Prevention Power

Removing Prejudice God’s Way

Are All of God’s Instructions Important?

The Adventist Christ

Freedom of Choice

The Latter Rain and the Final Shaking

The Sin of Licentiousness

By This Shall All Men Know

See page 4
We are living in a very interesting time. The prophecies are now fulfilling. The time is at hand, and the end is very near. See Joel 2:2. God’s faithful and obedient people should now be excited, for our redemption must be much nearer than our minds are able to comprehend.

The question now comes to us, Are we ready for the final judgment? Are we fully surrendered to do God’s will? Are we daily growing in His grace and being filled by the Holy Spirit’s power to do right by faith—no matter what the consequences?

How much faith do we really demonstrate to the world in our daily walk through life? We know the Bible definition of faith: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. Substance—that is pretty real, isn’t it? You can take hold of it. You cannot see it, but you can experience it. If you actually have the substance of what you hope for, what is the very first thing you want to do?—You thank God for it. So then true faith thanks God for the faith that brings victory over temptation and sin.

How do we then develop the faith of Jesus? Remember, the patience of Jesus is developed by the faith of Jesus.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

So, when we have the faith of Jesus, it will develop in us a joyful experience—a daily growing love for God and an appreciation for the tremendous sacrifice of Jesus. So faith—real faith—praises God with enthusiasm for the promised forgiveness of our sins; then we are truly repentant.

Even though we cannot see the thing hoped for or prayed for, true faith knows God has the answer. The evidence is in the promise!

How can we develop such unshakable faith?

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17.

Remember, the promise is in the Word of God.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,” John 5:39.

The majority of us are busy people, constantly stressed by our life situations—work, financial obligations, home, professions, the children’s education, daily complexities and the tragedies of life that seem at times almost insurmountable. Many of life’s disappointments tempt us to become discouraged and depressed.

The only answer to the stresses and problems of life is the faith of Jesus—a daily experience of merging our will with God’s will in obedience to all known truth, without compromise. Let us learn of this faith by turning now to the Bible and to the Spirit of Prophecy:

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

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Ephesians 3:17–20; see also 1 John 3:22.

“Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most. When we have learned to do this, we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us ‘exceeding abundantly,’ ‘according to the riches of His glory,’ and ‘the working of His mighty power.’ Ephesians 3:20, 16; 1:19.” The Desire of Ages, 200; see also ibid., 668.

Remember, “obedience is the fruit of faith.” Steps to Christ, 61.

The power of Jesus’ faith working daily in the life develops power for obedience to truth. “If we come to Him daily in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch.” Ibid.

Then we will thank Him, not because we see the answer to our prayer, but because we know He hears, and we believe He will always answer according to what is best for our eternal good. Then we thank Him because by faith we have already received the answer.

The faith of Jesus is to surrender to His will, to study, to search, and to believe His promises are ours for the power to show His love by our willing obedience to all known truth.

Let us learn to exercise the faith of Jesus now, while probation still lingers, that we may be able to stand through the crisis ahead.

Ron Spear—Editor
Table of Contents

Vol. 13, No. 4

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Articles

By This Shall All Men Know
Tom Waters 4
Does my life show that I am one of Christ’s disciples?

Prevention Power
Colin Standish 8
What role does religion play in preventing addictive behavior?

Removing Prejudice God’s Way
Alana McClintock 11
The “entering wedge”—is it still effective?

The Truth As It Is in Jesus, Part 2
Ellen G. White 12
Have the precious truths of the Bible lost their influence in our lives?

Are All of God’s Instructions Important?
David Dunkin 15
Does God speak idle words?

The Adventist Christ
Doneta Wrate 19
How is our view of Christ distinguished from that of others?

Freedom of Choice
Ellen G. White 21
A Spirit-of-Prophecy study on a most vital topic

The Latter Rain and the Final Shaking
Lowell Scarbrough 23
What will prepare us for the momentous times just ahead?

The Sin of Licentiousness
Ellen G. White 26
The danger that lies before us is the absence of pure religion.

Departments

Editorial ...................... 2  Letters ...................... 31

Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (1500–4000 words) manuscripts for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 3½ or 5¼-inch floppy disk in IBM format or neatly typed and double-spaced. Address all correspondence to Editors, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328.

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By This Shall All Men Know

Can you finish this verse? Jesus says there is something that you and I can experience that will reveal our union with Him to all men: "By this!" So what is it?—"If ye have love one to another." John 13:35. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

There is a love that will unmistakably convince people that how we are responding to them, and how we are caring for them, is coming from a Source of Power greater than we ourselves can generate. By this they will know, even if they make no profession of Christianity. However, this love has very purposefully been counterfeited and adulterated by Satan. This love has been so misstated and confused that many in the world today equate the word love with "anything goes," and many in the church equate it with "come as you are, stay as you are, and go to heaven as you are." Then there is a love that appears genuine, but only works on our human terms and conditions, and quickly fades out when self is wounded.

The love that will reveal our union with Christ is clearly described in 1 Corinthians 13. Paul says that this love (charity) suffers long, is kind, does not envy, does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things and never fails. How do we measure up?

Before our wedding Alane and I made the decision that beginning on the first day that we were married we would read 1 Corinthians 13 together daily. We had a book with thirty different renditions of that chapter, and we began our first reading on our wedding night. I even wrote my own paraphrase and gave it to my bride. Everything seemed so wonderful! We enjoyed 1 Corinthians 13 together, had a great honeymoon, and had no idea that we did not have that kind of love for each other! Not until the honeymoon was over and the pressures of everyday life set in did we begin to recognize that something was wrong with our version of love. It was not long until we decided it was futile to keep reading about a love that was long-suffering, that did not seek its own way, was not easily provoked, would bear all things, and in the process of all that, would not think evil. We did not understand that our greatest battle was the surrender of self to the will of God. Our intentions were good; our human love was as good as anyone else's, but we needed a power outside of ourselves to bring heaven's kind of love into our lives. We needed a practical understanding of what happens when self is crossed. We needed the tools to begin to respond to God and to each other. I am so thankful that we did not give up on each other, and that God has not given up on us as we continue to learn more of His kind of love in our marriage and in our relationships with others.

When Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," He knew that any person, whether a pro-
fessing Christian or not, would recognize that this kind of love cannot be
generated through anything but a mo-
ment-by-moment surrender to His will.
They will know that our response could
not be rehearsed or fabricated by us
gritting our teeth to prove that we will
not allow ourselves to get upset.

So, are we to conclude then that
there will be some great moment in our
Christian experience when we will be-
come partakers of this Christlike love,
but that until then, we are all just doing
our best to express our human love?
No! This 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love
is being learned and experienced on the
same basis as is the growth of all the
other aspects of our character. It is be-
ing cultivated, tested and revealed
through the trials, associations and cir-
cumstances in which we find ourselves.

Often we are blinded to our lack of this
deep love because circumstances have
called forth a deeper need. Let me
illustrate:

I find myself involved with someone
who has accused me of lying to him in a
real estate transaction made several years
ago. He is blaming me for a series of
events that he believes were unfair. I
have attempted to work through these
things on the basis of principle, tact and
a deepening understanding of love to-
ward someone who is vehemently angry,
and at times is irrational toward me.
When this situation began unfolding I
soon recognized that my love was being
tested, and as I have been willing for
God’s will to be done, He is bestowing a
deeper love. But it seems to be easier
for me to experience this love toward
this person for one very important rea-
son—he does not profess to be a Chris-
tian. Therefore, I have no expectations
of a good response from him, and I am
not disappointed. It is easier because I
am not confronted with regular associa-
tion with him which would necessitate
renewed surrender and the feelings as-
ociated with being maligned.

However, what happens to us when
we are falsely accused, misunderstood,
and maligned even by our spouse, child,
parent or friend(s)? What do we do when
we are told by someone else, whom we
really love and care for, that they know
our thoughts—when they do not? How
do we react when they misconstrue our
words and motives, and then accuse us
of things that they themselves struggle
with? The human response—our nat-
ural tendency—is to say something like,

"With friends like that, who needs en-
emies?" “I can remember the day this
happened to my wife and me. As we
listened we were both overwhelmed with
emotion. We literally lost all our appe-
tite and even had a feeling of nausea.
For more than one-half hour we were
told things very hard to hear—some of
them were true, some were miscon-
strued, and some of them (when they
told us what we were thinking) were
wholly untrue. Our minds raced as we
went back over the various scenes in
which we had reached out, and now we
were being told that we had been "plas-
tic."

Friends, I do not share this brief
account so you can sympathize with
me, and think how unkind this was of
those people, but rather to draw from
it the lesson that is the subject of this
article. I use this example to illustrate
that there is often more freedom to
express genuine love for the non-
Christian of casual acquaintance than
to choose to love in circumstances in
which you are likely to be misunder-
stood—no matter what you do. You
see, this situation has driven—not
drawn—yes, driven me to see my
greater need and my greater dependen-
cy upon my Saviour. It is revealing to
me that I need a much greater divine
love than I had ever recognized before.
God is using this experience to show me
yet another part of me that is very much alive and must be
crucified and replaced by His divine
love. One of the hard, and yet at the
same time beautiful, things is that we
really cannot hide from it. After we
have been stung repeatedly, our human
nature wants to recoil and avoid hav-
ing it happen again. We are fearful of
becoming vulnerable, of risking being
misunderstood, and of being maligned.
However, the Lord in His mercy com-
forts us with words like these: "We
cannot afford to let our spirits chafe
over any real or supposed wrong
done to ourselves." That means I have
no excuse for holding bad feelings
toward the person who has wronged
me, even if I am 100% right, and this
is not the case! The next line of the
statement says, "Self is the enemy we
most need to fear."

The Ministry of Healing, 485.

Theoretically, we should not be disturbed
by what others may think or say about us, or
even what they do to us, if we are in oneness
with Christ and in fellowship with His Spirit.
When we choose to yield ourselves to Christ, He will give us His divine power, and the temptations to entertain wrong thoughts will lose their strength as they find no answering cord in our heart.

As you read this, you may not relate to it on the basis of a misunderstanding with a friend, or a non-Christian, who has falsely accused you. You may find yourself going through a similar experience—maybe with your spouse, another relative, or a church relationship. You may also be recognizing, just as I do, that without this heaven-born love, we are not prepared to enter heaven. Satan taunts us with our weakness and tries to convince us that we will never make it, but this is only a lie from the accuser of the brethren.

