

Our Firm **FOUNDATION**

The 7th-Day Sabbath

Immutable Law of God

Non-Immortality of the Soul

Christ Our Righteousness

Three Angels' Message

The Sanctuary

Vol. 13, No. 9

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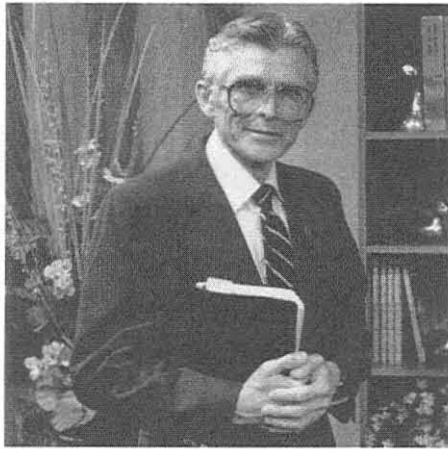
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Editorial

Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. . . . My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." Psalm 62:1, 5-7.

Waiting on God for His directions in our daily lives is man's most difficult experience. Our human hearts—our daily lives—are filled with our own plans and ideas. Many times we press ahead to bring our plans into reality without waiting on God. And then through tragedy we find that our plans and ideas have created a crisis because we did not go to God in humility asking, Is this the way of the Lord?

God's way is almost always different than our way. When God's way is our way, we will be walking with God. "Even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4.

Waiting on God is the only way to the experience of righteousness—a full salvational relationship. To follow God's way, His direction, without compromise is to know God as a Friend. We are keeping ourselves from a full salvational experience when we follow our way, our plans, and our ideas without seeking God's approval, asking, Is this the way of the Lord? Our defective knowledge of God—of His love, His mercy, and His justice—finds its cause in this one thing—our Laodicean experience.

Our greatest need is to know Jesus Christ as our Friend, our Redeemer. The greatest need of our church members today is for the manifestation of the mighty power of God in a second Pentecost—the latter rain.

Waiting on God, we need to "study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

Searching with all our hearts, we will find Him—know Him, serve Him, and love Him. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

The blessed secret of waiting on God to direct our words, actions and plans for our lives and our families is in the studying of His Word. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy give us His way for our daily lives. These inspired statements will help us to see our need, and then we can realize the joy of the assurance of our salvation through obedience to all truth.

"Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the Word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself." *The Desire of Ages*, 671.

The grace of God can only be experienced by searching for God's way in the daily life. This is the only way sinners can glorify God—by our transformed lives—not by what we can do, but by what we know God can do, and will do, in us by the power of the Holy Spirit—if we will let Him.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2.

"When he [the Spirit of truth] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. The preaching of the Word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth." *Ibid*.

So the Holy Spirit is to be our Teacher. When we are willing to be made willing to wait on the Lord—to trust His ways and not our own—we will then know and delight in the joy of our salvation!

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." Psalm 37:3-7.

Listen again to God as He instructs us in His way, which brings the reception of His power of the Holy Spirit. This is the blessing that God's people and His church have waited for. See *ibid.*, 672.

Many Seventh-day Adventist Christians find themselves spiritually destitute because they do not know God. They do not trust Him completely. Therefore, many are in absolute spiritual poverty and helplessness. They have no sense of their absolute ever-increasing dependence on the Holy Spirit to give them their daily experience of victory over their sins and temptations. But once a believer begins to see it, understand it, and consent to it, the miracle of the transformed life has begun. Waiting on God becomes his brightest hope and joy! As the sinner becomes a saint and a witness to the power of God, he begins to see that God's way is always the best way. He begins to understand how God, as God—Creator of our world, and re-Creator of sinners into saints—is a great God of supreme love, mercy, and justice! The sinner—transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit—is now in the process of developing a character that will be acceptable to God. He becomes a powerful witness to a doomed world!

God is not weary in keeping charge of our lives. The question we must ask ourselves is: Are we willing to be made willing each day to let His way be our way?

Ron Spear—Editor

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

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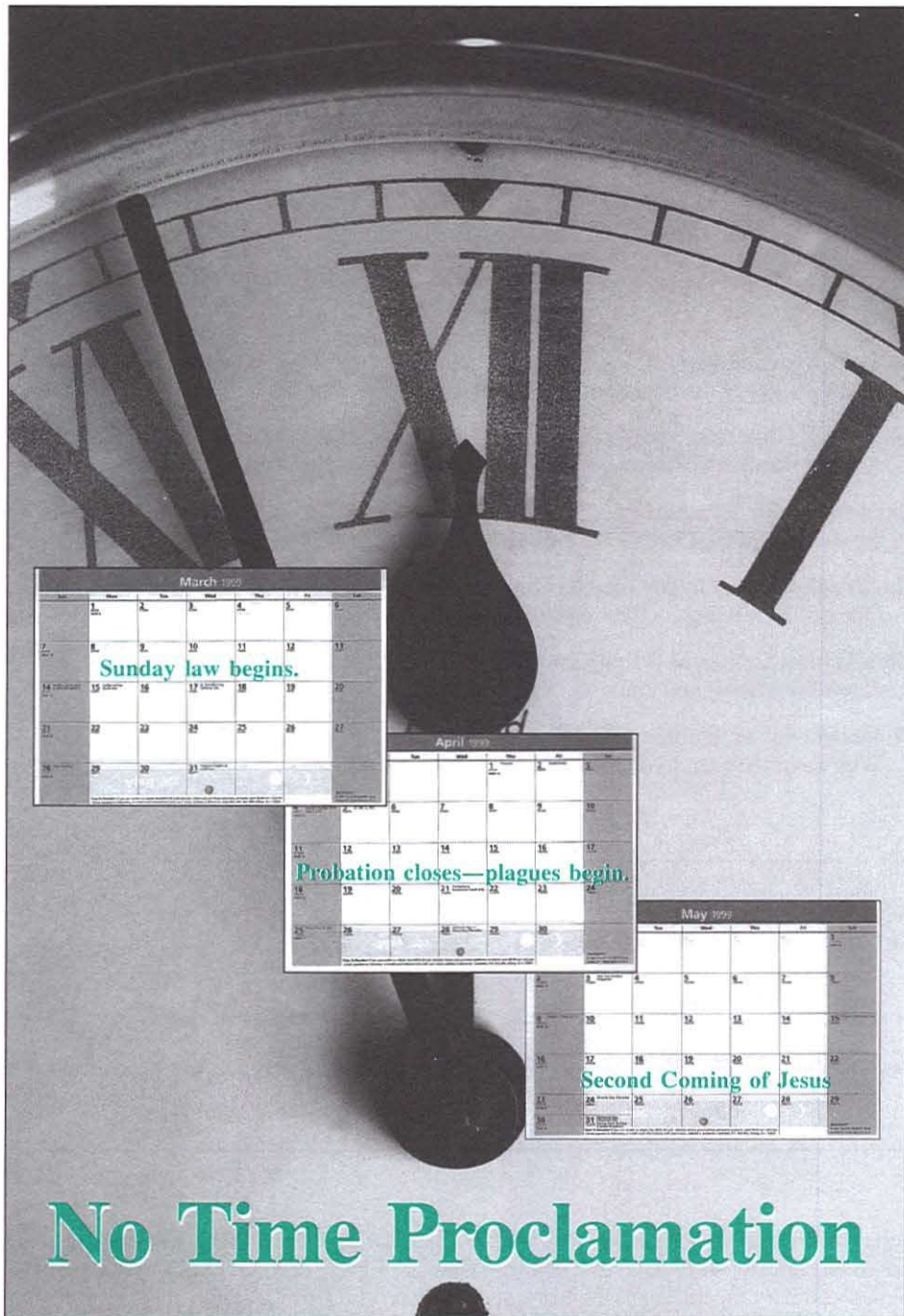
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Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.

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No Time Proclamation

“Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord’s coming.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, 270.

As the year 2000 approaches, the lure of time excitement continues to play with the zeal and emotions of faithful Seventh-day Adventists. The repeated failure of such efforts, even in recent times, seems to engender no restraint in those determined to bring such messages before God’s people.

The name of Larry Wilson is well known to Adventist students of prophecy

since the circulation of his first book, entitled *Warning: Revelation Is About to Be Fulfilled*, published in 1988.¹ Ten years later, this same author released a book entitled *The Beasts of Revelation . . . Exposed!*² with a similar, if not identical, message. Another author has also recently written a book by the title, *Sometimes Even A Dumb Dog Has To Bark*,³ presenting a message similar to that propagated by Larry Wilson.

A number of common approaches to the prophetic books can be seen to be used by both of these authors, together with others who share their views. But our study will focus on the one which most clearly contradicts the testimony of Inspiration; namely, the effort to reapply the time prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation into the future, using literal instead of prophetic time.

Those who use this approach often remind us of lawyers, and others, who use technicalities to get around the law. For example, because Ellen White clearly stated that there can be no dates set for either the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the close of probation, or the second coming of Christ,⁴ those reapplying the prophecies restrict their time reckoning to other events, such as the final period of persecution, the national and universal Sunday laws, the special resurrection, and the voice of God proclaiming the deliverance of the saints.⁵ But our study will demonstrate that throughout Ellen White’s writings she consistently maintained that no time proclamation of any kind is to take place between now and the coming of Jesus.

New theories offer a strong, persistent attraction for many minds. Some almost seem to feel that their minds might go to waste unless they invent at least one new idea a year! This danger of getting “bored” with familiar truth was faced by the primitive church at the end of the first century. Ellen White observes:

“One by one the old standard-bearers fell at their post. Some of the younger workers, who might have shared the burdens of these pioneers, and thus have been prepared for wise leadership, had become weary of oft-repeated truths. In their desire for something novel and startling, they attempted to introduce new phases of doctrine, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel.”⁶

The modern prophet offers an equally solemn warning for the last days:

“Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks.

Kevin Paulson

Their doctrines will not bear the test of God's Word, yet souls will be deceived."⁷

As the great final test of the great controversy approaches, Satan wishes more than anything for false tests to consume the attentions and spiritual energies of God's people. The following inspired warning is especially pointed in this regard:

"Issues have been and will continue to be made of men's conceived fallacies, not of truth. The devisings of men's minds will invent tests that are no tests at all, that when the true test shall be made prominent, it shall be considered on a par with the man-made tests that have been of no value."⁸

Faithful Adventists have been confronted with numerous theories of this kind in the past two decades, and in previous times as well. Extremes in diet and dress, the so-called "deliverance ministry," the Lord Our Righteousness movement, Old Testament feast-keeping, and prophetic speculation have lured many earnest hearts into fanaticism. We must ever bear in mind that the written counsel of God has been given to prevent us from straying into such paths. We cannot on the one hand denounce various doctrines and practices among mainstream Adventists because they violate inspired counsel, while on the other hand we tamper with that same counsel through fanaticism and speculation.

It is time, at long last, to deal decisively with this issue of prophetic reapplication. Like all issues we face, it is one for which God has an answer. This and every contemporary dispute has been anticipated by the inspired pen, as the following promise assures us:

"Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets."⁹

And as always, in every doctrinal quarrel, the following Bible rule stands supreme:

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

We likewise affirm the role of the Spirit of Prophecy writings in correcting errors in Biblical understanding:

"God has, in that Word [the Bible], promised to give visions in the 'last days'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."¹⁰

"There is instruction that the Lord has given me for His people. It is light that they should have, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. This is now to come before the people, because it has been given to correct specious errors and to specify what is truth."¹¹

We make no apologies for the use of Ellen White's Testimonies to clarify the meaning of Bible prophecy, for we have the following promise:

"Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through

and understand. Translated into many different languages, it will be a power to enlighten the world. . . .

"Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find *Daniel and the Revelation* an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and

God desires the light found in the book of *Daniel and the Revelation* to be presented in clear lines.

Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days"¹²

"No Long Discussions, No Presenting of New Theories"

In 1900 Ellen White wrote the following:

"The Lord wishes all to understand His providential dealings now, just now, in the time in which we live. There must be no long discussions, no presenting of new theories in regard to prophecies that God has already made plain."¹³

By the time this statement was written, Adventist prophetic interpretation had been laid out very clearly before the world. Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Revelation* was published in 1867; *Thoughts on Daniel* was published in 1873. The two were combined into one book, *Daniel and the Revelation*, shortly thereafter. While Ellen White never stated that Smith's final combined book was error-free, the following endorsement of that publication is most impressive, especially taking into account those who would have us believe Smith's book contains major errors:

"Especially should the book *Daniel and the Revelation* be brought before people as the very book for this time. This book contains the message which all need to read

strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. . . .

"God desires the light found in the book of *Daniel and the Revelation* to be presented in clear lines. It is painful to think of the many cheap theories picked up and presented to the people by ignorant, unprepared teachers. Those who present their human tests and the nonsensical ideas they have concocted in their own minds, show the character of the goods in their treasure house. They have laid in store shoddy material. Their great desire is to make a sensation.

