SO, YOU THINK YOU KNOW?

CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

WE HAVE X-RAY VISION!

STILL HERE - WHY?
The Light of the World

My wife has been reading many of the books that describe the peoples, both good and bad, that were involved in the Holocaust. One of the most recent and most astonishing books that she has read is the story of Misha, a seven-year-old Jewish girl who, over a period of four years, walked 3,000 miles across Nazi-occupied Europe in search of her parents. She survived by hiding in the forests, stealing from farm kitchens along her way, and pilfering crops in the field. “Often she was near starvation and many times nearly froze to death. In the course of her travels she was befriended by wolves, and among their family she experienced the happiest moments of her troubled life.” Misha, a Memoire of the Holocaust Years, Misha Defonsea, Mt. Ivy Press, 1997.

In her book at page 108, Misha states: “I have heard people use the word ‘bestial’ to describe what the Nazis did to their victims; I have heard them say the Nazis ‘acted like animals.’ When I hear that, I answer, ‘No, the Nazis acted like humans.’ Only humans have the capacity to kill for pleasure. Only humans have the capacity to enjoy another’s suffering. What I saw the Nazis do to their own kind, no animal has ever done.”

Later in the book at page 246, Misha is asked, “Could the Holocaust happen again?” Her answer: “It has happened again. At any time, somewhere in the world, it is happening right now. An evil on the enormous scale of the Holocaust could not have been perpetrated by a small handful of deranged fiends, individuals wholly different from ourselves. By the hundreds of thousands, even by the millions, ordinary people had to compromise, collude and acquiesce. The Holocaust is not over now—nor will it ever be.”

We readily realize that humans controlled by Satan have existed throughout history in different locations upon the earth. We have the persecutions under the Roman emperors, and the horrors of the Inquisition under the Catholic pontiffs. We hear of the atrocities committed by extreme Muslims and Hindus against Christians. We know of a time of trouble like there has never been that is ahead of us as Sabbath-keepers and followers of the true God.

The question comes into my mind: How will we fare in the times ahead of us? Do we have the love and care for one another now that will show we have been with Jesus? Will we have love for our persecutors that will reflect our Lord’s presence in our lives? How do we treat and speak about each other now?

Ellen White in Gospel Workers (1893) at page 92, states, “There is a decided lack of love, compassion and pitying tenderness among brethren.” And at page 430, she writes, “The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christ-like, but savors of the Satanic.” In 5T at page 294, we read, “The enemy is preparing for his last campaign against the church. He has so concealed himself from view that many can hardly believe that he exists, much less can they be convinced of his amazing activity and power… The worst enemies we have are those who are trying to destroy the influence of the watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Satan works through agents… Be careful lest you be found aiding the enemy of God and man by spreading false reports and by criticisms and decided opposition.”

Every morning I walk my dogs. Today during our walk I thought of Misha's wolves that so cared for her, and my dogs that love me with a passion. I thought of the followers of Satan that have so cruelly tortured others. I asked myself, “How do I behave toward others? How do Christians within our church, within our fellowships, behave toward others? Can I trust my animals more than some of the Christians around me?”

My only answer is that the safety of each of us lies in a complete and total surrender to Jesus on a daily basis. We must die daily to self. Then we will see others as people that Jesus died for.

The Ellen White article in this issue of Our Firm Foundation is entitled Christ’s Followers the Light of the World.

May each of our readers truly be part of that people that can, in this last age of earth’s history, truly be spoken of as the light of the world!
Our Mission:
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world. —Editor

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We are a lay ministry founded, supported, and operated by Seventh-day Adventists to assist God’s Church in the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel in every way that is consistent with the principles of God as revealed in Inspiration.

Invitation to Writers
We are accepting article-length manuscripts (1700 to 4000 words) for possible publication in Our Firm Foundation. We prefer that submissions be submitted in Word.doc format as a computer file. Include a digital picture and a short bio. Please address all correspondence to Editor, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 220, Knoxville, IL 61448, or by email to editorial@hopeint.org.

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I had become a Christian just a year or so before I was assigned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I went to the mess hall to have something to eat. As a fairly new Christian, the idea of praying publicly for my meal was a little embarrassing to me, so I was inclined to not do it openly. However, I was impressed by the Spirit that if I deny Jesus Christ, even by this small act, then as the Word says, He would deny me as well. 

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10:32–33.

Besides, I reasoned, if I am going to stand for God, I need to stand all the time, including when I eat at the mess hall. So, a little reluctantly, I folded my hands, put my elbows on the table, bowed my head and prayed. That prayer, and that commitment to stand, was to change my life.

As I said, I had become a Christian over a year ago, but I was a member of no particular denomination. But let me back up a year earlier….

Taking a Stand in the Army

I was converted while in the Army back in the 70s. During the 70s in the Army, there was only Protestant or Catholic. And even then, the chaplains were not allowed to preach much in regard to doctrinal ideas. Since religion was non-denominational, so-to-speak, I didn’t get too much into what church to attend. I just went to the services on base. And even with my limited Bible knowledge, I knew you didn’t have to go to a man to confess your sins or to get forgiveness.

At this time I was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas. Just after being converted, I received orders to go to Korea. While in Korea, I continued to go to the base chapels and learn more and more about Christ and His love for me. It was a wonderful time in my experience. But it was not without its difficulties.

In my studies of the Bible, I became convicted that I should not kill people. I was a soldier. I was actually a gunner for a mortar squad. As you can imagine, my new conviction did not go over well with my company commander.

What I went through as a result of my conviction on killing people I would not wish on anyone. I was threatened with beatings, court martial and even death. But I was a brand-new Christian, and I felt that if that is what I must go through to stand true to my convictions of what the Bible said, then so be it.

It seems odd to me, as I think about it, that I was willing to stand up to the United States Army and tell them I would not kill, but it was hard to pray in public over my meals. Embarrassment is a powerful tool of the devil.

I won’t take the time here to go over all that happened. Suffice it to say that the Army tried its best to dissuade me. But I knew what Jesus had done for me and the commitment I had made to Him, and I was sticking with it.

Prayer was a big part of my life during that time. I have found that when things are going very badly, prayer becomes the only thing that can help.

I also found that the arm of flesh definitely fails you. God is your only source of strength then. And you hold on for dear life.

And I was holding on. I made the choice to follow my Saviour and I loved Him for all He had done for me.

This was the background for what was going to come next. In hindsight, of course, I can clearly see that the Lord was leading me, step by step, to a deeper understanding of His will, and the need to be solidly committed and connected to Him, and not look to man for help and support.

Where to Go Next?

When I left Korea for my return to the United States, I was in a quandary, and I took it to the Lord. In Korea, there had been really no other place to go to church but on base, and on base, you just had Protestant and Catholic services. But now I was coming to America, where there were hundreds, if not thousands, of denominations. Which one do I go to? How do I know? I had no clue.
I found that the arm of flesh definitely fails you. God is your only source of strength then. And you hold on for dear life.

I had talked to the Lord and in whatever limited knowledge I had, I felt sure there must be some “right” denomination. I had met many Christians in the Army, from one denomination or another, and it seemed almost all of them were saying they were the “right” denomination. It seemed like such confusion to me. How can God be in one denomination that said, “We are the way,” and another denomination down the street that said, “No, we are the way”? How could God be in both of them, telling people opposite things? It just didn’t seem right to me.

So… just from common sense, I felt there must have been one that was right. So… just from common sense, I felt there must have been one that was right. But, how in the world was I going to find out which one it was among the hundreds or thousands of denominations?

So I prayed. After all, He is the One who knows… right? I was hoping to have an answer before Sunday, so I would know where to go to church Sunday is when you go to church… right? I thought I knew.

Non-Denominational Not the Answer

Well, I didn’t get an answer before Sunday, so I went driving down the boulevard right outside Fort Campbell, KY, on Sunday morning, looking for a church to go to. And I found one! There was a billboard promoting this non-denominational, “no creed but Christ, the church in the cross” kind of church.

“Maybe this is it,” I thought. Maybe it is no “denomination” at all. Just follow Christ instead of some church’s rules. After all, everyone’s “rules” were different, so pick one with no “rules.” I was really looking for more of an answer than my just driving along and finding a billboard ad, though. I wanted a “direct” answer… you know, a voice from heaven, words of fire on a wall or something like that. But it didn’t happen that way, so I just resolved to follow what seemed to be my “sign” and started going to that church.

It was great. Everyone was loving, everyone was kind—really, the same kind of thing that I had had in Korea. So I settled in, assuming this is where I was supposed to be. But after about four months, I was getting a little tired of the same, “Jesus loves me, this I know” stuff. I wanted something more. It reminded me of what I had read Paul say in Hebrews: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hebrews 5:12–14.

Bible Readings—for Me!

My new friend Art Whitener pulled off his shelf a book called *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. We opened up our Bibles and he asked me, “What day is the Sabbath day?” I looked at him like he was a little off and said, “Sunday, of course.” He said, “No, it’s Saturday.” Then he asked me, “What happens when you die?”

Them That Honor Me...

I was a “babe” when I started, but now I was tired of milk and I wanted some meat. It was at this time that I went to the mess hall to eat, and prayed over my food.

As I said, I was really kind of embarrassed and didn’t want anyone to see me pray. Well, guess what happened. Someone saw me.

Another young soldier—Art Whitener—came up to me and said, “I noticed you praying over your food. Are you a Christian?”