Let us turn all of our attention over to the solution now, since the solution is a practical part of the title of this article. Think for a moment what it would mean to try to hear through the avenue of humanity what the Spirit wants to communicate. “Slow to speak”—do not be so quick to respond human to human—it only makes things worse. “Slow to wrath”—whether we are right or wrong our irritation and frustration does not work the righteousness of God—it only slows the process.

Confess and repent: As we have honestly listened, even if the other persons are projecting upon us their own faults and weaknesses, or if we have done the same to them, we must be willing to confess and repent of our part. We are told, “If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender.” Review and Herald, vol. 1, 489. If our motive here is only to lead them to confess their faults, God’s blessing will not attend. My confession must be specific, relating to my wrong and my side of the relationship.

Forgiveness: There must be a willingness to forgive and press onward, even if the other person has not asked for forgiveness. While it is ideal when both parties seek forgiveness, we cannot depend upon it for our peace. This true forgiveness, as with each of the other steps in this process, requires a power outside and above ourselves. None of this can be done by good intentions, emotional moments, or gritting our teeth. “The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17. True faith exercised brings the enabling power of Christ which is needed.

Deal with the thoughts: This step could be placed at the beginning, in between, and at the end of this whole solution process. In 2 Corinthians 10:5 Paul tells us of the importance of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Why is it so critical to have our thoughts brought under such strict obedience to Christ? Think for a moment, and please do this little exercise: Think about someone whom right now you are not fully at peace with, or who has misunderstood you, or possibly misrepresented you. Did you think about them? Well, unless your thoughts were governed by divine grace, the thoughts naturally turned toward your own self-perspective. Next, if the situation is particularly hard and the resolution is not coming quickly, feelings started to mix with those thoughts. Maybe you felt anxious, hurt, frustrated, irritated, angry, or bitter. With these emotional feelings there is often also a corresponding physical response—like a lack of appetite, nausea, increased pulse, elevated blood pressure and tension. You see, friends, our thoughts have a very close relationship to our feelings, and the two combined very quickly become who we are at that moment, regardless of our profession. We are told “if our thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and the feelings combined make up the moral character.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 310. Do you see how quickly the delicate nature of love can be squashed by our thoughts, and how vital it is that we cooperate with the Holy Spirit when He prompts us about a thought and where it will soon lead us? I have found that part of the solution involved in cultivating love is to ask God to prompt me when my thoughts are going to lead me away from my surrender and dependence into unlovely traits of character. If your human nature is like mine, you may find yourself having to repulse and turn from certain thoughts many times. Do not become discouraged. Just keep responding to the Spirit. His grace is sufficient. When we choose to yield ourselves to Christ, He will give us His divine power, and the temptations to entertain wrong thoughts will lose their strength as they find no answering cord in our heart.

When we have been misunderstood or misrepresented, when it seems that it must always be me that must give in,
remember that to give back understanding when misunderstood, to continue to reach out when the hand has been slapped—is to experience more of His love for another. This is a freedom that is higher than being understood, and this freedom only comes when we are willing to fully surrender in the situation—no matter how difficult—and choose to focus our prayers and thoughts on allowing the heaven-born love to work in us and through us. We need to allow God to show us that “while self is unsubdued, we can find no rest.” Desire of Ages, 336. Do not assume that finding or implementing the solution means that everything will turn out comfortable. It did not for Christ. Do not assume that you will be understood, and then rest will come. We must find the rest alone in Christ, not because the situation is resolved humanly. Our rest comes from how successfully we respond to the Holy Spirit—not from the outcome of the situations that burden the soul.

Dear reader, as you have read this article, the Spirit may have impressed upon you the case of some person, some difficulty, some painful misunderstanding that is robbing you of the peace and rest that only comes from Christ. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will help you, as He has helped me, and even as I write, to measure it with Calvary. Measure the hurt or difficulty, the unwillingness to let go, with Christ in Gethsemane as He cried out for another way, if possible, than the cup that trembled in His hand. He was despised, oppressed and afflicted—yet He opened not His mouth.

Friends, to have the love that Christ is calling us to experience, we must have the unconditional giving of our all, and the partaking of His all. Just as our peace can only come from Christ, so also can this love only come through our surrender and dependence upon Him. Then, and only then, will you and I be able to love, and truly give ourselves for the other person—as Christ loved and gave Himself entirely for us. May we be merciful to one another as we learn this kind of love. He loves us when we misunderstand Him, betray Him, and even when we crucify Him afresh. May God help us to experience this kind of love one to another. Then, by this shall all men know! □

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**Upcoming Meetings**

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

### April

- **Eatonville, WA** ............... **April 20–24**  
  Spring Week of Prayer  
  Hope International

- **Eatonville, WA** ............... **April 25**  
  Life Abundant Missionary Institute

### May

- **San Bernardino, CA** ............ **May 14–17**  
  Ron Spear will be at the National Orange Show, Damus Building  
  689 South “E” Street, San Bernardino

- **Portland, TN** ................. **May 21–24**  
  1099 Wattwood Hollow Road

- **Puyallup, WA** ................. **May 23**  
  Edgewood Grange Hall  
  1806 Meridian East

- **Milton-Freewater, OR** ....... **May 23**  
  Senior Center  
  311 N. Main

### Hope Camp Meetings

- **Eatonville, WA** ............... **August 4–9**

- **Angelus Oaks, CA** ............ **September 17–20**  
  Camp Morning Star  
  Barton Flats, Highway 38

- **Calistoga, CA** ................. **September 24–27**  
  Napa County Fairgrounds  
  1435 Oak Street

Look for our “Upcoming Meetings” announcements in future issues. If you need more information please call Hope International, (360) 832-6602, and ask to speak to someone in the Evangelism and Revival (E&R) Department.
YOU have heard it said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The little bit of effort required to guard against obvious danger can often save one from catastrophic cost, injury and pain. Today a great deal of attention is being given to the development of all kinds of safety regulations and devices to prevent injury and harm in all aspects of our lives. In the home, in the work place, on the road, and in the marketplace, it seems that there is no end to our government’s efforts to protect us from ourselves.

Much is also being said about methods of preventing the youth from becoming involved in harmful and addictive behaviors which bring deleterious consequences of entrapment in misery and despair. Increasing attention is also beginning to be given to the prevention of divorce, which is reported to destroy up to sixty percent of American marriages.1

Ironically, most of the theories that drive these grandiose plans of social engineering are built upon the concepts of Greek humanism. Though well meaning, these efforts to prevent massive life-destroying tragedies are frequently founded upon the faulted assumption that man is innately good. On this basis it is believed that all we need to do is to allow the child enough room—or freedom from restraint—for this inner goodness to express itself, and then the individual will develop into a “good person.” Meanwhile our streets are filled with violence, and masses of our youth are becoming victims of the wretched consequences of their indulgence of deceptive, pleasurable feelings of the moment. Based upon our own current observation, as well as the testimony of inspired Bible writers, as a Christian psychologist, I must reject these faulty modern humanistic theories.

It is much easier to observe in the natural behavior of man a greater tendency toward evil than toward good. The Scriptures tell us that, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12. Satan has certainly not abandoned the deceptive device he used so successfully with Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4. It seems to be characteristic of youth to come equipped with a sense of immortality. To many people, life-threatening—risk-taking—is an almost inherent challenge.

Certainly the more permissive concepts that have arisen out of humanistic psychology have not advanced the morality of the human race. Indeed the evidence is all in the other direction. Left to his own natural propensities, all humans accept a principle of life based upon the desire for self-satisfaction here and now. This is a response pattern that is continually and massively reinforced by the television, advertising and entertainment medias. The consequences of action are rarely evaluated by the inexperienced children and youth who are being seduced into the behaviors of drug and alcohol use. We cannot expect them to have a sufficient basic understanding of cause and effect to be able to make valid decisions without the intervention of the more mature members of society. But granting all of this, the evidence still surely suggests that even the development of rational thinking processes does not necessarily lead to productive behavior.

By contrast, I believe that the principles of Christianity contained in the Holy Scriptures provide a fundamental basis for prevention in the drug-centered culture of the present day. The old Socratic concept of “to know is to do” is fundamentally faulted. Most drug users know that the use of these depressive, stimulant and hallucinatory substances are effecting dangerous consequences in them—both physically and intellectually. Therefore the issue in prevention has to proceed beyond education—as important as that may be. Obviously, education, acculturation, and example all have a significant role to play. But many of us, who have been working with youth for many years, recognize that ultimately without the power of divine intervention all of these areas are inadequate to guarantee either the prevention of drug use or the continued rehabilitation of those who have become addicted to these destructive agents.

It is of interest that through the years some prominent voices from the world have also recognized this reality. One of these was the world-renowned psychiatrist, Karl Menninger. For years there was a strict dictum that Menninger passed on to the psychiatrists he trained at the institution that bore his name. According
to him, there were only two topics that the psychiatrist must never discuss with his patients—politics and religion. This was presumably because they were both often so highly charged with intense feelings and differing opinions that their discussion could interfere with effective treatment.

Yet it appears that over time, like some other Christian mental health professionals, Menninger came to more and more appreciate the dimensions of morality and religious experience in the achievement and maintenance of mental health. On his 80th birthday when Menninger’s last book entitled, “Whatever Became of Sin?” was released, it made a significant impact. But, that was almost a quarter of a century ago. Today Menninger’s searching question seems almost to have been forgotten. But some of his perceptive insights are worthy of reexamination.

After many decades of dealing with humanity, he realized just how certain it was that in any aspect of human endeavor, divine power must be employed. Interestingly, Menninger quoted not from a fellow psychiatrist or a theologian, but from the late, great British historian Arnold Toynbee, and he emphatically supports this historian’s conclusions:

“Science has never superseded religion, and it is my expectation that it never will supersede it... Science has also begun to find out how to cure psychic sickness. So far, however, science has shown no signs that it is going to be able to cope with man’s most serious problems. It has not been able to do anything to cure man of his sinfulness and his sense of insecurity, or to avert the painfulness of failure and the dread of death. Above all, it has not helped him to break out of the prison of his innate self-centeredness into communion or union with some reality that is greater, more important, more valuable, and more lasting than himself...”

