Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 1 John 2:7. See also 2 John 1:5.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Galatians 5:14.

As “commandment keepers,” we tend to focus on what has been forgotten by most Christians, which is, of course, the Sabbath commandment. And that is well and right, for it will be the great test that will be brought to each one of us as we approach these last moments in history. But in our zeal to keep the commandments, even the Sabbath commandment, it is imperative that we do not forget what is most important, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves.

In a land of “commandment keepers,” “Sabbath keepers,” “dietary law keepers,” correct dress wearers, and so on, Jesus was asked what was the greatest of all those commands.

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40.

It is extremely important to note that Jesus said that all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. Love has been, is, and always will be the guiding principle of God and His people. And Satan, desiring to destroy us, wants us in one side of the ditch, or the other; either more concerned with love, or more concerned with law.

Love is the fulfilling of the law, and that is where the scribes and Pharisees of Christ’s day missed the boat, so to speak. They were so concerned with making sure they “did it right,” that they did it all wrong.

They were so “right” that they even tithe their mint and anise and cumin. In other words, they wanted to make sure they didn’t rob God, that they even counted the amounts of herbs they produced in their gardens to make sure they tithed on those as well. They went out of their way to make sure they “obeyed” the law. Yet, in their zeal to keep the law, they actually missed the entire point of the law.

The law, rightly understood, would cause all men to treat God and each other with the utmost love, respect and honor. All things would be in harmony. And the church of God would be such a light as to draw all men to the God that embodies that law.

We have the history of how the Jewish church failed in their keeping of the law. Can we be following in the same path? We have been told, “Ye have done worse than they,” by unbelief and in being ungrateful. Testimonies, vol. 1, 129. Could we also be “missing the boat,” in striving to make sure we do everything right in tithing, diet, dress reform, music reform, worshipping correctly, and so on, but not truly loving our brothers and sisters? In not being merciful, faithful, and exercising judgment? Do the words of Jesus apply to us today as well as to the Jews?

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Matthew 23:23.

In our zeal, especially as “reformers,” and “repairers of the breach,” we must watch out that the devil doesn’t trick us into the very same ditches that the zealous law keepers of old fell into. Remember, Jesus, the best law keeper of all, drew people to Himself by His winning personality and ways. The people recognized His love for them and it drew them to Him.

If we rightly represent the law, people will be drawn to us as well. People will see that our love for them is real by our interest in, and service for, them and their needs. Brothers and sisters, as we prepare for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to derive joy in serving others in this life.

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Will God help His church today, as its leaders take hold of the noble work of reformation?

Bringing It Back - Reformation

How to best honor Pope John Paul II, according to President Bush.

Christian Courtesy

“Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible.”

Benedict XVI: His Legacy and His Mission

Just how imminent is the reunion between church and state led by the United States, the second beast of Revelation 13?

Abiding in Christ

Are you experiencing the work of salvation in your life?

The Transforming Grace of God

We are not only required to pray, but to guard the words and actions, and even the thoughts—to “watch unto prayer.”
People have short memories regarding God’s faithfulness. To help counter this, the Bible has been given, not only to set out clearly the plan of salvation, but also to remind us how God has led His people in the past so that we can have courage for the future. Among the Jews certain annual holidays were kept to remind them of God’s faithfulness.

One such holiday that many Jews still celebrate today is called Purim, which commemorates the salvation of the Jews from the death decree issued by Haman in the days of Queen Esther around 470 B.C. Purim is celebrated in the month of March each year. During this holiday, orthodox Jews read the book of Esther to be reminded of God’s great deliverance.

The Septuagint (LXX) contains “a copy of what purports to be a letter written by Artaxerxes, as Ahasuerus is called in the LXX: . . . ‘The great King Artaxerxes writes these things to the governors of 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia, and to the officials that are subject to them. After I became lord over many nations, and had dominion over the whole world, without being lifted up with presumption of my authority, but carrying myself always with equity and mildness, I purposed to settle my subjects continually in a quiet life; and, by making my kingdom peaceable, and open for passage to the utmost coasts, to renew peace, which is desired by all men.’

‘Now when I asked my counselors how this might be brought to pass, Haman, that excelled in wisdom among us, and was approved for his constant good will and steadfast fidelity, and had the honour of the second place in the kingdom, declared unto us, that in all nations throughout the world there was scattered a certain malignant people, that had laws contrary to all nations, and continually set aside the commandments of kings, so that the union honourably intended by us cannot be established.

‘Seeing then we understand that this nation is alone continually in opposition to all men, following by their laws an alien life, and evil-affected to our state, working all the mischief they can, that our kingdom may not be firmly established: therefore have we commanded, that they that are indicated in writing unto you by Haman, who is ordained over the affairs, and is a second father unto us, shall all, with their wives and children, be utterly destroyed by the sword of their enemies, without any mercy or pity, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar of this present year: so that they who of old and now also are malicious, may in one day with violence go down to Hades, and so ever hereafter cause our affairs to be well settled, and without trouble.’

“The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, 474.’

“The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God . . . . The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God’s people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath.” Prophets and Kings, 605.

Eroding Freedoms

The whole issue in the great controversy is over whom we will worship.

In Revelation chapter 13 verses 11–12, a beast with “two horns like a lamb” which speaks like a dragon comes up out of the earth. This beast, the United States, causes “the earth and them which dwell therein to worship” another beast, the Catholic Church. This worship is symbolized through keeping Sunday, a day the Catholic Church seeks to make sacred rather than the true Sabbath which God instituted at Creation, as sacred. “In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.” The Great Controversy, 578.
The keeping of the false day of worship becomes the mark of the beast while the keeping of the true Sabbath becomes the seal of the living God. Those who refuse the mark of the beast will suffer certain consequences, while other consequences await those who refuse the seal of God.

The United States has, through legislation, been heading toward an atmosphere that will make it easier to institute Sunday laws and attach strong penalties to them without violating the constitution. The Genocide Treaty, enacted on December 11, 1946, but not ratified by the United States until December 9, 1988, contains obscure terms that can be used to take away many freedoms of U.S. citizens, as also can the U.S. Patriot Act passed more recently.

The Patriot Act under section 213 authorizes property to be searched and seized in secret by government law enforcement officials without notifying the subject of a warrant. Section 215 authorizes searches of library, bookstore, medical, financial, religious and travel records without a judicial warrant. Section 218 eliminates the Fourth Amendment’s requirement for “probable cause” when obtaining a search warrant. Section 505 authorizes FBI field agents to issue national security letters to obtain financial, bank and credit records of individuals without a court order or judicial oversight. Section 802 defines “Domestic Terrorism” in such a broad way that political protests that unaccountably become violent could be classified as domestic terrorism.

Under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the federal government is able to monitor conversations between attorneys and their clients, violating the fundamental right of attorney-client privilege.

More recently he wrote, “In a particular way I ask that every effort be made this year to experience Sunday as the day of the Lord and the day of the Church. . . . Priests in their pastoral ministry should be even more attentive to Sunday Mass as the celebration which brings together the entire parish community, with the participation of different groups, movements and associations.” “The Eucharist is not merely an expression of communion in the Church’s life; it is also a project of solidarity for all of humanity.” Emphasis in original.

President Bush stated early in his office in 2001: “The best way to honor Pope John Paul II, truly one of the great men, is to take his teaching seriously; is to listen to his words and put his words and teachings into action here in America. This is a challenge we must accept.”

“The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . . This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 976.

But notice the following: “He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. . . . Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.” The Great Controversy, 605.

The national Sunday law, when it comes, will start out mild and become more severe. We have counsel on how to approach this law: “Seventh-day Adventists [are] to show their wisdom by refraining from their ordinary work on that day, devoting it to missionary effort. . . . Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord. On this day open-air meetings and cottage
meetings can be held. House-to-house work can be done. Those who write can devote this day to writing their articles.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 232–233.

