palestine was the homeland of the Hebrews as they were only sojourners in Egypt. As soon as they reached their homeland, the Feast of Tabernacles was instituted to commemorate their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and "in memory of their pilgrimage life in the wilderness." Patriarchs and Prophets, 540.

This great festival was a home-coming celebration and was also known as "the feast of home-coming." It was never celebrated while Israel was in bondage or captivity in a foreign land. It was instituted as soon as they reached their homeland from Egyptian bondage and was re instituted after they returned from captivity in Babylon.

"The Feast of Tabernacles was the closing gathering of the year. It was God's design that at this time the people should reflect on His goodness and mercy. The feast continued for seven days. . . . From far and near the people came, bringing in their hands a token of rejoicing. Old and young, rich and poor, all brought some gift as a tribute of thanksgiving to Him who had crowned the year with His goodness, and made His paths drop fatness. Everything that could please the eye, and give expression to the universal joy, was brought from the woods; the city bore the appearance of a beautiful forest.

"This feast was not only the harvest thanksgiving, but the memorial of God's protecting care over Israel in the wilderness. In commemoration of their tent life, the Israelites during the feast dwelt in booths or tabernacles of green boughs. . . . "With sacred song and thanksgiving the worshipers celebrated this occasion." Desire of Ages, 447-448.

The Final Home Coming

This home-coming celebration was typical of the home-coming of the redeemed of the earth to the heavenly Canaan. See Revelation 14:1-5, 15:2-8; 19:1-9. The revelator is given visions of the redeemed of earth in the heavenly land "clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands" celebrating the antitypical Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering. See Revelation 7:9-17. The whole universe joins in the celebration of the greatest home-coming and thanksgiving celebration of all the ages.

"The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative, but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. . . . And every voice in the whole universe will unite in joyful praise to God. . . ." The people of Israel praised God at the Feast of Tabernacles, as they called to mind His mercy in their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and His tender care for them during their pilgrimage life in the wilderness. They rejoiced also in the consciousness of pardon and acceptance, through the service of the Day of Atonement, just ended. But when the ransomed of the Lord shall have been safely gathered into the heavenly Canaan, forever delivered from the bondage of the curse, under which 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now' (Romans 8:22), they will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ's great work of atonement for men will then have been completed, and their sins will have been forever blotted out." Patriarchs and Prophets, 541-542.

Three-fold Doxology

It is during this great thanksgiving celebration of the final home-coming that the three-fold doxology of Revelation 5 is sung by the cherubim guardians of the throne of God with the twenty-four elders, the innumerable angelic host with their sevenfold ascription of praise to the Lamb, and ending with a mighty Hallelujah chorus of praise to God and the Lamb in which every creature in the universe participates. In the great home-coming celebration the triple doxology breaks out beyond the throne room of the celestial temple to all creation.

"Finally, all creation affected by the fall and embraced in the provisions of redemptive restoration reverberates with loyal praises to God and His Lamb, offering up unto them in thankful voice from all those spheres all 'blessing, and honor, and glory, and power.' We can well understand the thrill of rapturous anticipation that will at this time animate all the waiting creation when we read a passage like Romans 8:18-21!" Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, 126.

Waiting for Celebration

The apostle Paul describes the whole universe waiting in joyful anticipation for this great thanksgiving celebration when the Advent movement completes its journey and all the saints enter the heavenly Canaan:

"Why, what we now suffer I count as nothing in comparison with the glory which is soon to be manifested in us. For all Creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the Creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of him who so subjected it.) Yet there was always the hope that at last the Creation itself would also be set free from the thraldom of decay so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole Creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth until this hour. And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste and pledge of the glorious future, yet we ourselves inwardly sigh, as we wait and long for open recognition as sons through the deliverance of our bodies." Romans 8:18-23, Weymouth.
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