“I am convinced myself that man’s fundamental problem is his human egocentricity.”

In commenting on Toynbee’s insights we sense Menninger’s frustration with the failure of social leaders to confront and deal with the problem of sin, and his almost evangelistic fervor in urging that it be done. Notice Menninger’s words:

“Egocentricity is one name for it. Selfishness, narcissism, pride, and other terms have been used. But neither the clergy nor the behavioral scientists, including psychiatrists, have made it an issue. The popular learning is away from notions of guilt and morality. Some politicians, groping for a word, have chanced on the silly misnomer—permissiveness. Their thinking is muddy, but their meaning is clear. Diseases and treatment have been the watch words of the day, but little is said about selfishness or guilt or that ‘morality gap.’ And certainly no one talks about sin!”

“I am not attributing any special moral failure to the clergy, nor to my own profession. We get caught in the wave and currents of popular interests and are as helpless in the cancerous growth of technology as are the parishioners and the patients.”

“But a trumpet call like that of Toynbee’s phrase compels one to stop and reflect. We know that the principal leadership in the morality realm should be the clergy’s, but they seem to minimize their great traditional and historical opportunity to preach, to prophesy, to speak out. Spiritual leadership must indeed have intelligent following, so where are the lawyers, teachers, editors, publishers, and others to take up the lead?

“Some clergymen prefer pastoral counseling of individuals to the pulpit function. But the latter is a greater opportunity to both heal and prevent. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, indeed, and there is much prevention to be done for large numbers of people who hunger and thirst after direction towards righteousness. Clergymen have a golden opportunity to prevent some of the accumulated misapprehensions, guilt, aggressive action, and other roots of later mental suffering and mental disease.

“How? Preach! Tell it like it is. Say it from the pulpit. Cry it from the house tops.

“What shall we cry?

“Cry comfort, cry repentance, cry hope.”

It is clear that these isolated voices from among the world’s great thinkers have come to realize what God in His mercy has long ago revealed to us in His Word and through His special messenger for these times.

As we attempt to design strategies both for prevention and cure of all kinds of addictive behaviors there are certain basic truths that we must acknowledge:

First, man is basically self-centered and has a predisposition to sin, which leads to self-destructive acts and practices.


So as we note further below, the apostle Paul clarifies that our bent to sinning or self-destructive behavior is the result of “sin that dwelleth in me” or of sin having made its home in my nature. See Romans 7:17, 21.

Second, man is basically helpless when he has become a slave to drugs or any addictive behaviors.

“The good resolutions made in one’s own strength avail nothing. Not all the pledges in the world will break the power of evil habit. Never will men practice temperance in all things until their hearts are renewed by divine grace. We cannot keep ourselves from sin for one moment. Every moment we are dependent upon God.” The Ministry of Healing, 179–180.
The will of most human beings is weak at best. But once eroded by addictive substances it can be almost impossible to break the habits that the individual himself desperately wants to eliminate from his life. Many addicts have a desire to break their habit that is so life-destroying. Yet they continue to do that which they hate. Jesus so plainly described the dilemma of the addict when that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

“Christ lived a life of perfect obedience to God’s law, and in this He set an example for every human being. The life that He lived in this world we are to live through His power and under His instruction.”

He said, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Here Jesus not only describes man’s weakness, but in the same place He provides the needed prevention power, with the counsel, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” Matthew 26:41.

The apostle Paul also revealed his understanding of this principle when he said, as translated by J. B. Phillips:

“For I find myself not doing what I really want to do but doing what I really loath... I often find that I have the will to do good, but not the power. That is, I don’t accomplish the good I set out to do, and the evil I don’t really want to do I find I am always doing.” Then Paul recognized the true nature of this struggle in these words, “Yet if I do things that I don’t really want to do then it is not, I repeat, ‘I’ who do them, but the sin which has made its home within me.” Again in this same passage, the apostle identifies with the sinner’s dilemma and gives us the only solution, “It is an agonizing situation, and who on earth can set me free from the clutches of my own sinful nature? I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 7:15, 18, 20, 24-25.3

The third principle follows when we recognize the helplessness of one caught in self-defeating habits. Man requires the power of his Creator to strengthen his weak will in his battle against self-destructive practices.

Fortunately, it is here where our Saviour has stepped in to rescue us from sure defeat. “For God so loved the world, urge most youth on to at least experiment with one substance or another.

To every successful therapy built upon the Christian faith, the program must focus from an early age of the children not just simply in “saying No to drugs” but upon the claims that God has to the life and service of every human being.

The child must be taught the limitations of his own power when confronted with the desires and passions of his inherently self-centered nature.

The children must be educated to know and experience the power that is available to them through the daily submission of their lives to God. They need to understand and have practice in utilizing the power which God provides to resist temptation to experiment with behaviors or substances that damage or destroy the soul-temple.

Finally, the children and youth need to be trained in the most effective ways to help their fellow youth to understand these principles of freedom from slavery. By sharing with others, it will in turn reinforce these truths in the minds of the sharers. And then they will be able to declare with the apostle Paul, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” and, “my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:13, 19. 

FOOTNOTES:

1 Seattle Marital and Family Institute, 1997.
4 Karl Menninger, op. cit.

10 Our Firm Foundation April 1998
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VER and over again I read how important the medical missionary work is and how we need to establish this work everywhere. Mrs. White stated, “Soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work.” Evangelism, 523. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) Probably all of us have heard or read that quotation at one time or another, but we have not acted in preparing ourselves for service in the medical missionary lines. If ever there is a time to do the medical missionary work, it is right now!

Prejudice is so common in this world that I know that some Seventh-day Adventists are even prejudiced toward the work that God set forth for us to do in these last days. If some of us are biased against the medical missionary work, think of how prejudiced the world is toward the three angels’ messages. Here is a little secret I found: “As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries, to heal the sin-sick souls by giving them the message of salvation. This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can.” Evangelism, 515. Amazing! What a privilege it is that we can be involved in something that the Lord said must be done!

Some of you may remember when there was a big push to get The Great Controversy out to the people of the world. Some of you might even have been able to be a part of that exciting work. My family was able to travel (we were living in northern Wisconsin at that time) to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, and to give away The Great Controversy on the street corners. What a time we had! Even though it was winter and very cold, we were blessed! Anyway, my dad and sister and I were on one corner together, and we found that many times people would not take books from my dad, but they would take them from me or my sister. Youth. God can use us! I know that there are youth who have the idea that, since they are not grown up, there is not much they can do, but that is not true! Prejudice was broken down by children in Minnesota! That can be done everywhere!

How many of you have done door-to-door work and had people ask you what religion you were? Most of the time when they found out, they acted like you had a deadly disease, and they tried to get rid of you as fast as they could. Right? I have had that experience many times. What do you think about taking a different approach to door-to-door work? Counsels on Health, page 497, says, “As they go from house to house they will find access to many hearts. Many will be reached who otherwise never would have heard the gospel message. A demonstration of the principles of health reform will do much toward removing prejudice against our evangelical work. The Great Physician, the Originator of medical missionary work, will bless all who thus seek to impart the truth for this time.” Many people would scoff at the idea of doing medical missionary work door to door, but God has promised that if we follow His ‘health plan,’ He will bless our efforts.

Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 76, states this well-known passage, “I have been instructed that we are not to delay to do the work that needs to be done in health reform lines. Through this work we are to reach souls in the highways and the byways. I can see in the Lord’s providence that the medical missionary work is to be a great entering wedge, whereby the diseased soul may be reached. Much of the prejudice that prevents the truth of the third angel’s message from reaching the hearts of the people, might be removed if more attention were given to health reform.” □
The Truth
As It Is In Jesus

Part 2

GOD gives to every man his work, and with the imparted commission He gives to His messengers a measure of power proportionate to their faith. He is constantly unfolding to the heart the riches of His grace. Light will shine forth in clear rays from those who receive light from the Word of God. Converted messengers are needed, to give the Words of the Most High to the people.

The teacher of the truth must practice the truth he communicates to the people, else his labor will be in vain. Those who support the truth, not only by argument, but in their lives, range themselves on the side of righteousness. By a converted life they give evidence that they bear a solemn message of warning, which is a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. When men are really converted, controversy and debate will be ended. The plain, searching truth will be proclaimed by lips touched with a live coal from the altar of God.

The true minister of the gospel will not stand before the people to speak smooth words; to cry, Peace and safety. He realizes the dangers that threaten the soul, and he presents the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth comes from his lips clear, plain, and decided, as if he fully believed the words spoken to be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. He knows that he has the Spirit and power of God, and his words awaken the consciences of his hearers.

The lessons given by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known were given in plain, simple language. Christ's words were explicit and direct. His instruction was given line upon line, precept upon precept. Christ reproached His disciples with their slowness of comprehension. Why did they not understand His lessons?—Because His words did not agree with what they had been taught, or with their hopes and expectations. Christ tried to impress His disciples that He had left in their possession truths of which they did not realize the value.

The Old Testament is the ground where the seeds of practical godliness were first sown. This was repeated in Christ's words to His disciples. We have yet to learn that the whole Jewish economy is a compacted prophecy of the gospel. It is the gospel in figures. From the pillar of cloud, Christ presented man's duty to God and to his fellow men. His words to His appointed agencies, both in the Old Testament and in the New, point out plainly the Christian virtues. Through all His teaching He scattered the precious grains of truth. All will find these to be as precious pearls, rich in value, if they will practice the principles laid down.

We have the truth. Shall we not practice it? Selfishness is the great evil that makes of none effect the preaching of the cross of Christ. Preach the Word. Do not drown the voice of Christ by your own interpretation of the Scriptures. Do not make the Word of God mean what He never meant it to mean. Make a practical application of the truth. Use the truth home with sanctified assurance and directness, presenting the high standard God sets before His people. Truth must become truth to the receiver to all intents and purposes. It must be stamped upon the heart. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:10. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27. This is the service that God requires. Nothing short of this is pure and undefiled religion. The heart is the citadel of the being; and until that is wholly on the Lord's side, the enemy will gain constant victories over us by his subtle temptations.

