

# Our Firm FOUNDATION

Vol. 14, No. 1

January 1999

A magazine  
for Christians  
who desire to  
be grounded  
in truth.

## *This Month*

- **Adventism—  
How Has it  
Changed  
Your Life?**
- **Study to  
Show Thyself  
Approved**
- ***My Story:*  
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shares his  
experience.**

**When Time Runs Out . . .**

**Are You**

**Prepared?**



# EDITORIAL

Ron Spear



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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Those leaders, pastors, and laity that believe that God will justify all the people of this world while they are living in their sins, have forgotten that one little piece of fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil taken by the hands of Eve and given to her husband Adam, started the whole sin problem. Possibly over 100 billion people have been born into this world and have become sinners by breaking the same law that Adam and Eve broke—the Ten Commandments.

The sin problem is so terrible that the only way God could solve the rebellion forever was to come down to the human race, take our fallen humanity, and by a life of perfect obedience prove that all who are willing to be made willing to bring their life into strict obedience to known truth—without compromise and by the Holy Spirit's

power—can be victorious over every temptation. They can overcome as Jesus overcame. He is our Example in victorious living: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." 1 Peter 2:21.

"Let the souls who come to Christ consider that He is the Sin Bearer. . . . 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." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 941.

Jesus said: "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14. In every generation God has found only a few people who could be trusted with eternal life. He will include in His new world, which He will create, only those who have His character and have overcome as Christ overcame. This is the

only way He could be absolutely sure that sin would never rise again. See Nahum 1:9.

Only those who are searching diligently every day for a careful walk with Jesus by willing obedience to all known truth, will receive the joy and assurance of all the promises of salvation. They will then be transformed into His image, witnessing daily of their joy in His salvation and following Jesus' example in obedience.

Dear readers, the hour is very late. The church has been on borrowed time for more than 100 years. Probation is soon to close for the church and for the world. We must daily seek the Lord in prayer and in the study of His Word, memorizing Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy quotations. In this new year, let us resolve with new determination, by God's grace, to prepare while there is still time.

**Ron Spear—EDITOR**

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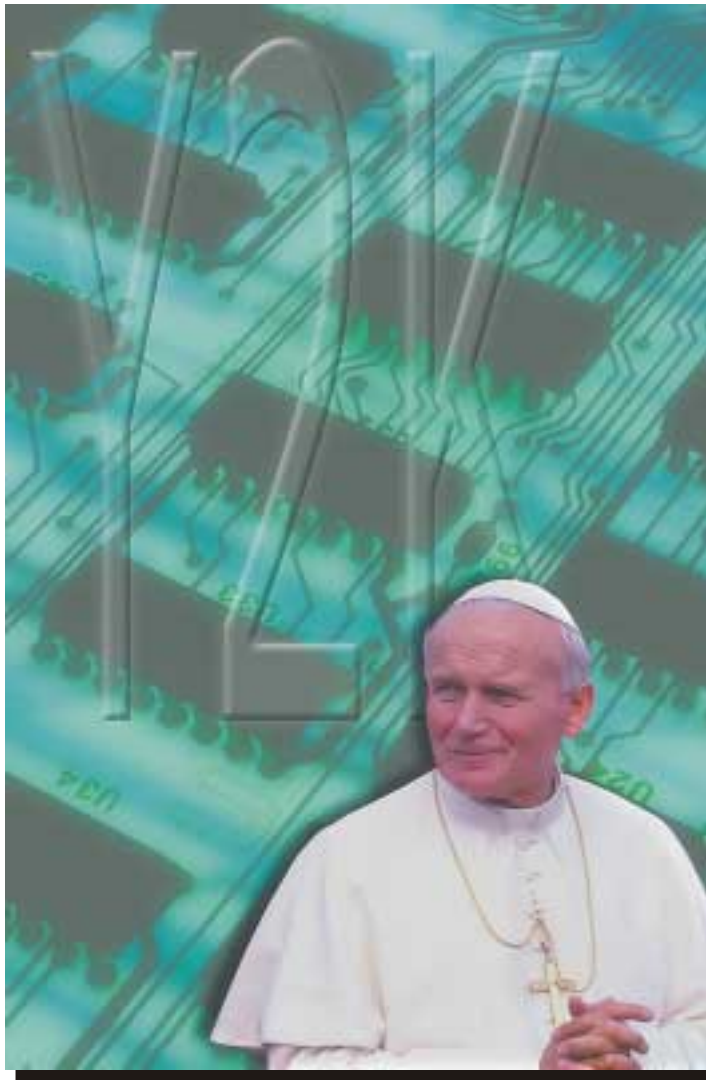