"The truth for this time has been brought out in many books. Let those who have been dealing in cheap sentiments and foolish tests, cease this work and study *Daniel and the Revelation*. They will then have something to talk about that will help the mind."¹⁴

Notice she says Smith's book "speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein."¹⁵ One might be able to reconcile this statement with one or two small interpretive errors in Smith's book. But those who wish to reinterpret the seven seals and seven trumpets of Revelation must of necessity regard as false a large portion of Smith's work, making it hard, if not impossible, to reconcile such error with Ellen White's salute to the book as

containing “past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein.”

We are deeply sobered by Ellen White’s statement that Smith’s book would discourage “cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God.”¹⁶ We should ponder carefully her comments about “cheap theories,” “human tests,” “nonsensical ideas,” and the “great desire . . . to make a sensation” by those presenting different views on Daniel and Revelation.¹⁷ Could this counsel have

religious systems of which the Papacy is only one:

“Contrary to what many believe and teach, I do not find the composite beast to represent the Papacy, nor do I find Bible prophecy predicts the Papacy will rule the world during end-times, as Europe was ruled during the Dark Ages. I believe the Papacy to be one of the key players in the big picture of coming events. For reasons that will follow, I understand that the seven heads are the seven religions of the world—after all, there are seven of the same thing—namely, seven heads.”¹⁸

“What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America.”²¹

One can see here a sharp contrast between the inspired prophetic interpretations of Ellen White and the uninspired interpretations of Larry Wilson. The two, being in opposition, cannot both be correct. And because Wilson is not inspired, he cannot defend his view by claiming he is merely making a dual application of an inspired prediction. Moreover, any assertion of “inspiration” on Wilson’s part is quickly dispelled—as we shall see—by his disregard of Ellen White’s clear declaration that there would be no time proclamation between 1844 and the Second Advent. A prophet may expand the perspective of a previous prophet, but he will never deny or disobey a previous prophet’s counsel.

Wilson’s interpretation places the seven trumpets of Revelation in the future.²² Some have actually tried to support this position from Ellen White’s writings by quoting the following passage which speaks of the last days:

“Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another upon the inhabitants of the earth.”²³

Many have used this passage as a springboard from which to develop a new, futuristic application of the seven trumpets. But this passage makes no specific reference to the seven trumpets described in the book of Revelation. Ellen White in context is simply using the language of Revelation to make a general description of the trouble soon to come upon the earth. One passage cannot rightfully form the basis of a new prophetic understanding. Only once does Ellen White make a specific interpretive reference to the seven trumpets, and that is when she endorses the prediction of Josiah Litch regarding the sixth trumpet, calling this “another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy.”²⁴

Because Wilson identifies the seven heads of the composite beast as the seven major religions of the world,²⁵ he must place this power in the future rather than in the past, since the Papacy had no partnership with major world religions during its years of medieval supremacy. We will now exam-

We are deeply sobered by Ellen White’s statement that Smith’s book would discourage “cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God.”

relevance to those now seeking to rewrite Adventist prophetic interpretation?

Some will ask, What about dual or multiple applications of these prophecies? In more recent history the church faced this challenge with the sanctuary theology of Desmond Ford and his so-called “apotelesmatic principle”—the idea that prophecies can have more than one fulfillment. The problem is that unless employed by an inspired writer, the principle of dual or multiple applications of prophecy amounts to nothing more than speculation and guesswork. A good example of an inspired application of this principle is where Matthew quotes the prophecy of Hosea stating “out of Egypt have I called my Son” as having been fulfilled by Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus back out of Egypt. Matthew 2:15; see also Hosea 11:1. Even though the context in Hosea says nothing about the coming Messiah, an inspired writer can place an inspired passage in a completely new light because such a writer is working under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. God knows what He intends an inspired passage to mean even if human scholarship cannot find such a meaning there. But when uninspired persons start reapplying prophecy, they—unlike inspired writers—do not have this privilege.

Larry Wilson explains the composite beast of Revelation 13 as referring, not to the Papacy, but to a coalition of seven

The lamblike beast of Revelation 13 is identified by Wilson as Satan himself, masquerading as Christ at the end of time:

“The beast coming up out of the Earth with two horns like the Lamb, but speaking like the dragon, represents the physical appearing of Lucifer masquerading as God.”¹⁹

But Ellen White flatly disagrees with Larry Wilson, identifying the composite beast as the medieval Papacy, and the lamblike beast as the United States of America:

“In chapter 13 [of Revelation, verses 1-10] is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the Papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire.”²⁰

“But the beast with lamblike horns was seen ‘coming up out of the earth.’ Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World—that turbulent sea of ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ It must be sought in the Western Continent.

ine Wilson's effort to move this and other prophecies from the past to the future.

"No Time Proclamation"

Wilson contends very strongly that the "forty and two months," described in Revelation 13:5 as the reign of the composite beast, is in a future period which will occur after the healing of the deadly wound:

"Further, this presupposition (that a day always equals a year in prophecy) prevents adherents from considering the fact that the 42 months in Revelation 13:5 occur after the deadly wound is healed. In other words, the presupposition demands that the 42 months be 1,260 years (42 X 30)—a period far too long to be considered 'the last days.' So, it is argued that the 42 months cannot occur after the deadly wound is healed, although Scripture plainly shows just the opposite."²⁶

Wilson seems to forget that Revelation does not always present future events in exact order. For example, the final verses of chapter 6 speak of the wicked at Jesus' coming crying for the rocks and mountains to fall on them (see verses 15-17), while the very next verses speak of the sealing of the 144,000, an event which obviously occurs before Jesus comes. Revelation 11:15 describes the sounding of the seventh angel's trumpet, which declares that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, "and he shall reign for ever and ever." Yet the very next chapter goes back and describes the woman (the church) fleeing from the dragon (Satan) into the wilderness (see Revelation 12:6), followed in the very next verses (7-10) by a description of Satan's fall from heaven. Obviously these events do not occur in chronological sequence. Thus it is foolish for Wilson to assert that every event in Revelation 13 must somehow occur in chronological sequence.

Ellen White is abundantly clear, in direct contradiction to Larry Wilson, that the forty-two months of Revelation 13:5 are in the past:

"In the sixth century the Papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the Papacy. The dragon had given to the beast 'his power, and his seat, and great authority.' Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1,260 years of papal oppression foretold in the

prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7."²⁷

"The periods here mentioned—'forty and two months' and 'a thousand two hundred and threescore days' [Revelation 11:2-3]—are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798."²⁸

"The forty and two months [Revelation 13:5] are the same as the 'time and times and the dividing of time,' three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the Papacy in A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798."²⁹

Some, however, have cited the following statement as "evidence" that an additional future application of this prophecy can be found:

"The remnant people of God are to endure persecution. 'And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 12:17. The prophet says of this power, which represents the Papacy: 'There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was

period. This becomes especially clear, as we will see, from these statements which expressly forbid any time proclamation between 1844 and the Second Coming.

In a previous book, Larry Wilson applies the 1290 and 1335 days of Daniel, chapter 12, to the last-day time of trouble.³¹ Recently, another author, a layman in central California, has done the same thing.³² But Ellen White is clear that these prophetic time periods are in the past:

"In his vision of the last days Daniel inquired, 'O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. . . . Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' Daniel 12:8-13. Daniel has been standing in his lot since the seal was removed and the light of truth has been shining upon his visions. He stands in his lot, bearing the testimony which was to be understood at the end of the days."³³

"Daniel is today standing in his lot, and we are to give him place to speak to the people. Our message is to go forth as

Ellen White is abundantly clear, in direct contradiction to Larry Wilson, that the forty-two months of Revelation 13:5 are in the past.

given unto him to continue forty and two months.' Revelation 13:5."³⁰

Because this passage speaks of future persecution to be endured by God's people, it is assumed that the forty and two months of this passage must be future also.

However, the context simply quotes verses from Revelation which speak of the papal power which has warred—and will continue to war—against God's people. In no way does this, or any other passage in Ellen White's writings, imply that the forty and two months of Revelation 13 constitute a future time

a lamp that burneth. See Daniel 12:1-3, 10-13 then quoted."³⁴

In other words, the last verse of Daniel 12:13 is clear that Daniel is to stand in his lot "at the end of the days," namely, the 1335 days. Ellen White then comments on this verse by saying that "Daniel has been standing in his lot" and "is today standing in his lot." Since the verse is clear that Daniel was to stand in his lot at the end of the 1335 days, Daniel could not possibly stand in his lot unless the 1335 days were over. And

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Disdaining Christian Standards

IN 1996 the Pacific Press Publishing Association published a book entitled *The Gospel versus Legalism* authored by Marvin Moore, editor of the *Signs of the Times*. More recently, in the February 15, 1998, issue of *The Visitor*, Dick Duerksen, vice president for Creative Ministries for the Columbia Union Conference, presented an article entitled, "How to Kill a Church."

These two publications had one thing in common—a decided attempt to convince the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that any emphasis upon the divinely presented Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy standards would destroy the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We will examine the assumptions of these prominent writers in the light of Inspiration itself, but, first, let me give you an idea of the concepts of these two men:

In the early pages of his book, Elder Moore presents a dangerous and confusing concept of the prophetic role of Sister White. He says, "Can Adventists prove that God spoke through Ellen White?

Can the Mormons prove that God spoke through Joseph Smith? No. We can only accept these prophets by faith, and Adventists reject the Mormon claim that Joseph Smith was a prophet because we do not have their faith." *The Gospel versus Legalism*, 28.

If one were to accept this statement made by Elder Moore, we would have to assume that it is by human choice that Ellen White is our prophet—just as the Mormons chose Joseph Smith to be their prophet. However, nothing could be further from the truth. It is not by choice, or preference, it is by evidence that it is determined that Sister White is a prophet of God. That evidence is, first, unwavering loyalty to the words of Scripture. But as it has been demonstrated so many times, Sister White met all of the ten tests of a true prophet. Without such evidence, we could not be assured that she was one of those prophets whom, in the stream of history, God has sent to establish and confirm the faith of His people.

There are many today who treat Sister White as a minor prophet, but it is my conviction that God would not send other

than a great prophet to His people at the end of time. It will be noted that Jesus declared that there was no greater prophet than John the Baptist. See Matthew 11:9-11. Surely at the end of earth's history as we face the greatest test of the ages, God has sent us one of the greatest of the prophets.

Now it is not difficult to discern that when a man has such a faulted concept of the end-time prophet, it is unlikely that the rest of his writings will be trustworthy. And indeed that is what the book, *The Gospel versus Legalism*, reveals.

Here are some examples of the thinking of the author: "Here's something else I want you to notice about both Sinai and Calvary. Each was the beginning of a new religion. Sinai began the Israelite religion. Calvary began the Christian religion. And each was God's true religion for its time. Notice also that each of these religions replaced the system that preceded it, and each was a great improvement over the preceding system." *Ibid.*, 80. If we agree with Moore, we would have to join our Evangelical

Colin D. Standish

friends in declaring that the law of God was nailed to the cross. And indeed such a dispensational concept is the basis upon which Moore builds in his attempt to convince the reader that God's standards are of little consequence. Here are some examples: "But in matters of dress, diet, entertainment, Sabbathkeeping, and other life-style standards, I am convinced that the less advice that we give others, the better, except when we are asked." *Ibid.*, 134.

For a minister of the gospel to suggest that nothing should be said about these areas of Christian life except when asked, is to deny the very calling and ministerial vows that he took when he was ordained to the gospel ministry: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:1-2. Does the Word of God provide standards in each of these areas?—Let us refer to but one or two texts in each area:

1. Dress: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible." 1 Peter 3:3-4.

2. Diet: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31.

3. Entertainment: "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Corinthians 9:23-27. "And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." Exodus 32:18-19.

4. Sabbathkeeping: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to

toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils." *Education*, 248.

Here are enshrined the reasons why God in His love and goodness has provided clear and profitable standards for the human race. They are not to make life more difficult. They are not to op-

Seventh-day Adventists are people of the Book. The Bible, and the Bible only, is their basis of faith and practice. They have no creed but the Bible.

ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob: thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13-14.

5. Lifestyle standards: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Matthew 5:32.

It is amazing just how blatant is the effort to deny the validity of the very principles that are enshrined in the Word of God. But Elder Moore's statement was not an isolated comment in his book. Indeed, he comes back to the theme of these standards time and time again. Here is another example: "Arising out of this obsession with standards is another attitude that is closely related to it. Legalists tend to put a great emphasis on lifestyle standards as a measure of progress in the Christian life. When they see a woman in the church wearing earrings and a necklace, their first thought is that she must be slipping in her Christian experience." *Ibid.*, 142-143.

While I fully endorse the fact that we are not to judge motives, yet for those who know the precious truth of God, the outward adorning evidences a lack of focus upon giving glory to God rather than glory to self. We present the divine principles, "A person's character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far

press us. They are rather the parameters that provide us wonderful protection. They are the parameters that allow the Christian to live a fruitful and profitable life. They are the parameters that facilitate, in the power of Jesus, a refocusing from the egocentricity of our human natures to the selfless glorying in the cross of Christ and in seeking the salvation of men and women sharing this sin-blighted planet.