If the life is given into its control, the power of the truth is unlimited. The thoughts are brought into captivity to Christ. From the treasure of the heart are brought forth appropriate and fitting words. Especially will our words be guarded. Writing to Timothy, Paul says: “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” 2 Timothy 1:13-14.

The Holy Spirit must work on the hearts of the teachers of God's Word, that they may give the truth to the people in the clear, pure way that Christ Himself gave the truth. He revealed it, not only in His words, but in His life. If God's messengers realize the necessity of the Holy Spirit's working, this Spirit will speak through them to the hearers, who

Ellen G. White
will understand the meaning of the truth spoken.

Men in this age of the world act as if they were at liberty to question the Words of the Infinite, to review His decisions and statutes, endorsing, revising, reshaping, and annulling, at their pleasure. If they cannot misconstrue, misinterpret, or alter God’s plain decision, or bend it to please the multitude and themselves, they break it. We are never safe while we are guided by human opinions; but we are safe when we are guided by a “Thus saith the Lord.” We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to any lower standard than the decision of an infallible Judge. Those who make God their Guide, and His Word their Counselor, follow the Lamp of Life. God’s Living Oracles guide their feet in straight paths. Those who are thus led do not dare judge the Word of God, but ever hold that His Word judges them. They get their faith and religion from His Word. It is the Guide that directs their path. It is a Light to their feet, and a Lamp to their path. They walk under the direction of the Father of light, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning. He whose tender mercies are over all His works makes the path of the just as a shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day.

I am afraid for our churches. I tremble before God on their account. We have light on the Scriptures, and we shall be held accountable for all the light not cherished. The works of many do not harmonize with the truth they have received. There is far too much of the human element brought into our plans. We do not depend upon the Holy Spirit to work with its transforming energy upon the heart and life. We are deficient in faith, which is invincible and mysterious. The efficacy of truth is weakened by the course of those who do not purify their souls by obeying the truth.

The secret of the Lord are with them that fear Him and keep His covenant. We need faith in God, that under the sanctifying power of God’s Word, the principles of human brotherhood may be manifested. We need the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Its power upon mind and heart will enable us to present the truths of God’s Holy Word. Sound doctrines brought into actual contact with human souls will result in sound and elevating practices. The truth as it is in Jesus must be cherished. Then Christians will not be Christians in name only. The love of Christ will pervade their lives.

The power of the Holy Spirit is needed to chase away our unbelief and unchristlike attributes. We must see our need of a physician. We are sick, and do not know it. May the Lord convert the hearts of His workmen! When there is a converted ministry, then look for results.

God, that he may find out what standard he must reach.

Can we ever find a surer guide than Jesus? True religion consists in being under the guidance of the Holy One in thought, word, and deed. He, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, takes the humble, earnest, whole-hearted seeker, and says, Follow me. He leads him in the

The soul that cherishes the love of Christ is full of freedom, light, and joy. In such a soul there are no divided thoughts.

But we cannot convert our own hearts. This work can be done only by the power of the Holy Spirit. In every stage of the work let this be remembered: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. But this should not intimidate one soul. What can give such sunshine to the soul as the evidence of sins forgiven? What can impart true nobility if it is not the restoration of the moral image of God in man? Whence can peace come if not from the Prince of Peace? To what source can we look for help, but to Him who can give us light in the midst of darkness?

Christ has promised to send us the Comforter, whose work is to establish the kingdom of God in the soul. When such abundant provisions of mercy, grace, and peace have been made, why do human beings act as if they regarded the truth as a yoke of bondage?—It is because the heart has never tasted and seen that the Lord is good. The truth of the Word of God is thought by some to be a fetter. But it is the truth that makes men free. If the truth therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. The truth separates man from his sins, from his hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. The soul that cherishes the love of Christ is full of freedom, light, and joy. In such a soul there are no divided thoughts. The whole man years after God. He does not go to men to know his duty, but to Christ, the Source of all wisdom. He searches the Word of narrow way to holiness and heaven. Christ has opened this path for us at great cost to Himself, and we are not left to stumble our way along in darkness. Jesus is at our right hand, proclaiming, I am the Way; and all who decide to follow the Lord will be led in the royal path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in.

The usefulness of workers for God depends on whether they have an abiding Christ. “Without me,” he says, “ye can do nothing.” John 15:5. God’s workers should be filled with His Spirit. By their faith and labor of love, true Christians give unquestionable evidence that their work is wrought in God. Their spiritual discernment testifies that they have been taught of God, that their eyes are not blinded to the interests of the cause of God, or to the elements of true Christianity.

“Our gospel came not unto you in word only,” writes Paul, “but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.” 1 Thessalonians 1:5. Paul lived the gospel that he preached; and if our ministering brethren will live the truth, they will be loving, kind, tender, lowly in heart, unpretending, earnest, devoted. Their works will be their credentials. There would be a hundredfold more conversions than the record shows today if God’s workmen were what they should be. God demands truth in the inward parts. The Spirit of those in the ministry must correspond to the truth preached.

Will the workers in the various lines of God’s work ponder these things? A
When mind and heart are worked by the Spirit, when self is dead, the truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. When the truth molds our characters, it will be seen to be truth indeed.

shown in the presentation of the different points of truth. All this has been seen. Ears are gratified, a present emotion is excited; but where are the souls who are identifying themselves with Christ? Where is the holy unction, the living earnestness, the deep moving of the Spirit of God? Where are those who expound the truth by upholding staunch, correct principles, irrespective of loss or gain? O that God would impress His ministers with the need of being thoroughly converted! O that He would impress them with their need of an abiding Christ! Then there would be a revival of the Holy Spirit.

The question has been asked, What kind of vessels does the Spirit use? What does Christ say?—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28–30. What kind of vessels are meet for the Master’s use?—Empty vessels. When we empty the soul of every defilement, we are ready for use. Are we emptied of self? Are we cured of selfish planning? O for less self-occupation! May the Lord purify His people, teachers, and churches. He has given a Rule for the guidance of all, and from this there can be no careless departure. But there has been, and still is, a swerving from righteous principles. How long shall this condition of things exist? How can the Master use us as vessels for holy service until we empty ourselves, and make room for His Spirit to work?

God calls for His people to reveal Him. Shall the world manifest principles of integrity that the church does not maintain? Shall a selfish ambition to be first be shown by the followers of Christ? Shall not the principles cherished by them be laid upon the True Foundation, even Christ Jesus? What material shall we in the church? Shall we bring to it wood, hay, stubble? Shall we not rather bring the most precious material—gold, silver, precious stones? Shall we not distinguish sharply between the chaff and the wheat? Shall we not realize that we must receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts, that it may mold and fashion the life?

We are living in perilous times. In the fear of God I would say that the true exposition of the Scriptures is necessary for the correct moral development of our characters. When mind and heart are worked by the Spirit, when self is dead, the truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. When the truth molds our characters, it will be seen to be truth indeed. As it is contemplated by the true believer, it will grow brighter, shining with its original beauty. It will increase in value, vivifying the mind, and subduing selfish, unchristlike coarseness of character. It will elevate our aspirations, enabling us to reach the perfect standard of holiness. □ Review and Herald. 02-21-99, 02-28-99
ARE ALL OF GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS IMPORTANT?

SOME time ago a friend commented that what we eat has nothing to do with our salvation. As I thought about that statement, I realized that it is only a half truth if left to stand alone. The same type of statement could be made about the Sabbath, or any other doctrine that we teach, with equal truth. The danger in making such a statement is that someone may be led to believe that they can indulge their appetite as they wish, or break the Sabbath as they wish, and still be saved in God’s kingdom. The fallacy of this idea is pointed out clearly in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy:

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

“It is as truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the Ten Commandments.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 17.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

“Who will enter in through the gates into the city?—Not those who declare temptation of Satan. But those who are slaves to appetite will fail in perfecting Christian character.” Testimonies, vol. 3, 491-492. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

Does God Speak Idle Words?

Satan often tempts us with the rationalization that some of God’s instructions are not important. Jesus’ answer to Satan when tempted on the point of appetite is instructive: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4. Jesus has warned us against using idle—useless, unproductive, unimportant—words (see Matthew 12:36), so we know that God never uses them either. Every word that God speaks is important, including those about eating.

The first sin involved disobedience to God’s instructions about eating.

In Manuscript Releases, vol. 9, 232, we read: “If Adam and Eve had lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, they never would have fallen, never lost the right to the tree of life. All who will live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God will now be brought back to the Eden home.” How different the history
of our world would have been if Adam and Eve had believed and obeyed God! Notice that if we expect to walk in the beautiful Garden of Eden, we should be living now by “every word” that proceeds from God’s mouth.

**Faith, Works, and Salvation**

But someone objects, “I thought we were saved by faith, and not by works.”

**Faith is trusting God**—believing that He loves us and knows what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way.

It is very important to understand the relationship of faith and works to our salvation. To many it seems to be a mystery—but perhaps the mystery will be solved when we understand the difference between a gift and wages. In Romans 6:23 we read, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here we see that eternal life is a gift. This same thought is brought out in Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Eternal life cannot be earned. Not one person who enters the pearly gates will be able to boast that he earned his right to be there. However, it is also clear from Romans 6:23 that eternal death can be earned. “The wages of sin is death.” We might say that, though you cannot eat your way into heaven, you can eat your way out of heaven—just as Adam and Eve ate their way out of Paradise. **Though you cannot earn eternal life by keeping God’s commandments, you can earn eternal death by breaking them.**

God will never give the precious gift of eternal life to those who are in rebellion against Him—no matter what sin it is that they love more than Him. This decision is not arbitrary on His part, but inescapable. In the first place, if He did take someone to heaven who is in rebellion against the just laws which He has established, He or she would not be happy there. If they have not found happiness in keeping His laws here on earth, how could they be happy in keeping them there? Our characters will not be changed when Jesus comes. See Revelation 22:11; Testimonies, vol. 4, 429. Furthermore, they would cause others to be unhappy there too. Sin always brings discontentment and sorrow. God loves every sinner, but with great sadness, He will destroy them—unless they repent—because they will not come to Him and be saved. This is the only way He can wipe away all tears and bring peace and joy to all of His creation.