As Seventh-day Adventists continue to uplift the seventh day Sabbath, “the popular ministry . . . will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it. . . . Conscientious obedience to the Word of God will be treated as rebellion.” *The Great Controversy*, 607.

Then finally comes a universal death decree. “I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty after a certain time to put them to death. But in this hour of trial the saints were calm and composed, trusting in God and leaning upon His promise that a way of escape would be made for them.” *Early Writings*, 282–283.

Dear Reader, where are you standing today? Esther, who was called for her day, as you are called for a time such as this, stood for truth at the risk of her life. Esther remained close to God. Are you seeking day by day to fully surrender your life and all you are and have to Jesus? Are you studying God’s Word as you never have before? Do you seek His direction daily?

We are told, “Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many, even among those who teach the truth to others, who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. . . .

“Jesus is the only true pattern. Everyone must now search the Bible for himself upon his knees before God, with the humble, teachable heart of a child, if he would know what the Lord requires of him.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 213–214.

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Christian Courtesy

“Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible.”

Ellen G. White

Whatever may be the surroundings of the Christian, whatever may be his temptations, he should not be uncourteous. Affection, kindness, and forbearance were designed of God as a preparation for the society of heavenly angels.

Very many who are seeking for happiness will be disappointed in their hopes, because they seek it amiss. True happiness is not to be found in selfish gratification, but in the path of duty. God desires man to be happy, and for this reason He gave him the precepts of His law, that in obeying these he might have joy at home and abroad. While he stands in his moral integrity, true to principle, having the control of all his powers, he cannot be miserable.

With its tendrils entwined about God, the soul will flourish amid unbelief and depravity. But many who are constantly looking forward for happiness fail to receive it, because, by neglecting to discharge the little duties and observe the little courtesies of life, they violate the principles upon which happiness depends.

Bible rules must be written on the heart and carried into the everyday life. The Christian may lift up his soul to God for strength and grace amid every discouragement. Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. This is a way to gain respect, and extend the sphere of usefulness, which costs but little.

It is the religion of Christ in the heart that causes the words issuing therefrom to be gentle and the demeanor condescending, even to those in the humblest walks of life.

A blustering, fault-finding, overbearing man is not a Christian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. It is no mark of a Christian to be continually jealous of one’s dignity. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and comfort he is constantly bestowing on others, is seen the true dignity of the man. The one who pursues this course will not complain that he does not obtain the respect due him.

He who drinks in the spirit of Christ will let it flow forth in kind words, and be expressed in courteous deportment. The plan of salvation is to soften whatever is harsh and rough in the temper, and to smooth off whatever is rugged or sharp in the manners. External change will testify of an internal change. The truth is the sanctifier, the refiner. Received into the heart, it works with hidden power, transforming the receiver.

But those who profess the truth and at the same time are rough, and sour, and unkind in words and deportment, have not learned of Jesus; all these manifestations show that they are yet servants of the wicked one. No man can be a Christian without having the spirit of Christ, manifesting meekness, gentleness, and refinement of manners.

Enoch, Joseph and Daniel

Enoch was a marked character. Many look upon his life as something above what the generality of mortals can ever reach. But Enoch’s life and character, which were so holy that he was translated to heaven without seeing death, represent what the lives and characters of all must be, if, like Enoch, they are to be translated when Christ shall come. His life was what the life of every individual may be if he closely connects with God.

We should remember that Enoch was surrounded with influences so depraved that God brought a flood of waters on the world to destroy its inhabitants for their corruption. Were Enoch upon the earth today,
his heart would be in harmony with all God’s requirements; he would walk with God, although surrounded with influences which are the most wicked and debasing.

The palm tree well represents the life of a Christian. It stands upright amid the burning desert sand, and dies not; for it draws its sustenance from the springs of life beneath the surface.

When Christ shall come, our vile bodies are to be changed, and made like His glorious body; but the vile character will not be made holy then. The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy; we must have the mind of Christ, that He may behold with pleasure His image reflected upon our souls.

We are none of us what God would have us, and what we may be, and what His Word requires us to be. It is our unbelief that shuts us away from God.

Joseph preserved his integrity when surrounded by idolaters in Egypt, in the midst of sin and blasphemy and corrupting influences. When tempted to turn from the path of virtue, his answer was, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel depended upon a strength that was infinite. This is the only course of safety for Christians to pursue in our day. Those who profess Christ are too indolent in their religious life to surmount obstacles, and be patient, may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:14–16. A surly, fault-finding, selfish, uncourteous person cannot have this sacred influence.

Pleasant, kind, and well-bred Christians will have an influence for God and His truth; it cannot be otherwise. The light borrowed from Heaven will shed its brightening rays through them to the pathway of others leading them to exclaim, “O Lord of hosts . . . blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.” Psalm 84:3–5.

The words we speak, our daily deportment, are the fruit growing upon the tree. If the fruit is sour and unpalatable, the rootlets of that tree are not drawing nourishment from a pure source. If our affections are brought into harmony with our Saviour, if our characters are meek and lowly, we evidence that our life is hid with Christ in God; and we shall leave behind us a bright track. The Christian life will be in such marked contrast to that of unbelievers and children of darkness, that beholders will discern that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him.

The Christian need not become a recluse; but while necessarily associating with the world, he will not be of the world. Christian politeness should be cultivated by daily practice. That unkind word should be left unspoken, that selfish disregard for the happiness of others should give place to sympathy and thoughtfulness. True courtesy, blended with truth and justice, will make the life not only useful, but fragrant. It is no evidence that the Christian has lost his religion, because he has a good report from those who are without. Virtue, honesty, kindness, and faithful integrity make noble characters; they will win esteem even of unbelievers, and their influence in the church will be very precious. God requires us to be right in important matters, while He tells us that faithfulness in little things will fit us for higher positions of trust.

If our affections are brought into harmony with our Saviour, if our characters are meek and lowly, we evidence that our life is hid with Christ in God; and we shall leave behind us a bright track.
Attracting or Repulsing?

There is a very great neglect of true courtesy at the present time. The good qualities which many possess are hidden, and instead of attracting souls to Christ they repulse them. If these persons could see the influence of their uncourteous ways and unkind expressions upon unbelievers, and how offensive is such conduct in the sight of God, they would reform their habits; for a lack of courtesy is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to sinners. Selfish, complaining, sour Christians bar the way, so that sinners do not care to approach Christ.

Could we look beneath the surface of things, we should see that half of life’s misery is created by frowns and unkind speeches, which might be prevented as well as not. Many make a hell upon earth for themselves and for those whom they might comfort and bless. These are not worthy of the Christian name. These will not dwell in heaven, in the society of pure angels who are always kind, courteous, and considerate of others.

I call upon these dissatisfied, mourning, fretting ones to reform before it shall be too late. There is still time for you to learn of Christ. You have greatly injured His cause, you have kept many souls from the kingdom of heaven; but you may yet repent and be converted. Lay off the yoke which you have placed upon your own neck, and accept the yoke of Christ.

Many are sensible of their great deficiency, and they read, and pray, and resolve, and yet make no progress. They seem to be powerless to resist temptation. The reason is, they do not go deep enough. They do not seek for a thorough conversion of the soul, that the streams which issue from it may be pure, and the deportment may testify that Christ reigns within.

All defects of character originate in the heart. Pride, vanity, evil temper, and covetousness proceed from the carnal heart unrenewed by the grace of Christ. If the heart is refined, softened, and ennobled, the words and actions will testify to the fact. When the soul has been entirely surrendered to God, there will be a firm reliance upon His promises, and earnest prayer and determined effort to control the words and actions.