I looked at him and said, “Yes.” Then he asked, “Would you like to study the Bible together?” “Sure,” I answered.

Now, what denomination do you suppose he was? Seventh-day Adventist.

He didn’t mention it, and I never thought to ask. I just wanted to get deeper into the Word, and God brought someone to me. As I look back on it now, I understand much better now the verse that says: “Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” 1 Samuel 2:30.

I honored God by standing for my convictions and having a willingness to be noticed and possibly be embarrassed for my connection to Him. He honored that, and sent me His servant to teach me. But it was what I was getting ready to be taught that took me totally off guard.
I said, “You either go to heaven or hell.”
“Nope,” he said, “you lay in the grave waiting for Jesus to return.”
After that he asked, “Who was the last prophet of God?”
I think I said, “John” or “Paul,” not knowing what else to say.

Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

He corrected me again, saying, “Nope, it was Ellen White.”
Then he asked, “What is Jesus doing in heaven right now?”
I mumbled some non-descript answer that I don’t even remember.
Again, he said, “Nope, Jesus is officiating for us in the heavenly sanctuary.”

He hit every doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in forty-five minutes or less. That is not how I would suggest you try to study the Bible with someone. Normally, that would not work very well. But God knew exactly what I was like. And He knew just how to reach me.

I looked Art right in the face and asked him if he was some sort of nut job. He actually took that very well, and said it was all in the Bible, and that the book he had, Bible Readings for the Home Circle, had all the references to those Bible doctrines that I needed to prove it.

He gave me the book and I told him, “I’ll be back,” with what I assumed would be the scriptures to prove him and his little book wrong.

So you think you know? I thought I knew. As I have gotten older, the one thing for sure that I have learned is that I don’t know near what I think I do.

And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” 1 Corinthians 8:2.

That verse is actually quite humbling, and from my perspective, completely accurate.

“Meat” Hard to Digest
So I started reading and studying the Bible like I never did before. I wanted “meat,” and I got “meat.” I went back and forth, up and down, left and right. And what I thought I knew was being turned upside down.

Art was obviously completely wrong and some sort of nut job, but I wasn’t able to prove it from the Bible. Actually, what he had told me seemed to be right. But how could almost every other denomination and every other person in the world be wrong, except Art and, no doubt, just a few other nut jobs?

I needed help. I had been praying and asking for God’s direction, but this was the wrong direction, I was sure.

So you think you know?

Consulting the Elders
I felt I needed some “professional” help, so I went to the pastor and elders of the non-denominational church I was attending. After all, these men had been in the faith for many years and were the leaders in this church.

I was convinced they would have the answers. This is when I began to understand why God led me to that church.

When I went to these brethren of experience, men who had become my friends, men who I assumed were scholars in the Word, I was met with troubled looks and curious answers. One of the first things I was asked when I came looking for answers was, “Have you been talking to Seventh-day Adventists?”

I couldn’t believe it! How did they know? I knew the Biblical answers were forthcoming, and I was excited. I couldn’t wait to get back to Art and show him how wrong he was.

The first thing I wanted to get cleared up was this ridiculous assertion that the Bible Sabbath was Saturday, instead of Sunday. How preposterous! I just needed to be guided to those elusive texts in the Bible that proves that Sunday was God’s Sabbath, and I would be on my way.

Answers—from Tradition
I was given, by my Bible mentors, several arguments to combat the “errors” I was being fed by this Seventh-day Adventist: “God changed the day.” “We keep Sunday in honor of Christ’s resurrection.” “The law was nailed to the cross.” “The Saturday Sabbath was for the Jews.” “We are under the new covenant of grace, not the old covenant of law, so we don’t need to keep the Sabbath any longer.” “The calendar has been changed, so we really don’t know what day the Sabbath is anyway.”

As I began to insist upon scripture for the things I was taught and we were doing, I noticed a distinct change in their attitudes.

Every one of these was an excellent argument, I thought, and I couldn’t wait to get back to Art.

So you think you know?

It Is Written
I met with Art and brought every one of these arguments, voicing them as articulately and passionately as I could. He smiled; he listened; he patiently waited… and then he destroyed all of my fabulous “reasonings” with one single question. That question was: “Do you have any
scripture?"

We were “reasoning” from the Bible. Everything Art said he backed up from the Bible. Everything I said was just “man’s” answers or reasonings. He had God… I had man. And I was embarrassed… again!

Art calmly went through the scriptures again, defending the Bible doctrines from the Bible alone, and not from his own wisdom or reasoning. Then he looked at me and asked me to do the same.

I couldn’t, but I was still sure that I could get the answers. After all, how crazy would it be— could it be— if everyone in the Christian world were following man’s ideas instead of what God said in His Word. It reminded me of the text…

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” 2 Peter 1:16.

There was no way, I thought, that all of the people were following “cunningly devised fables.”

So you think you know?

**Exposure Brings Alienation**

Undaunted, I told Art that I would be back again. I just knew there had to be some scripture, and I went back to my pastor and elders and told them what happened, and that I needed some scripture to back up my Sunday-keeping. Once more I began to see why God had led me to that church.

As I began to insist upon scripture for the things I was taught and we were doing, I noticed a distinct change in their attitudes. They were no longer the happy, jovial, loving, patient, kind brothers I had been fellowshiping with. They were becoming agitated, uncomfortable, impatient and aloof. I was told that I needed to stop studying with that Seventh-day Adventist!

At first I didn’t understand, but it began to dawn on me that they had no answers, no proof, no reasons from the Bible for what they did. As they could see that I saw that, they began to distance themselves from me. The light finally came on that I was wrong and Art was right. And what a change took place with my “brothers.”

Oh, they were cordial and still managed a faint smile, but it was clear that I was no longer “one of them.”

No, I had become… “one of God’s.”

I was quite taken back and hurt that I was no longer “one of them.”

Never heard of it? I thought you know.

No, it was not the Great Chicago Fire of October 8, 1871; only 250 people lost their lives in that fire.

No, there was a much worse fire that same night, October 8, 1871. That fire killed as many as 2,400 people. That fire burned 2,400 square miles of land… over 1.5 million acres. Surely you have heard of it. It was the Great Peshtigo Fire of Peshtigo, Wisconsin.

So you think you know?

**Humility Yields Obedience**

I went back to Art’s room in the barracks and asked him where he went to church. I had no choice. It was either follow God’s word, or deny Him and His word and do what I wanted. I figured if I was going to do that, what was the point in “pretending” to be a Christian and “pretending” to do His will?

When I became a Christian, I thought I knew what day to go to church. I thought I knew what happened when you died. I thought I knew who all of God’s prophets were. I didn’t know anything like I thought I did, or as I ought to have known.

So, do you think you know?

**So You Think You Know?**

Let me end with a short analogy. We live not too far from the site of the worst fire that has ever happened near Lake Michigan. It was, in fact, the worst fire that has ever happened near the rest of the world. Peshtigo, Wisconsin, was a rough frontier town in the woods, with a single telegraph line that was destroyed by the fire.

Did you assume you knew which fire I was talking about? I assumed I knew which day on which to worship God. I thought I knew. Do you think you know? Don’t assume! Find out for sure.

I found out it wasn’t Chicago. I also found out… it wasn’t Sunday.

**It was either follow God’s word, or deny Him and His word and do what I wanted.**

It was the evening of October 8, 1871.

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
William Miller’s dream shows what historically has happened to God’s truth—a repeated covering-up of precious gems of truth, followed by a clearing-away of the debris of human invention and opinion.

From the beginning God has sought to have a pure “Word” and a pure people that could show to others a way of life in which the elements of sin were removed, and yet still give free choice to His creatures.

**STARTED IN EDEN**

It all started back in the Garden of Eden as God placed the man and woman there to reproduce and fill the beautifully created world with their offspring. Adam and Eve were created without the tendency to sin, but with the ability to think and choose. Love can only exist where there is freedom of choice. They were warned of Lucifer and told of his fall from heaven because of his wrong choices.

In spite of God doing all He could to keep them pure, short of removing their right to choose and making them robots, Adam and Eve fell and thus were ushered from the Garden of Eden. But at the same time, a plan was set forth to provide for their redemption from sin and all that accompanies sin.

**CAIN REJECTED GOD’S TRUTH**

The altar with its sacrificial offering of a lamb pointing to a coming Redeemer and the complete salvation from the fall was explained to them. The first altar of sacrifice was set up immediately outside the gates of Eden. However, one of their sons, Cain, perverted the perfect plan that God had given by seeking to substitute his own plan. And so it has been from the time of creation. God has given the plan, and man has continually perverted it. God cleans it up, and man again wanders from it through bad choices.

In the time of Noah, God brought a flood upon the earth to help purify the stench that had been brought by the antediluvians, and out of the many on the earth at that time, eight people rode through the waves to repopulate the earth, while the rest perished. The sacrifice pointing forward to a coming Saviour was preserved and performed on the other side of the flood.

**AFTER THE FLOOD**

But again as time continued and man multiplied, man chose his own way to do things. Pagan sacrifices to appease angry gods were introduced—all this being at the inspiration of Satan and his demons.

Again God sought to gain a pure people and a pure Word. Abraham was called, then Isaac, and finally Jacob. The nation of Israel was born. But again as the perfect plan of God was set aside for man’s ideas, Israel was allowed to go into Egyptian captivity.