But even more astonishing than the above statements is the following statement by Elder Moore: "But legalists find the idea of making up their own minds about what is right and wrong quite threatening. This is particularly true when common sense would suggest a course of action contrary to what Scripture seems to say." Moore, *The Gospel versus Legalism*, 143-144. Is Elder Moore urging that we should make up our own minds about right or wrong independent of the counsel of Scripture? Surely such a suggestion is riveted in the Satanic concept of existentialism as proposed by the Danish theologian-philosopher of the last century, Soren Kirkagaard, in which ultimately he made each individual responsible for his understanding of right and wrong, which, of course, led to situational ethics.

Seventh-day Adventists are people of the Book. The Bible, and the Bible only, is their basis of faith and practice. They have no creed but the Bible. I believe every faithful Seventh-day Adventist stands on the principle that rather than the faulted and deceptive concepts of his

own reasoning he will search the Scriptures for the divine answer to every question of life. Moore couches his humanistic concepts in these words: "I believe that many of the debates we hear today over music, adornment, the length of a woman's dress (should it be above the knee or below the knee?), modes of Sabbathkeeping, how much sugar to eat, and styles of worship have far more to do with personal preference, cultural conditioning, or both, than with Biblical morality." *Ibid.*, 146.

the way in which this concept is couched is sure to trivialize or demean those who, under the grace of God, are following His guidance and have determined that what they wear will reflect the glory of God—not the glory of self.

I recall some years ago when I was studying with a woman who had attended one of my crusades. She was a stylish dresser wearing all the jewelry imaginable along with heavy make-up. Neither the pastor of the church nor I said anything about it to her in the months in

acter. And then I read to her 1 Timothy 2:9–10, followed by 1 Peter 3:3–4. I concluded by saying, "What God is calling us to do is to dress so that we might reflect His character and be an honor to Him rather than to glorify ourselves." There was an agonizing pause of many seconds. I knew eternity for her was in the balance, for this dear lady had to choose whether she would honor self or honor God. To the glory of God she broke the silence by saying, "That's beautiful!" To this day she is a faithful member of God's remnant church. God is seeking to rid us of our inborn self-centeredness so that we might come into full communion with Him.

Number 9. "Remember the past. Better yet, keep close track of small sins (both of commission and omission) and bring them up to the perpetrators at the most opportune and embarrassing moments. Members only grow closer to God when they learn to overcome their weaknesses." Of course, every converted Christian knows that this is an aberrant view of the gospel of Christ. It is when we come closer to Jesus that, in His power, we learn to overcome our weaknesses. I know that the most dedicated Christians have had to agonize with the Lord in prayer—morning-by-morning—to gain victory over their most cherished sins and weaknesses.

Duerksen further places God's standards in an exaggerated and negative light:

Number 7. "Leave the 'visitors welcome' words on the church sign. But when a visitor actually visits, ignore her. Better yet, put a big ribbon on her coat, have her stand up to be recognized, ask public questions about her family, stare at her earrings and explain why she must try the vegetarian goulash."

To underscore all these efforts to lovingly present the duties of a Christian—his responsibilities as well as his privileges and joys—Duerksen puts the most negative connotation on it in the point he set down as **Number 4**: "Preach sermons with generous portions of fear and guilt, using strong warning stories of people who have died without 'accepting the Truth.' Speak often of the 'time of trouble' and describe how sinners are going to hurt at the 'end of time.' Point out how awful some of our sins are to God. Guilt and fear, pumped up powerfully enough, bring conversion and teach us to love God's love."

As we were visiting across the breakfast bench, without warning the woman asked, "What are the rules of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on jewelry?"

It is amazing that any Seventh-day Adventist could believe this. It is even more amazing that a man who is a leader in the church could believe it, and even more amazing still, that such a leader would share these concepts in written form, and most amazing of all, that one of our denominational presses would print such a tragic denial of God's wonderful protection of those who are seeking to reflect the character of Jesus.

In Elder Dick Duerksen's article, "How to Kill a Church," he sets out ten suggestions for the killing of a church. These points focus in again on God's protective standards, placing them in the most negative light. While it is possible to agree with some of Duerksen's points, this continuing bombardment against standards is sure to have its baneful effect upon the preparation of God's people for the kingdom of heaven.

Keep in mind that he enunciates his principles from ten down to one. Here are some examples of what Duerksen suggests:

Number 10. "Don't look at the Bridegroom [*sic*]. Focus instead on anyone else who happens to be in the area. Notice the hairdo, the jewelry, make-up (or lack of it) and clothing, compare what you see with what you know is required by God." While we would agree wholeheartedly that we must never lose sight of the Bridegroom, nevertheless,

which we were studying with her, but we decided the time had come to bring her to a decision concerning baptism and the full surrender of her life to Christ. We knew we could not broach baptism while she continued dressing in such a worldly fashion. For many months she, with her husband, had been attending church. However, our regular Wednesday visits afforded the most likely opportunity to deal with the jewelry and make-up issues. On Wednesday the pastor and I prayed earnestly that God would open the opportunity for one of us to address, as lovingly as possible, this issue of jewelry and make-up. But somehow the visit went by and neither of us introduced it. We decided that we would pray daily until our visit the following week.

As we were visiting across the breakfast bench, without warning the woman asked, "What are the rules of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on jewelry?" I knew that God was answering our prayers, and yet I did not know how to answer, so I asked her why she was asking that question. She said, "Well, I notice that none of the women in the church wear make-up or jewelry." What a wonderful testimony that was to that little Colfax Church in northern California! Then I proceeded to tell her that it was not so much the rules of the church, but it was that God was looking for a people who would fully reflect His char-

We recognize that God's warnings are just as much an evidence of a loving God as are His promises. To quote *The Great Controversy*, 656: "For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men." Further, "There is work to be done to enlighten, to warn. Holy characters are to be presented to the world to represent the power of sacred truths upon human hearts." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1212.

The concerted efforts exerted by many to seek to diminish the importance of God's protective standards, defy Inspiration's promise that God will have a perfect people when Christ returns. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24. The one hundred and forty-four thousand are declared to have the following characteristics: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4-5.

In like fashion Sister White depicts the faithful who will inherit eternity as being overcomers, "Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 187.

This is the time to turn a deaf ear to those who are calling for lowered standards in the church. Indeed, rather than the standards of God being the basis of discouraging people from coming to God's church, it is surely the increasing likeness to the fallen churches of Babylon that is discouraging people from accepting the words of truth. Every honest, sincere and earnest man and woman will delight to do the will of the Lord, for the law is written in their hearts. See Psalms 40:8. □

1998 Eatonville Camp Meeting

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News Watch

The Pope's recent apostolic letter entitled "*Dies Domini*" or "*The Lord's Day*" is a wake-up call for Seventh-day Adventists!

Tuesday, July 7, 1998, the Pope released on the Vatican's worldwide web (Internet) site a lengthy paper entitled *Dies Domini* (The Lord's Day). It is interesting to note that the Pope acknowledges that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "Celebration of the Creator's Work" (the title of chapter 1). However, at the end of the chapter he attempts to show that the sacredness was transferred to Sunday by the Lord's resurrection.

Chapter 4 is probably of greatest interest to most Seventh-day Adventists. It is entitled "*Dies Hominis*." Subtitled "*Sunday: Day of Joy, Rest and Solidarity*." In the section subheaded "*The day of rest*" the Pope notes the "blessing" of Sunday legislation in the fourth century (see paragraph #64), and then he states that "Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy." Par. #65-67.

It seems clear that the Pope is setting forth the idea that Christians must strive for civil laws that will set Sunday aside as a day of rest. It is our prayer that each reader may recognize this recent letter from the Pope as a loud wake-up call, and that each of us will be faithful

to our duty to herald the three angels' messages while our freedom remains.

We are sure that many of our readers would appreciate being able to read the paragraphs referred to above. (The paragraph numbers are as they appear in the original document.) We are reproducing the following paragraphs exactly as they appear in the Pope's letter without changing them to conform to our usual style.

—Editors

Excerpts From *Dies Domini* by Pope John Paul II:

From the Sabbath to Sunday

18. Because the Third Commandment depends upon the remembrance of God's saving works and because Christians saw the definitive time inaugurated by Christ as a new beginning, they made the first day after the Sabbath a festive day, for

that was the day on which the Lord rose from the dead. The Paschal Mystery of Christ is the full revelation of the mystery of the world's origin, the climax of the history of salvation and the anticipation of the eschatological fulfilment of the world. What God accomplished in Creation and wrought for his People in the Exodus has found its fullest expression in Christ's Death and Resurrection, though its definitive fulfilment will not come until the *Parousia*, when Christ returns in glory. In him, the "spiritual" meaning of the Sabbath is fully realized, as Saint Gregory the Great declares: "For us, the true Sabbath is the person of our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ".¹⁴ This is why the joy with which God, on humanity's first Sabbath, contemplates all that was created from nothing, is now expressed in the joy with which Christ, on Easter Sunday, appeared to his disciples, bringing the gift of peace and the gift of the Spirit (cf. *Jn* 20:19-23). It was in the Paschal Mystery that humanity, and with it the whole creation, "groaning in birth-pangs until now" (*Rom* 8:22), came to know its new "exodus" into the freedom of God's children who can cry out with Christ, "Abba, Father!" (*Rom*

8:15; Gal 4:6). In the light of this mystery, the meaning of the Old Testament precept concerning the Lord's Day is recovered, perfected and fully revealed in the glory which shines on the face of the Risen Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:6). We move from the "Sabbath" to the "first day after the Sabbath", from the seventh day to the first day: the *dies Domini* becomes the *dies Christi!* . . .

The day of rest

64. For several centuries, Christians observed Sunday simply as a day of worship, without being able to give it the specific meaning of Sabbath rest. Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognize the weekly recurrence, determining that on "the day of the sun" the judges, the people of the cities and the various trade corporations would not work.¹⁰⁷ Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made observance of the Lord's Day heroic. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common without hindrance.¹⁰⁸

It would therefore be wrong to see in this legislation of the rhythm of the week a mere historical circumstance with no special significance for the Church and which she could simply set aside. Even after the fall of the Empire, the Councils did not cease to insist upon the arrangements regarding Sunday rest. In countries where Christians are in the minority and where the festive days of the calendar do not coincide with Sunday, it is still Sunday which remains the Lord's Day, the day on which the faithful come together for the Eucharistic assembly. But this involves real sacrifices. For Christians it is not normal that Sunday, the day of joyful celebration, should not also be a day of rest, and it is difficult for them to keep Sunday holy if they do not have enough free time.

65. By contrast, the link between the Lord's Day and the day of rest in civil society has a meaning and importance which go beyond the distinctly Christian point of view. The alternation between work and rest, built into human nature, is willed by God himself, as appears in the creation story in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11): rest is something "sacred", because it is man's way of withdrawing from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew his awareness that everything is the work of God. There is a

risk that the prodigious power over creation which God gives to man can lead him to forget that God is the Creator upon whom everything depends. It is all the more urgent to recognize this dependence in our own time, when science and technology have so incredibly increased the power which man exercises through his work.

66. Finally, it should not be forgotten that even in our own day work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours—especially in the poorer regions of the world—or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man. When, through the centuries, she has made laws concerning Sunday rest,¹⁰⁹ the Church has had in mind above all the work of servants and workers, certainly not because this work was any less worthy when compared to the spiritual requirements of Sunday observance, but rather because it needed greater regulation to lighten

and women who, because of the lack of jobs, are forced to remain inactive on workdays as well.

67. Through Sunday rest, daily concerns and tasks can find their proper perspective: the material things about which we worry give way to spiritual values; in a moment of encounter and less pressured exchange, we see the true face of the people with whom we live. Even the beauties of nature—too often marred by the desire to exploit, which turns against man himself—can be rediscovered and enjoyed to the full. As the day on which man is at peace with God, with himself and with others, Sunday becomes a moment when people can look anew upon the wonders of nature, allowing themselves to be caught up in that marvellous and mysterious harmony which, in the words of Saint Ambrose, weds the many elements of the cosmos in a "bond of communion and peace" by "an inviolable law of concord and love".¹¹¹ Men and women then come to a deeper sense, as the Apostle says, that "every-

Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.

its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord's Day holy. In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spoke of Sunday rest as a worker's right which the State must guarantee.¹¹⁰

In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation which human dignity requires, together with the associated religious, family, cultural and interpersonal needs which are difficult to meet if there is no guarantee of at least one day of the week on which people can *both* rest and celebrate. Naturally, this right of workers to rest presupposes their right to work and, as we reflect on the question of the Christian understanding of Sunday, we cannot but recall with a deep sense of solidarity the hardship of countless men

thing created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim 4:4-5). If after six days of work—reduced in fact to five for many people—people look for time to relax and to pay more attention to other aspects of their lives, this corresponds to an authentic need which is in full harmony with the vision of the Gospel message. Believers are therefore called to satisfy this need in a way consistent with the manifestation of their personal and community faith, as expressed in the celebration and sanctification of the Lord's Day.

Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep

Sunday holy. In any case, they are obliged in conscience to arrange their Sunday rest in a way which allows them to take part in the Eucharist, refraining from work and activities which are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord's Day, with its characteristic joy and necessary rest for spirit and body.¹¹²

68. In order that rest may not degenerate into emptiness or boredom, it must offer spiritual enrichment, greater freedom, opportunities for contemplation and fraternal communion. Therefore, among the forms of culture and entertainment which society offers, the faithful should choose those which are most in keeping with a life lived in obedience to the precepts of the Gospel. Sunday rest then becomes "prophetic", affirming not only the absolute primacy of God, but also the primacy and dignity of the person with respect to the demands of social and economic life, and anticipating in a certain sense the "new heavens" and the "new earth", in which liberation from slavery to needs will be final and complete. In short, the Lord's Day thus becomes in the truest sense *the day of man* as well.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹⁴ "Verum autem sabbatum ipsum redemptorem nostrum Iesum Christum Dominum habemus": *Epist.* 13, 1: CCL 140A, 992.
- ¹⁰⁷ Cf. The Edict of Constantine, 3 July 321: *Codex Theodosianus* II, tit. 8, 1, ed. T. Mommsen, 12, p. 87; *Codex Iustiniani*, 3, 12, 2, ed. P. Krueger, p. 248.
- ¹⁰⁸ Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, 4, 18: PG 20, 1165.
- ¹⁰⁹ The most ancient text of this kind is can. 29 of the Council of Laodicea (second half of the fourth century): Mansi, II, 569-570. From the sixth to the ninth century, many Councils prohibited "*opera ruralia*". The legislation on prohibited activities, supported by civil laws, became increasingly detailed.
- ¹¹⁰ Cf. Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (15 May 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* 11 (1891), 127-128.
- ¹¹¹ *Hex.* 2, 1, 1: CSEL 321, 41.
- ¹¹² Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 1247; *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, Canon 881, 1; 4.

If you have access to the Internet, you may read a full copy of the pope's encyclical by pointing your web browser to the Vatican's worldwide web site (<http://www.vatican.va>) and clicking on "*Dies Domini*."

Those who do not have Internet access may write to Hope International and request a full copy. Please send a donation of \$3.50 to cover copying and postage costs.

Message of Warning

"Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced."
Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 408.

Rome's Arraignment of Sabbath Breakers

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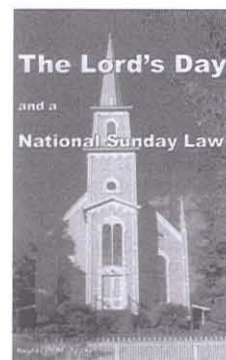
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Preparation for Baptism

THE preparation for baptism is a matter that needs to be carefully considered. The new converts to the truth should be faithfully instructed in the plain, "Thus saith the Lord." The Word of the Lord is to be read and explained to them point by point.

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says, "no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24. Again he says, "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. . . . Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the

kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:13-14, 21. The practicing of the truth is essential. The bearing of fruit testifies to the character of the tree. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts. There is need of a thorough conversion to the truth. We are not only to say, I believe, but to practice the truth.

Ellen G. White

The light of the Word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, soul, body, and spirit.

The question put to Christ by a lawyer was, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:17. There stood the wily priests and rulers expecting to hear from the lips of Christ an answer that would give them opportunity to condemn Him. He who reads every heart as an open book understood their purpose. Turning to the lawyer, Christ said unto him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Luke 10:26.

brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This conformity to the mind and will of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Before baptism there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidate. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirement of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism. Christ is represented as bearing the griefs and sorrows caused by sin, and He does this, not only as our sympathizing Friend, but as our Substitute. Therefore

"Thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2. These words are spoken to the repentant, believing soul. Wonderful Saviour! All need to understand the process of conversion. The fruit is seen in the changed life. True repentance will be shown to be sincere by producing fruit in good works. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character that we prove our connection with Him. We cannot depend on any other one to do our work for us. We must perform our duties for ourselves. We must work the will of God, and delight to do His commandments. Then we shall not lean upon anyone but Jesus Christ for support and efficiency.

One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need faithful instruction, is the subject of dress. In the examination of candidates for baptism this subject should not be lost sight of. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. True conversion of the heart will work wonderful changes in the outward appearance.

There should be no carelessness in dress. Teach the young converts that dress is a talent. For Christ's sake, whose property we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that the Lord has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolical. So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolical. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Good taste should be exercised in the selection of appropriate colors. Our dress should be tidy and well-fitting. The hair should be carefully arranged. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. But the Word of God gives us no sanction in making changes in our apparel merely for the sake of fashion, that we may appear like the world. When the desire for display in dress absorbs the

All need to understand the process of conversion. The fruit is seen in the changed life. True repentance will be shown to be sincere by producing fruit in good works.

He gave him an opportunity to answer his own question. And the lawyer answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Verses 27-28. Christ will not accept a divided heart. The life of the receiver of truth should witness to the change wrought by the transformation of character. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD." Isaiah 43:10. Why?—Because they have an indwelling Saviour, who works the mind and heart to reveal that love for Christ which leads them to do His will, not their own. They have that faith which works by love and purifies the soul.

There is need of a much more thorough preparation of the candidates for baptism than has been given them. Satan does not want anyone to see the necessity of an entire surrender to God. When the soul fails to make this surrender, sin is not forsaken; appetites and passions are striving for the mastery; temptations confuse the senses, so that true conversion may not take place. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be

our sins of selfishness, of unamiable temper, of indolence, of wrong habits and practices, are to be positively and firmly put away. The one who breaks with Satan is to give no place to his temptations. Let the souls who come to Christ consider that He is the Sin-bearer, "wounded for our transgressions, . . . bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matthew 8:17. All this is done for the sinner, and as the sinner comes to Christ, helpless, penitent, and humble; as he views the expensive expiation made in his behalf, let the repenting soul lay hold by faith of the provision made to save him, not **in** his sin, but **from** his sin. Christ as the Sin-bearer must take away the sin and rescue the sinner from his morbid spiritual condition. As he asks for a change of heart, the answer comes, "My son, give me thine heart." Proverbs 23:26. "A new heart also will I give you." Ezekiel 36:26. I will restore you to a pure, holy atmosphere, that you, being dead to sin, may live unto righteousness. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

mind, vanity is manifested. All this must be put away.

The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." 1 Timothy 2:9-10. And through the apostle Peter the instruction is given, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:3-4.

Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array of expensive ornaments. All this display imparts no value to the character. The Lord desires every converted person to put away the idea that dressing as worldlings dress will give value to our influence. The ornamentation of the person with jewels and luxurious things is a species of idolatry. This needless display reveals a love for those things which are supposed to place a value upon the person. It gives evidence to the world of a heart destitute of the inward adornment. Expensive dress and adornments of jewelry give an incorrect representation of the truth that should always be represented as of the highest value. An overdressed, outwardly adorned person bears the sign of inward poverty. A lack of spirituality is revealed.

Extravagance in dress requires the expenditure of means that are needed to advance the work of the Lord. Extra ribbons and bows mean pennies and shillings spent needlessly. The trimming of ladies' hats with high-standing bows is a needless expense, and it is unbecoming to a Christian. In the house of God the overtrimmed hats are a positive annoyance. The congregation desire to see the face of the speaker as well as to hear his voice; but the ladies' hats with their high-standing ribbons and bows, obscure the view. Many in the congregation may be seen peering this way and that to get a glimpse of the speaker; but often their efforts are in vain. Their enjoyment of the service is marred, and the minister, who observes all this, is disturbed.

Satan has a snare laid to captivate unwary souls by leading them to give

more attention to the outward adorning than to the inward graces which love of truth and righteousness display as the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. If the enemy can keep the minds of believers centered upon their dress and outward appearance, he is well pleased. They injure their influence, and the cause of truth which they profess to love.

Many indulge a passion for dress. They spend their money for that which is not bread, and are as foolish as was Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Many bar their own souls from entering the strait gate because they cannot indulge their love for display and

godliness. All such experiences are of the highest value. The usefulness of the Christian testifies to the genuineness of his conversion.

As those who claim to believe the truth give expression to the truth in appropriate dress and in their words and conduct, they are living epistles for God, known and read by all who behold them. Their chaste conversation is a sign of the inward adorning. They have enlarged influence; a field of usefulness is ever open before them. They are as signs in the world, perpetuating a saving knowledge of divine truth, as salt that has not lost its savour.

Wherever the grace of humility, a meek and quiet spirit, is cherished, the whole person will express the same. The grace of Christ in the heart finds expression in a dignified, decorous deportment.

yet believe in Christ and walk in His footsteps.

"If any man will come after me," said Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew 16:24. Self-denial and self-sacrifice will mark the Christian's life. Evidence that the taste is really converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk the narrow path of holiness, the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in.

Christians should not neglect to search the Scriptures on these points. They need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. Those who are earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired of God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel. Their dress bears its testimony to their own family, to the church and the world, that they are being purified from vanity and selfishness. They demonstrate that they are not idolaters.

Wherever the grace of humility, a meek and quiet spirit, is cherished, the whole person will express the same. The grace of Christ in the heart finds expression in a dignified, decorous deportment. The truth is manifest in the flesh. And truth lived always has an influence in favor of the truth, testifying of practical

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—the same Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God. John 1:14. Through His own life in human nature, Christ has revealed to us His methods of usefulness in saving souls. His character is to be revealed in His followers. The reception of the great testing truths for these last days never makes the receiver coarse and rough and uncourteous, harsh in conversation and spirit. The truth genuinely believed is a reality to the receiver. It never degrades, but always refines, elevates, and ennobles the receiver. Through sanctification of the Spirit it makes him an agency through whom the unseen angels of God work out His holy principles.

The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. Faithful, Christian men and women should have an intense interest to bring the convicted soul to a correct knowledge of righteousness in Christ Jesus. If any have allowed the desire of pleasure or the love of dress to become supreme, so that any portion of their mind, soul, and strength, is devoted to selfish indulgences, the faithful believers should watch for these souls as they that must give an account. They must not neglect the faithful, tender, loving instruction so essential to the

young converts, that there may be no half-hearted work. The very first experiences should be right. If those who have been long in the way will try to help the one who is just beginning the Christian course, they will often be as the Lord's living agencies. All who will be true and faithful in the performance of their duty are representatives of Christ, the true Shepherd. If all realized the conflict which each soul must wage with Satanic agencies that are seeking to ensnare and entice and deceive, there would be much more diligent labor done for those who are young in the faith.

The atmosphere of the world is charged with spiritual malaria. All who accept of Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour must count themselves dead to all things in their life conduct that Christ would not approve. These newborn souls seldom have sufficient instruction. They are left too much to themselves, and are often tempted, and do not discern the evil of the temptation. Let these souls newly come to the faith feel that it is their privilege to solicit counsel. If they seek the society of those who can help them, they will soon possess the refined taste that will ever choose the company of those who love and fear God. Our conversation with these souls should be of a spiritual, encouraging character. The Lord marks the conflict of every weak, doubting, struggling soul, and He will help all who call upon Him. They will see Heaven open before them, and angels of God ascending and descending the ladder of shining brightness which they are trying to climb.

After the believing soul has received the ordinance of baptism, he is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. These three all cooperate in the great work of the covenant made by baptism in the sight of the heavenly universe. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit receive the believing soul into covenant relation with God.

All who study the life of Christ and practice His teaching will become like Christ. Their influence will be like His. They will reveal soundness of character. They are established in the faith, and will not be overcome by the devil because of vanity and pride. They seek to walk the humble path of obedience, doing the will of God. Their character exerts an influence that tells for the advancement of the cause of God and the healthful purity of His work.

By the reception of the doctrines revealed and the performance of the duties required in the Word of God, the professed followers of Christ are to witness to the world of their unity with Christ. They are to show that they have been given to Christ by His Father, and are overcomers through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. They love Him who hath redeemed them. They increase in knowledge of Christ through exemplifying His character. And they cherish expectations that will not be disappointed: they expect to see His face and to rejoice in the sunshine of His countenance.

In these thoroughly converted souls the world has a witness to the sanctifying power of truth upon the human character. Through them Christ makes known to the world His character and will. In the lives of God's children is revealed the blessedness of serving the Lord, and the opposite is seen in those who do not keep His commandments. The line of demarcation is distinct. All who obey God's commandments are kept by His mighty power amid the corrupting influence of the transgressors of His law. From the lowliest subject to the highest in positions of trust, they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

In His prayer to the Father, Christ says of His followers, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I

in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John 17:22-23. O what possibilities and probabilities are for God's people if they will humble themselves and exalt the Lord Jesus!

In His prayer the Saviour says further, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Verses 24-26.

The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is an exaltation above everything that is esteemed in earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the very key that opens to us the portals of heaven, that we may obtain eternal life, an immortal inheritance, and eternal substance. All who have this knowledge are constantly advancing heavenward. They have a good report in their own family, in the church, and in the world. □

Manuscript 56, 1900 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 155-165).