Some persons speak in a harsh, uncourteous manner, that wounds the feeling of others, and then they justify themselves by saying, “It is my way; I always tell just what I think;” and they exalt this wicked trait of character as a virtue. Their uncourteous deportment should be firmly rebuked; it is something of which they ought to be ashamed—a cruel practice, which is born of Satan, and is not in the least akin to heaven. Much is said concerning the improvements which have been made since the days of the patriarchs. But those living in that age could boast of a higher state of refinement and true courtesy than is possessed by people in this age of boasted enlightenment.

Integrity, justice, and Christian kindness, blended, make a beautiful combination. Courtesy is one of the graces of the Spirit. It is an attribute of heaven. The angels never fly into a passion, never are envious, selfish, and jealous. No harsh or unkind words escape their lips. And if we are to be the companions of angels, we too must be refined and courteous. And we have none too much time to change our wrong habits, reform our defective characters, and obtain a fitness for the society of those with whom we expect to associate not long hence. All harshness and severity, coarseness and unkindness, must be overcome in this life; for they are satanic.

Now is the very time for us to do the work. We can have no second probation. If we do not improve these hours of privilege, we would not improve a second probation should it be granted to us. It is now, while it is called today, that we are not to burden our hearts and continue to make Christ ashamed of the unsanctified words and deportment of us who bear His name. ☐

Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God’s people around the world.
Can we now conclude that Benedict XVI will be a benevolent pope? I believe not. Even after his election by the College of Cardinals to the papal throne, there were those who were ready to present him in a negative light, in spite of his attempted make-over. The Sun of London headlined his biography: “From Hitler Youth to . . . Papa Ratzi.” Whether or not a pun was intended, many people mis-read the nickname as Paparazzi—a term used for invasive photographers which became especially ignominious after the death of Princess Diana.

While many newspapers reported positively upon Pope Benedict XVI’s first sermon after his election as seeking the unity of the Christian faith and reaching out to Jews and Muslims, students of Bible prophecy will have a different evaluation. In the sermon he stated from the perspective of third person:

“Peter’s current successor takes on as his primary task the duty to work tirelessly to rebuild the full and visible unity of all Christ’s followers. This is his ambition, his impelling duty. He is aware that good intentions do not suffice for this. Concrete gestures that enter hearts and stir consciences are essential, inspiring in everyone that inner conversion that is the prerequisite for all ecumenical progress.

“Theological dialogue is necessary; the investigation of the historical reasons for the decisions made in the past is also indispensable. But what is most urgently needed is that ‘purification of memory,’ so often recalled by John Paul II, which alone can dispose souls to accept the full truth of Christ. Each one of us must come before Him, the supreme Judge of every living person, and render an account to Him of all we have done or have failed to do to further the great good of the full and visible unity of all His disciples.

“The current successor of Peter is . . . prepared to do everything in his power to promote the fundamental cause of ecumenism. Following the example of his predecessors, he is fully determined to encourage every initiative that seems appropriate for promoting contacts and understanding with the representatives of the different churches and ecclesial communities. . . .

“I address everyone, including the followers of other religions or those who are simply seeking an answer to the fundamental questions of life and have not yet found it. I address all with simplicity and affection, to assure them that the church wants to continue to weave an open and sincere dialogue with them, in the search for the true good of the human being and of society.

“I ask God for unity and peace for the human family, and declare the willingness of all Catholics to cooperate for an authentic social development, respectful of the dignity of every human being, I will make every conscientious effort to continue the promising dialogue initiated by my venerable predecessors with the different civilizations, so that mutual understanding may create the conditions for a better future for all.” All emphasis supplied.

What is implied is that he will be the leader of all. This aim has long been the goal of the papacy and it will be achieved among those “whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8.

We do not have to recourse to speculation to know what the future of the papacy will be. The Word of God is replete with details for the future direction of the papacy.

Insights into Fulfillment of Prophecy

Revelation 13, above all chapters in the Bible, describes the most definitive details of the papacy’s characteristics just prior to Christ’s return. The papal communications which Benedict XVI helped John Paul II to write foreshadow the reintroduction of severe persecution to those who are faithful to the Lord.

In summary, this is what we learn from the Bible:

Rather than decreasing the historical blasphemy of the Roman Catholic Church—claim-
ing that the pope is another God on earth, that he is infallible when speaking ex cathedra, and that the priests have the power to forgive sin and to create their Creator in the blasphemous mass—it will increase and become more readily accepted.

In the pope’s first message he affirmed: “In choosing me as Bishop of Rome, the Lord wanted me to be his Vicar, he wanted me to be the ‘rock’ on which we can all safely stand. . . . I ask everyone in the coming months to intensify love and devotion for Jesus in the Eucharist, and to express courageously and clearly faith in the Real Presence of the Lord.” Ibid.

On the 15th of May, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated mass at the ordination of some priests. In his message he reaffirmed the powers granted to them such as the Eucharist and “Lastly, there is the power of forgiveness. The Sacrament of Penance is one of the Church’s precious treasures, since authentic world renewal is accomplished only through forgiveness.”

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. . . . And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” Revelation 13:1, 5–6.

3 Roman Catholicism will fully dominate the religion of the world. Not only Protestants, but Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, Taoists, and all other forms of religion, together with skeptics, agnostics and atheists will come under its control.

Professor Timothy Garton Ash (a liberal agnostic Oxford University professor) said, “I will not make judgment concerning his [John Paul II’s] meaning for the Catholic Church, but he was the first world leader. . . . All other leaders are local leaders who sometimes have a global impact but only the pope has a global program with a global message.” Der Spiegel, 96.4

“And all the world wondered after the beast. . . . And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:3, 8.

“And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:7.

4 There will be terrible persecution of God’s people, with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” Revelation 17:6.

5 Under the guise of love and peace, God’s saints will be persecuted at the instigation of the papacy and many will lose their lives.

“And through his [a king of fierce countenance’s] policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many.” Daniel 8:25.
There will be a great union between the compromised nations of the world under the papacy. It was observed at John Paul's funeral that “Rome again was the capital of the world, perhaps for the first time since the fall of Imperial Rome.” Ibid., 96.

“There will be great miracles: “And he [the second beast] doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Revelation 13:13.

There will be a reunion between church and state which will be led by the United States, the second beast of Revelation 13, which will use its military might to enforce the edicts of the papacy.

Overwhelmingly, the inhabitants of the world will be deceived, including most Christians, who will despise those who are following God, because most Christians will worship the beast and his image and receive his mark.

“Overwhelmingly, the inhabitants of the world will be deceived, including most Christians, who will despise those who are following God, because most Christians will worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Verse 14.

Sunday laws enacted in the United States will rapidly be legislated by other countries around the world. There will be a decree of no buying or selling against those who refuse to receive the mark of Rome’s authority, Sunday sacredness. The United States will eventually lead out in a death decree against dissenters who refuse to receive the mark.

“Sunday laws enacted in the United States will rapidly be legislated by other countries around the world. ... The United States will eventually lead out in a death decree against dissenters who refuse to receive the mark.

During this time of terrible persecution there is one joyous consequence—many who once walked under the banner of the papacy and followed other false religions, will then respond to the call of the everlasting gospel.

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

However, sadly, many who once walked in the light of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–12, but did not...
receive the love of the truth, will defect from God’s people.

“Even him [that Wicked], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Timothy 4:3–4.

Striding toward Ecumenism

How much of this will occur in the lifetime of Benedict XVI is not for us to speculate. However, one thing is certain, his legacy, however short, will be to forward the events which will lead to the consequences which the Bible has foretold.