**SACRIFICIAL LAMBS AND THE LAMB OF GOD**

After 215 years in that captivity, the nation of Israel was led forth by Moses and Aaron. The sacrificial system was
set forth in the enlarged sanctuary system. The plan of salvation was again made clear both with the more detailed tent tabernacle and the institution of feast days.

God was looking for a people that could occupy the then-center of the world and witness to the world of the true God and His plan for mankind. God through Jeremiah speaks to these people: “I have spoken unto you rising early and speaking; but you have not hearkened. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but you have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you and unto your fathers.” Jer. 25:3–5. And in Psalm 106, verse 6, we have the admission: “We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.”

God’s truths were perverted, and when the true Messiah came to fulfill the prophecies as demonstrated in the sanctuary service and feast days, His own people did not recognize Him. On the road to Emmaus and later in the upper chamber, Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples to the true plan of salvation as given through the sanctuary system and the prophets. On another road, the road to Damascus, Jesus began opening the truths of salvation to Saul, who later became Paul the apostle, author of the enlarged tabernacle and the institution of feast days.

“In 1st Timothy, the 2nd chapter, verses 3–4, we read, “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done!”

In the Dark Ages the Roman Catholic Church began covering up the truths opened up by Jesus and the disciples by mixing the truths of the Scriptures with the errors of paganism and the ideas of men. And again God began uncovering the jewels and gems of His Word, one after another, through the men of the Protestant Reformation. Many jewels and gems were revealed in the people themselves as one after another went to the stake to uphold the purity of truth.

Finally, in the 1830s and 1840s, God brought forth a man that found a key to begin unlocking the truths of prophecy that would lead to a new movement and a pure people that would finally finish the work. This man, William Miller, had a dream that Ellen White, God’s last-day prophet, considered to be God-inspired. This dream is recorded in Early Writings at page 81:

WILLIAM MILLER’S DREAM: A CASKET OF TREASURE
“I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought casket about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a key attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged they reflected a light and glory equaled only to the sun.

“I thought it was not my duty to enjoy this wonderful sight alone, although my heart was overjoyed at the brilliancy, beauty, and value of its contents. I therefore placed it on a center table in my room and gave out word that all who had a desire might come and see the most glorious and brilliant sight ever seen by man in this life.

“The people began to come in, at first few in number, but increasing to a crowd. When they first looked into the casket, they would wonder and shout for joy. But when the spectators increased, everyone would begin to trouble the jewels, taking them out of the casket and scattering them on the table.

FUTILE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT
“I began to think that the owner would require the casket and the jewels again at my
hand; and if I suffered them to be scattered, I could never place them in their places in the casket again as before; and I felt I should never be able to meet the accountability, for it would be immense. I then began to plead with the people not to handle them, nor to take them out of the casket; but the more I pleaded, the more they scattered; and now they seemed to scatter them all over the room, on the floor and on every piece of furniture in the room.

“I then saw that among the genuine jewels and coin they had scattered an innumerable quantity of spurious jewels and counterfeit coin. I was highly incensed at their base conduct and ingratitude, and reproved and reproached them for it; but the more I reproved, the more they scattered the spurious jewels and false coin among the genuine.

“He told me to ‘fear not,’ for he would ‘take care of them.’

“Then, while he brushed the dirt and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin all rose and went out of the window like a cloud, and the wind carried them away. In the bustle I closed my eyes for a moment; when I opened them, the rubbish was all gone. The precious jewels, the diamonds, the gold and silver coins, lay scattered in profusion all over the room.

“I then began to plead with the people not to handle them, nor to take them out of the casket; but the more I pleaded, the more they scattered….”

“He then placed on the table a casket, much larger and more beautiful than the former, and gathered up the jewels, the diamonds, the coins, by the handful, and cast them into the casket, till not one was left, although some of the diamonds were not bigger than the point of a pin.

“He then called upon me to ‘come and see.’

“I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand by the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout awoke me.”

This dream, I believe, is a summary of the way God has worked throughout salvation history, and covers the time prior to the dream as well as a prophecy covering the time after the dream.

WHAT HAS BEEN, WILL BE
In Ecclesiastes 1:9, the Bible says, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done! And there is no new thing under the sun.”

And as a second witness, we read in Ecclesiastes 3:14–15, “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.”

GOD’S WORD: JEWELS AND GEMS
When William Miller began to preach, he began to display the jewels and gems of God’s Word. He understood the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and of using the Bible to interpret the Bible.

In Child Guidance at page 505, Ellen White has written: “The Word of God abounds in precious jewels of truth, and parents should bring
them forth from their casket and present them before their children in their true luster. . . . In the Word of God you have a treasure house from which you may draw precious stores, and as Christians you should furnish yourselves for every good work.”

At first “the people began to come in few in number to listen to the preaching of Miller, but increasing to a crowd” after the fall of the Ottoman Empire happened on the exact day predicted. The year/day principle, recognizing the prophetic year as being 360 days, became the key that unlocked the prophecies of Scripture. The casket in Miller’s dream was 10 inches by 6 inches square. 6 squared is 36, which, times 10, is 360.

**CROWD CARELESS WITH JEWELS; REMNANT GIVEN MORE JEWELS**

But as the prophecy concerning Christ and the cleansing of the sanctuary did not meet the expectation of the huge crowd, the gems and jewels began to be covered up with the dirt and dust of man’s ideas. The casket of truth was torn asunder.

There was a small remnant, however, that prayed and sought the Lord, and were rewarded with the understanding of the sanctuary in heaven and a greater opening of the Word of God. A prophet, Ellen G. White, was part of this group. The gems and jewels of her writings, added to the gems and jewels already there, required a much bigger casket. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born.

In the writings of Ellen White, the casket is not only the Bible that contains the words of God’s truth, but it is the people that make up God’s true church.

“Christians are Christ’s jewels.” In *Heavenly Places*, 267. “He who lives nearest to Jesus shines the brightest. . . . The luster of the tiniest gem in God’s casket will glorify Him.” *Bible Commentary* 4:1184.

**JEWELS SOUGHT, REVEALED, TREASURED**

Just as Miller had at first enjoyed gazing into the casket by himself, so the little group that would eventually make up the Seventh-day Adventist Church gazed upon and studied the beauty of God’s truths.

“My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, a man who was keen, noble, and true, and many others whose names I can not now recall, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for truth. At our important meetings, these men would meet together and search for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly; for we felt that we must learn God’s truth. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light, and studying the Word. As we fasted and prayed, great power came upon us. But I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend what we were studying. Then the Spirit of God would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to the position we were to take regarding truth and duty. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter

In the writings of Ellen White, we read that the casket is not only the Bible that contains the words of God’s truth, but it is also the people that make up God’s true church.

Continued on Page 21
“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16.

From Abraham Till Now

In all ages the people of God have been the light of the world. Joseph was a light in Egypt. He represented Jehovah in the midst of a nation of gross idolaters. While the Israelites were on their way from Egypt to the promised land, they were a light to the surrounding nations. Through them God was revealed to the world. Satan sought to extinguish their light; but by the power of God it was kept alive through successive generations while Israel maintained a national existence, and even during the captivity there were faithful witnesses for God. From Daniel and his companions and Mordecai, a bright light shone amid the moral darkness of the kingly courts of Babylon. In holy vision, God revealed to Daniel light and truth that he had concealed from other men; and through his chosen servant this light has shone down through the ages, and will continue to shine to the end of time.

We who are living in this age have greater light and privileges than were given to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and other ancient worthies, and we are under correspondingly greater obligation to let our light shine to the world. God has made us the depositaries of his law. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and we are to follow in his footsteps, to represent him before the world. But are we faithful depositaries of the truth, correctly representing it amid the spiritual declension and moral corruption that now exist? Are we doing one-third that we might and should do to diffuse the precious light of truth? Brethren, you see the truth, you understand the claims of God’s law. You know that no willful transgressor of that law will enter into life, and yet you see that law made void in the world. What is your duty? You are not to ask, What is convenient for me? what is agreeable? but, What can I do to save souls?

You are not to ask, What is convenient for me? what is agreeable? but, What can I do to save souls?

Duty to Use God-Given Talents

There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. The truth is to be translated into different languages, that all nations may enjoy its pure, life-giving influences. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has intrusted to our keeping. He has given us abilities that enable us to exert an influence on other minds. We have talents in the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. All these talents are the Lord’s. He has lent them to us, and he holds us responsible for the use we make of them,—for the faithful discharge of our duty to the world. We may come very near to Jesus; we may commune with him, and, having found rest and peace to our own souls, we may show forth to others the beauties of true holiness. If we are illuminated by the Sun of Righteousness, we shall reflect the light to the world in good works. Our example will show what it is to be a practical Christian. Light from heaven may shine through us to the world.

Wisdom from On High

We must be better acquainted with our Bibles. We might close the door to many temptations, if we would commit to memory passages of Scripture. Let us hedge up the way to Satan’s temptations with “It is written.” We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace Jesus is willing to give. But we must believe; we must grasp the promises without a doubt. They are ample and rich, even during the perils and trials of the last days. Hear the assurance given by a prophet of the Lord: “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stais; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; . . . he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” As we exercise faith, talk faith, and act faith, the promises of God will be verified to us. And as we walk consistently with our profession of faith, we are also teaching others to walk circumspectly.