**Living Faith Versus Dead Faith**

The apostle James poses an interesting question. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” James 2:14. Many today would answer James’ question in the affirmative, but that was not the inspired answer that James gave. Not once, but three times in the following verses, he states that faith without works is dead. See verses 17, 20, 26. Almost as if he is afraid that someone will miss the point, he further states in verse 24 that “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

The relationship of faith and works to salvation is succinctly summarized in the following statement from Selected Messages, vol. 1, 377: “While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.” We would each do well to ask ourselves the question: “Is my faith living or dead?” As James so clearly points out, the answer will be revealed by our works.

**What Is Genuine (LIVING) Faith?**

There are many definitions which we could give for faith, but I especially like the one found in Education, page 253: “Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing.” Do we really trust God? Do we really believe that He loves us and knows what is for our good? Has this belief led us to choose His way instead of our own? If it has not, then perhaps we need to ask God to lead us into the experience of a living faith.

Sometimes I struggle with doubt and think that, if only I could see some of the mighty miracles that the children of Israel saw, my faith would be greatly strengthened. But would it really? Just imagine what it must have been like to see that path open up through the Red Sea! Imagine walking between those two towering walls of water on dry land which only hours before had been deep mud! Imagine seeing the mighty Egyptian army destroyed as they tried to follow them through the sea! Visualize yourself standing with them before smoking Mount Sinai, as lightning flashed, the trumpet blew “exceeding loud” (Exodus 19:16), and the “whole mount quaked greatly” (verse 18), and then hearing the voice of God speaking His law! And yet, although some two million people left Egypt on the way to the Promised Land, only two actually lived to enter there. They all saw the same mighty displays of God’s power and care for them, but when they came to the borders of the Promised Land, only a few had enough faith to believe that God would keep His promise to drive out their enemies before them. See Exodus 23:27-28.

One of those men was Joshua, whom God chose to succeed Moses as leader of His people. I believe the secret of his strong faith is found in the instructions he gave to God’s people when he said, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15. Every man is given a measure of faith. See Romans 12:3. Every time he acts on that faith and chooses to place his trust in God, his faith grows because he sees that God is faithful and keeps His promises. At the time he makes his decision to trust God, it may seem like a risky
The Bible is clear that we will be judged by our works. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. The reason for this is obvious. Our works are the evidence of the genuineness of our faith.

The story is told of a tightrope walker who was about to push a wheelbarrow over Niagara Falls on a tightrope. He asked the audience how many believed he could do it. Many hands were raised. He then asked if anyone would like to ride in the wheelbarrow! No one was willing to do it. Did they really believe he could do it?—Not enough to trust their lives to him.

What about us? Do we really have faith in Jesus—enough to trust our lives to Him? He has told us that He loves us and will never forsake us. He has graven us upon the palms of His hands. What more could He do to prove His love? He will give us the victory over Satan and bring us safely to His kingdom at last—if we will just place our trust in Him. But He may ask us to get into the wheelbarrow sometimes! He asked Noah to build a big boat on dry land, and preach to a scoffing world about a coming flood. He asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son. He asked Daniel to go into the lion’s den. He asked Daniel’s companions to go into the fiery furnace. His promise is, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10. We can trust Him to keep His promise. We will never earn eternal life. It is the gift of God. However, “Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming.” Faith and Works, 48. Our faith, if it is genuine, will always produce good works. See Matthew 7:21—27.

How Does Our Faith Work?

“Genuine faith always works by love; it supplies a motive power.” Review and Herald, January 24, 1893. When we realize how much God loves us, our hearts respond with love for Him, which is the motive (or moving) power in all true works. (In fact, the word “worketh” as found in Galatians 5:6 and Philippians 2:13 is translated from the Greek word energeo, which many readers will recognize is related to our English words “energy” and “energize.”) “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15. Because we love Him, we want to do what pleases Him, as Enoch did. See Hebrews 11:5. When we love God, it is not a burden to keep His commandments. See 1 John 5:3. With David we can say “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalms 40:8. If we recognize that this is not our experience, perhaps we need to pray that God will remove our love of the world, which Satan makes appear so attractive to our carnal natures. He will write His perfect laws in our hearts as He has promised to do. See Hebrews 8:10; 10:16.

Reasons for God’s Rules

A loving and wise father always makes rules for his children. When a father tells his child not to touch the hot stove, does he do this to restrict his freedom—or to promote his happiness?

What kind of children would come from a home where there were no rules? Would you like to have such a family for your neighbors? Our all-wise, all-knowing, and infinitely loving heavenly Father knows what will bring us true happiness. Do we believe it? Or do we think we know better than He? Adam and Eve thought so. Cain thought so. The entire antediluvian world, except Noah and his family, thought so. Will we make the same mistake that they made?

In Training

We know that soon there will “be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” Daniel 12:1. During that time we will be forced to choose between obedience to God’s instructions and eating. See Revelation 13:17. We need to be learning now the lessons of faith and trust that will enable us to be faithful during that terrible time. “Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the Word of God and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.” Prophets and Kings, 626. We have been

April 1998   Our Firm Foundation 17
aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Hebrews 12:1–2.

Jesus often fasted before an important event. It would be good for God’s people to do that now too. “Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 188–189. It will be much easier for us in the time of trouble if we learn now that there are more important things than food. Then we will be able to say with Job, “I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.” Job 23:12, NIV. Jesus has not left us to fight the battle alone. He endured his long fast to gain the victory on our behalf. “Christ has resisted the power of him who would hold us in bondage; though weakened by His long fast of forty days, He withstood temptation, and proved by this act that our cases are not hopeless. I know that we cannot obtain the victory alone; and how thankful we should be that we have a living Saviour, who is ready and willing to aid us!” Counsels on Diet and Foods, 170.

The words of an old hymn seem appropriate here:

All to Jesus I surrender, 
All to Him I freely give, 
I will ever love and trust Him, 
In His presence daily live, 
All to Jesus I surrender; 
Humbly at His feet I bow, 
Worldly pleasures all forsaken; 
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

Will you surrender your life to Jesus today? Will I? That is the question that each of us must answer for ourselves. May we learn to love Him who has loved us so much. May we commit our lives to Him in obedience and service. May we believe that all of His commandments are given for our happiness, including the ones that are given to help us have healthy bodies and keen intellects so that we will be able to understand and obey His will.

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Many people say, “Aren’t we all seeking after the same God and striving to go to the same place?” No, that is not true. The Catholic Christ is different from the Calvinist Christ, who is different from the Adventist Christ. Here we will discuss three major points that make the Adventist Christ different from some others, primarily centering on that of Christ as our High Priest.

First, what qualities does Jesus have that the Father desired to make Him High Priest over humanity?

We find the answer in Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses]; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

This verse mentions three points that qualify Jesus to be our High Priest:

1) He can sympathize with our weaknesses: “For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity.” The Desire of Ages, 117.

Christ is one of us, and He has conquered. He suffered through the same trials that we have, without being overcome. His temper was tested, and He did not become angry, but gave the soft answer. He was flattered and praised, yet did not become proud, but gave the glory to God. He was betrayed by friends, yet He did not seek vengeance, but prayed for them. He was raised in a poor home, and knew what it was like to squeeze the pennies to meet the necessities of life. He was trained by His earthly father in a carpenter’s shop, and experienced weariness after working long, hard hours. He felt the frustration of days when everything seemed to go wrong. Yet He praised God and sinned not. He experienced all of the types of temptations in life that we do. This qualifies Him to be our High Priest—because He can show us how to conquer.

2) He was in all points tempted as we are: “If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured.” Ibid.

3) Jesus did not sin: “Christ glorified not Himself in being made High Priest. God gave Him His appointment to the priesthood. He was to be an Example to all the human family. He qualified Himself to be, not only the Representative of the race, but their Advocate, so that every soul, if he will, may say, I have a Friend at court. He is a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” Ibid., vol. 7, 930.

How do these qualities affect the ministry of Christ as our High Priest?

He is able to temper justice with mercy. Christ must uphold justice since the law has been broken, and He cannot allow anarchy to reign. Every sin hurts someone, so sin must come to an end. Justice demands it. And justice demands punishment. “For the
wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. When we sin, we turn our backs on God, and separate ourselves from Him. This results in death, because God is the Source of All Life. But in the beginning of eternity, when Jesus foresaw our poor pitiful state, He had compassion and mercy. He decided to step into the breach that we create between us and God when we sin, and enable us to live and to be overcomers. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Psalm 85:10.

“Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. Divinity needed humanity: for it required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man. The Desire of Ages, 296. Today Christ as our High Priest is acting as that Channel.

One snowy winter day a wife prayed for the conversion of her husband. It was the Sabbath, and she asked him to go to church. But he refused. “It just makes no sense to me,” he chided. She left through the snow for church. While he remained in his overstuffed chair reading, he heard a howling outside his front door. He opened the door to find some cats in the snow, fighting over a morsel of food. Upon seeing him, they scattered in fear. The husband, a cat lover, thought to himself, “I wish I could become one of those cats to convince them I only wish to warm, feed, and help them.”

Then he heard the church bells ring. He listened, bowed his head, turned indoors to his chair, knelt and prayed, because he realized God had done that very thing for him.

In God’s character and government, justice and mercy are blended into a rainbow of promise. Both aspects are needed to make a balanced true love. Too often only the mercy of God is emphasized until God is thought of as a kind of “Santa Claus.” But justice is just as much an aspect of God’s love as mercy. While He is longsuffering and forbearing, His justice requires that He not let sin pass. So in mercy Christ, at our invitation, steps in. This is the rainbow of promise: Christ empowering His likeness in us. Christ is like a parent who teaches a child not to play with fire lest he get burned. Sin burns. Christ as our High Priest will teach the willing ones to overcome sin and become fit for heaven.

This introduces the third and last question: What is Christ doing for us as our High Priest?

The answer is summed up in the word “atonement.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (1960 ed.), 92, states, “Understood in terms of its original meaning, ‘atonement’ properly denotes a state of reconciliation that terminated a state of estrangement.”

The first phase of the atonement was completed at His death on the cross. The second phase is now being completed with Christ as our High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary in heaven. Christ’s life and death revealed to man the true nature of God, and it paid the price for our sins. We are reconciled to Him as we see His love for us and accept His sacrifice for our sins. The second phase—Christ, as our High Priest—is now administering the atonement to His people today.