Already we have seen the rapidity of this movement. On June 1–3, 2005, the inaugural meeting of the planning committee for the new organization, Christian Churches Together (CCT) took place. It was held at the Jesuit Conference Center at El Retiro in Los Altos California. Ron Roberson, a Catholic priest chaired the planning committee for this meeting. The inauguration of this new organization was scheduled to be launched September 18, 2005, at the Episcopal Church’s National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

However, it was subsequently postponed to provide time for other churches and Christian organizations to join so that they too can be inaugural members of the CCT. The postponement announcement especially focused upon the fact that Afro-American Baptists and Methodist denominations had not made a decision to join the organization. At the time of the postponement, it was announced there were thirty-one church denominations and Christian organizations, which had indicated their intentions to join the CCT. The CCT is the fourth major organization to be established in the United States to forward the ecumenical movement. I believe the ultimate direction of these organizations is to bring Protestantism back into the bosom of Rome.

The National Council of Churches founded in 1950 still wields a powerful influence today. Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority which only lasted a decade was succeeded by the Christian Coalition led by Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed. Christian Churches Together is the first of these organizations in which the U.S. Catholic Church has taken membership—much less a chair position in planning the organizational meeting. Revelation 13:8 is being fulfilled rapidly. 

Next month we will conclude this look at Pope Benedict XVI and his role in the imminent fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 13.

Colin Standish, speaker and author, writes from Rapidan, Virginia, where he serves as president of Hartland Institute.

1 The Sun, April 20, 2005, http://www.thenewsarchive.co.uk
5 http://www.christianchurchestogether.org/
6 http://www.christianchurchestogether.org/press_releases.htm
7 Ibid.
Abiding in Christ

Are you experiencing the work of salvation in your life?

Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the Lord." Leviticus 22:31.

God requires us to obey the law, but we cannot obey the law. How do we remedy this dilemma?

Self has to die. Our old man (Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:8–9) which is our carnal nature, must undergo a crucifixion experience. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:6.

When self dies, then Christ is able to live in us. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

While Christ lives in us, He will live out His perfect life in us. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” 1 John 3:5. “[Jesus] knew that the life of His trusting disciples would be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter.” Desire of Ages, 679.

What happens when self is crucified? “When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness.” Selected Messages, book 1, 389.

“If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.” Steps to Christ, 62.

The Experience of Justification

When we are justified, Christ lives in us. What is justification? It means we are cleansed. “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” Job 25:4.

When we are cleansed, we receive pardon from God. “And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.” Jeremiah 33:8.

When we are pardoned we receive forgiveness. “Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” Numbers 14:19.

Justification means that we are cleansed, pardoned, and forgiven in the sight of God. This is how God looks at us as though we had never sinned.

Jeremiah 13:23 clearly states that we of ourselves cannot be good. It is impossible! “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”

There is no way for us to fulfill the requirements of the law, so we have to let Christ live in us. We do that by surrendering to Him. Faith and Works, 100 says, “God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place.”

The surrendering process is daily and moment by moment. “I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

“This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, ‘Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.’ John 15:4.

This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the
branches is unobstructed and constant. . . .

"Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service." Desire of Ages, 676.

How to Surrender

How can we surrender to God? “Many are inquiring, ‘How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?’ You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair.

“What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.” Steps to Christ, 47.

If we are like Jesus, then we will hate sin. “The example of Jesus was to them a continual irritation. He hated but one thing in the world, and that was sin.” Desire of Ages, 88.

Meditating on the cross and the life of Jesus will help us surrender our will to Him because we will see the vileness of sin. “The exceeding sinfulness of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross.” Steps to Christ, 31.

By beholding and appreciating Christ’s life on this earth and His death on the cross for our sins, it will lead us to surrender our heart to Him and experience His salvation. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18.

“As Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their works were performed with a quiet dignity and ease, whatever commotion was around Him. Applause did not elate Him. He feared not the threats of His enemies. He moved amid the world of excitement, of violence and crime, as the sun moves above the clouds. Human passions and commotions and trials were beneath Him. He sailed like the sun above them all.

“Yet He was not indifferent to the woes of men. His heart was ever touched with the sufferings and necessities of His brethren, as though He Himself was the one afflicted. He had a calm inward joy, a peace which was serene. His will was ever swallowed up in the will of His Father. Not My will but Thine be done, was heard from His pale and quivering lips.” This Day With God, 263.

If our hearts are continually surrendered to God, we will one day see Jesus face to face:

“You need not be worried. You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified. The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God’s people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you.” Upward Look, 283.
How King Asa Brought the Church Back to God

We will now look at the examples of six leaders in the ancient church who, step by step, went through several of the nine points of revival and reformation that we have discussed. In each instance, the result was that a great majority of the church repented and returned to God. Each time, God used church leaders to turn the church around before it went into hopeless apostasy.

The first of the six was King Asa of Judah. Recognizing that under its previous rulers, Rehoboam and Abijah, the southern kingdom had seriously declined in spirituality, Asa determined that decided changes must be made.

“During the greater part of this time of apostasy in Israel, Asa was ruling in the kingdom of Judah. For many years ‘Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.’” 2 Chronicles 14:2–5 [emphasis supplied].

King Asa had done all he could to prepare the nation for any crisis. And when the enemies of God’s people attacked them, the church was ready! It was not the size of the army nor its strong battlements. Asa’s strength was due to the fact that he had brought his people back to the worship of the true God and the keeping of His commandments! You can read about it on pages 110–111.

Will God help His church today, as its leaders take hold of the noble work of confronting the terrible apostasy that is creeping into our midst? Yes, He will! If our leaders will, as it were, cast out the idols, raise the standards, and teach our people that, through the enabling grace of Christ, they must faithfully obey the Ten Commandments—our leaders will be able to meet and overcome every challenge from worldlings, both from within and without the church.

The God of heaven approved of Asa’s diligence in seeking to bring the church back to its historic standards:

“As the victorious armies of Judah and Benjamin were returning to Jerusalem, ‘the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with...”

Emphasis supplied.
him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.’ ‘Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.’ 2 Chronicles 15:1–2, 7.”

Ibid., 112.

Do not forget the words: “If ye forsake him, he will forsake you.” Let none flatter themselves that this warning cannot apply to God’s church today.

Very thankful that God approved of his eﬀorts to turn the church around, Asa determined to carry the reformation even further.

After putting away still more idols, Asa gathered all the people together to Jerusalem; and, we are told, they “entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul. . . . And he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about.” Verses 12–15.

What a thrilling series of events! And all because the leaders in the church, under Asa’s direction, put away the idols out of the land and, through earnest prayer and careful instruction at special meetings, brought the church members back to the true God! Oh, how this is needed today!

Such a gathering of the people together and entering into a covenant to henceforth obey God, occurred several times in the Old Testament church. We read about it during the time of the patriarchs, in Solomon’s time, and repeatedly in the southern kingdom of Judah. This obviously was a very important step in bringing the church back to obedience to God’s Word, and therefore is something we must do today!

Because of Asa’s reform, the church grew in numbers because it was growing spiritually and keeping God’s commandments. This is the secret of true, solid “church growth.” A great increase in numbers also occurred when Rehoboam instituted reforms. See

Because of your integrity today, leaders of modern Israel, God will also give you success in bringing the people back to Him!

“In his eﬀorts to rule wisely, Jehoshaphat endeavored to persuade his subjects to take a firm stand against idolatrous practices. . . . Because of his integrity, the Lord was with him, and ‘established the kingdom in his hand.’ 2 Chronicles 17:5.” Ibid., 190–191.

Because of your integrity today, leaders of modern Israel, God will also give you success in bringing the people back to Him! You have God’s promise of abundant help if you will take hold of this good work.