Representing Satan

Do not consult feeling; for feeling is not to be our guide. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. Do not let unbelief separate you from God. Do not let one word of unbelief or discouragement escape your lips. Satan is pleased at every such expression, because it is dishonoring
to Jesus. Seek earnestly to remedy every defect of character. Put away murmuring and fretfulness. In the indulgence of these traits you represent Satan, the prince of darkness, and not Christ, the Prince of light. Cast no shadow to darken the pathway of others. Walk in the light, and the peace and joy that shine in the face of Jesus will be reflected upon you. Jesus lives; and his promise is, “According to your faith be it unto you.”

Talking Unbelief

Those who talk unbelief will have a little enthusiasm when the sky is bright, and everything encouraging; but when the battle goes hard, when we have to hope against hope, and urge our petitions to the throne of grace through deep darkness, then the unbelieving ones will talk of the good land of Canaan, but will make prominent the dangers to be encountered. They will dwell on the strong walls, and the giants that we shall meet, when the language of faithful Caleb should be heard: “The land is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us.”

If we confess and forsake our sins; if we come to Jesus in penitence and humility of soul, acknowledging our inability to remove one spot or stain of sin, and relying wholly on the merits of a crucified Saviour, we may expect forgiveness; for his word is pledged. He has said that he will pardon our transgressions, and blot out our sins. We must dwell upon the matchless love and compassion of Jesus, and not upon our own unworthiness and sinfulness. If we look to ourselves, all will be darkness; but Jesus is all light, and we have only to “look and live.” We may look unto “Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.” What tenderness, what mercy, what love, are here manifested!

Cleansing the Soul Temple

Through constant watchfulness and prayer, we may grow in grace, and perfect Christian characters. But prayer will be no task to the soul that loves God; it will be a pleasure, a source of strength. Our hearts will be stayed on God, and we shall say by our daily life, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” In view of what Jesus has done to redeem us from the power of Satan, how can we allow evil traits of character to gain the ascendency, thus giving Satan occasion to rejoice and exult, and bringing grief to Him who died for us? How can we cherish malice toward our brethren, the purchase of Christ’s blood, or even one feeling of unkindness? Let us put away all suspicion and hatred, and all feelings of bitterness even toward our worst enemies, those who are seeking to do us harm. But, brethren, do not wait until your heart is in harmony with your brother before you come to Jesus; for it is his spirit and power working in you that will give you the victory in this particular.

Healing Habits

The Lord is waiting to bestow rich blessings upon us if we only comply with the conditions. We cannot glorify him while we cherish doubt. We must believe that he will do just as he has said he would. Remember that we have a living Saviour. If you do not feel light-hearted and joyous, do not dishonor God by talking of your feelings. Talk of the promises, talk of Jesus’ willingness to bless; and before you are aware of it, the cloud will lift, light will come into the soul, and you will find peace and rest in Jesus. Cherish love. “Be kindly affectioned one to another; with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.” Form a habit of speaking words of cheerful hope and courage, words of love and appreciation, that will bind hearts together. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Review and Herald, May 13, 1884. (Remarks addressed to the ministers assembled in General Conference at Battle Creek, Michigan, in their morning meeting on November 12, 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.
I am sure that many of you have been through the airports and been to the security checkpoints where they run your carry-on baggage through the x-ray machines. The goal of these machines is to be able to detect what is really inside your bags, instead of what they “look” like they might be carrying.

The reason we have to go through this laborious process is that some people might be trying and have tried in the past to bring onto the planes things that hurt and kill others. Many bags can look very innocuous, even pretty, but can contain very dangerous and even lethal elements.

Normally, you would think that people would not bring things on a plane that would do harm to themselves, but as incredible as it seems, some are willing to hurt themselves in order to hurt others. We saw lethal examples of this just a few short years ago. So, we need to use special x-ray vision to “see” what the intents of the people really are.

Don’t you wish we had those same powers so that we could look inside people to see what their real intents were? Employers would love them—just put on your x-ray glasses and see what is really inside.

Anybody can look good on the outside. We have bleach, make-up, hair removal, hair implants, plastic surgery, etc., etc. Yes, with enough money and time, we can make the outside look pretty good.

But we cannot hide the inside. That is much more difficult to “fix.” Fortunately for those who have ulterior motives, the inside is harder to discern.

What about dating and marriage? Would you like to have special glasses that you could put on so you could know what a person was really like on the inside? Someone could make a fortune with such glasses.

Actually, you might not really want to know what most people were like on the inside. Most of us don’t want to admit what we might be like on the inside. And those that have determined that they are not right on the inside have great news!

Jesus can fix the inside! Praise God!

Yes, Jesus can and wants to fix the inside of all who will come to Him. Jesus mentioned what many people are like on the outside:

Beautiful—Outwardly

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.” Matthew 23:27.

Ouch! I’m sure that went over well. No doubt this made Him very popular with the scribes and Pharisees. But notice what Jesus said of their outward appearance: Beautiful! They were beautiful on the outside!

Have you ever seen people like that? Beautiful on the outside, but dead and unclean on the inside? That is probably a major reason we have so much divorce today. They looked good to start with, but when you got to know them, the ugliness began to appear.

The uncleanness, the deadness of their hearts and souls.

But . . . they looked so good! How could they look so good on the outside, and be so dead on the inside?

Special Vision Needed

We need some kind of detector, some kind of x-ray machine, some kind of special glasses so we can tell what people are really like.

The scriptures are full of examples where these special glasses would have come in handy. Remember Samuel?

“And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said,
Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD’S anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” I Samuel 16:1–7.

What does the Lord look at? The heart!

**A Searcher of Hearts**

“The Searcher of hearts looked down. . . He looks not on the outward appearance; he judges not as man judges. He does not value man according to his rank, talent, education, or position. ‘To this man will I look,’ he declares, ‘even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.’” Signs of the Times, October 21, 1897.

God told Samuel, “I don’t look at people like you do, like all men do. I look on the inside; you look on the outside.”

**The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”**

God has the x-ray vision. He does see what is on the inside. And He said we don’t look on the inside; we focus on the outside.

“Oh look how tall he is.” “Look how shapely she is.” “Look at his muscles!” “Look at her lovely hair.”

Yes, we are outside-focused people. But, praise the Lord . . . God isn’t!

The scripture continues: “Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.” I Samuel 16: 8–12.

Here is another perfect example of looking on the outward appearance: “He’s too young to be of any use” . . . or . . . “he’s too old to be of any use.”

Have you ever heard that? Have you ever thought that? We can be thankful that God does not think that way. He has x-ray vision!

**Seeing the Possibilities**

But you know what? He has even better vision than that! God can see beyond what is inside!!!

I can hear you asking, “What can possible be beyond what is inside us?”

Oh, friends. Beyond God’s x-ray vision, He has Potential Vision!

That’s right! Besides seeing what we are really like on the inside, He can see what we are not now . . . but what we can become! Now THAT is a powerful pair of glasses right there! God can see what we can be, if we will let Him in.

Remember the rich young ruler?

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.” Mark 10:21.

Jesus beheld him. He was looking at him and he could see what he could be.

“In His infinite wisdom and love He sees man’s possibilities, the height to which he may attain. He knows that, even though human beings have abused their mercies and destroyed their God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.” 7 Testimonies 269.

Jesus saw what the rich young ruler, and all the rest of us, can be . . . could be. And it is interesting to note that someone else was looking at the rich young ruler, too, and he thought Jesus made a mistake!

“When Jesus presented to the rich young ruler the condition of discipleship, Judas was displeased. He thought that a mistake had been made. If such men as this ruler could be connected with the believers, they would help sustain Christ’s cause. If Judas were only received as a counselor, he thought, he could suggest many plans for the advantage of the little church. His principles and methods would differ somewhat from Christ’s, but in these things he thought himself wiser than Christ.” Desire of Ages, 719.

This is what happens when you look on the outside. You do not, no . . . you cannot see what is on the inside. In addition, what is even more pathetic and sad is that we rarely see what the potential is, or what the possibilities are. That is the worst of it, if you ask me.

God “knows that, even though human beings have abused their mercies and destroyed their God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.”
Seeing Men as They Might Be

Look at how Jesus looks at us: “In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God.’ Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man’s true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life.” Education, 80.

Does that not thrill your soul? Does that not fill you with encouragement? Does that not create in your heart a desire to honor Him for the way He views us?

Wrong Choices—Seemingly

If you were to start a church that was to turn the world upside down, whom would you pick? Would fishermen be your first choice? Maybe IRS/government workers? Would you be hanging around prostitutes and the lower elements of society? Is that how you would start your world-wide work and church?

No, I doubt it. But then again, we don’t see like God sees. We don’t treat people like God treats people. And Jesus took a lot of grief from the “good” people because of whom He worked with and fellowshipped with:

“And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.’” Luke 15:2.

Yes, according to the “righteous” church members, Jesus was definitely making the wrong choices. He was definitely hanging around, working with, eating with the wrong kind of people. And let’s face it, didn’t there seem to be better choices? After all, James and John had such terrible tempers Jesus called them the “sons of thunder.”

“And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surmamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder.” Mark 3:17. They were more ready to fry than forgive people.

Jesus was going to visit a village of the Samaritans, but they did not want His visit. James and John had a bit of an attitude about it.

“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” Luke 9:54.

A little temper tantrum there. Maybe not the best choices for disciples. Family, too. Never good to have family working together.