“Then, through the blood of the atonement, we become partakers of the divine nature.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 741.

Christ’s earthly life revealed that we can live the sinless life. As High Priest, He now administers that power to us.

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ.” The Great Controversy, 623.

In 1844 Jesus entered the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary of sins, as in the typical Day of Atonement. However, before He can finish that work, sins must stop entering the sanctuary. “As the priest entered the Most Holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the Most Holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary.” Early Writings, 253.

“We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ.

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"The great Captain of our salvation has conquered in our behalf, that through Him we might conquer, if we would, in our own behalf. But Christ saves none against their choice; He compels none to obedience. He made the infinite sacrifice that they might overcome in His name and His righteousness be imputed unto them. . . .

"Your confidence in your own poor, weak, faulty self must be broken. You must feel your weakness before you will drop, with your burden, into the hands of God. The soul that trusts fully and entirely in God will never be confounded." Testimonies, vol. 3, 457.

"A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God." The Great Controversy, 543.

"Every soul has a heaven to win, and a hell to shun. And the angelic agencies are all ready to come to the help of the tried and tempted soul. He, the Son of the infinite God, endured the test and trial in our behalf. The cross of Calvary stands vividly before every soul. When the cases of all are judged, and they [the lost] are delivered to suffer for their contempt for God and their disregard of His honor in their disobedience, not one will have an excuse, not one will need to have perished. It was left to their own choice who should be their prince, Christ or Satan. All the help Christ received, every man may receive in the great trial. The cross stands as a pledge that not one need be lost, that abundant help is provided for every soul. We can conquer the satanic agencies, or we can join ourselves with the powers that seek to counterwork the work of God in our world." Selected Messages, book 1, 96.

"The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame—the power of the Word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' 'If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.' John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin.

"Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so weak, so weak as those who have embraced the world and its devices as their strongholds. They may be strong in body, but they have no power in heart or mind. They are made as lees in the winepress of God's patience, and they do not know how to overcome. The world is their power and they are overthrown. The strong hold is broken down in the very presence of the enemies of God. . . ."

Lawana Joslin is the compiler of this study from the Spirit of Prophecy. A resident of Tarlock, California, Sister Joslin is a veteran author and church worker and continues to write and send out stories and Bible studies.

Ellen G. White
vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart’s unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature.” *The Desire of Ages*, 258–259.

“God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.” *Prophets and Kings*, 511.

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

“Jesus was presented to me, pointing to the charms of heaven, seeking to attract your eyes from the world, and saying: ‘Which will ye choose, Me, or the world? You cannot have Me and the love of the world, too. Will you sacrifice Him who died for you for the pride of life, for the treasures of the world? Choose between Me and the world; the world has no part in Me.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 494.

“Though created innocent and holy, our first parents were not placed beyond the possibility of wrong-doing. God might have created them without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no develop-

ment of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced. Therefore He gave them the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience. And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested.” *Education*, 23.

If you will now face right about, cease to do evil and learn to do well, then you will be happy indeed; you will be successful in the battles of life and rise to glory and honor in the better life than this.

“God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean.” *The Desire of Ages*, 458.

“When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,” 2 Corinthians 3:18.” *Steps to Christ*, 72.

“This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the Fountain of Life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is ‘alienated from the life of God.’ Christ says, ‘All they that hate me love death.’ Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.” *The Desire of Ages*, 764.

“Again I warn you as one who must meet these lines in that day when the case of everyone shall be decided. Yield yourself to Christ without delay: He alone, by the power of His grace, can redeem you from ruin. He alone can bring your moral and mental powers into a state of health. Your heart may be warm with the love of God; your understanding, clear and mature; your conscience, illumined, quick, and pure; your will, upright and sanctified, subject to the control of the Spirit of God. You can make yourself what you choose. If you will now face right about, cease to do evil and learn to do well, then you will be happy indeed; you will be successful in the battles of life and rise to glory and honor in the better life than this. ‘Choose you this day whom ye will serve.’ Joshua 24:15.” *Child Guidance*, 454–455.
EVEN before the fall of Adam and Eve, God had made provision for the salvation of man in the event of sin. It was agreed between the members of the Godhead, that if man should fall and be in need of a Redeemer, Christ would come to earth, be born into the human family and live a perfect life. All who would repent, surrender, and be led by the Holy Spirit, would receive forgiveness and be accepted at whatever stage of development they might be. That plan is still in effect today. However, that plan will not continue as it is today right up until Jesus comes:

Since we are the remnant church—as expressed by John in Revelation 12:17. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"—the one hundred and forty-four thousand of Revelation 7:4; 14:1–6, will be developed in this last church. "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5. This will be the condition of the faithful after the close of probation.

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil." The Great Controversy, 425.

As we proceed in this article we will have clear evidence that God has designed that the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–12 will close only when He has a perfected people.

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

"The third angel is leading up a people, step by step, higher and higher. At every step they will be tested." Testimonies, vol. 1, 190.

The same article on page 187 says: "Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.”

The counsel of the true witness mentioned above is Christ’s message to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:18. Remember the statement above is what Jesus is asking for us to be, and He is well able to empower us to meet the high standard presented. When His counsel is not accepted, the result is pluralism, with division in the church. That is exactly what we have in our church today. Inspiration predicted that very thing one hundred years ago. It is in the context of giving the three angels’ messages, and in the time frame of receiving the latter rain that she says, “A new life is coming from heaven and taking possession of all God’s people. But divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest… All who are laborers together with God will contend most earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. They will not be turned from the present message, which is already lightening the earth with its glory. Nothing is worth contending for but the glory of God.” Selected Messages, book 2, 114.

The contending for the glory of God mentioned above is the latter rain—the same as was written where it says that a new life is coming down from Heaven and taking possession of all of God’s people. Those who are proclaiming the loud-cry message will not be turned from that message which was present in 1896. The other party has brought in pluralism with its deplorable division. To be shaken out of God’s church, after the abundance of light we have been given, will no doubt be one of the most devastating and tragic events in the history of Christianity.

At one time Ellen White rebuked our people for the way they were treating God’s messengers—Waggoner and Jones.

Lowell Scarbrough
She said, "God has raised up His messengers to do His work for this time. Some have turned from the message of the righteousness of Christ to criticize the men and their imperfections. . . . The third angel's message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 27, 1890.

From the material we have covered so far, we can see that in order to comprehend the third angel's message we must understand that God has designed to perfect His people that they might lighten the earth with His glory. See Revelation 18:1. To preach or to teach otherwise is to become aligned against the third angel's message. When we understand that God will have a perfected people before man's probation closes, we gain a very different perspective of what, through God's grace, our Christian experience must be.

Waggoner and Jones' message was the third angel's message which clearly taught Christian perfection. It also carried with it the binding claims of God's law, that so many of our people reject today. How could we ever receive the final seal of God by rejecting such a major requirement? The binding claims of God's law mean that He requires obedience to it as a condition of salvation. Just to mention a few examples: See Matthew 19:16–17; *The Great Controversy*, 584; *Christ's Object Lessons*, 391; *Steps to Christ*, 62; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 931, 972.

There is no legalism in this position. Christ told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." *John* 3:3. This means that God's law is written in the heart with His love. See Romans 5:5; *John* 14:15, 21. It is impossible to separate the love that the Holy Spirit imparts from the keeping of the commandments, because the law is the embodiment of the principle of love. See *Steps to Christ*, 60.

The following is a favorite passage of mine, because it speaks so clearly and beautifully about what Christ will accomplish by His love imparted to the believer: "The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphs boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery... The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display... The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great Center from which radiates all glory. 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' Revelation 19:9. "*Testimonies to Ministers*, 18–19.

These promises, regarding God's people at this point in time, are awesome. As Christ's people manifest the full and final display of His love, the Holy Spirit will be for them as an encompassing wall of fire before the world. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." I have heard from the sacred desk, read in our published books and papers, and heard from friends, that we just have not understood this verse. Sometimes long circuitous explanations are given to show that it really does not mean what it says. However, in the following two instances Ellen G. White quotes Matthew 5:48 and gives further instruction: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." *The Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1908.

"When Christ would define the advancement possible for us, He said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' *The Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1904.

How should we respond to these speculative theories that Christ did not mean what He said in Matthew 5:48? The only safe path, of course, is to stand with Inspiration. There is to be a great shaking in our church as we come to the time of the outpouring of the latter rain.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans." *Early Writings*, 270.

Christ is calling for victory over all sin in the lives of His people, and this standard is largely the cause of the final shaking. It may be that the great majority in our church have already decided that it is impossible for them to overcome all sin. We hope and pray that this is not the case. It need not be, for all who will determine by the grace of God to keep their life surrendered to Him, and to follow through by study and prayer, need not fail. The love that Christ has shown in becoming one of us and living and dying as our Sacrifice, can consume sin in us, if that is what we choose more than anything else.

The following passage is a clear masterpiece of information on what is soon to become a reality in God's remnant church:

"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. Those who have rendered supreme homage to 'science falsely so called' will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the
light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

"When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' Song of Solomon 6:10. Testimonies, vol. 5, 80–82.

You have just read about the purging and the final shaking of God's church on the earth. The greatest decision that you will ever make is to accept God's challenge—His great gift of love in the latter rain.

All around us we see signs of immorality—men killing without cause, and so forth. This corrupt age is telling us that Christ is coming very soon.

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1 G. Edward Reid, Even At The Door and Sunday's Coming. Both books are available from Hope International. See ad below.

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The Sin of Licentiousness

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

When the law of God is written in the heart it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. The commandments of God are no dead letter. They are spirit and life, bringing the imaginations and even the thoughts into subjection to the will of Christ. The heart in which they are written will be kept with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil; not because they are constrained thus to do, but because they are copying a pure model, and feel averse to everything contrary to the law written in their hearts. They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity. The atmosphere surrounding them is pure; they will not corrupt their own souls or the souls of others. It is their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. See Micah 6:8.