But Jehoshaphat did not stop there. As did many other godly Old Testament leaders, Jehoshaphat determined to instruct the people in the teachings of God’s Word. With this in mind, he appointed “teaching priests,” not to tell jokes and entertain the people as is sometimes done today on Sabbath morning, but to open the Scriptures and teach the people what was written in those sacred pages:

“Throughout the kingdom the people were in need of instruction in the law of God. In an understanding of this law lay their safety; by conforming their lives to its requirements they would become loyal both to God and to man. Knowing this, Jehoshaphat took steps to ensure to his people thorough instruction in the Holy Scriptures.

“The princes [division, union, and conference presidents] in charge of the diﬀerent portions of his realm were directed to arrange for the faithful ministry of teaching priests [ministers]. By royal appointment these instructors, working under the direct supervision of the princes, ‘went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.’ 2 Chronicles 17:7–9. And as many endeavored to understand God’s requirements and to put away sin, a revival was eﬀected.

“To this wise provision for the spiritual needs of his subjects, Jehoshaphat owed much of his prosperity as a ruler. In obedience to God’s law there is great gain. In conformity
to the divine requirements there is a transforming power that brings peace and good will among men.” Ibid., 191–192.

As if this was not enough, good king Jehoshaphat next set up faithful judges to hear the problems of the people and deal with them. See pages 197–198. This was another wise decision and should be done today in our own church. It is biblical, and Jehoshaphat made it clear that the judges must base all their decisions on the Word of God alone. Our church members today do not always receive a fair hearing when new theology pastors are transferred to their churches and they plead for help from leadership. Unfortunately, ignoring their concerns only adds to the number of faithful believers who leave the church.

The thrilling story is told on pages 198–200, of how God protected His church when it was attacked by its enemies! What a glorious reward this was, after years of upbuilding the church by its leaders! Jehoshaphat and the people were given the promise of divine protection and were specifically told that it was given because of their adherence to God’s inspired Word:

“Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.” 2 Chronicles 20:7, 8.

“Early in the morning they rose and went into the wilderness of Tekoa. As they advanced to the battle, Jehoshaphat said, ‘Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness.” Verses 20–21.

These singers went before the army, lifting their voices in praise to God for the promise of victory.” Ibid., 201.

And then we are told:

“God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater.” Ibid., 202.

What a most wonderful story! What encouragement it brings to each one of us! Hear the divinely inspired words: “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” Those words should guide our homes and our church today. Write them on your doorposts. Teach them to your children. Study the writings of the prophets and live them all the days of your life.

In the next article in this series, we will see how King Hezekiah cooperated with God in bringing reform to Israel.

Vance Ferrell writes from Tennessee, where he operates his ministry Pilgrim’s Rest.

This article was adapted from Bringing It Back, 39–45. You may order this book from Hope International for $1.95 each. Quantities of 10 or more: 99¢ each; cases of 24: 80¢ per book.

Please see page 30 for shipping and sales tax information.
We are not only required to pray, but to guard the words and actions, and even the thoughts—to "watch unto prayer."

This morning one of the ministers remarked that he had been greatly helped in these meetings. He understood faith better than he ever had before; but he could not yet rejoice in the full assurance of the favor of God. His heart craved the blessing of God. His life seemed productive of little good; but he wished to go forth to his labors wholly consecrated, with no selfish motive, but with the object to save his fellow-men, and glorify his Creator.

Another said that he had been in discouragement, and almost in despair, but the words spoken in these morning meetings had helped him. Rays of light had broken in upon his mind, dispelling the dark clouds that enshrouded him, and he felt that the Lord, for Christ's sake, had forgiven his sins. He could now see that unbelief had been the greatest hindrance to his enjoyment of the blessing of God.

Others bore testimony that they were confessing their sins and striving for the blessing of God, but they had fears that Jesus would not, could not, pardon them. They could have faith for others, but not for themselves. This was the language of unbelief. Such persons will receive no help, no freedom, until they look to Jesus. There is no merit in self; Jesus is our only hope.

Jesting and Joking

Some confessed that they had a light and trifling spirit, which cut off their influence in the desk. They now realized the magnitude and wickedness of this fault as they never had before. This spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is a stumbling-block to sinners and a worse stumbling-block to those who give way to the inclination of the unsanctified heart. The fact that some have allowed this trait to develop and strengthen until jesting is as natural as their breath, does not lessen its evil effects.

When any one can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in His character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate His example. A Christian is the highest type of man, a representative of Christ.

Some who are given to jesting, and to light and trifling remarks, may appear in the sacred desk with becoming dignity. They may be able to pass at once to the contemplation of serious subjects, and present to their hearers the most important, testing truths ever committed to mortals; but perhaps their fellow-laborers, whom they have influenced, and who have joined with them in the careless jest, cannot change the current of their thoughts so readily. They feel condemned, their minds are confused; and they are unqualified to enter upon the contemplation of heavenly themes, and preach Christ and Him crucified.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency. God is not honored when we turn everything to ridicule one day, and the next day are discouraged and almost hopeless, having no light from Christ, and ready to find fault and murmur. He is pleased when His people manifest solidity, strength, and firmness of character, and when they have cheerful, happy, hopeful dispositions.

Mental Discipline

Says Peter, “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope..."
Rumors concerning the Whites’ personal finances continued to spread. One believer in Massachusetts wrote a long letter to James, reproofing him for his extravagant way of living. Naturally, the question arose in his mind, What’s the use? How could men who professed to love the Lord and believe the Bible treat him so cruelly?

Completely discouraged, he sat down and wrote a short note to appear on the back of the next issue of the Review. He then put on his hat and headed for the door. Before going out he turned to Ellen, “Wife, it is no use trying to struggle on any longer. These things are crushing me, and will soon carry me to the grave. . . . I have written a note for the paper stating that I shall publish no more.” As he stepped across the threshold Ellen fainted. He hurried to her side. In answer to his prayer, she recovered.

The following morning while praying at family worship Ellen White had a vision. Specific instruction was given in regard to the paper. It was not to be discontinued, for that was just what Satan wanted. If James would continue to publish, the Lord would uphold him.

This was the sixth and last time that James White proposed to stop printing and was kept from doing so by the testimony of his wife. From this time on, nothing could separate James from the publishing work.

But if Elder White received some critical letters that tended to crush his spirit he also received some that had the opposite effect. If he had his detractors, he likewise had loyal supporters who loved him and were not afraid to tell him so.

In a communication submitted to the Review and Herald, Elder S. W. Rhodes wrote these cheering words to his associate: “Be of good cheer, my dear tried brother, and in Jesus’ name, turn the battle to the gate. . . . I mean to go to heaven with you. I love you more and more.” Another brother by the name of Laughhead wrote, “My dear brother, be strong for the Lord is with us, and we shall soon receive the reward if we faint not.”

Also, from Massachusetts came a letter from the man who had been so critical. In an entirely new tone, he expressed heartfelt sorrow for having so misjudged his brother. So moving was his confession that James and Ellen wept when they read it. But even the writing of this letter did not entirely satisfy the brother. He traveled all the way to...
Paris to see the Whites and once again confessed his error. He told them he had been influenced by a false friend.

The Whites had suffered severely physically as well as emotionally on that winter tour through New England. Later, Ellen wrote that it was years before James recovered fully from the effects of that long exposure, and then only in answer to prayer.

James and Ellen were compelled to travel by stagecoach, which was often wearying and inconvenient. During a visit to the church at Sutton, Vermont, some of the laity decided it was their duty to provide a good horse and carriage for the use of these spiritual leaders. Word was sent out inviting Sabbathkeeping Adventists who had horses to sell to bring them to a certain crossroads on a specified day, when James and his wife could make their choice.