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# When Time Runs Out . . . Are You Prepared

By Colin D. Standish

In the August 1998 issue of the *Our Firm Foundation* magazine I presented an article entitled “Are You Ready for the Y2K Computer Bug?” Much has happened since that article was written. Thus I am updating our readers, mindful of the crucial times in which we live. But I am focussing this time upon the Second Coming, for the Scripture says: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. . . . But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1–4.

It is our burden to keep God’s people so informed that the day of the Lord will not come to them as a thief in the night.

In the *Bristol Herald Courier/Virginia Tennessean*, July 4, 1998, under the caption “Pope to Ask Forgiveness for Inquisition Cruelty” we have this report:

“Pope John Paul II might soon add witches and heretics to the list of groups against which the Roman Catholic Church has sinned.”

The same article quotes Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, as saying,

“May the Lord help us to understand that the Church must not make martyrs but be a church of martyrs.”

Just six weeks earlier, a papal Apostolic Letter—*Ad Tuendum Fidem*—was released, which contained ominous threats against those who violate Catho-



Colin Standish,  
President of  
Hartland Institute,  
writes from  
Rapidan, Virginia.

lic doctrines. New canon laws were enacted. Here are two examples:

**“Canon 1371**—The following are to be punished with a just penalty: (1) a person who, apart from the case mentioned in Canon 1364 teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff or by an Ecumenical Council, or obstinately rejects the teachings mentioned in Canon 750 and Canon 752 and, when warned by the Apostolic See or by the Ordinary, does not retract; (2) a person who in any other way does not obey the lawful command or

prohibition of the Apostolic See or the Ordinary or Superior and, after being warned, persists in disobedience.

**“Canon 1436**—§1. Whoever denies a truth that must be believed with divine and

catholic faith, or, who calls into doubt, or who totally repudiates Christian faith, and who does not retract after being legitimately warned, is to be punished as a heretic or an apostate with a major excommunication; a cleric moreover can be punished with other penalties, not excluding deposition. §2. In addition to these cases, whoever obstinately rejects a teaching that the Roman Pontiff, the College of Bishops, exercising the authentic Magisterium, have set forth to uphold definitely, or who affirms what they have condemned as erroneous and does not retract after being legitimately warned, is to be punished with an appropriate penalty.”

There are many reasons for deep concern regarding what is in these canon laws, some being as follows:

1. **Coercion**—God gave man freewill. No man has divine authority to coerce another human being. Not even God coerces:

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is

athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

2. **“Appropriate Penalty**”—The Roman Catholic Church believed in the use of the sword and the stake to punish so-called heretics in the past. Today the Catholic Church—at heart—has not changed. She is only restrained from exercising her will. The term “appropriate penalty” is vague and broad enough to encompass any future, more severe penalty that Rome may find it has the ability to impose. But God does not use the sword or fire to compel the conscience: “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” John 18:36. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” 2 Corinthians 10:4.

3. **“Whosoever**”—It would seem these laws apply to all—not just to Catholics.

**These new canon laws surely make shallow any attempts to offer apologies for the frightful atrocities of the Inquisition. Rome has not changed.**

4. **“Christian Faith**”—It is noted that the law moves quickly from “Catholic faith” to “Christian faith.”

5. **Human Authority**—Note that neither law is established upon the written Word of God but upon human edicts.

6. **“Ecumenical Council**

”—The Council of Trent and Vatican II are examples of Ecumenical Councils whose goals were to find a strategy to entice Protestantism back into the bosom of Rome.

These new canon laws surely make shallow any attempts to offer apologies for the frightful atrocities of the Inquisition. Rome has *not* changed.