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Rules for Discerning True Prophets

The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel Church Part 5

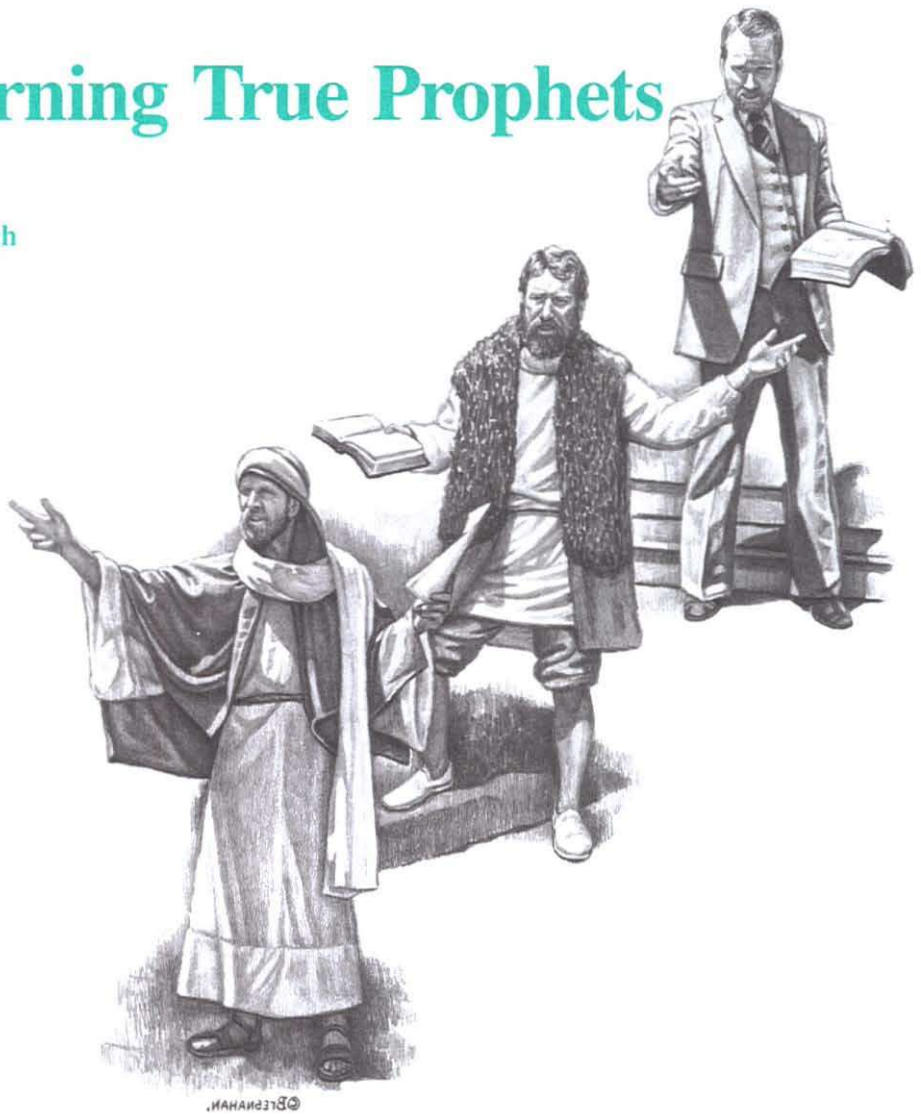
THE prophet Isaiah, in speaking of the situation of affairs existing in the last days, says: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. . . . And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:16-20.

In this scripture attention is called to a people engaged in restoring the seal to God's law—a people who are waiting upon the Lord, engaged in His service. They are looking for Him; that is, they are looking for His coming—this, too, in a time when spirits, professing to be spirits of the dead, are asking the people to seek to them. Some heed that call, and seek to the dead for knowledge; but the Lord invites His people to seek to Him. That is virtually saying that if they seek to Him He will give them special instruction. They need not seek to the dead, who can give them no information; for "neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun;" and "the dead know not any thing." Ecclesiastes 9:6, 5.

Rule One

In the above scripture a rule is given by which all communications are to be tested: "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." All communications from the Lord will speak in harmony with His Word and His law.

Applying this rule to the writings of Mrs. White, I would say that during the last fifty-eight years I have carefully read her Testimonies, comparing them with



the law of God and the testimony of the Bible, and I find perfect harmony between the two. Her instructions do not come in to give any new revelation to take the place of the Scripture, but rather to show where and how, in these times, people are liable to be led astray, to be led from the Word. The position that the Testimonies of Mrs. White occupy can be best told in what she herself has written respecting them:

"The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But, notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed Testimonies, bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow. . . . Additional truth

is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse. . . . The Testimonies are not to belittle the Word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 663, 665.

Rule Two—True Prophets

By looking at the testimony of the apostle John, we find another rule describing the teaching of true prophets. He says:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that

J. N. Loughborough

confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:1-3.

Note carefully the foregoing scripture. It does not say whosoever confesses that Jesus Christ "did come in the flesh," but, "IS COME IN THE FLESH;" that is, that He comes, by His Spirit, and dwells IN US, in response to our faith. This, in fact, is the central truth of the gospel, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27; see also Ephesians 3:17. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

The practical theme found in all of Mrs. White's writings is the necessity of an indwelling Saviour if we would make any advancement in the heavenly way. Her writings teach the necessity of Christ first, last, and all the time. As an illustration of this fact, attention is called to her book, "*Steps to Christ*," of which more than one hundred thousand copies have been sold in English, to say nothing of the thousands of copies in more than twenty foreign languages in which it is now printed. [This article was first published in 1911. As of this year (1998) *Steps To Christ* has been printed in approximately 140 languages, and millions

of copies printed in English and in various foreign languages have been sold and distributed all over the world.]

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teach "smooth things," instead of exalting "the Holy One of Israel." See Isaiah 30:10-11. Anyone who reads even a few pages of Mrs. White's writings, can see that they are in the direct line of self-denial and cross-bearing—not of a nature to please a worldly, carnal heart. See 1 John 2:10.

Rule Four

In tracing this subject still further, we will take, as a fourth rule, the words of the apostle James: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." James 5:10. When we read the experience of those ancient prophets, we learn that one of their greatest trials was to see Israel reject, or go contrary to, the plain testimony borne to them. A brief study of those times will show at once the character of both true and false prophets. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD." Jeremiah 23:16.

There is nothing in the writings of Mrs. White to make the reader vain; but, as expressed by another: "I have

own heart, No evil shall come upon you." Verse 17.

As to the nature of Mrs. White's teachings in her Testimonies, I will quote the following words from a careful reader: "I find the most earnest appeals to obey God, to love Jesus, to believe the Scriptures, and to search them constantly. Such nearness to God, such earnest devotion, such solemn appeals to live a holy life, can only be prompted by the Spirit of God."

True and False Prophets Compared

When considering the character of the Lord's prophets in ancient times, the trait of faithfulness in reproofing sins, even when surrounded by a vastly superior number of false prophets, is particularly noticeable. Their testimony is not withheld from the highest in authority; even kings were not exempt from reproof, as is seen in the case of Elijah before Ahab:

Because of Israel's departure from the true worship of God, the Lord brought famine upon the land. In response to Elijah's petition, rain for the space of three years and six months had been withheld. Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. . . . And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." 1 Kings 18:1-2,17-18.

Often has the writer heard Mrs. White advise persons as to what they would do, and they would protest that they **never** would do it. She would say, "If you do it not, the Lord has not spoken by me." Notwithstanding their protest, they did, at last, the thing they had solemnly declared they would **never** do.

Rule Five—True Prophecies Are Fulfilled

There is a statement made by Moses relative to the true and the false prophets, found in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, which, in our consideration of rules for discerning true and false prophets, may be designated as rule **five**. He says: "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD

The practical theme found in all of Mrs. White's writings is the necessity of an indwelling Saviour if we would make any advancement in the heavenly way.

of copies printed in English and in various foreign languages have been sold and distributed all over the world.]

Rule Three—False Prophets

John gives a rule for detecting false prophets, which we designate as rule three. Speaking of false prophets, the apostle says, "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." 1 John 4:5. This shows that the teachings of false prophets will pander to the carnal heart, instead of exalting the self-denying and cross-bearing way. False prophets will

received great spiritual benefit times without number from the Testimonies. Indeed, I never read them without feeling reproof for my lack of faith in God, lack of devotion, and lack of earnestness in saving souls." Surely, then, the effect of Mrs. White's Testimonies is vastly different from that of the teachings of false prophets, as described by Jeremiah.

The prophet tells us also how the false prophets will teach: "They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his

hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Verses 21-22.

The same thing is also found in the following scriptures: "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" Lamentations 3:37. Of the prophet Samuel it was said, "All that he saith cometh surely to pass." 1 Samuel 9:6. "When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him." Jeremiah 28:9.

It is now over fifty-eight years [1911] since the writer first saw Mrs. E. G. White in prophetic vision. During these years many prophetic statements have been made by her relative to things that would take place. Some of these predictions relate to events already fulfilled, and some are in process of fulfillment, while others are still future. As to those relating to the past or present events, I know not of a single instance of failure. Before noting some of the predictions made during these fifty-eight years, it may be well to note some that were made previously, which were in print in 1852.

Before me lies a book published by Joseph Bates, in January 1849, entitled "*A Seal of the Living God*." In the book is an account of a vision given to Mrs. White in the home of Otis Nichols, Dorchester, Massachusetts, on the evening of November 18, 1848. At that time there was a condition of war, rioting, and confusion, which began on the twenty-second of February of that year, in the city of Paris, France, and had spread to over thirty of the principalities, states, and governments of Europe. Modern Spiritualism began its "rappings" at Hydesville, New York, about the same time that the stir among the nations began. The First-day Adventists claimed that this stir among the nations was the rally to the battle of the great day of the Lord, and that the "rapping spirits" were the spirits of devils, going forth to gather the nations, as predicted in Revelation 16:14, and that the Lord was immediately coming.

At that time the few who had begun to observe the seventh-day Sabbath had just discovered, from the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation, a "sealing message," which must go forth to prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. These few said, "The last great battle cannot come yet; for here is a sealing work to prepare a people to stand in that great day." Mr. and Mrs. White and Mr. Bates were the three public laborers who were then teaching the

Sabbath truth and the "sealing message." They, with the few who had already accepted the message, were among the very poor of the world.

On the evening already mentioned, these laborers and other brethren met at Otis Nichols' home, to pray the Lord to guide

money with which to print it. It will be a success from the first. From that small beginning it [the publishing work] was shown to me as streams of light that went around the entire world."

The few believers had faith in that prediction, but were without money to begin

As they prayed, Mrs. White was taken off in vision. While in vision, she said of the Sabbath truth: "It is the seal!"

them in publishing the "sealing message" to the world. As they prayed, Mrs. White was taken off in vision. While in vision, she said of the Sabbath truth: "It is the seal! That truth arises, and is on the increase, **stronger** and **stronger**. It is coming up! It arises, commencing from the rising of the sun. Like the sun, at first cold, it grows warmer and sends its rays. The angels are holding the four winds. It is God that restrains the powers. The angels have **not** let go; for the saints are **not** all sealed. When Michael stands up, this trouble will be all over the earth. They [the winds of war, etc.] are just ready to blow. There is a check put on because the saints are not sealed. Yea, publish the things thou hast seen and heard, and the blessing of God will attend."

At the time that vision was given, it did really look as if the nations of the world would soon be in a "whirlwind" of war. Of the situation, United States Senator Choate said, "It has seemed to me as if the prerogatives of crowns, and the rights of men, and the hoarded-up resentments of a thousand years, were about to unsheathe the sword for a conflict in which blood shall flow, as in apocalyptic vision, 'to the bridles of the horses.'"

In a few months the nations were all quiet again; but this change came on so unexpectedly that Horace Greeley, in speaking of it in the New York *Tribune*, said, "It was a great wonder to politicians what started all that turmoil of the nations, but a greater wonder still **what** stopped it all so suddenly."

After coming out of the vision already spoken of, Mrs. White said to her husband: "I saw that you must begin to print a paper, small at first; but as you send it out to the people, they will read it, and will send you

the work. Many prayers were offered to God to open the way. In June 1849 the way opened up for Mr. White to have an opportunity to mow forty acres of grass with a handsythe. With the money thus obtained, in July 1849 he printed the first number of a small paper entitled *Present Truth*. During 1849-50, eleven numbers of this paper were printed. In No. 5 we read this statement, which was written by Mr. White: "The money our readers have sent in has been more than enough to print the paper. With the remainder we have met the expenses of Mrs. White and myself as we went from place to place to hold meetings." So it was a "success from the first."

How from that "small beginning" has the published truth "gone around the world"! At the present time Seventh-day Adventists have twenty-seven publishing houses in different parts of the world. In these houses over seventy steam-power presses are used. This truth is issued from these offices in sixty-seven languages of the world. The literature of the denomination in these languages consists of over 2,700 different books, pamphlets, and tracts, and 126 periodicals, either weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Each one of the smallest papers is about the size of the first paper, *Present Truth*. Up to January 1911 over eleven million dollars' worth of the books had been sold. Publishing houses, sanitariums, schools, and missions are established twice around the world—both north and south of the equator. That prediction, which looked "preposterous" to our opponents in 1848, is surely in a well-advanced state of fulfillment in 1911. □

The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel Church, 65-76.