The evening before they went to look at the horses, Ellen was instructed by the Lord not to take the first horse presented, a high-spirited sorrel, nor the second, an iron-gray horse, but to take the third, a well-built, dappled chestnut horse.

The next morning they went to the appointed place. There were the three horses she had seen the night before. Of course, they chose the chestnut horse. For many years this faithful horse took the Whites over long distances. Over good roads and bad, he carried them safely through all kinds of weather. His new owners were also given money with which to buy a new carriage.

Dollars for the Review continued to come in, and the paper went out to an ever-widening circle of readers. As Andrews, Bates, Edson, Rhodes, and a dozen other preachers traveled far and wide they continually met persons interested in Bible truth. The names and addresses were sent to James White, and he made sure that these individuals received the paper.

Occasionally James received letters that especially touched his heart. One came from J. B. Sweet, a fisherman living in Connecticut:

“I should be glad, dear brother, to have your paper continued, but my limited means will not admit of it at present, and to ask it gratis is more than I can do. If you can do me the kindness to continue the paper, as soon as the means is in my hand you shall have it.”

Needless to say, his paper was not discontinued.

James felt concerned regarding those who were in a position to help support the paper but made no move to do so. He often wondered whether they should continue to get the Review free, while others were paying for it. He wrote about this problem in the Review and Herald:

“We do not speak of want [of means]. If this was any other than the cause of God, we then might have to urge appeal for help, as is done in other papers. More than a score of brethren have said to us, ‘If you need means, just let me know it and you shall have it.’ But shall we call on such free hearted brethren while three-fourths of those who read the Review and Herald have done nothing to support it? We think we should not.”

Is it right that a few self-sacrificing souls should bear the whole expense, and share the whole blessing?

After mulling the problem over, however, James White decided to continue to send the paper gratis to anyone indicating a desire to have it, since, he decided, they were the very ones who needed it most.

Virgil Robinson was the great-grandson of James and Ellen White on his mother’s side and the great-grandson of William Farnsworth (one of the first Seventh-day Adventists) on his father’s side.

Notes:
1 Life Sketches (1888), 280–281.
2 Review and Herald, December 23, 1851.
3 Life Sketches (1888), 282.
4 Review and Herald, April 25, 1935.
5 Ibid., vol. 1, January, 1851.
6 Ibid., vol. 1, no. 7, March, 1851.

This article was taken from Virgil Robinson, James White, 48-53. This book is available from Hope International for $11.99 plus shipping and sales tax (see page 30).
T he eighth section begins with the Reformation. Sect after sect has risen to proclaim some phase of Protestant truth, and to lead God’s people onward. Men of many nationalities have been used to stir the hearts and lead the minds of the people with living truth. In that way many of the Protestant denominations came into being. They each one had some definite truth to proclaim, or some important principle to make clearer. These truths, with all that they had previously received, became their founding principles.

It was God’s will that they each one should not only hold fast that which they had, but should receive additional truth as He saw fit to reveal it. They were to remain firm on those founding truths and principles, and on them embrace new revelations of God’s will.

Have they done this? We have only to look around on the wreckage of Protestant faith that is everywhere, to know that they have not. In the main, those Protestant peoples have not only failed to progress in Christian faith and power, but have, almost without exception, failed to keep within sight of those founding principles. Were the founders of many of those Protestant movements now to come to the peoples that they once taught and inspired, they would find the movement that each so successfully started, far more distant from the will of God than was the life of the religious body from which He originally called them at the time of their denominational beginning.

Why is this? Is it because those founding truths and principles were found to be wrong and untrustworthy?—Not at all. It is simply because the people have listened to the voice of the world instead of the voice of God. They have failed to hold fast that which they had. They have been beguiled of their reward. They have come to love the world; and as their love of the world has increased, their love of God and God’s truth has decreased. They have become conformed to the world instead of being transformed by the renewing of their minds.

That is the situation of Protestantism today, and to an alarming degree it is led by what, but a few years ago, would have been hesitatingly denounced as an unbelieving ministry. Widespread uprisings against the Christian faith are taking place in heretofore Christian lands, and the church is powerless to prevent them.

We face that terrible fact, and we are far too indifferent to its woeful significance. Protestantism is losing out in this our day, and we are not very deeply concerned about it. It is now heard with no voice of power. Its pulpits ring no longer with the proclamation of vital Protestant truth. It should grieve us deeply to be forced, as we are, to admit that the eighth section of the story is ending in a tragic failure of human effort to have the purpose of God fulfilled in the lives of those whom the world regards as God’s people.

But this section of the story reaches to our own time, and we can accurately trace causes in this period. What is it that has brought Protestantism to this sad, backslidden condition? To perpetuate itself and to propagate its truths, Protestantism established its centers of learning and training. These it intended to be the great immovable buttresses to its being. But they have become the strongholds of unbelief and the channels of departure from those grand, rugged, eternal principles of essential truth upon which the Christian church was placed by its divine Founder. Protestantism has been betrayed, and is being betrayed, by its own educational institutions. These centers of learning have, through the pulpit and the professions, admitted the world into the church, and the church, as a result, is powerless in the hour of its disaster.

The Protestant church has entrusted the world, through its
own unbelieving worldly schools, to train the leaders and ministers and professional members of the church, and the power of a Spirit-led, evangelical church has departed from it. The lesson for us is an important one, and is rooted in an experience that belongs, not to the distant past, but to the present. God help us to hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown.

Final Movement--success or failure

The ninth section of the story is pictured in the latter part of the book of Revelation. At a specific time a movement begins that closes up the work of reformation forever. This finishing work is to be done in the judgment hour. It is to be done by a people that are spoken of as “the remnant.” It is to be done at a time when faith is failing in the experience of men; when the world is in confusion, and its populations are in distress; when unbelief is prevalent and arrogant. The message of this movement is to be preached with power, and by believing that message its adherents are to be separated in life and purpose and principle and belief and hope from the world all about them. That movement is to succeed by its people’s holding fast to the peculiar truths and to the definite principles upon which it was founded.

We believe, and have proclaimed our belief far and wide, that we are that people, and that the movement with which we are connected is that movement. We believe that our service will bring the work of God for sinners to a close. We believe that the truth we proclaim will prepare the way of the Lord among all peoples. We publicly and widely proclaim all these things. But there are two very important facts that we should consider:

First, that this movement, if not directed according to God’s will, is just as subject to failure as any previous movement of God’s people

Second, that the Bible foreshows that this movement must meet the most tremendous efforts of Satan and his agents to overthrow it, and to cause it to fail of fulfilling God’s purpose.

These two facts must be kept in the minds of our leaders continually, and they must be allowed to influence us wisely in every consideration of our leadership.

We look back over the other sections of the story, and we find that the reasons for failure are very definite. Briefly, those reasons center in one thing, “love of the world.” God’s people have never been victorious while surrendering or surrendered to the world. They have had victory only when surrendered to God, to have His will done in and by them. It must still be so. The remnant people can no more have success by loving the world and surrendering to its allurements and claims and calls, than did Israel of old.

The message by which we are made the remnant requires that we be separate from the world. Why?—Because, otherwise, we shall meet with the most awful failure that has ever overtaken a people. Observe the statement of God regarding that: “Come out of her, my people, . . . that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

If we are not separate, we cannot possibly succeed. If we are not separate, the ninth section of the story will be but the tale of a work well begun, but marred and distorted and ruined by the weakness and unbelief and worldly-mindedness of its leaders and its people, the story of a people that undertook to finish God’s work, and failed.