“The defenders of the Papacy declare that the church has been maligned, and the Protestant world are inclined to accept the statement. Many urge that it is unjust to judge the church of today by the abominations and absurdities that marked her reign during the centuries of ignorance and darkness. They excuse her horrible cruelty as the result of the barbarism of the times and plead that the influence of modern civilization has changed her sentiments. . . . Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecu-

ed?

tion.” *The Great Controversy*, 563–564.

Now this is remarkable! Here the Papacy is said to be readying itself to ask forgiveness of witches and heretics that were burned at the stake, and in other ways fearfully tortured and persecuted in the times of the Inquisition, while at the same time the pope is warning that those who violate the Papal canon laws will be punished as heretics. Need we remind our readers again what the papal punishment of heretics is?

Brethren and sisters, the Sunday laws are coming! A number of the top theological leaders of the Protestant world have supported the pope in his call for reestablishing the sacredness of Sunday. Make no mistake thinking that this has been lost upon the governments of the world, or upon the politicians seeking election and reelection. In Europe the press for Sunday rest is intensifying very quickly.

I was preaching in the Netherlands on the last Sabbath of March 1998. The very same day a petition was distributed to all Seventh-day Adventist Churches of the Netherlands asking our members to sign that they supported a call for the Netherlands government to set aside a day each week for family and rest time. We do not have to think hard to guess which day will be chosen—especially as the petition was sponsored by the Counsel of Churches in the Netherlands. How could Seventh-day Adventist leaders be so blind and so irresponsible in this moment of earth’s history? Led by Germany, there is a great thrust to enact Sunday legislation in all of the European Union nations.

Seventh-day Adventists must be in the vanguard of opposition to such legislation.

### Y2K Rumbblings

In my August article I referred to the warnings of Representative Stephen Horn, chairman of the committee in the House of Representatives seeking to find solutions to the year 2000 (Y2K) computer bug. He had warned of the unreadiness as a whole of the U.S. government departments. Commencing August 2, 1998, the *Washington Post* ran a three-day extended series on the year 2000 computer bug. While the Post reported that most home appliances will not be affected by the Y2K problems, this can only be true if the electric grid for all of the United States is functioning normally. There will be problems in some camcorders, fax machines, pagers, telephones and video recorders.

The U.S. government situation is still of grave concern. The governments of most other nations will face even graver situations. To the right is a chart taken from *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1998, concerning the state of readiness of the “Mission Critical” Systems at major U.S. agencies. That report revealed the status of the preparedness of U.S. government departments.

Surely this dilemma parallels the time spoken of by Jesus in His end-time prophecies to the disciples: “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”

Luke 21:25.

Yet it is not a time for God’s people to panic or to be filled with fear, for we are to look up “for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:8.

In his widely reported address to the National Press Club, July 1998, Senator Robert Bennett, Chairman of the Senate Y2K Committee, made some very unsettling statements concerning the situation which the citizens of the United States could confront in the year 2000. He emphatically stated that there is absolutely no way that all the electronic systems in our nation could be fixed in time. Senator Bennett used the medical term “triage” to describe

### Tracking Y2K Progress

“Mission Critical” Systems at Major United States Federal Agencies

Agency	Total	Compliant	
	Number	Number	Percent
Agriculture	1,080	430	40%
Commerce	472	343	73
Defense	2,803	480	17
Education	14	4	29
Energy	411	149	36
Health and Human Services	289	98	34
Housing and Urban Development	63	31	49
Interior	91	37	41
Justice	197	57	29
Labor	61	21	34
State	64	24	38
Transportation	630	237	38
Treasury	323	125	39
Veterans Affairs	11	2	18
Environmental Protection Agency	61	40	66
Federal Emergency Management Agency	47	29	62
General Services Administration	58	39	67
NASA*	158	79	50
Social Security	308	284	92

\*National Aeronautics and Space Administration

the approach that will be taken. Triage refers to the protocol followed when large numbers of casualties result from sudden catastrophic circumstances such as earthquakes, floods, explosions, and so forth, thus overwhelming the resources and personnel of a hospital or a number of hospitals. The triage officer in a hospital has the fearful responsibility to decide which patients are too critical to be treated, which ones should be treated immediately, and which ones are minor cases that can be left for later treatment. Senator Bennett's usage of this word conveyed the impact that judgments had to be made as to which were the most critical systems that

should be repaired. The Senator made it plain that many systems will not be 2000 ready and will fail.