Speaking of family, Peter and Andrew were family, too. And do we even really want to get started with Peter? What a mouth this guy had on him.

“And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.” Mark 14:67–71.

Remember, this is after three and a half years of being with Jesus! What was Jesus thinking?

I’ll tell you what He thinks. He thinks we do not think like Him. That’s what He thinks.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8–9.

An Unmerciful People

No, He certainly does not think like we do. If He thought like we did, we would all be dead. We are the most unmerciful people there are. And, as a rule, church people are the worst. Nobody hurts you like friends, especially church friends! Jesus said that is the way it is, though:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.” John 16:1–3.

Who is going to put us “out of the synagogues”? Catholics? Jews? Government officials? It is fellow church members!

Yes, we are an unmerciful lot. Too bad we don’t have those x-ray glasses so we can see what people are like, or even what they could be like. We could avoid a lot of problems, if only we could tell who is really on the Lord’s side and who isn’t. We need a “True Christian” test, so we can know for sure.

The “True Christian” Test

You might not have known this, but God gave us one. He gave us a sure-fire way for us to know who is real and who isn’t. And even though we might like to use it to see if others are really God’s people, it is much better if we use it to see if we are really God’s.

Would you like to know what the
“test” is? It’s right here in John:
“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:34–35.

“By this,” Jesus said. By loving one another, not just you, but all men will know that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**New to Us, But Not to Him**

Jesus said that this was a new commandment. Do you suppose this was new to Him? No, the Bible says that He IS love. Then, who do you suppose it is new to? Do I really need to ask?

Unfortunately, for so many of us, being kind and forgiving and merciful and loving . . . is “new” to us. Remember that great pick of Jesus, Peter, Andrew’s brother? He even asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone.

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” Matthew 18:21.

Yes, Peter is counting, and after seven times, he is going to get his friends James and John, and they’re going to do a little fireworks display. No question, it was a new concept to His disciples.

I find it interesting that the only gospel that added this story was the gospel of Matthew—the tax collector. I wonder if he did it because he was a “numbers” man, or if it was because he was hated so much by the rest of the church for being a tax collector?

**Loving as Jesus Loves**

We are supposed to love others like Jesus loved and loves us. How does Jesus love us? How good do we have to be for Jesus to love us? How perfect? How holy?

You know the answer. That is how we are supposed to love each other.

We have X-Ray vision! We can see right into the heart! We can tell who is real and who isn’t! Jesus told us how. He gave us the “litmus” test; the way to be absolutely sure.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:34–35.

It’s a new commandment to us. Be loving! Be merciful! Be forgiving!

“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:28–31.

Love others like you want to be loved.

Do you want to be forgiven? How many times? Seven?
Do you want mercy? How much?
Do you want people to be patient with you? How patient?
Like He said—it’s a new commandment.

Then, just in case we needed one last way to tell for sure if we are really Christians— really in-our-hearts Christians— He said this: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15.

He had just said, “I give you a new commandment; love one another.” Then He added, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Love is the motivating force, the identifying characteristic, of a true Christian. So it is with Christ.

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
STILL HERE - Why?
THE LEGACY OF ROBERT H. PIERSO

The late Robert H. Pierson was president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists from 1966 to 1977. This appeal to God’s people was first printed in the Review and Herald of December 13, 1973, in the section entitled “Heart to Heart.” It then appeared in Our Firm Foundation in September 1995. Because of its continuing relevance and the urgency of our times, it is reprinted here for the edification of our readers.

Why hasn’t the work been finished? Why hasn’t Jesus come, and why aren’t the saints in the kingdom? Today we hear different reasons advanced explaining why we are still in the land of the enemy. It is a matter of character development, some say. Others declare the great commission has not been fulfilled—the Advent message has not as yet been proclaimed as a witness to all nations. Still others contend that the church has not fully accepted the message of righteousness by faith as presented at the 1888 General Conference session held in Minneapolis; hence the loud cry has not sounded, the work is not finished, and we are still here. All of these explanations may be contributing factors, but I want to give you another thought worth pursuing, worth your prayerful consideration when you wonder about the delay in the Lord’s return.

Read these words of God’s last-day prophet thoughtfully. They were written in the year 1901: “We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.” Evangelism, 696. Emphasis supplied.

Insubordination is disregard for authority—in this instance disregard for the authority of the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy—disregard for the counsel God has so clearly and graciously given His last-day people.

“But because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. . . . They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.” Proverbs 1:24-30.

In Moses’ day God’s chosen nation suffered from the same spiritual malady that plagues the people of God in our day. “For forty years did unbelievers, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.” Ibid.

In these words Ellen White expands upon insubordination—linking it closely with unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion. She further describes some of the results of deliberate disregard for the authority and counsel of God. It is manifest in worldliness, unconsecration, and sometimes strife.

Ah, you say, but where have we disregarded the Lord’s admonition? When have we spurned His counsel? Let us take a prayerful look at some inspired statements that should cause us to ponder and pray most earnestly. How do you measure up?

“God has called us to uplift the standard of His downtrodden Sabbath. How important, then, that our example in Sabbathkeeping should be right.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 352-353. There is no question about it. More of us than we care to admit have grown lax in remembering God’s holy day: pleasure trips, beach excursions, restaurant dining, idle talk. What about God’s counsel regarding true Sabbath observance? Are we insubordinate?

Some of you may be tempted to “turn me off” at this juncture—“just another harangue on ‘externals’—legalism!” I appeal to you to hear me through. You will find plenty of Jesus before I finish.

Many of us need to do much praying—and changing—when we read these next lines: “Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God.” Ibid., vol. 4, 647. If true when written, how is it with us now?

Don’t slip over this inspired counsel too quickly. Are there seeds of insubordination in your relationship to the solemn warnings regarding light that many pass off with a gesture of the hand as merely an external? God says it is separating many from Him.

What about amusements? “The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God.” Adventist Home, 515. Think it over! Insubordination?

Could the following statements have any relationship to your practice? “Tea and coffee drinking is a sin.”
When he gets into this study of the deeper element of the challenge of authority, and as Ellen White puts it, ‘insubordination,’ our minds will be led to see some of the elements which can easily stand in the way of the speedy finishing of the work. To name a few, we might list: a growing laxness in Sabbath observance; an acceleration in the experience of Seventh-day Adventists in reasoning to law and lawsuits, laying their troubles before the courts of the land, which is forbidden in the Word of God and pointed out as being particularly offensive to God; laxness in regard to the health reform in its broad aspects, and in some cases defiance; pride and the love of dress and the lack of modesty in dress.

**Struggle Over Ornamentation**

“Some of the first counsels to the church having to do with a relationship with God touched on this point. The constant struggle over ornamentation, jewelry, and the wedding ring; the flouting of the counsels which have come to us regarding the disparity in the remuneration of physicians and other denominational workers. Ellen White portrayed very clearly the fruitage of the carrying out of these principles, first in our publishing house in Battle Creek—and this was one of the problems in the [18]90s— and the

Only externals—little things—you say? When we disregard God’s counsel, and it is causing us “to remain here in this world,” the name of the game in Heaven’s language is insubordination.

What about our music? Music is acceptable to God only when the heart is sanctified and made soft and holy by its facilities. But many who delight in music know nothing of making melody in their hearts to the Lord. Their heart is gone ‘after their idols.” *Evangelism*, 512. Do some of our tastes and choices ever become insubordination?

Teachers, school administrators, and board members may well pray over this instruction: “We do not honor God when we go aside from the only true God to inquire of the god of Ekron. The question is asked, Is it because there is not a God in Israel that ye have gone to the god of Ekron to inquire?” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments on 2 Kings 1:3, vol. 2, 1036.

I realize only too well some of the complexities we face in our educational program today. I do not want to be critical, but I am anxious. How frequently, perhaps unconsciously, do we pattern portions of our educational program after Ekron, and how prominent a role does the Bible play in our church schools, academies, colleges, universities?

Bookstands are choked with cheap literature these days. Is there any counsel for us on this subject? “Cheap works of fiction do not profit. They impart no real knowledge. . . . They take time which should be given to the practical duties of life and to the service of God.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 92.

Recently, a friend of mine, whom most of you would know if I mentioned his name, wrote me a letter after we had concluded a prayerful discussion on the subject of insubordination. I want to share two paragraphs of his letter with you. He sums it all up in these words: “I believe that as we get the fuller view, which one cannot escape
medical work. The dishonesty on the part of church members in their obligations to God concerning the tithe. And I could go on and on.”

Only externals—little things—you say? When we disregard God's counsel, and it is causing us “to remain here in this world,” the name of the game in Heaven's language is insubordination.

Jesus’ blood provides the way out of this world. Our acceptance of this provision and our unconditional surrender to His will and authority is our only hope of entrance into His kingdom—soon!

Does it annoy us to be reminded of these things? Reproof is distasteful to the human heart. "The spirit of murmuring against reproof has been taking root and is bearing its fruit of insubordination." Testimonies, vol. 4, 199.

Parents may contribute to insubordination in their children. “If the parents would stand pledged to sustain the authority of the teacher, much insubordination, vice, and profligacy would be prevented.” Ibid., vol. 5, 89.