When this movement began, the
If it dwells upon unimportant matters, the intellect is dwarfed and weakened. There may be some spasmodic flashes of thought; but the mind is not disciplined to steady, sober reflection. There are themes that demand serious consideration. They are those connected with the great plan of redemption, which is soon to be finished. Jesus is about to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, and what manner of characters must we have to enable us to stand in that day? By dwelling upon these themes of eternal interest, the mind is strengthened, and the character developed. Here lies the foundation of that firm, unswerving principle which Joseph possessed. Here is the secret of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

**How to Have Victory Over Self**

The religion of Christ is not what many think it is, nor what their lives represent it to be. The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life, and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and sustained by His life-giving power.

When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Every one who is sincerely striving for victory over self will appropriate the promise, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Through personal effort joined with the prayer of faith, the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ; and finally, instead of being the sport of circumstances, instead of indulging selfishness and being carried away by light and trifling conversation, the man is master of his thoughts and words. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ. He invites us to learn of Him. He would have us practice self-control, and be perfect in character, working that which is well pleasing in His sight. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” is His own standard of judging character. Matthew 7:20.

**Finally Honored by God**

If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go on from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, until we shall receive the finishing touch of immortality. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:2–3.

Can any earthly promotion confer honor equal to this—to be sons of God, children of the heavenly King, members of the royal family? Man may be ambitious of the honor that his finite fellow-man can bestow; but what will it avail? 

The nobility of earth are but men; they die, and return to dust; and there is no lasting satisfaction in their praise and honor. But the honor that comes from God is lasting. To be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, is to be entitled
to unsearchable riches—treasures of such value that in comparison with them the gold and silver, the gems and precious stones of earth, sink into insignificance. Through Christ we are offered joy unspeakable, an eternal weight of glory. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

We are wanting in simple faith; we need to learn the art of trusting our very best Friend. Although we see Him not, Jesus is watching over us with tender compassion; and He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. No one in his great need ever looked to Him by faith, and was disappointed. Brethren, do not express doubt; do not let your lips utter one complaining, repining word.

The Christian is not morose, sullen, and desponding; he is the happiest man in the world. He feels secure; for he trusts in Jesus, and enjoys His presence. His “defense is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.” Psalm 7:10. Do not defer this matter, but begin here in this conference to fix your minds more firmly upon Jesus and heavenly things, remembering that by beholding we become changed into the same image. Have courage in God, brethren; have courage in God. ▶

Review and Herald, June 10, 1884. (Remarks addressed to the ministers assembled in general conference at Battle Creek, Michigan, in their morning meeting held November 16, 1883.)

Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God’s people around the world.

Volume 20, Number 10

1. When Sabbath keepers first started keeping the Sabbath, what time did they observe as the beginning of the Sabbath?
   a. 6:00 p.m. Friday
   b. Sundown Friday
   c. 6:00 a.m. Sabbath
   d. 12:00 a.m. Sabbath morning

2. At the Waterbury conference in Vermont, a vicious rumor circulated that James White was making “good money.” On what did they base this rumor?
   a. He had two suits.
   b. He had three hats.
   c. He had a brand new buggy.
   d. He had too good a horse.

3. Someone began preaching that the Lord was to come seven years after 1844. Who was that?
   a. Joseph Bates
   b. William Miller
   c. Joseph B. Himes
   d. James White

4. What was Ellen White’s first book?
   a. Early Writings
   b. Steps to Christ
   c. Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White
   d. Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1

5. What year was that book published?
   a. 1848
   b. 1846
   c. 1888
   d. 1851

6. What was the age difference between James and Ellen White?
   a. Two months
   b. Two years
   c. 8 years
   d. 15 years

7. Who was Annie Smith?
   a. Wife of Uriah Smith
   b. Daughter of Uriah Smith
   c. Sister of Uriah Smith
   d. Mother of Uriah Smith

8. What is significant about the name Steven Smith?
   a. He was the first person to be disfellowshipped.
   b. He married Annie Smith.
   c. He was the builder of the first SDA church.
   d. He said he had visions from the Lord.

9. Where was our first printing press and publishing office located?
   a. Topsham, Maine
   b. Dorchester, Massachusetts
   c. Gorham, Maine
   d. Rochester, New York

10. How much was the building rent?
    a. $250.00 per month
    b. $100.00 per month
    c. $14.50 per month
    d. $2.75 per month
Mary Veneration by Protestants?

News Item: “Should Mary be venerated by Protestants? That question frames the March 21, 2005 cover story for TIME magazine. David Van Biema has written an expansive and insightful report on contemporary developments among Protestants—developments that may influence some evangelicals.

“Van Biema begins by introducing Reverend Brian Maguire, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Xenia, Ohio. Pastor Maguire has decided to combine his church’s Good Friday observance with a Marian Festival, calling this move ‘a beautiful, poetic opportunity.’ As Van Biema notes, this kind of attention to Mary, the mother of Jesus, would have been controversial just a few years ago.

“Nevertheless, the situation has changed so much that TIME’s cover carries this explanation: ‘Catholics have long revered her, but now Protestants are finding their own reasons to celebrate the mother of Jesus. What’s going on here?’ The Christian Post, March 18, 2005.

End-time Perspective: “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” Ecclesiastes 9:5.

“Most of the Christians at last consented to lower their standard, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism. Although the worshipers of idols professed to be converted, and united with the church, they still clung to their idolatry, only changing the objects of their worship to images of Jesus, and even of Mary and the saints.” The Great Controversy, 44.

And this [Catholicism] is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism. This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism; for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism.” Review and Herald, June 1, 1886.

Grow a Plant

News Item: “The average person burns 202 calories digging, spading, and tilling, compared with roughly 100 calories walking at a normal pace for half an hour or 200 calories playing basketball. Recent studies show that gardening can help maintain healthy bone mass in women over 50 more effectively than activities like jogging or aerobics and may lower blood pressure and cholesterol in older men. In addition, gardeners report increased levels of self-esteem, greater personal satisfaction and efficacy, and an enhanced sense of stability.” Carolyn Kleiner Butler, U.S. News & World Report, December 27, 2004, 52.

End-time Perspective: They are finally coming around to what we have known over a hundred years!

“Let men and women work in field and orchard and garden. This will bring health and strength to nerve and muscle. Living indoors and cherishing invalidism is a very poor business. If those who are sick will give nerves and muscles and sinews proper exercise in the open air, their health will be renewed.” Medical Ministry, 296.

Bilking the Brethren

News Item: “It’s not always the little old lady in the pew. In 2003, major charismatic evangelists Benny Hinn, Marilyn Hickey, and Reinhard Bonnke were taken in by a Ponzi scheme called IPIC International. Greg Setser has been...
charged with defrauding them and other Christians of more than $160 million. . . .

“It may be one of the biggest untold stories on the religion beat. Barry Minkow [leader of Fraud Discovery Institute] says he has personally uncovered more than $1 billion in church-based scams and other fraud targeting Christians in a year. His research has convinced him that this is but a fraction of the problem.

“By comparison, the recent abuse lawsuits in the Roman Catholic Church—which have received huge media attention—have so far cost the dioceses only $772 million nationally.” Ted Olsen, *Christianity Today*, January 2005, 10.

End-time Perspective: “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.” Leviticus 19:13.

“To every church member I would say, Never, never let there be any departing from the strictest integrity. Do not mock God, the Majesty of heaven, by a disregard of His Word. Never, never, defraud a fellow-being, and then suppose that your sharpness is something to be proud of. Do not follow maxims of business that are based on false pretensions. There is in this our day a great deal of falsity. The pretender, the deceiver, is increasing in numbers, and truth and integrity are violated. Lies are spoken, lies are acted, and are becoming more and more common among those who do not make the Word of God their counselor.” *The Paulson Collection*, 256.

Twentysomethings for the Lord

News Item: “Narcissism and apathy are out. A growing number of Christians say too many young people have checked out of the church—mentally or physically—and they aim to bring them back by making not fewer demands, but more.