Senator Bennett reserved the right to change any of his evaluations in any 24-hour period, but here is a recap of some of his forecasts:

1. While the electric grid will generally work, brown-outs and blackouts will occur in many areas, and in some regions of the country, power failures will take place. [We note that this will be in the middle of winter in the northern hemisphere where the consequences of prolonged power failures in some urban areas could lead to a large number of deaths.]

2. He predicted that in general the financial system will work.

3. He believed that there would be trading on the New York stock exchange, but almost certainly not in Tokyo.

4. Some banks and credit unions will fail.

5. Most water systems will work, but some municipal systems will break down causing serious consequences.

6. He expressed great concern about the health system. Some health care organizations will go bankrupt because they will not be able to obtain reimbursements from Medicare or Medicaid claims. Medical equipment will fail in some hospitals, causing some patients to die as a result.

7. Senator Bennett expressed concerns about counties which cannot deliver Social Security checks, and he wondered if this might lead to riots.

8. He expressed great concern about the Defense Department, hoping that the satellites would work. However, he feared that some of the ground systems would not.

9. Telephone systems will work, but do not expect to get a dial tone in Taiwan.

10. Air traffic control towers will work but will be rationing flights, for they will not be able to operate at present levels. This will be bad news for the hotel/leisure business.

11. Just Canada, Great Britain, Australia and Singapore are strongly progressing toward 2000 year compliance. Only the Netherlands, and possibly a handful of other nations, have any chance of meeting the preparedness of this elite group.

Other information indicates that as of the end of July 1998, not one major bank and not one major insurance company on the planet was yet able to declare itself to be 2000 year compliant.

### Don't Delay Preparation

Above all, this is certainly the time to turn our hearts over wholly to the Lord, seeking earnestly His love and His power in our lives. We must search our hearts to determine how we can best follow His counsel, and prepare to receive the latter rain. There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind that the Lord is allowing these events to come upon the earth to demonstrate how impotent man is in circumstances such as this, and to encourage us to put our trust—not in man—but in God. With the uncertainties of this world, surely each one of us desires to take part in that movement which will look for and hasten the coming of our Lord:

“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” 2 Peter 3:12.

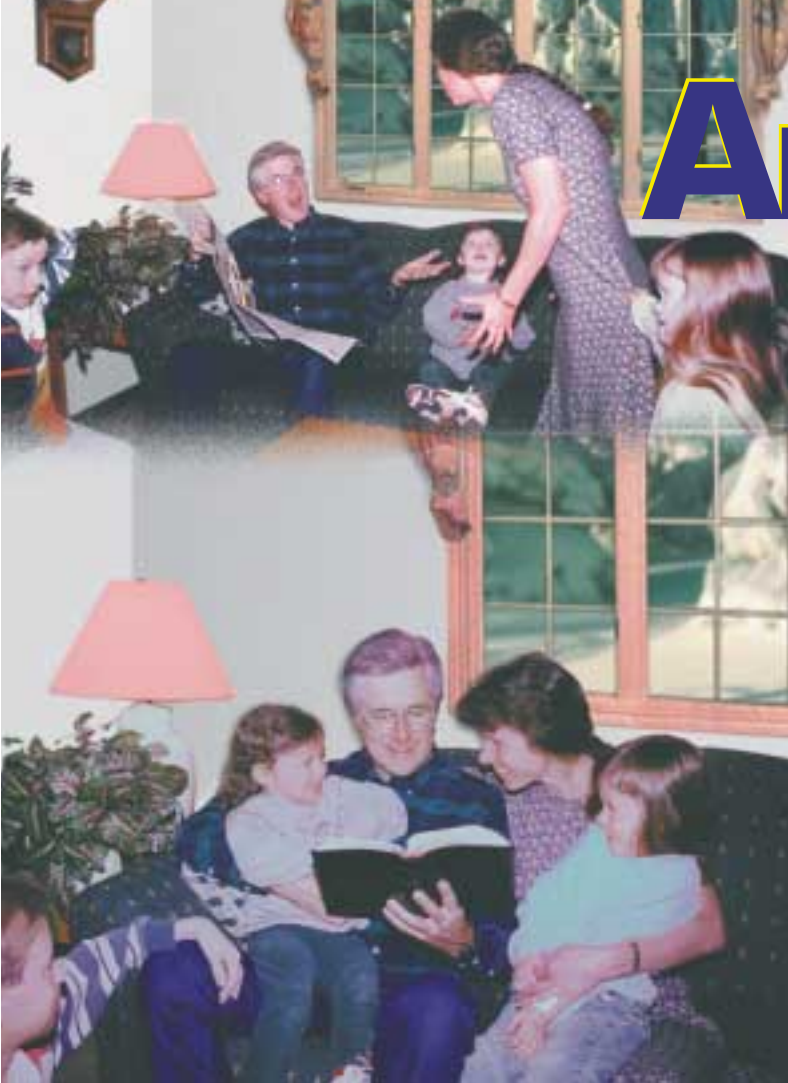
What will happen in 2000 is uncertain, but what is certain is that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. I entreat each reader to make his or her calling and election sure now. And as I pray for God's people around the world, I solicit your prayers on my behalf. We need to pray for one another in this hour of earth's history. □