Some of us as pastors, church officers, and administrators should prayerfully consider whether we are guilty of sowing seeds of insubordination in the hearts of fellow leaders or church members by conducting our work as dictators. “The highhanded power that has been developed, as though position has made men gods, makes me afraid, and ought to cause fear. It is a curse wherever and by whomsoever it is exercised. This lording it over God's heritage will create such a disgust of man's jurisdiction that a state of insubordination will result.” Testimonies to Ministers. 361.

The Lord has placed us among His people as shepherds, never as dictators.

How very much we need the spirit of our lovely Jesus. His was the spirit of obedience, of submission to the will of His heavenly Father. “I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love,” He says. John 15:10.

With Jesus there was no striving, no resisting. He willingly and fully yielded Himself day by day to the leading of His Father. Nothing was too small, nothing was too great to prompt His loving obedience, He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,” Chapter 5:8. “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Chapter 12:2.

**Harmony with God’s Will**

With Jesus it was not a question of how little He could do to be in harmony with His Father's will. There was not the slightest trace of insubordination in His life or ministry. “My meat is to do the will of him which hath sent me,” said Jesus. John 4:34. Again, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” Chapter 5:30.

When the evil one tempted the Master with love of the world, Jesus set the example we as God's people must follow today, “Jesus said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Matthew 4:7-10.

Neither did He falter on the question of appetite, or on any other point. “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15.

Jesus was obedient to “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4. No insubordination!

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him.” Hebrews 3:1–2.

Jesus’ blood provides the way out of this world. Our acceptance of this provision and our unconditional surrender to His will and authority is our only hope of entrance into His kingdom—soon!

“We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years.”

Jesus provides a better way—the way of full submission and obedience to the will of our heavenly Father. Result? An early entrance into His kingdom.
The city of God, was plainly marked out before me, and I gave my brethren and sisters the instruction that the Lord had given me. They knew that when not in vision I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given me. The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony.

The whole company of believers were united in the truth.” Manuscript Releases 3:412.

“Those who had looked for the coming of the Lord were not without comfort. They had obtained valuable knowledge in the searching of the Word. The plan of salvation was plainer to their understanding. Every day they discovered new beauties in the sacred pages, and a wonderful harmony running through all, one scripture explaining another, and no word used in vain.” Life Sketches, 62.

But sad to say, there came a change! The church was not to remain pure for long. Insincere spectators started to come in. As they increased, they began to “trouble” the jewels. Finally they took them out of the casket and scattered them all over the table, and eventually about the room. The order and unity of the church and God’s Word was being destroyed. Tares were joining with the wheat. The old truths were being obscured. The dirt and dust of feast days, no Holy Spirit, Jesus coming in the nature of Adam before the fall, the inability to overcome sin through the power of Jesus in the life, lunar Sabbaths, Ellen White not being a prophet, and other distortions of truth, have been creeping and blowing in.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Tim. 4:1.

“But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” Testimonies 5:79.

“Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal.” Ibid., 136.

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few--this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason.” Ibid.

“The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.”

The question becomes, where will each of us stand? The man with the dirt brush is soon coming.

Hang onto the Lord, brothers and sisters, and be one of His precious jewels. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matt. 7:12–13.

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:23–24.

“This to us is a mournful statement that there are those who will fail to enter in at the strait gate because they only seek to enter in and do not strive.” In Heavenly Places, 263.

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It's Jewish

When we present God's holy law,
And arguments from Scripture draw,
Objectors say, to pick a flaw,
"It's Jewish."

Though at the first Jehovah blessed
And sanctified His day of rest,
The same belief is still expressed,
"It's Jewish!"

Though not with Jewish rites, which passed,
But with the moral law 'twas classed,
Which must exist while time shall last,
"It's Jewish."

If from the Bible we present
The Sabbath's meaning and intent,
This answers every argument—
"It's Jewish."

Though the disciples, Luke and Paul,
Continue still this rest to call
The "Sabbath day," this answers all:
"It's Jewish."

They love the day of man's invention,
But if Jehovah's day we mention,
This puts an end to all contention:
"It's Jewish."

O ye who thus God's day abuse,
Simply because 'twas kept by Jews,
The Saviour, too, you must refuse—
He's Jewish.

The Scriptures, then, we may expect
For the same reason you'll reject;
For if you will but recollect,
They're Jewish.

Thus the apostles, too, must fall;
For Andrew, Peter, James and Paul,
Thomas and Matthew, John and all
Were Jewish.

So to your helpless state resign
Yourself in wretchedness to pine;
Salvation, surely you'll decline—
It's Jewish.

by Uriah Smith
1. A bill was proposed in the House of Representatives that the organizers of the World Expo at Chicago would have to agree to Sunday closings in order to
   a. Get clearance for the affair.
   b. Get Congressional appropriation to finance it.
   c. Get the goodwill of the people they hoped would attend.
   d. Avoid mass picketing if they refused.

2. Two different pro-Sunday groups crowded the bill’s hearing:
   a. Nat’l Reform and American Sabbath Union.
   b. Temperance Soc. and Nat’l Reform.
   c. Temperance Soc. and Save our Sundays.
   d. Save our Sundays and American Sabbath Union.

3. What gave strength to their Sunday position was a recent ruling by
   a. A judge in the Illinois Circuit Court.
   b. A judge in the Court of Appeals.
   c. A Superior Court judge whose specialty was labor law.
   d. A Supreme Court justice.

4. That judicial officer’s name was
   a. David Brewer.
   b. Stanley Livingston.
   c. Charles Fordham.
   d. Henry Stedham.

5. Citing Columbus’ commission for exploration and colonial grants and charters, that judge declared that
   a. All originated in the mother church.
   b. All showed America’s Christian foundation.
   c. All were precedents of laws that could be passed in support of religious interests.
   d. B and C.

6. The fate of that bill was:
   a. House passed; Senate rejected.
   b. House and Senate passed; president vetoed on Constitutional grounds.
   c. House and Senate passed; the president signed it into law.
   d. House passed; in Senate it went and stayed in committee.

7. After the National Religious Liberty Asso. circulated a petition, Jones, its president, was permitted to present Adventists’ religious liberty principles to the Chicago Expo Select Committee. Their reaction:
   a. Disparaged Jones; all were in favor of Sunday day of rest.
   b. Uninterested: the law already passed.
   c. Critical of Jones’ reasoning.
   d. A and C.

8. The Adventists’ main concern was that the foundation of all their religious liberty arguments and appeals had been nullified. That foundation was
   a. The Bible.
   b. The Bill of Rights.
   c. The 10 Commandments.
   d. The Constitution.

9. In recognition of a now-worldwide SDA church, the organization changed its name to the International Religious Liberty Asso. It emphasized total separation of church and state in all countries. This position was first tested in another country—that of
   a. South Africa.
   b. Switzerland.
   c. Columbia.
   d. Italy.

10. The group who protested the unilateral separation policy were
    a. Adventist foreign missionaries.
    b. Diplomats in foreign countries.
    c. American SDA churches supporting missionaries abroad.
    d. Geneva Convention representatives.

Our Firm Foundation

News Watch

“Brides’ and ‘grooms’ are no longer allowed to marry in the State of California. That privilege is only extended to individuals who allow themselves to be called ‘Party A’ and ‘Party B’ on marriage licenses.

Pastor Doug Bird of Abundant Life Fellowship in Roseville, Calif., was alarmed to find the state now rejects the traditional terms after he officiated his first marriage ceremony last week following the California Supreme Court decision to overturn Proposition 22.

The couple had written the words ‘bride’ and ‘groom’ next to ‘Party A’ and ‘Party B’ because they wanted to be legally recognized as husband and wife. However, the Placer County marriage license was denied.

“I received back the license and a letter from the Placer County Clerk/Recorder stating that the license “does not comply with California State registration laws,”’ Bird said in a statement from the Pacific Justice Institute.

“The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is a new particle accelerator near Geneva, costing $8 billion to build. It sends a beam of protons whirling around a ring-shaped tunnel some 300 feet underground and nearly 17 miles around, making the circuit in approximately 1/10,000 of a second. The LHC represents the latest and easily most ambitious attempt to fathom such primal questions as how the universe began and what all matter—including us—is made of.”


**End-time perspective:** “The Sodomitish practices which brought the judgment of God upon the world, and caused it to be deluged with water, and which caused Sodom to be destroyed by fire, are fast increasing. We are nearing the end. God has borne long with the perversity of mankind, but their punishment is no less certain. Let those who profess to be the light of the world, depart from all iniquity.” RH, Nov. 10, 1884.

**America’s Money Crisis**

“Stock prices have plunged in recent weeks. So have oil prices. Most Americans probably see the former as terrible news and the latter as a ray of sunshine at a dark time. But both could contribute to a growing concern among economists–deflation.

‘When prices start to fall because of lack of demand, they can go well below the cost it takes to produce the products,’ said… the executive director of the Economic Outlook Group. ‘Companies have no alternative than to cut back production and lay off a lot of workers.

“Rejecting Creation Gets Expensive!”

“Stock prices have plunged in recent weeks. So have oil prices. Most Americans probably see the former as terrible news and the latter as a ray of sunshine at a dark time. But both could contribute to a growing concern among economists–deflation. Simply put, deflation is the opposite of inflation: It’s when prices for a wide range of products start falling, rather than rising. And while consumers struggling with the high cost of gas and food might think the idea of deflation sounds attractive, economists almost universally agree that it would be very bad news.