“A lot of folks in my age group are hungry to do something; they just don’t know what,” said Brian Mosely, 25.” Jim Jones, *Christianity Today*, January 2005, 24.

End-time Perspective: “There are many lines in which the youth can find opportunity for helpful effort. Companies should be organized and thoroughly educated to work as nurses, gospel visitors, and Bible readers, as canvassers, ministers, and medical missionary evangelists. . . .

“Wherever possible, students should, during the school year, engage in city mission work. They should do missionary work in the surrounding towns and villages. They can form themselves into bands to do Christian help work. Students should take a broad view of their present obligations to God. They are not to look forward to a time, after the school term closes, when they will do some large work for God, but should study how, during their student life, to yoke up with Christ in unselfish service for others.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 546–547.

The Church—Why Bother?

News Item: “The Barna research group reports that in the United States about 10 million self-proclaimed, born-again Christians have not been to church in the last six months, apart from Christmas or Easter. (Barna defines ‘born-again’ as those who say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important today, and believe they will ‘go to heaven because I have confessed my sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior.’)

“Nearly all born-agains say their spiritual life is very important, but for 10 million of them, spiritual life has nothing to do with church.

“About a third of Americans are unchurched, according to Barna’s national data. Approximately 23 million of those—35 percent of the unchurched—claim they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their lives today.” Tim Stafford, *Christianity Today*, January 2005, 42.

End-time Perspective: How many of these have no real experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ? Can you see where these will clamor to the leaders and demand a law to keep Sunday, having no idea, or even interest in truly following God and His will? God is revealing to us what is soon to come upon us as an overwhelming flood!

Let us also take advantage to reach these 35 percent for the Lord while the door of probation remains open!

Contributor: Joe Olson
General Books

Barrett, E. Boyd

*Rome Stoops to Conquer*
First published in 1935, the author, an ex-Jesuit, observed that “Here, there and everywhere, propaganda is busy ‘making America Catholic.’” This book discusses many aspects of Rome’s plans for and influences on American life that are coming to pass before our very eyes.

*Paperback*  
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**$12.99**

Daniel, John

*Grand Design Exposed, The*
This book exposes a bold design for world domination, ferreting out history that begs to be left unknown. The solemn mission of this book is to remove the deceptive smokescreen and expose Satan’s masterpiece on earth so that you may turn tragedy into triumph and rise to meet the Lord in the air when He returns.

*Paperback*  
**BEDJ-GDEX**  
**$15.99**

Franklin, Jere

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From country living, to medical preparation, wilderness survival, log cabin building, gardening, cooking, financial planning, and, most importantly, the spiritual preparation—this book will help you get ready for what is just ahead!

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**$19.99**

Gresham, Joe W.

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This series of 18 sermons on different aspects of the gospel is must reading for the serious Bible student who wants to know the “real gospel” as taught years ago.

*Spiral bound notebook*  
**BEGJ-WGOS**  
**$9.99**

Jones, A. T.

*Rights of the People*
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Here We Stand

The authors of this book are Seventh-day Adventist men and women who are willing to take a stand for sound biblical teaching and practices. Here we Stand offers a biblically compelling response to some of the new trends in the church: new methods of church planting and church growth, new questions about our doctrines, new views on Creation, new styles of worship and music, new issues on marriage, new changes in local church leadership, and new structure for the church.

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Evolution Dissected separates biological evolution into distinct categories and examines the characteristics of each category—both of which lack unique supporting scientific data and are found to be highly irrational scientific hypotheses. A must-read for all high school and college students, teachers, and the scientific community!

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BENF-EDIS $13.99

Thousand Miracles Every Day, A

This book contains a selection of stories of miracles that shaped the mission and history of Adventist hospitals around the world—stories of “happenstance,” perseverance and a deep well of divine providence.

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BEQJ-TMED $6.99

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Jugos Para una Vida Saludable

[The Spanish edition of Juicing for Life]

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As disease increases and conventional treatments fail, this book is a welcome assistance to the world’s need of caring for and treating the body according to God’s plan. Take advantage of the tremendous amount of work that has been done to make this beautiful volume that deals with everything from coughs to cancer!

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BEFV-NREN $64.99

Enciclopedia de los Remedios Naturales

The popular Natural Remedies Encyclopedia is now available in Spanish!

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BSFV-ERNA $64.99
## Cookbooks

**Olson, Roxie**

*Art of Delicious Raw Cookery, The*

This totally raw food recipe book teaches how to prepare foods in the most simple and natural way, using no refined oils, grease, sugar, animal products, or processed supermarket foods.

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Letters to the Editor

Please find enclosed a money order to renew my subscription to Our Firm Foundation. It is a most excellent magazine and one we surely need.

LP, British Columbia, Canada

We would like to thank Ron Spear and Clark Floyd for their inspired words at the meetings in Trego, Montana. Your zeal and love for the Lord encouraged us in our own walk with God, to be diligent in studying His Word more deeply and to commit to memory God's promises.

EHC, Montana

Our Firm Foundation magazine means a lot to my wife and I. Instead of taking turns to read it, we have decided that whoever gets it first should read it aloud so that both of us can be edified at the same time. We especially appreciate the fact that you use a lot of writings from the Spirit of Prophecy.

RB

My wife and I love to read your magazine. We read and underline and even date the articles as to when we read them. We are not hearing what is in your magazine in the churches we go to. This magazine fulfills our needs and expectations of something that convicts.

We are ordering a 2-year subscription and look forward to enjoying each issue.

ES, Michigan

I just wanted to say thank you for the “Historical Footnotes” in Our Firm Foundation each month.

I put them on the bulletin board of our suite for students to test their knowledge!

FM, Michigan

Thank you so much for your article entitled “What in the Name of God, Are We Doing?” I have been very concerned that some of our top leaders do not see the danger concerning the direction the church is going, Satan is moving in fast and furiously without detection. Rick Warren is taking over! I was so thrilled to see that someone is alert at the watch gate. Please continue to warn our people of the dangers that are presently invading our church. We cannot write obscure warnings anymore We must make pointed warnings whenever necessary. Thank you so much for your warnings and insight.

S, Massachusetts

Thank you for your steadfast adherence to traditional Adventist doctrine. I read every issue with genuine interest.

Of, California

I just finished reading your editorial in the August edition of your publication. It both moved and inspired me. It was excellent and the points were clear and concise with practical applications. Thank you for re-igniting a sense of urgency.

I pray that God will continue to bless your ministry.

KF

Thank you for your ministry. May God continue to bless you and all the staff at Hope International as you bless others.

SS, New York

Our Firm Foundation is a welcome ray of light in a world of darkness.

A, California

I received the complimentary copy of Our Firm Foundation for May. Thank you! Could you also send me the April, June and July issues? I am thankful to be on your mailing list. May God continue to bless you in your work, which is needed more than ever today.

RH, Wisconsin

We enjoyed Elder Floyd’s article “The Church Militant and Triumphant.” We would like to see more from him.

JM, Indiana

Photo: © Photos.com

Volume 20, Number 10
We wish to express our sympathy and regret for the loss of property and life inflicted by Hurricane Katrina in the Southern States, especially Louisiana. Our prayers are with all who are adversely affected by this disaster, that the Lord of glory will be especially close to you and strengthen you in this time of sorrow.

We would also invite our readers to reflect on the signs of the times preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ as stipulated in Matthew chapter 24 and take heart in knowing that He is coming, and even at the door to set things straight and make wrong right. Therefore, our hope should be built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; all other ground is, indeed, sinking sand. Satan always blames God for the things that he instigates because he is a liar and the father of lies from the beginning. In the few moments of probationary time that is left, may each one of us take every opportunity to prepare ourselves and others to meet our Lord in the air.

The staff of Hope International