Ellen G. White: Critics and Criticism

Part 2

From time to time we become aware of someone who is sharing his criticisms of the writings of Ellen G. White. Sadly, even some Seventh-day Adventists who once held the Spirit of Prophecy in high regard, have made an about-face, and are now doing all they can to promote what they consider to be the "truth" concerning Adventism's "false prophet."

We do believe Ellen White's prophetic gift should be tested by the Scriptures, and there is a place for honest questions. However, we have yet to be confronted with a criticism that does not fall into one of two categories: (1) There is what seems to be a reasonable answer to the question or criticism, that does not diminish our understanding of the inspiration, role, and authority of Ellen White's gift of prophecy; or (2) the criticism seems to be of such a minor nature that we can be satisfied that we do not have all the answers at this time, and that God will one day explain all our perplexities.

Because many of the criticisms regarding the work of Ellen White are repeating issues that have been raised for decades—some since long before Ellen White passed away—we felt it would be helpful to our many readers for us to reproduce the following overview, which is taken from chapter 22 of T. Housel Jemison's book entitled *A Prophet Among You*, published in 1955. Copies of this book are available in some Adventist Book Centers.

For a more thorough treatment of any of the charges, we highly recommend F. D. Nichol's book *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*. —EDITORS

Critics charge that numerous predictions made by Ellen G. White have failed of being fulfilled. Is



this so? The prediction most commonly brought up is one made in 1856, currently published in *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 131-132: "I was shown the company present at the conference. Said the angel: 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.'" All present at the conference are dead, says the critic, therefore Ellen White is a false prophet. We freely admit that during the century that has passed since that conference those who were in attendance have died. But we do not admit that the critic's conclusion based on this fact is a necessary conclusion. On the contrary, a consideration of all the facts involved shows the conclusion to be wholly unwarranted.

As a basis for considering this problem, it would be profitable to review the matter of conditional prophecy. . . . All of God's promises of blessing or threatenings of punishment are made upon condition, whether or not the condition is specifically stated. God's ultimate purposes, of course, cannot be altered by any decision of man, but the coming of blessing or punishment in fulfillment of the prediction is dependent upon whether man's relationship with God remains the same or changes. That was true with Jonah; it was true with the children of Israel throughout their history.

The fact of the second advent of Christ cannot be altered by anything that man can do. Christ will return the second time to gather the righteous and destroy

T. Housel Jemison

the wicked, then again to create a new earth as a home for His people. All the combined hosts of men and evil angels cannot alter that fact. But there is a place where men come into the picture. Peter tells us that it is possible for men to hasten the day of Christ's return. "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God!" 2 Peter 3:11-12, RSV. If it is possible for men to hasten the Lord's return, obviously it is possible for them to delay it by their failure to complete the work entrusted to them to be done in their own lives and for others.

What is the bearing of all this on the question of the conference of 1856?—Simply this: The obvious intent of the words spoken by the angel and heard by Mrs. White in vision was to convey the idea that Christ was to return during the lifetime of some who were present at the conference. Now, as far as we know, all those persons are dead. Does that mean that Christ is not going to return?—Not at all. But it raises the question as to whether some change has come about that has made it necessary for the Lord to delay His return—even as the destruction of Nineveh was delayed beyond the days of the prophet Jonah. During the years following this prediction, while there was still abundant opportunity for it to be fulfilled to the letter, Ellen White gave a number of indications that conditions among God's people were such that they were even then delaying the Second Advent:

"To become impatient now would be to lose all our earnest, preserving watching heretofore. The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 194 (1868).

"If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people." *The Great Controversy*, page 291 (1886),

or page 458 of the current trade edition.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 450 (1900).

The fact that we see today that there was sin in the lives of some of the Bible prophets after they had been called to the prophetic office in no wise invalidates the instruction God gave through them.

"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 (1901).

These are only a few of the statements that run in this vein. The prediction of 1856 has not been fulfilled, but the reasons are clearly given. We cannot regard predictions given through Ellen White in an entirely different light from that in which we look at Bible predictions. Both must be viewed from the same point.

In dealing with any prediction, either in the Bible or in these messages for the last days, we must be careful to learn all the facts possible involved in its fulfillment or its nonfulfillment. This is not a matter to be dealt with on the basis of what appears on the surface, but one for careful consideration before any conclusion is reached. The Nichol book (pp. 102, 112) touches on a number of predictions that critics claim are unfulfilled. Attention should be given to them so that one is at least aware of the criticism and knows where to turn for help in finding an answer.

The Life of the Prophet

Of only One is it written that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15. The rest of us are characterized by the words of Paul: "All have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. The classification fits each individual—whether prophet or not. The fact that we see today that there was sin in the lives of some of the Bible prophets after they had been called to the prophetic office in no wise invalidates the instruction God gave through them. God knew the kind

of men He was dealing with and did the best He could with the material He had to work with. Today, what we remember about these men is not the sin that was in their lives, but the truth of the gospel that God chose to reveal through them. Prophets needed the working of that gospel in their own hearts as did the people to whom they preached and wrote.

Critics have tried to build a case against accepting the teachings of Ellen White by attempting to show that her life was not always in full harmony with her teachings. Most certainly we would not try to establish that after revelation from God began to come to this messenger, she never made another mistake and always acted in complete accord with every detail of the instruction she passed on to the church. This would be placing her in a class apart from and above ancient prophets. On the other hand, the critic is unjustified in holding Ellen White to a standard to which neither he nor anyone else holds Bible prophets. What has been said is not for the purpose of preparing the way to say that the critics have been right in some of their charges against Mrs. White's personal experience, but that that is something to be expected. The facts are that it is relatively easy to show that in the matters usually selected by the critics to build their case against Mrs. White's character, her course of action was not contrary to the principles she taught. Perhaps meeting three charges will be sufficient to show the tenor of the criti-

cisms and make it plain that the facts dispel the charges:

Health Reform

A frequently heard charge is that Ellen White did not live according to the health-reform principles she taught. One point that is emphasized is that she used flesh as food after giving instruction that the flesh diet should be abandoned. It is not necessary to review here what has been said on the subject of flesh diet; we are dealing only with Ellen White's relation to the counsel. A

by some that I have not followed the principles of health reform as I have advocated them with my pen; but I can say that I have been a faithful health reformer. Those who have been members of my family know that this is true." In this instance one must make a choice—between the word of the critic and the word of the one who has borne such a multitude of messages of truth. Some have gone so far as to say that during the last days of Mrs. White's life she called for and ate meat. While she makes no comment that late, the testimony of one

a considerable sum of money. Then did her practice differ widely from her teaching? The facts concerning why and how her debts were incurred and how they were liquidated, present a picture very different from the critics' representations:

Mrs. White always lived economically. No indebtedness was incurred to supply her needs. But demands upon her for the work of the Lord were heavy, both for donations to worthy enterprises and for the publishing of her books. At times she found it necessary to borrow money to meet these demands. She did so knowing that there was an assured income from her book royalties to meet the resulting obligations. As she neared the end of her life there were a number of projects that she wished to see completed before her death. To accomplish these ends in the furtherance of the Lord's work, she mortgaged the assured future income from her books.

In harmony with the provisions of her will (February 1912), all obligations standing at the time of her death have been cleared from the income she designated for that purpose. No loss was sustained by any private individual or by the denomination. Since the obligations have been met, all royalties on the Ellen White books are paid into the treasury of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. When the facts are known there is no occasion for criticism. Additional information will be found in F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, 523.

Owning Property

Did Ellen White hold large and valuable properties at the same time that she counseled the members of the church to dispose of all they had and give to the Lord? There are critics who maintain that this was the case.

Perhaps we should note first that we have no record of Ellen White's telling Seventh-day Adventists that the time had come for all to sell all their property and give the money to the church. She did counsel against adding lands to lands, and property to property, for the sake of the accumulation of wealth. But she also taught that it was good for people to own their own homes, and lay a little money aside to care for themselves in case of emergency. See *The Adventist Home*, 372-373, 395. She indicated that the disposition of property was an individual matter, and that if the earnest Christian

It is true that in her writings Ellen White frequently warned against debt. She spoke against personal and institutional debts arising from failure to manage so that income would meet expenses.

good summary of the instruction will be found in *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 373. Mrs. White's experience as a health reformer appears as an appendix to the book. See *ibid.*, 481-494.

In 1864 Ellen White wrote: "Since the Lord presented before me, in June, 1863, the subject of meat eating in relation to health, I have left the use of meat. . . . I have lived for nearly one year without meat." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, 153. But, says the critic, it is known that Mrs. White ate meat after that time. He is right, but he is not producing evidence of something that had been hidden by Mrs. White. The eating of flesh was not her practice, but in 1890 she stated clearly: "When I could not obtain the food I needed, I have sometimes eaten a little meat; but I am becoming more and more afraid of it." *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 394. In 1895 she wrote: "Since the camp meeting at Brighton (January 1894) I have absolutely banished meat from my table. It is an understanding that whether I am at home or abroad, nothing of this kind is to be used in my family, or come upon my table." *Ibid.*, 488.

But, the critic continues, "We are informed, by those who knew, that she used flesh after that time." In a section in *Testimonies*, volume 9, 159, dealing directly with this subject, Ellen White, in 1909, commented on this: "It is reported

who cared for her during her last illness will be of interest. Speaking of the time she spent as Ellen White's nurse during the last months of her life, Mrs. Carrie Hungerford wrote: "In regard to her changing her ideas about health reform, she never did. Why should she, when the Lord had shown her about it? She never ate meat or fish, nor were they in her house. Even butter was not served on her table while I was there.

"I was sent on duty by the [Saint Helena] Sanitarium the a.m. following Sister White's accident, February 1915, and was with her until she breathed her last, July 16. Friday night as the sun was setting, she passed to her rest." Letter to Alonzo J. Wearner, January 11, 1953.

The facts do not support the critics' charges.

Debt

A charge that has been freely circulated is one to the effect that, although Mrs. White taught that the members of the church should shun debt as they would leprosy, she died heavily in debt and that the church had to meet these obligations. It is true that in her writings Ellen White frequently warned against debt. She spoke against personal and institutional debts arising from failure to manage so that income would meet expenses. It is also true that she died owing

placed his property in the hands of the Lord, it would be made plain to him when he should sell it. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 734.

What about her own property holdings? At the time usually pointed out by the critics, Ellen White owned about two hundred acres of land. Of this seemingly large area, held for a few years by Mrs. White, one hundred and twenty acres were a wooded hillside, purchased for \$550 so that the wood might be cut for fuel for herself and her workers. Some timber was sold to neighbors, and needy persons were given employment cutting wood. One hundred and twenty acres may sound like a good deal of land, but its value, \$4.58 an acre, was small, except for the purpose for which it had been purchased. After the timber had been cut from the hillside, the land was traded for some lots in the town of Saint Helena, a few miles from Mrs. White's Elmshaven home. Some of the lots were donated for the purpose of building a church school in Saint Helena. It also forms the site of our church there. The remaining land was not extensive and its valuation was not high. Possession of a home on a moderate-sized plot of farm and grazing land is not out of harmony with the principles set out in Mrs. White's writings. See Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, 520.

Conclusion

What sort of conclusion should we draw from this brief review of a few of the charges made against Ellen White and her work?

Perhaps we are not as yet ready to draw final conclusions other than that it is never safe to accept any charge of a critic without making much careful investigation and gathering as many facts as possible about the case in hand. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that the life and work of Ellen White do not suffer as a result of honest investigation. The more the whole experience is studied, the more firmly one becomes convinced that here are messages sent from God through a messenger whose earnest endeavor was to live a life matched to the messages. □

FOOTNOTES:

* Most of the material regarding the charges against Mrs. White is drawn from F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, where all the major charges against Mrs. White are dealt with in considerable detail. See p. 62. It is not

the purpose in this chapter to duplicate what has been done in the Nichol book concerning any one of these problems. In each case the details should be studied from that work. In the present chapter we are dealing only with methods of approach and introducing instances solely for illustration, not for the purpose of fully refuting the charges.

** F. D. Nichol's account contains a detailed study of all the deletions. See *Ellen G. White*

and *Her Critics*, 619. "A Word to the Little Flock" is available in pamphlet form from the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and is reproduced in an appendix to the Nichol book. The *Present Truth* article will be found in the volume of *Facsimiles of the Two Earliest S.D.A. Periodicals*.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Evangelism & Revival Department
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Camp Morning Star
Barton Flats, Highway 38

Calistoga, CA September 24-27

Napa County Fairgrounds
1435 Oak Street

Puyallup, WA September 26

Edgewood Grange Hall
1806 Meridian East

Milton-Freewater, OR October 3

Senior Center
311 N. Main

Eatonville, WA October 4-10

Medical Missionary Training Seminar
Life Abundant Missionary Institute

Puyallup, WA October 24

Edgewood Grange Hall
1806 Meridian East

Eatonville, WA November 16-20

Hope International's Fall Week of Prayer
Tom and Alane Waters family
Life Abundant Missionary Institute

Eatonville, WA November 21

Tom and Alane Waters
Life Abundant Missionary Institute

Divine Energy, or Human Power?

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting yielded and still.”