The danger that lies before those living in these last days, is the absence of pure religion, the absence of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming their characters. They profess to believe sacred truths as did the Jewish nation; but in their failing to practice the truth, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and the power of God. The power and influence of God’s law are around about, but not within the soul, renewing it in true holiness. Therefore the Lord sends his appeals to them to urge upon them the practice of what is right. The appeals of His Spirit are neglected and rejected. The barriers are broken down, and the soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. They are binding themselves in bundles as fagots [kindling wood], ready to be consumed at the last day.

The Jewish priests were required to be in person all that was symmetrical and well proportioned, that they might reflect a great truth. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” The Lord required not only a well proportioned mind and symmetrical body of the Jews’ ministry in holy office, but He required also pure and uncorrupted minds. And He requires no less of us, in this dispensation, in the ministry of the gospel. His called and chosen are to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. The same Bible that contains the privileges of God’s people, and His promises to them, contains also the sacred duties and the solemn obligations He requires of the shepherd who has charge of the flock of God, so that the people can see by comparing the living preacher with the divine picture whether he has credentials from heaven in likeness of character to Him who is the Chief Shepherd. God designs that the teacher of the Bible should in his character and home life be a specimen of the principles of the truth which he is teaching to his fellow men.

What a man is, has a greater influence than what he says. The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. A man may speak and write like an angel, but his practices may resemble a fallen fiend. God will have the believers of the truth zealous to maintain good works. As they occupy high positions, they will be tested by a higher standard. They will be sifted, defects and vices will be searched out; for if such exist, they will be developed in words and deportment. True character is not something shaped from without, or put on, but it is something radiating from within. If true goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and equity are dwelling in the heart, that fact will be reflected in the character; and such a character is full of power.

The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this man. But the reason of this was, that
never man lived like this man; for if He had not so lived, He could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure, holy, burdened with love and sympathy, beneficence and truth. How rejoiced are those who hate God’s law, to find spot and stain of character in one who stands in defense of that law! They are only too glad to cast a reproach upon all the loyal and true, because of the faults and impure practices of a few. There is eloquence in the quiet and consistent life of a pure, true, unadulterated Christian. We shall have temptations as long as we are in this world. But instead of injuring us, they will only be turned to our advantage, if resisted. The bounds are placed where Satan cannot pass. He may prepare the furnace that consumes the dross, but instead of injury, it can only bring forth the gold of the character, purer, upon higher vantage ground than before the trial.

The crime that brought the judgments of God upon Israel was that of licentiousness. The forwardness of women to entrap souls did not end at Baal-peor. Notwithstanding the punishment that followed the sinners in Israel, the same crime was repeated many times. Satan was most active in seeking to make Israel’s overthrow complete. Balak by the advice of Balaam laid the snare. Israel would have bravely met their enemies in battle, and resisted them, and come off conquerors; but when women invited their attention and sought their company and beguiled them by their charms, they did not resist temptations. They were invited to idolatrous feasts, and their indulgence in wine further clouded their dazed minds. The power of self-control, their allegiance to God’s law, was not preserved. Their senses were so besotted with wine, and their unholy passions had such full sway, overpowering every barrier, that they invited temptation even to the attending of these idolatrous feasts. Those who had never flinched in battle, who were brave men, did not barricade their souls to resist temptation to indulge their basest passions. Idolatry and licentiousness went together. They first defiled their conscience by lewdness, and then departed from God still farther by idolatry, thus showing contempt for the God of Israel.

Near the close of this earth’s history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Is-

rael just before their entering the land of promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls, and to take God’s professed people upon their weakest points. Those who have not brought the lower passions into subjection to the higher powers of their being, those who have allowed their minds to flow in a channel of carnal indulgence of the baser passions, Satan is determined to destroy with his temptations—to pollute their souls with licentiousness. He is not aiming especially at the lower and less important marks, but he makes use of his snares through those whom he can enlist as his agents to allure or attract men to take liberties which are condemned in the law of God. And men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God’s law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid—over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work, and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character, knowing that he who offends on one point is guilty of all, thus obtaining complete mastery over the entire man. Mind, soul, body, and conscience are involved in the ruin. If he be a messenger of righteousness, and has had great light, or if the Lord has used him as His special worker in the cause of truth, then how great is the triumph of Satan! How he exults! How God is dishonored!

The licentious practice of the Hebrews accomplished for them that which all the warfare of nations and the enchantments of Balaam could not do. They became separated from their God. Their covering and protection were removed from them. God turned to be their enemy. So many of the princes and people were guilty of licentiousness, that it became a national sin; for God was wroth with the whole congregation. The very same Satan is now working to the very end, to weaken and destroy the people who claim to be keeping the commandments of God, as they are just on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. Satan knows it is his time. He has but little time left now in which to work, and he will work with tremendous power to en-

The licentious practice of the Hebrews accomplished for them that which all the warfare of nations and the enchantments of Balaam could not do. They became separated from their God.

snare the people of God upon their weak points of character. There will be women who will become tempters, and who will do their best to attract and win the attention of men to themselves. First, they will seek to win their sympathy, next their affection, and then to induce them to break God’s holy law. Those who have dishonored their minds and affections by placing them where God’s Word forbids, will not scruple to dishonor God by various species of idolatry. God will leave them to their vile affections. It is necessary to guard the thoughts; to fence the soul about with the injunctions of God’s Word; and to be very careful in every thought, word, and action not to be betrayed into sin. It is necessary to guard against the cultivation of the indulgence of the lower passions. This is not the fruit of sanctified thoughts or hearts.

It is now the duty of God’s commandment-keeping people to watch and pray, to search the Scriptures diligently, to hide the Word of God in the heart, lest they sin against Him in idolatrous thoughts and debasing practices, and thus the church of God become demoralized like the fallen churches whom prophecy represents as being filled with every unclean and hateful bird. With the Hebrews, God’s judgment fell upon them at once. A plague immediately broke out. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and the plague visited those who were most guilty. But “the wages of sin is death,” (Romans 6:23) and for their hidden licentious indulgences God poured upon them His wrath. “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” 1 Corinthians 3:17. The ringleaders in this
demoralizing work, which was so debasing, so corrupting to Israel, so insulting to God, were ordered to be put to death by the hand of public justice, which was the only way to turn the wrath of God from the congregation of Israel. The command came from the Lord, to take the heads of the people who went out of the camp to associate with Moab, and hang them up before the sun as sacrifices to God's justice, and as a terror to the rest of the people. The command was executed. They were first slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel for a terror to the congregation of Israel, that they seeing their leaders and their princes so severely punished for their licentiousness and idolatry, without regard to wealth, or station, or what they had been, might have a deep sense of the abhorrence of God for sin, and a terror of God's wrath against them. And the men who have great light, and to whom one would look for an example, are in the sight of God very great sinners, if they transgress His law or deliberately lower the standard of His law to minister unto lust.

Never was vice more bold, stubborn, or daring than it was in Zimri, a prince of the chief house in the tribe of Simeon. Such an exhibition of effrontery toward God was almost too great for belief. He publicly appeared before the people leading a Midianitish harlot, one of high standing, a daughter of a chief house in Midian, in the sight of Moses and the congregation. He thus showed open contempt of God. He gloated in his shame; for wine had perverted his senses. He openly declared his sin as that of Sodom. The position he had occupied had been one of influence. Moses and the people who had taken no part in this great departure from God's law, were weeping and lamenting at the door of the tabernacle for the sins of the people, and the plague that had begun. But amid all this demonstration of sorrow, this prince defied the judges to molest him if they dared. The priests were weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, and rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin, and went after the man of Israel into the tent, and killed them both. This staid the plague.

With this history before the peculiar people of God in these last days, there is no excuse for anyone who will follow the example of ancient Israel in sin. But Satan will work in this special temptation to make void the law of God, and make light of God's special injunctions and warnings. The point to be marked is, that Moses' prayers were not heard, neither his weeping nor the sorrow and prayers of those who had maintained their integrity, until justice was executed upon that demoralized, God defying prince. God says of Phinehas, He "hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel." It was the greatest mercy that Phinehas could do to Israel, to deal promptly and decidedly with the guilty, and thus be instrumental in turning the wrath of God from the congregation of Israel. Something besides prayers and tears are needed in a time when reproach and peril are hanging over God's people. The wicked works must be brought to an end. The very work of justice done by Phinehas was an atonement for Israel.

There is to be a people fitted up for translation to heaven, whom Enoch represents. They are looking and waiting for the coming of the Lord. The work will go on with all those who will cooperate with Jesus in the work of redemption. He gave Himself for us
that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. God has made every provision that they should be intelligent Christians, filled with a knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. A theoretical knowledge of the truth is essential. But the knowledge of the greatest truth will not save us; our knowledge must be practical. God's people must not only know His will, but they must practice it. Many will be purged out from the numbers of those who know the truth, because they are not sanctified by it. The truth must be brought into their hearts, sanctifying and cleansing them from all earthliness and sensuality in the most private life. The soul temple must be cleansed. Every secret act is as if we were in the presence of God and holy angels, as all things are open before God, and from Him nothing can be hid.

In this age of our world the marriage vows are often disregarded. God never designed that marriage should cover the multitude of sins that are practiced. Sensuality and base practices in a marriage relation are educating the mind and moral taste for demoralizing practices outside the marriage relation. God is purifying a people to have clean hands and pure hearts to stand before Him in the Judgment. The standard must be elevated, the imagination preserved; the infatuation clustering around debasing practices must be given up, and the soul uplifted to pure thoughts, holy practices. All who will stand the test and trial just before us, will be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped, not participated in, the corruptions that are in the world through lust. The works of Satan are not half discerned, because purity and holiness do not mark the life and character of those who claim to be ministers of Christ. Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, we are thus fortified against the temptations of Satan. Christ and His purity and His matchless charms should be the soul's contemplation. There is spiritual power for all, which they may have if they will, that they may resist temptation, that duty may be done and the soul hold fast its integrity. Those who feel their need of being strengthened by might by God's Spirit in the inner man, will not lose their integrity. Earnest prayer and watching thereunto will carry them through temptations. We must be united to Christ by living faith.