“When prices start to fall because of lack of demand, they can go well below the cost it takes to produce the products,” said… the executive director of the Economic Outlook Group. ‘Companies have no alternative than to cut back production and lay off a lot of workers.

End-time perspective: “When consideration is given to man’s opportunities for research; how brief his life; how limited his sphere of action; how restricted his vision; how frequent and how great the errors in his conclusions, especially as concerns the events thought to antedate Bible history; how often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth’s development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another, --considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and mollusks and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, ‘God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him? Genesis 1:27. Shall we reject that genealogical record,- -prouder than any treasured in the courts of kings,- -which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God? Luke 3:38.” Education, 130.
That cuts demand more. You get this vicious downward spiral in prices.” CNNMoney.com, October 17, 2008.

End-time perspective: “Poverty is coming upon this world, and there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. There will be wars and rumors of wars, and the faces of men will gather paleness. You may have to suffer distress; you may go hungry sometimes; but God will not forsake you in your suffering. He will test your faith. We are not to live to please ourselves. We are here to manifest Christ to the world, to represent Him and His power to mankind.” Manuscript 37, 1894; Evangelism, 240.

Bailout Plan No Guarantee

“Lawmakers raised doubts Monday about what would be the largest government bailout in American history, but a bigger, more terrifying question lurked right under the surface: What if it doesn’t work?

“Failure, says one insider, is not an option.

“The alternative is complete financial Armageddon and a great depression,’ said a former Federal Reserve official. ‘Where do they go after this? Well, the U.S. government could nationalize the banking system outright.’” Eamon Javers, Yahoo! News, Sept. 24, 2008.

End-time perspective: “The Family Circle a School.--In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life--lessons of respect, obedience, reverence, self-control. The educational influences of the home are a decided power for good or for evil. They are in many respects silent and gradual, but if exerted on the right side, they become a far-reaching power for truth and righteousness. If the child is not instructed aright here, Satan will educate him through agencies of his choosing. How important, then, is the school in the home!” Adventist Home, 182.

Home Schooling

“Not every student is away from home when they begin the new school year. Several Barksdale families choose home schooling, and they regularly meet as the Barksdale Homeschool Group.” Stephanie Bemrose, Shreveporttimes.com, Sept. 24, 2008.

End-time perspective: “In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practiced were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah’s kingdom. In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practiced; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ’s mercy and loving-kindness.” RH, August 18, 1896.

Russian Rumbles

“Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has proposed a pan-European summit to review a plan to create a ‘reliable collective’ security system in Europe…. This was a veiled attack on Washington’s plan to site 10 interceptor missiles in Poland and a targeting radar in the Czech Republic as part of a missile defense system already deployed in the United States, Britain and Greenland.

“The project angers Moscow, which says the plan is a threat to its security and has threatened to respond with targeted attacks on the missile shield’s future sites....” Gerard Aziakou, Yahoo! News, Sept 27, 2008.

This comes in addition to Russia’s announced plans to upgrade its nuclear systems.

End-time perspective: “In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practiced were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah’s kingdom. In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practiced; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ’s mercy and loving-kindness.” RH, August 18, 1896.
Men and women have biology that is gender specific. For instance, women have breasts, ovaries and uteruses, while men don’t. And men have a prostate, while women don’t. Each gender has its own unique biological parts with a reason for each. But what is the prostate in a man and what is its function?

Generally speaking, the prostate doesn’t come up in casual conversation, so you may know little or nothing about this internal organ. Maybe you have questions, but you have just never thought to ask. Like many men (or women), you may be prompted to learn about it because you have heard that men over age 50 are more likely than younger men to have “prostate trouble.” Maybe you have noticed changes in your urinary habits that have left you wondering, “Is something wrong?” or “Should I see my doctor?”

Whether you are worried about your prostate or simply curious, the following article is intended to help answer your questions about the function and importance of the prostate.

**Where is the prostate?**
The prostate is located in front of the rectum, which is why it can be felt during the normal course of a rectal exam. “It is a gland in the male reproductive system located just below the bladder, the organ that stores urine. The prostate surrounds a part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis.” Because of its location, when it begins to enlarge, it can frequently start to squeeze the urethra (like pinching a straw). This can interfere with the normal flow of urine and is the cause of most of the uncomfortable urinary symptoms.

**What is the function of the prostate?**
“The prostate makes it possible for a male to father children. As most people know, the testicles produce sperm. What most don’t know is that the prostate contributes to the milky fluid that helps to carry the sperm. This sperm-containing fluid is also thought to supply nourishment for the fragile sperm and to help make the vaginal canal less acidic. All of these factors increase the likelihood of conception.”

**Prostate Stages and Growth**
In males at birth, the prostate is very small, about the size of an almond. It remains this size throughout childhood. During puberty, the prostate begins to enlarge and approximately doubles in size; then growth slows. This is normal. The prostate is preparing for its main role in life: sexual reproduction. At about the same time that the testicles are able to produce sperm, the prostate is sufficiently mature to produce the seminal fluid that will support the sperm. A normal adult prostate is somewhat greater in size than a walnut. At about age 45, the prostate often starts growing again and, in some cases, can continue to enlarge for the rest of a man’s life. It’s generally accepted that this growth is influenced by hormonal changes.

**Prevalence of Enlarged Prostate**
By itself, prostate enlargement isn’t a problem. However, as aforementioned, because it surrounds the urethra, it can interfere with the normal flow of urine and can cause uncomfortable symptoms. An enlarged prostate generally does not interfere with sexual functioning. However, severe urinary symptoms can be embarrassing and can inhibit a man’s sexual activity.

**As men age, both benign prostate conditions and prostate cancer become more frequent.**

Not every man develops an enlarged prostate and, in those men who have the condition, it’s not always progressive. However, a major medical study showed that 4 out of every 10 men over age 55 have an enlarged prostate. The number jumps to 7 out of 10 in men in their 70s; by age 80 it’s even higher.
Every man age 50 or older (age 40 or older with a family history of prostate cancer) should ask for a rectal exam as part of an annual checkup and have a PSA blood test drawn.

**Symptoms of an Enlarged Prostate**

The symptoms commonly associated with an enlarged prostate are frequent urination, especially at night, or the sudden, almost uncontrollable urge to urinate. That’s because in the early phase of prostatic enlargement, the bladder muscle has to force urine through the narrowed urethra by contracting more forcefully. Over a period of time, the forcing causes the bladder muscle to gradually become stronger, thicker, and overly sensitive. This creates a need to urinate more frequently. The added pressure on the urethra can also cause a weak, interrupted urine stream, a sense of incomplete bladder emptying, leakage, and difficulty in starting urination. An enlarged prostate can even result in total blockage, a very serious condition.

**Three Most Common Problems of the Prostate**

Although there are several diseases of the prostate that can develop, these three very different problems are the most common:

1. **Prostate Enlargement**
   - Prostate enlargement is a benign condition. Its medical name is benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is most commonly found in men over age 45. BPH is not cancer and does not turn into cancer. However, a man can have BPH and prostate cancer at the same time.
   - As previously discussed, hormones in the prostate are generally thought to be involved in the growth of new tissue which can enlarge the prostate and can “pinch” the urethra. This, in turn, can create bothersome symptoms. After proper diagnosis, many enlarged prostate conditions can be improved by a spectrum of different treatments. While you may have an enlarged prostate, you may have no symptoms or symptoms that are disturbing to some degree. If this is the case, you and your doctor may decide on a program of “watchful waiting,” which involves only periodic checkups. If your symptoms are more bothersome to you, there are various herbal products formulated to help reduce the size of the prostate.

2. **Prostatitis**
   - Prostatitis is an entirely different condition from an enlarged prostate. Prostatitis is an inflammation of the prostate that may be caused by the presence of a bacterial infection. This condition can affect men of all ages. Having prostatitis does not increase your risk of getting any other prostate disease. Some of the symptoms of prostatitis are similar to those caused by an enlarged prostate, e.g., the frequent urge to urinate, yet difficulty in doing so; but prostatitis can also be accompanied by chills and fever (in acute infections) and by pain or burning during urination.

3. **Prostate Cancer**
   - Prostate cancer is a serious disease because it is a malignant condition. Malignant tissue is present in the prostate, and the malignancy can spread to other parts of the body. While prostate cancer can occur in men of all ages, it is most commonly found in men older than 40 years of age.

   **After proper diagnosis, many enlarged prostate conditions can be improved by a spectrum of different treatments.**

   In its early stages, prostate cancer may not cause urinary symptoms. It is usually detected during a routine rectal exam or by the use of a screening blood test called PSA, or prostate-specific antigen. When caught early, prostate cancer has an encouragingly high cure rate. In its advanced stages—when cure is most difficult—prostate cancer may produce symptoms that are similar to an enlarged prostate.

   Approximately one out of every 10 American men develops prostate cancer. More than 30,000 die annually from this disease. A wide range of techniques can be employed to treat prostate cancer.

**What Every Man Should Do**

Every man age 50 or older (age 40 or older with a family history of prostate cancer) should ask for a rectal exam as part of an annual checkup and have a PSA blood test drawn. These, coupled with a frank, open
discussion of any changes in urinary habits, will better enable your doctor to diagnose your problem.

**What Your Doctor Will Do**

Once you’ve given your doctor a detailed description of any symptoms that you may be having, the doctor will examine your prostate as part of your exam. Since the prostate is located near the rectum, the doctor can feel the prostate by inserting a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum. This simple exam helps the physician to determine whether the prostate is enlarged or if it has lumps or areas of abnormal texture. He will also be able to evaluate your PSA level and determine if further tests or consultation is needed to rule out a prostate cancer.