#### Estimated Cost

\$124.0 million  
83.3 million  
1,930.0 million  
34.2 million  
226.2 million  
289.9 million  
  
47.5 million  
  
35.4 million  
31.7 million  
26.9 million  
152.8 million  
182.5 million  
1,450.0 million  
196.0 million  
26.2 million  
  
15.6 million  
  
6.4 million  
  
45.5 million  
33.2 million

Chart published in *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1998





# ADVENTISM...

## How Has it Changed Your Life?

*“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9<sup>1</sup>*

**H**AS Seventh-day Adventism changed you into the likeness of Jesus? Or are you hypocritical, judgmental, and miserable? Have you found that walk with God that you are seeking? If not, what’s the solution? In my seemingly short time on this earth, two principles have helped me to know what it means to walk with God. I can assure you that if you take these principles to heart, your life will change and others will also see the change in you:

1) Psalm 46:10 says, **“Be still and know that I am God.”** Many of us want to be holy, but we do not take the time. We might have read and even memorized much of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and that is good. However, have you been “still” to *know* the God you read about? (All emphasis by author unless otherwise noted.)

Psalm 139:17–18 says, “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.”

Is God still with you when you get up in the morning? Remember, He is our strength. I have found I must not begin the day without Him. When I say this, I’m not talking about a quick prayer in the morning, but I mean really taking time with



By Dwight Hall

Dwight Hall writes from Coldwater, Michigan, where he and his family operate Remnant Publications—a Seventh-day Adventist publishing ministry.



Him—communion! “Take time to be holy.” Do you want to follow Jesus’ example? He arose early in the morning when everything was quiet and still.

2) **When you pray and study, open your heart to God as you would to a friend.** Read the Bible as if He wrote it *just for you*. Make it practical. Ask yourself, “How does this apply to *me* for today?” Remember, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things.

You see, when I was growing up, I wanted so much to fit in with everybody else that all I could see in Adventism were “do’s and don’ts.” I was never told that because of God’s love for me, He set me apart so that I would be protected from the harm that is the natural result of disobedience. I didn’t understand that His laws and statutes were for my well-being and happiness.

**G**rowing up as the son of Seventh-day Adventist parents was certainly not easy for me. I remember attending public school and being looked on as “weird.” It wasn’t because I looked different or acted strangely, but because I *was* definitely different.

I vividly recall standing in line one day with my hot lunch token, getting my lunch, and taking a long, hungry look at the food—and then wishing there was something I could eat. Then I walked back to my seat, saying to myself, “Can’t eat this (a ham sandwich), can’t eat that (pork and beans).” All I could eat was applesauce and cookies. Boy, does that bring back memories!

One time my third-grade teacher—in front of the whole class—said, “Dwight, I know you don’t eat pork. Pigs were unclean at one time because everyone fed them their garbage, but today it’s okay to eat pork because they feed pigs corn and grain.”

Can you imagine being singled out of the entire class because of your beliefs?

Further, the majority of the school outings were on Saturdays. I would agonize, “Why can’t they be on some other day?” To top it off, I had to explain every single time why I could not attend. You know how the story goes: “Hmm, this might sound a little weird, but from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, we don’t do things that we would normally do during the rest of the week.” I was tired of not fitting in! Have thoughts like these ever crossed your mind?