We are now amid the perils of the last days. Satan has come down with great power to work his deceptions. He fastens the mind or imaginations upon impure, unlawful things. Christians become like Christ in character by dwelling upon the Divine Model. That with which they come in contact has a molding influence upon life and character. I have read of a painter who would never look upon an imperfect painting for a single moment, lest it should have a deteriorating influence upon his own eye and conceptions. That which we allow ourselves to look upon most often, and think of most, transfers itself in a measure to us. The imagination trained to dwell upon God and His loveliness will not find delight in dwelling upon scenes that are created by the imagination that is excited by lust. "But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now well with what material he has to deal. He knows the weak points in every character; and if these weak points are not strengthened, he will display his infernal wisdom in his devices to overthrow the very strongest men, princes in the army of Israel. All along through successive generations are wrecks of character which have been destroyed, because the soul was not garrisoned. And now as we near the close of time, Satan will work with masterly activity to undermine principle, and corrupt moral character. Sin is committed by many who think their crime is effectually concealed. But there is One who says, "I know thy works;" (Revelation 3:8) "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." Matthew 10:26. When the mind is infatuated with the idea of sin, there will be deception practiced; lies will be told; for those who commit such sins will not be slow to lie as well. But all sin shall be revealed.

God sees the sinner. The eye which never slumbers knows everything that is done. It is written in His book. One may conceal his sin from father, mother, wife, and friends, and yet all lies open before God, and is placed in His book of record. Darkness, secrecy, deception, and crime added to crime have not obliterated the record. David was a repentant man, and although he confessed and hated his sin, he could not forget it. He exclaimed, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me. . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day." Psalms 139:7-10, 12.

God is everywhere. He sees. He knows all things, and understands the intents and purposes of the heart. It is in vain that an attempt should be made to
conceal sin from His notice. He saw our first parents in Eden. He saw Cain when he raised his hand to kill Abel. He saw the sins of the inhabitants of the old world, and numbered their days and punished them with a flood. He saw the sins of His own covenant people, the Jews, when they plotted against the life of the Son of God. As surely does He mark every transgression, and every secret thing will be brought into Judgment. They may ever enjoyed sweet communion with God? Then how can they turn to sensual, condemning, soul-degrading practices?

The last great day is right upon us. Let all consider that Satan is now striving for the mastery over souls. He is playing the game of life for your souls. Will there be sins committed by you on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan? Oh what revelations! The husband will know for the first time the deception and falsehood that have been practiced by the wife whom he thought innocent and pure. The wife for the first time will know the case of her husband, and the relatives and friends will see how error and falsehood and corruption have been clustering about them; for the secrets of all hearts will stand revealed. The hour of Judgment is almost here—long delayed by the goodness and mercy of God. But the trump of God will sound to the consternation of the unprepared who are living, and awaken the pale nations of the dead. The great white throne will appear, and all the righteous dead will come forth to immortality. Whatever have been the little sins indulged will ruin the soul, unless they are overcome. The small sins will swell into the greater sins. Impure thoughts, private, impure actions, unrefined, low, and sensual thoughts and actions in the marriage life, the giving loose reins to the baser passions under the marriage vow will lead to every other sin, the transgression of all the commandments of God. Men that God has entrusted with noble talents will be, unless closely connected with God, guilty of great weakness, and, not having the grace of Christ in the soul, will become connected with greater crimes. This is because they do not make the truth of God a part of them. Their discipline has been defective, the soul culture has not been carried forward from one advance to another, inborn tendencies have not been restrained, but have degraded the soul. For all the natural weaknesses Jesus has made ample provision, that they may be overcome through His grace. If not overcome, the weakness will become a tyrant, a conqueror, to overcome them, and the heavenly light will become clouded and extinguished.

I feel compelled to write most earnestly on this point because I feel the peril that is upon us. We have in past history the example of most painful characters showing the danger of men in high places being corrupted. Men of masterly minds, who possessed large talents of influence, yet did not put their trust wholly in God, but allowed themselves to be praised and petted and lauded by the world’s great men, lost their balance, and thought that great men’s sins were not vices. The heavenly guide left them, and their course was rapidly downward to corruption and perdition. They completely lost the just standard of honor, lost all distinction between right and wrong, between sin and righteousness. There are lights and shades in character, and one or the other certainly triumphs. But God in heaven is weighing moral worth. He will judge righteously. The wicked will not always remain unchecked. Nothing but grace and truth brought into the inner life, inwrought in the character, is sufficient to keep the greatest, the most talented men morally erect. If intellectual greatness could have been sufficient, their characters would have been firm as a rock. But they needed virtuous characters. Paul says, I am what I am by the grace of God that is in me. God’s people must arise, and gird themselves with the whole armor of righteousness.

When you present your petitions to the Lord, it should be in humility, without boasting of superior attainments, but with real soul hunger for the blessing of God. Christ always knows what is cherished in the heart. We must come in faith that the Lord will hear and answer our prayers; for “whatever is not of faith is sin.” Genuine faith is the faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. A living faith will be a working faith. Should we go into the garden, and find that there was no sap in the plants, no freshness in the leaves, no bursting buds or blooming flowers, no signs of life in stalk or branches, we would say, “The plants are dead. Uproot them from the garden, for they are a deformity to the beds.” So it is with those who profess Christianity, and have no spirituality. If there are no signs of religious vigor, if there is no doing of the commandments of the Lord, it is evident that there is no abiding in Christ, the living vine.

The Youth’s Instructor, September 13, 1894.

Review and Herald, May 17, 24, 1887.

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othing but grace and truth brought into the inner life, inwrought in the character, is sufficient to keep the greatest, the most talented men morally erect.

be hid from mortal man, they may be hid from the good, the pure, and the holy, from friends and from foes, yet God sees them. All sins will be revealed in the day of Judgment, and unless they have been repented of beforehand, they will receive punishment according to their magnitude: for a record of all the deeds of men is kept in the book of God’s remembrance. All the good actions, all the evil actions of life are recorded. The fact that the accumulated sins are treasured up and at last exposed, is a terrible fact. And why those professing to be sons and daughters of God venture in the face of light, in the face of knowledge, to sin against their own conscience and by their sin involve others in the same ruin, is a mystery. Have they ever tasted of the powers of the world to come? Have they
Dear Hope International,

I am very thankful for the books and Our Firm Foundation magazines which you posted to me. I do believe that I and the majority of the people in Zimbabwe would not have had the opportunity to obtain these books and magazines had it not been for your generosity. I would like also to thank those who contribute toward the success of your publications. As I receive these books and magazines I am continuing to pray for your publications to assist many people to see the light of Jesus Christ in these days of false doctrine. May God double bless. EN, Zimbabwe

Dear Brethren,

Thank you so much for the precious gifts which I received from you on the 22nd of October of 1997. They are the three volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy set, the Review and Herald Articles, and the Spalding-Magan Collection. I saw many administrative lights of guidance from the articles through the experiences of our pioneers, the newly organized young Adventist church and its mission. Therefore I appreciate them and thank you.

May the Lord bless. KK, Myanmar

Dear Hope,

Recently I got hold of two copies of Our Firm Foundation from a church elder. Truly, I have never read such a soul filling and soul nourishing magazine, the one that answers my inner questions. As a young Adventist man of nineteen, I am faced with all the confusion about life, and some concerning the Bible. I certainly know that such literature will strengthen me physically, mentally and more important spiritually. I therefore kindly appeal to you that if it is possible, please do help me with anything to heal my soul.

Yours in Christ. MP, Zimbabwe

Greetings!

Thank you so much for your faithful service and truth-filled literature! My soul has been nourished, fed, comforted, and enlightened with every magazine! JK, U.S.A.

To whom it may concern:

A short time ago I received some of your publications and I am very thankful to the Lord for them. I enjoyed with my friends getting your magazines, and I am very impressed with them.

I hand out your magazine, Our Firm Foundation, freely to anyone, and to my family and friends.

The things that you sent me will help me to develop my church’s spirituality, so that you will have your share of blessings from God.

Once again I wish to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to your organization for the great things that you have done for me.

Praise and thank the Lord, we are being fed by reading Our Firm Foundation when so much error is in our church!

Pray for us that the message of God will go all over the world, and we have your efforts in our prayers. AS, Hungary

Dear Brethren,

I want to thank the Lord that He has continued to guide and bless you in publishing the magazine Our Firm Foundation. I believe the magazine has lifted the cross of our Redeemer higher than a living preacher, especially in some doctrinal issues of our church here. Few members of the church are privileged to have this magazine inspite of the year of its publication. They have not known their duty in preparation of Jesus second coming.

Once again may the Good Lord continue to bless you.

LS, Zambia

Dear Hope,

My wife and I appreciate very much your efforts in spreading the truth. May God bless you with many stars in the crown prepared by our Lord Jesus Christ for every single member of your team.

TR, California

Dearest in Christ,

Thank you once more for helping me to do pure Bible studies through the books you have been sending me. I assure you that I have been distributing the Bibles and some of the other books to people, especially my prospects, to win them to Christ. I am very grateful.

I still count on your help through the sending of the books and tracts requested to enable me and my evangelism team to win more souls for Christ, and to teach my congregation. PT, Ghana

Dear Friends,

It is really nice and encouraging reading Our Firm Foundation magazines with very powerful messages in them. Each time they come in the mail I read all of them at once. At the same time I am a good distributor of the magazine to the whole city.

The Lord has given me two things to do in my ministry, Bible work and medical missionary work. For the Bible work I trained two years and worked as a church pastor for six years. After my medical missionary training in the U.S.A. I do personal work as a self-supporting ministry. I have no resources anywhere. I work by faith in the Lord. Calls come everywhere in my country for me. It is a long story. In short, many people join our church [because of this work] all the time.

The Lord bless you. JN, Central Africa

Dear Sirs,

My husband and I have been so blessed by your magazine and newsletters! We have never read a magazine that is so straight forward, that pulls no punches and is not afraid to point out the failings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We recently acquired an old satellite dish and can only pick up one channel. Thank God it is a SDA channel, but the sad thing is, we didn’t know it until they said they were Adventists. Ninety-five percent of the women have to tell you they are Christians. You sure wouldn’t know it by looking at their worldly faces.

May God continue to bless. LS, Arizona
SIGNPOSTS

Our newest outreach magazine is here! It is perfect for giving to your family and friends, and for bulk mailing to an entire town! It has an eye-catching, four-color cover, lots of interesting pictures and a life-giving message you will want to share with everyone you know!

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