We believe these words, but are we really willing for Him to have His own way? Are we really yielded, or are we persistently rationalizing and justifying our outbursts and indulgences of “self”? Or maybe we’ve been trying to do the will of God in the power of our own will? This means we’re trying to make ourselves do what is right because we have to, but we’re not choosing to have “self” surrendered to God to receive **His** power to accomplish it.

Yes, we may do the right thing. It may even look good on the surface, but it’s still humanity doing it alone. Friends, will power is not the power over temptation. Will power is our God-given power of choice. It is the power to choose to remain in, or gain, a connection with God, who will give us the power to overcome the temptation. That is why James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God.” This has often been the missing link in our warfare with “self” during the battle against temptation. Submission to God is the right action of the will. Our first work is **not** to fight against temptation or to choose to resist the devil by human will power alone. **It is to surrender the thought, word or action to God, depending upon Him for the power to do that which is right, cooperating with Him continuously.** Sadly, many of us have misunderstood this first step which we need to take when temptation comes. Let me illustrate:

A family was visiting us in our home. Their two children and our three were

busy doing their home schooling. Their mother had been doing some corrections and had brought them to their attention. Then the battle of “self” began as both children protested, debated and tried to negotiate with their mother. The older child did make the right decision, and yielded a full surrender to the Father in heaven, which was immediately evidenced by a sweet disposition and acceptance of the mother’s will.

However, there was an obvious contrast between the surrender of the older child and the stubborn refusal and obstinacy of the younger. Finally, in what appeared to be futile desperation, the mother threatened the younger child with what would happen if there was no change before the father returned. The change (or should I say the compliance) came almost



instantly as the child stopped arguing and began doing the corrections. But there was a scowl on the face and a coldness in the eyes which was carried with the child for a good share of the day. Had this child made a decision using the will?—Yes! Did it enable an outward conformity to mother’s will?—Yes! Was there real submission to God’s will?—No! And was there really a surrender to the mother’s

will?—No! Was this decision empowered by grace?—No!

You see, friends, will power alone is not the power over temptation and sin. Will power is not **divine power**, but it must be used to connect us with **divine power**, which is the **power** for true victory over self and sin.

In *The Desire of Ages*, 466, we are told, “When we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a **power** out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the **divine energy** of the Holy Spirit, and they [the powers of the soul] obey the dictates of the will [our choice] in fulfilling the will of God.” (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

How does this reference apply to the children in our illustration?—Both children were tempted; both experienced the initial giving way to the flesh as seen in argument and justification of self, and both of them used their will to make a decision to do what their mother had requested. Here’s the difference: The first child had a desire to seek “a **power** out of and above” himself. His will was used to seek that **power**, to place his will in submission to that **power**, and to receive “the **divine energy**” to bear righteous fruit

that only comes from that **power**. The second child did use the will, the power of choice, not to surrender self and take hold of **divine power**, but instead, as will power to “grit the teeth” and force “self” to do what mother had said, rather than face the consequences of father’s disapproval. The child was miserable; “self” was unsubdued, and its negative effects were experienced by others.

Tom Waters

It is vital to our daily Christian walk that we recognize how we are really coping with temptation. For years, I thought I understood the will, until God helped me reflect upon what was really taking place. For most of us, our first reaction to temptation is to justify why we should be irritated, why we should speak these words to our spouse, and why our temptation and circumstances are different from others. Or, second, because we want to do right, we try to “grit our teeth,” stand our ground, and live our religion in our own strength—and very often in the wrong spirit. This is where we’re missing it—we are either justifying and rationalizing “self,” or trying hard to resist the flesh in our own might—but without **divine power**.

We are so busy in one or the other of these two scenarios that we are totally missing the call that comes from our Lord during every temptation. “My son, give me thine heart.” Proverbs 23:26. When temptation comes, our first question needs to be, Do I want to stay in vital connection with God and do His will? Or, if I’m not connected, Do I want to make that connection in order to receive “a **power** out of and above” myself right now?

It makes more sense to me that we are admonished twice on page 47 of *Steps to Christ* to understand the “**true force** of the will,” and to recognize that “everything depends on the **right action** of the will.” The “**true force**” comes when the “right action of the will” is taken. When I add this missing ingredient, I realize I must use my will to keep myself in a truly submissive and surrendered position to God’s will instead of using my power of choice—my will—to excuse and defend “self” or as a “teeth-gritting” power to conquer temptation.

Here is a simple illustration:

Because we travel quite often, my wife, Alane, has become efficient at preparing and serving meals on the road. Often these meals include some tasty, healthful dessert which I enjoy. On one occasion we had finished a series of meetings and were on our way home, eating as we drove. It was just about time for that special dessert to come out when I felt this unmistakable irritation in my throat. To me it meant the first symptom of a sore throat. It also meant the first sign of a temptation ahead and the faithful call of God, “My son, give me thine heart.”

Let me tell you what was going quickly through my mind. I knew that the little irritation in my throat was a warning to

me that my body was in a weakened condition. My meals had been off schedule, and I had been going to bed late. Being involved in all of the meetings, I had been talking a lot more, and my body needed some rest! Even though it was sweetened with honey or dates, the dessert would still be sweet, and it would work against my immune system. In an

religion of Christ without the **power** of Christ.

Christ’s Object Lessons, 96–97, says it this way: “Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be effected. . . . The **renewing energy** must come from God. . . . There are many who try to reform by correcting this or

Quietly the Lord impressed this thought upon my mind: “I’m not telling you that you can’t eat the dessert. I just want to know if you want to do My will right now.”

instant I recalled a special meal of home-made waffles, banana smoothie, toast and whipped honey. The Lord had prompted me to be temperate with that delicious honey. But I liked the honey! So I rationalized away the call to my heart and overused the honey. I justified the clamorings of “self” and soon reaped the consequences. In about three hours I had a sore throat, which was followed by a cold. Now here I was again, this time driving down the road, and God was calling to my heart. What would I do this time?

The first question was, Will I do what I want to do, or will I honestly yield my will and inclinations to choose what God wants me to do? I wanted to begin a debate with the Lord about how healthy the dessert was and how it would be okay to eat it. Quietly the Lord impressed this thought upon my mind: “I’m not telling you that you can’t eat the dessert. I just want to know if you want to do My will right now.” God was trying to spare me from sickness—not deprive me of dessert.

As I remembered that God had never asked me to give up anything, except for my own good, I gave Him my willing submission. Then I received the promised **divine energy** to make the decision to pass up the dessert. In times past I might have used my will to choose not to eat the dessert because I felt obligated to, or guilty if I ate it with the symptoms of a sore throat. There is far too much of this kind of “arms crossed,” scowly faced, “I have to” kind of religion among professing Christians today. It’s trying to live the

that bad habit, . . . but they are beginning in the wrong place. **Our first work is with the heart.**”

There it is: “**Our first work is with the heart.**” Or, we could say, **our first work is with the will. Am I willing to be molded to God’s will, or will I stubbornly hold to “self’s way”?** We must choose “**not what I will, but what thou wilt,**” or we will choose to justify ourselves and resist the call. If my will is not surrendered, doing the will of God is arduous and is not true obedience: it is the work of the flesh.

In the little situation with the dessert, the pivotal point between the drudgery of “I have to” and the joy of obedience was in the first decision. God says, “My son, give me thine heart.” My son, before you go any further in this temptation, decide whether you want to stay connected to **My divine power**. Decide whether you want to manage yourself, your way, or if you want Me to manage you and have My will be done. As I yielded a willing surrender, the “**renewing energy**” was provided to not only choose against the dessert, but to do it so willingly that it was not even noticed as a struggle by my family.

How does this “**renewing energy**” operate? Is it tangible?—Yes, it’s as tangible in the Christian walk as it was to the man by the pool of Bethesda. It is real energy to live the daily experience! As soon as I am willing to have my will quieted, and to do God’s will, the “**renewing energy**” flows in. It is the energy to do what is right and to do it in the right spirit.

One evening Alane and I received a phone call—a very agitating call. Afterward, while discussing the call, we found that we disagreed about one very important part of the conversation. I knew that my perspective was correct, and I felt that she needed to see it my way. I tried twice to get her to see the point, but the Holy Spirit gently entreated me that my spirit was not right. So I decided to be silent and to go have some prayer time. That

Where do we honestly find ourselves? Is the Christian life secretly a drudgery? Are we trying to “reform by correcting this or that bad habit” without making the first decision to allow the “renewing energy” to vitalize and give power to our decisions? In *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 97, we are told, “The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is re-

ion. The “burden” described in this passage refers to trying to live the Christian experience while battling temptation, using our will power alone as the power over sin, rather than using the power of the will to make a conscious surrender of “self” to God and His will, and then receiving His **divine power** to accomplish it.

We can have the “joy of obedience”! Do you believe it?—“I delight to do thy will, O my God.” Psalms 40:8. David said, “Teach me to do thy will.” Psalms 143:10. Are we willing to learn how?—With each temptation we can be learning how to maintain our hold upon God, so that His “renewing energy” brings the joy into our obedience.

When our Saviour faced the three fierce temptations in the wilderness He “gained the victory through **submission and faith** in God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 130. Then through James He says to us, “**Submit** yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” James 4:7-8.

Friends, Jesus gained the victory by first submitting to God, and then resisting the devil. May God open our eyes to see how we have been losing the battle against temptation and where our real strength lies. Let us draw nigh to Him in submission, and with a faith that depends fully upon Him. He then will draw nigh to us with His “**divine energy**,” that enables us to accomplish His will. □

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience.”

sounds good, doesn’t it? But I wasn’t silent on the inside, and I wanted God to see my perspective too. In spite of my unrest, agitation, and justification of self, God was calling to my heart. He was asking me if I would stop rehearsing my will, stop nursing my views, and just decide whether I would like to do His will. That’s hard to argue with! I said, “Okay, Lord, You have my permission to show me Your will and work out Your will in me.” At that moment I knew I was willing to let go of my way and allow God to have His way. Then the “renewing energy” was there! It’s really there all the time, like the air we breathe, but we don’t always want to utilize it, do we?

Steps to Christ, 68, says, “God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of **grace** as real as the air which circulates around the globe.” Right there on my knees I was allowing that “**grace**,” that “renewing energy,” to transform my thoughts, motives, and actions. God gave me a desire to listen more carefully to Alane’s perspective. There was rest in my soul, instead of chafing and agitation. There were no more peevish feelings of being misunderstood. And I was truly willing to admit my wrong spirit, without the excuses and justifications we are all so prone to use. It was this “renewing energy” that David was seeking when he said in Psalm 51:10, “Renew a right spirit within me,” and in verse 12, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”

quired to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a **burden** because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.”

Does this passage mean that there are no hard experiences, or that there is no personal agonizing effort on our part?—No! Our battle is the continual “surrender of self” as our flesh cries out for domin-

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No Time Proclamation

Continued from 7

both of the above Ellen White statements are clear that Daniel is and has been standing in his lot, as promised.

Perhaps the clearest of all the statements that Ellen White made on this subject of future time proclamation is the following:

“Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord’s coming.”³⁵

Notice that no distinction is made here between prophetic time and literal time. All time proclamation is prohibited between 1844 and the coming of Christ. Any application or reapplication of time prophecies during this period is thus a direct violation of clear, inspired counsel.

The above statement is helpful for an additional reason. Some will ask, when we speak of the impossibility of time proclamation after 1844, “What about the millennium? Isn’t that a prophecy of a future period in literal rather than prophetic time?” That is true, but the above inspired prohibition forbids time proclamation “between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord’s coming.” The millennium, by contrast, occurs after the Lord’s coming, and thus cannot create the “time excitement” which God has withheld from His church between 1844 and Jesus’ return.

The following statement is also comprehensive in this regard:

“Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would set a time for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, or in regard to any other promise He has made of special significance.”³⁶

According to Larry Wilson, when the universal death decree is issued and the seven “first” plagues (which he distinguishes from the seven last plagues) begin, God’s people will know exactly when their persecution will end and when their deliverance will take place. Whether this deliverance is the exact moment Jesus comes or sometime earlier, is not the point. The point is that the above statement by Ellen White makes it clear that no one can set a time for God to fulfill His word regarding any promise He has made of special significance. This includes not only the Second Coming, but all end-time events. If Wilson’s predic-

tion were true, God’s people during the final crisis would know the exact time in which God would fulfill several promises, leaving the above inspired statement untrue.

Larry Wilson makes the following statement:

“The author can attest to the significance of knowing **definite time** periods. When sent to Vietnam in 1969, it was a daily ritual to mark off another day on the calendar and note the progressively smaller amount of time remaining. Knowing my sentence was ‘fixed’ at 365 days instead of an indefinite time period made difficult times and moments tolerable. So it will be. The saints will be encouraged knowing an END is determined upon the beast.”³⁷

It is interesting that Wilson uses the term “**definite time**” to describe his prophetic understanding. Yet Ellen White makes the following pronouncement, using these very words:

“This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world’s history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will **not** have another message upon **definite time**. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.”³⁸

Notice how Ellen White equates the words “definite time” with “prophetic time.” No distinction can be found here, or elsewhere in her writings, between prophetic and literal time. Therefore, it is not justifiable to imply that while prophetic time ended in 1844, literal applications of time prophecies can take place after that point. According to Ellen White, any tracing of time prophecies with definite points of start and finish—whether in prophetic or literal time—is forbidden between 1844 and the return of Christ.