What is the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test?

Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is a protein produced by the cells of the prostate gland. The PSA test measures the level of PSA in the blood. Because PSA is produced by the body and can be used to detect disease, it is sometimes called a biological marker or tumor marker. It is normal for men to have low levels of PSA in their blood; however, prostate cancer or benign (not cancerous) conditions can increase PSA levels. As men age, both benign prostate conditions and prostate cancer become more frequent. PSA levels alone do not give doctors enough information to distinguish between benign prostate conditions and cancer. However, the doctor will take the result of the PSA test into account when deciding whether to check further for signs of prostate cancer.

Early treatment may save your life as well as your lifestyle.

PSA test results report the level of PSA detected in the blood. The test results are usually reported as nanograms of PSA per milliliter (ng/mL) of blood. In the past, most doctors considered PSA values below 4.0 ng/mL as normal. However, recent research found prostate cancer in men with PSA levels below 4.0 ng/mL.

Many doctors are now using the following ranges with some variation:

- 0 to 2.5 ng/mL is low.
- 2.6 to 10 ng/mL is slightly to moderately elevated.
- 10 to 19.9 ng/mL is moderately elevated.
- 20 ng/mL or more is significantly elevated.

There is no specific “normal” or “abnormal” PSA level. However, the higher a man’s PSA level, the more likely it is that cancer is present. But because various factors (such as age) can cause PSA levels to fluctuate, one abnormal PSA test does not necessarily indicate a need for other diagnostic tests. When PSA levels continue to rise over time, other tests may be needed.

**What Can I Do?**

Early diagnosis of the most serious prostate disease—prostate cancer—increases the chances of a cure. Early treatment may save your life as well as your lifestyle. In many cases, treatment for prostate cancer will not affect your sex life or your ability to control urination. By the same token, you need not suffer from bothersome symptoms of an enlarged prostate (BPH). Such symptoms are not a necessary part of getting older. There are a variety of useful herbal aids available.

If you have any questions about prostate disease, it’s important to discuss them with your health care professional as soon as possible. If you are interested in herbal supplements to help decrease the size and improve the health of your prostate, please see the following ads on Small Flower Willow Herb and Saw Palmetto. As always, if you have any questions about how you can improve the health of your prostate, or your overall health, we have health counselors standing by to answer all of your questions!

2. Ibid.
Saw Palmetto appears to have efficacy [effectiveness] similar to that of medications like finasteride (Proscar), but it is better tolerated and less expensive. There are no known drug interactions with Saw Palmetto, and reported side effects are minor and rare. - American Family Physician 2003;67:1281-3.

Saw Palmetto is widely used in other countries; for example, it is used in 50 percent of treatments for BPH [Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia] in Italy and in 90 percent of such treatments in Germany. - European Urology 1992;21:309-14.

In one study, patients subjectively said that Saw Palmetto helped improve BPH symptoms. - 83 percent said it was effective after 45 days and 88 percent said it was effective after 90 days.

Saw Palmetto has proven similarly effective to the prescription drug Proscar (finasteride), but without side effects such as decreased libido, ejaculatory problems, and loss of erection.

For many suffering with prostate problems, a major benefit of Saw Palmetto is that its effects are generally seen only shortly after beginning treatment. Some people report noticing a reduction in symptoms in as little as 30 days. This is an advantage over most of the currently available drugs which can take as long as 6 to 12 months for effects to be seen. In addition, Saw Palmetto is an herb which may stop or even reverse hair loss!

Saw Palmetto For Prostate Disorders

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**Saw Palmetto For Hair Loss**

While **Saw Palmetto** is most recognized for improving prostate health, you may not know that it is also great for preventing hair loss! **Saw Palmetto** is beneficial for any adult (man OR woman) who suffers from this condition. Hair loss develops when the level of dihydrotestosterone (DHT) in the scalp is too high. DHT binds itself to the hair follicles, decreasing the amount of nutrients they can extract from blood. The follicles gradually shrink and the hair growing from them becomes thinner. If nothing is done to treat this condition, the hair disappears completely. To prevent and treat hair loss, the level of DHT in the body must be decreased. Prescription drugs for treating hair loss often have serious side effects, such as gynecomastia (abnormal breast enlargement in males) and even erectile dysfunction. **Saw Palmetto**, on the other hand, is a herbal DHT inhibitor. While it has a similar mechanism of action to Propecia, it does NOT cause side effects such as those associated with Propecia and other prescription drugs.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.*
**Small Flower Willow**

**Facts:**
- By age 50, one-third of American men have microscopic signs of prostate cancer, and by age 75, half to three-quarters of men’s prostates will have cancerous changes.
- More than 30,000 men die of prostate cancer each year in the United States.
- About 16 percent of American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime; 8 percent will develop significant symptoms; and 3 percent will die of the disease.

2 oz Extract .............. $17.99 SXSB-SMWE
3.5 oz Tea ................. $12.99 HXSB-SMWT

Suggested Adult Dosage:
- **Extract:** 2 droppers-full in the morning and evening on an empty stomach.
- **Tea:** 1 heaping teaspoon of tea per 16 oz. of boiling water, infused for a short time. 1 cup in the morning on an empty stomach, 1 cup in the evening, half an hour before a meal.

**To Order Call Today:**
1-800-468-7884
or Visit us on the web at: www.hopeforhealthusa.com

**What is Small Flower Willow Used For?**
- Bladder and Prostate Cancer
- Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- Cystitis
- Male Pattern Baldness
- Kidney and Bladder Problems
- Urinary Tract Disorders
- Many Other Prostate-Related Problems

**Does Small Flower Willow Really Work?**

**Scientific Studies:**
- Many studies have shown that Small Flower Willow reduces prostate size and inflammation (prostatitis).
- A German 3-year study found that taking 160 mg. of SFW extract twice daily reduced nighttime urination in 73% of patients & improved urinary flow rate.
- In a double blind trial, 160 mg. of SFW extract taken twice daily was found to treat BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia) just as effectively as the popular drug Proscar, but with absolutely NO side effects!
- European scientists have proven that SFW extract lowers the level of the hormone dihydrotestosterone in the prostate. **Why is this important?**

**Increased Levels of Dihydrotestosterone Can Cause:**
- Prostate cancer
- Male Pattern Baldness
- Development or exacerbation of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH)
- Kidney, Bladder, and Urinary Tract Disorders
- Enlargement of the prostate gland and other prostate-related disorders

**Prostate Problems? We’ve Got the Answer!**

*Prices listed above do not include shipping, handling, or sales tax.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.
“The eyes of the Lord run throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” Is not that blessed consolation?

HF, Florida

I am greatly touched by the marvelous work you are doing at Hope International. Many souls are being won to Christ, and may the glory be unto our GOD. I am a Zambian adult and a very dedicated Adventist and am kindly appealing for the SDA Study Bible and other ministerial books about Ellen White. These will greatly help me in my evangelism ministry. I’ll greatly appreciate your favorable response.

VN, Zambia

I like all that you do to inform everybody of the second coming of our Lord. I will keep praying for you. God Bless you!

JT, New York

I receive Our Firm Foundation; it was a gift and let me tell you, it is like the Review used to be in the OLD days. I tell you if it were not for straight SDAs like yourself who are not afraid to tell it like it is and leave out the warm and fuzzy, I would have to quit going to church.

A friend would like the DVDs also, but does not have a computer. Elderly like me.

LC, Oregon

Your DVDs have been and are a blessing. The health part is great, too! Please keep sending them to my ex-husband, a surprise being he is listening to them, at least the health part. Please pray for him.

BS, Arkansas

May the Lord bless you with His abundant mercy and grace as you continue to help His children. Love in Christ.

JW, Wisconsin

I enjoyed the true stories in your Good News newsletter. (A series of three were sent to me.) I had hoped for a telephone number (and I just found it!). Thank you so much and God bless you all!

VE, California

We enjoy your DVD sermons and would like to order ___. Thank you! Praise the Lord!

AH, Michigan

Thank you sooo much for the DVD “Will the Structure Last?” Please send a catalog.

C&JB, Ohio

I love the Hope for Health healing and “eating right” messages on DVD!

AP, Illinois

Thank you for the DVD you sent in the mail. It spoke to my heart.

ML, West Virginia

Thank you for the DVDs. I never requested them, but the topics look very interesting and I will be watching them. I am mailing a $___ donation, charged to my Mastercard.

LO, Indiana

May God bless Hope International and all you folks that make it happen!

JB, Missouri

I praise God for your ministry! Jesus is coming soon! God bless.

RP, Utah
“Restoring the Image of God”

The title of a beautiful new daily devotional, and a great new year’s resolution!

“The Lord gave His only begotten Son in order that the most sinful, the most degraded, need not perish, but, by believing on Jesus Christ, may be reclaimed, regenerated, and restored to the image of God, and thus have eternal life.” - The Signs of the Times, November 20, 1893.

If you were not claiming this promise in your life last year, it is never too late: you need not perish! Every day during this new year you have an opportunity to read about the Lord’s love for you. Every day you have an opportunity to grow closer, to gain a deeper understanding of what God has provided for you. Every day you can be restored to the image of God! Read, and believe!

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