The following inspired statement speaks even more pointedly about the preaching of definite time:

“Those who so presumptuously preach **definite time**, in so doing gratify the adversary of souls; for they are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity.”³⁹

I can attest myself to the truth of this observation. My local church in Mentone, California, runs a weekly ministry of book and literature distribution at a local farmers’ market. At this same market

some people had in the past sold Larry Wilson’s books on Revelation, predicting that Jesus would come in 1994. As people have wandered past our booth at this open market, we have occasionally heard ridicule from persons who remember those booksellers and their ill-fated predictions. Time and again we are required to inform such persons that we share no sympathy with the views of those who set dates for any events which are to happen at the close of time.

The 1994 date was but one of several set by modern Adventist timesetters. Some of us remember those who traced the fulfillment of the so-called “Jubilee Cycle” to 1987, claiming that Jesus would come in that year.⁴⁰ It seems that no matter how often these predictions keep failing, people keep devising new ones. Ellen White comments on this particular trait of timesetters:

“Many who have called themselves Adventists have been timesetters. Time after time has been set for Christ to come, but repeated failures have been the result. The definite time of our Lord’s coming is declared to be beyond the ken of mortals.”⁴¹

One is fascinated again by how Ellen White foresaw, through Divine Inspiration, the various means whereby people would presume to know when Jesus would come back:

“I want you to see that it is not in the providence of God that any finite man shall, by any device or reckoning that he may make of figures, or of symbols, or of types, know with any definiteness in regard to the very period of the Lord’s coming.”⁴²

Notice she speaks of figures, and symbols, and types as means whereby people will try to determine when Jesus will return. Surely the Jubilee Cycle would fall into this category! Notice also that she spoke of the danger of thinking to know “the very period of the Lord’s coming,” not just the exact time of the coming itself. This plainly rules out any tracing of prophetic time periods to any events surrounding Jesus’ coming. One of the prophetic speculators quoted in this document asserts:

“I have set no dates nor given the exact time for anything. . . . I don’t claim to know the day and hour of the Second Coming. But, I do claim that Jesus will return shortly after the 1335 days specified in Daniel 12:12, and that this period will begin with the passage of the Sunday Law in the United States. This is

merely knowing when His advent is near, as instructed in the above testimony. And nothing I've said here can be construed to be 'another message upon definite time.' I repeat, this is not another message. It's a very old message from the prophet Daniel. And since it includes no dates, there is nothing about definite time in it."⁴³

But the problem with this brother's claims, as we have already seen, is that Ellen White explicitly forbids us to use any device to "know with any definiteness in regard to the very period of the Lord's coming,"⁴⁴ something this brother claims will be known just as soon as the national Sunday law is passed. Prophetic counsel in this regard would thus have no validity—were we to follow this brother's reasoning—just as soon as that event takes place. Moreover, we have already found that Ellen White teaches that the 1335 days of Daniel 12 are in the past.⁴⁵ Most importantly of all, her counsel insists on "no time proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming."⁴⁶ Thus on three counts this brother's message—despite his earnest protests—contradicts the Testimonies of God's Spirit.

Again we see the fulfillment of Ellen White's promise that "not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets."⁴⁷ The heresies we confront today have all been divinely anticipated, and God has given us the answers in advance!

Conclusion

The ultimate proof of our sanctification is when we allow God's written counsel to correct those ideas and practices which we hold dear. This includes cherished interpretations of the Bible as much as it includes the cherished but improper practices of our personal lives. No matter how fervently we might believe that new approaches to prophecy are needed in this hour to revive and inspire the church, the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy stands resolutely in the way of those who promote such views.

At the bottom line, as we noted before, Seventh-day Adventists face the choice of either accepting the uninspired theology of Larry Wilson and other pro-

phetic speculators, or accepting the inspired theology of Ellen G. White. **It must be one or the other. It cannot be both.**

Most seriously of all, such speculation has the tendency to divert our minds from the heart preparation necessary that we may be able to stand in the final crisis. Too many of us have seen how interest in prophetic speculation can crowd even from the minds of faithful Adventists the more important issues of Christian victory and cleansing from sin. The following inspired observation should be borne in mind by us all:

"Instead of living in expectation of some special season of excitement, we are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth. . . . Jesus did not come to astonish men with some great announcement of some special time when some great event would occur, but He came to instruct and save the lost. He did not come to arouse and gratify curiosity, for He knew that this would but increase the appetite for the curious and the marvelous. It was His aim to impart knowledge whereby men might increase in spiritual strength, and advance in the way of obedience and true holiness."⁴⁸

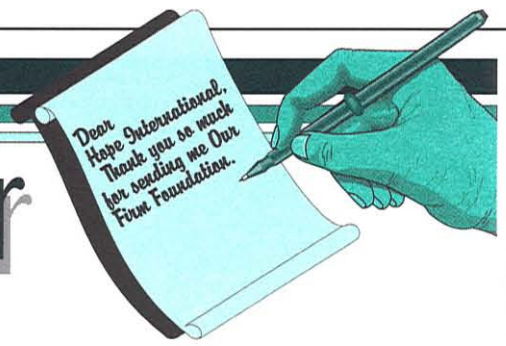
Let those who would gird up the loins of their minds in the creation of new ideas devote the same energy to preparing themselves and others to meet the crisis of the ages. No claim, position, or idea can possibly qualify as new light unless it harmonizes completely with the light of truth thus far revealed through Inspiration. □

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Letters to the Editor



Dear Brethren,

Thank you all for the books and *Our Firm Foundation* magazines you sent to me. In fact I was very happy and I prayed to God to give you more love to show to many people as you have showed to me. I have distributed some of the books to my friends, mostly the non-believers, whereby some of them have made their decision through reading some books like: *Is the Virgin Mary Dead or Alive?* and *The Lord's Day and a National Sunday Law*. They are also reading the others, and I have faith they will get more.

Please in your private prayers remember me and my husband. He is not a believer but I have faith through our prayers that God will help him to know the truth.

Yours in Christ, JN, Kenya

Dear Sirs,

I was really amazed when I received all those wonderful books in so short a time! May the Lord bless you! Believe me, I am going to put them all to good use. Now I know you are for real and you definitely keep your promises. Thank you once again. I am so grateful to you!

If you have books like *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, and *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, please do not hesitate to send them to me. An extra copy of the *King James Version Bible* for my wife will very much be appreciated.

We are forever grateful to you as we are also very hungry for the pure, unadulterated Word of God!

Yours Sincerely, SM, Zimbabwe

Dear Brother,

My heart is moved by the letters you get from sincere truth-seeking individuals here and abroad. I read the *Our Firm Foundation* magazine and am blessed by the timely articles contained therein.

Keep up the good work! AV, Tennessee

Dear Editors,

I am extremely grateful to you for retaining my name on your subscription list

for this time also. It is the Lord that has made you do this, for your paper has been of great benefit and help to me spiritually!

The articles have made me realize what these times are and how to prepare to meet these last days. Your paper has made me know where we have come to.

Yours in Christ, SB, Ghana

Beloved Brethren,

I would like to thank you for the books I have receive so far from you. Above all I thank you for the *Our Firm Foundation* magazine I'm receiving monthly.

I'm a thorough reader of this magazine for I have adopted a policy of not leaving any portion of *Our Firm Foundation* unread.

MM, Zimbabwe

Dear Believers In Christ,

With thrilling heart I write to register my heartfelt appreciation and thanksgiving to you all in God's name for sending me some valuable books of present truth which is preparing the world for Christ's second coming.

Once again I say, May the Almighty Father richly bless you all! TA, Ghana

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for what you have done for me. In fact, I was moved with deep feelings as I received a big envelope full of spiritual materials from you. May our Blessed Saviour, whom you serve, continue to bless you as you prepare the people to stand in the Day of the Lord.

The book, *Beyond Belief Reviewed* by Kevin Paulson has proved to be of a great help to me and my fellows. Again, your truth-filled magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*, has been "meat" to me daily. May God keep on blessing your labors.

My thirst and hunger for your magazines and books is not satisfied to the full. My fellow Adventists and non-Adventist friends are still in need of your literatures. There is still a great demand for *Earth's Final Warning* magazine.

May God bless you as you "come over" to our help.

TC, Tanzania

Dear Brethren,

I have been reading *Our Firm Foundation* magazines for about three years now. I have greatly learned a lot of truth from the magazines. But all that I am requesting from you brethren are the Spirit of Prophecy books which you have always been quoting in *Our Firm Foundation* magazines. I would appreciate it if you can send me books like: *The Great Controversy*, *Desire of Ages*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Step to Christ* and the *Testimonies for the Church*. Brethren I plead with you that you can even send me the old copies of the *Testimonies*. I have no money to order these books and to support your ministry. All that I can do is to pray for you and your work to advance.

Your Brother in Jesus, PK, Zambia

Dear Friends at Hope International,

Just finished reading the June 1998 issue of *Our Firm Foundation*.

Today was Sabbath and, since I did not go to church today, I spent the day reading *Our Firm Foundation* from cover to cover. Wonderful! I want to let Colin Standish know how much I enjoyed his article about what a pastor is supposed to be. My eyes were opened to so many things! I will not be so quick to call the pastor about every little thing myself. I did not know the problems were for the elders to take care of. I know now and must apologize to Pastor W. soon.

Yours in Christ, VR, USA

To the Editor,

I am very much delighted, my fellow brethren, for sending me the spiritual books! Thanks very much for the good work you are performing. Keep it up! Your books have broadened my knowledge and elevated my mind spiritually. I wish to pass this knowledge on to my fellow friends and countrymen.

Yours, CS, Zimbabwe

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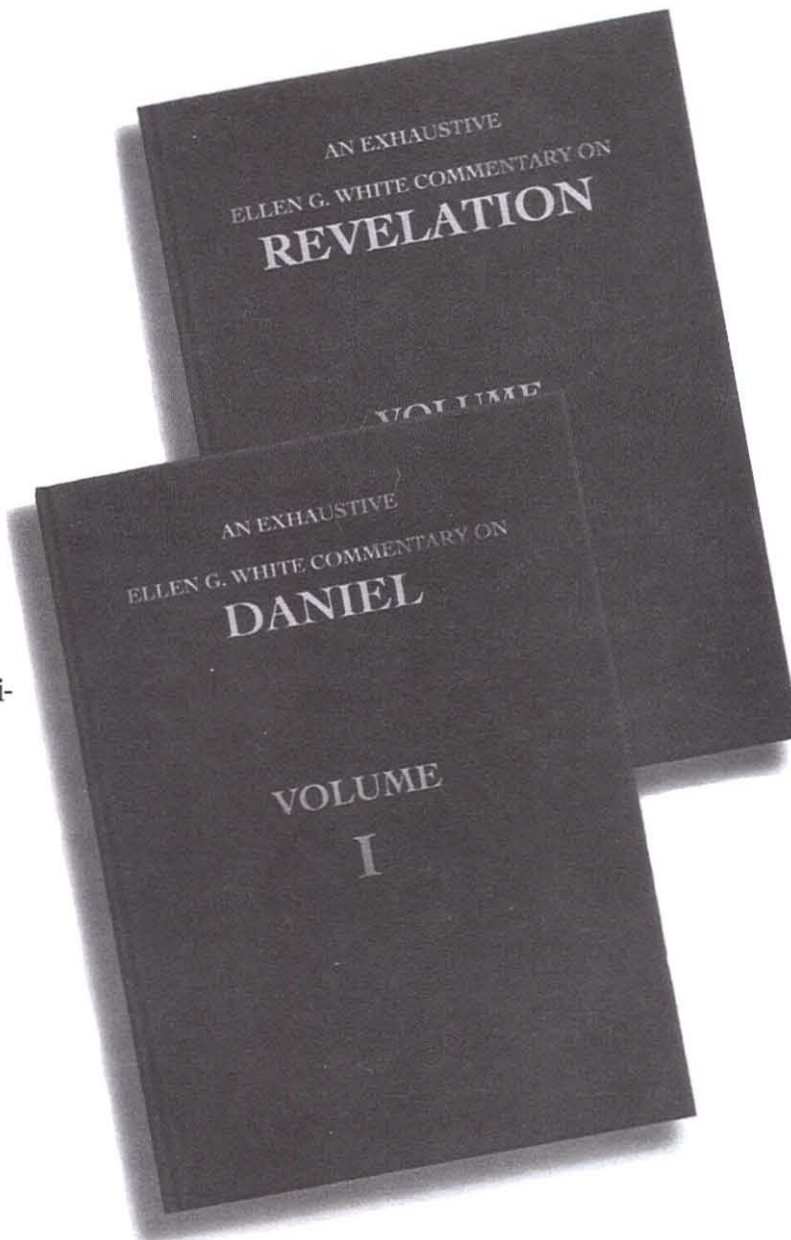
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