I remember thinking, “I wish this problem would just go away.” But it never did. I couldn’t even play basketball or football because the games were on Saturday. Many of my friends thought that after church I went straight home to stare at the wall until sundown—after all, what *could* you do on Saturdays but be bored stiff or sleep until sundown?

Many times, the only thought in my mind was “Why?” My parents tried to help me—and I’m so thankful they were strong parents—but they never explained in depth why we were so different.

**When you pray and study, open your heart to God as you would to a friend. Read the Bible as if He wrote it just for you. Make it practical.**

When I turned fourteen, I thought this situation would finally change, since most of the high-school games were on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Finally, I didn’t have to be so different! Now I could at least play basket-

ball with my friends. I didn’t have to worry about games being on Sabbath anymore!

Then suddenly, my mom and dad decided to send me to academy. “Mom,” I pleaded, “please don’t make me go. I don’t want to. The games aren’t on Saturdays anymore. I can play along with the rest of the kids. I will finally fit in.” Or at least, I thought I would. “Mom, can’t you see? At last, this year I can be somewhat normal!” But mom and dad were firm. I ended up going to academy.

In academy I learned more “do’s and don’ts”—mainly the “don’ts.” I found out what good Adventists don’t eat, don’t listen to and don’t wear. My view of the rules became very cynical: If it tasted good, it couldn’t be good for you. If it was fun, it had to be a sin. If the music sounded good, it had to be bad.

Sorry to say, but it was in academy where, through the bad influence of a few of my friends, I learned to swear, to listen to rock and roll music, to drink and to take drugs. Finally, I was expelled from school during my junior year. In fact, during that year I was

in four different high schools—two of them Adventist academies.

Unfortunately, during that time I learned that not even all of the teachers who taught the rules were consistent or happy with what they taught. Boy, was I surprised! Because of that experience, I made up my mind in later years that I would not reflect the

hypocrisy I had seen in some of my teachers—saying one thing and doing another. As a result, even though I knew that the Sabbath, the state of the dead, and other doctrines were Biblically correct, I left the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A few years after I finished school, I got married and started a business that soon became successful. Yet I still didn't fit in! Here I was, out of the house, out of school, even out of the church—and I still wouldn't eat a ham sandwich. I would not open my business on the Sabbath. Even though I drank alcohol, there were certain things that I just couldn't do.

**H**ad my experience with Adventism changed me? Yes, it had—just enough to give me one big headache! I had “just enough religion for a migraine.” To put it simply, I was trying to conform to Adventism without experiencing true heart conversion.

Brothers and sisters, let's be honest. Are you doing the same thing? If so, will you be honest and admit

**I was, out of the house, out of school, even out of the church—and I still wouldn't eat a ham sandwich. . . . Had Adventism changed me?**

it? How has your experience in Adventism changed you? Has it changed you like it did me—just enough to be bored with your life? Or are you the “microscope” type of Adventist, who scrutinizes most everybody and everything to point out their minutest flaws? I can assure

you, either way is a nasty and most discouraging trap to be in. Do we have just enough religion to give us *one big headache*?

As you look at the picture with this article, you see two settings: one in utter chaos, and the other in complete harmony. Which picture depicts you and your family? Do you talk about others in front of your children? Do you gossip about the faults of others while your children see how you argue and fight with your spouse?

Dads, do you reprove your children for watching certain programs on TV while your attention is fixed on the sports channel? Do you think Jesus would watch a football game, or any other sport? Can you imagine Jesus saying, “Man, did you see the way he got creamed at the line of scrimmage?”

Moms, do you tell your children to clean their rooms while yours is a mess? The questions could go on and on!

My wife and I have been there. Do you see how we can turn not only our children off, but our families, friends, and neighbors as

well by saying we are Christians, but not living what we believe?

Now, by God's grace, instead of grumbling about what I shouldn't eat, I first see Jesus as my Example. What did He do? Then I look into the Spirit of Prophecy and search with an open heart to see what His love tells me, knowing that He reveals it for the same reason He hung on the cross for me—only for my well-being and because He loves me. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10.

If God were to open my eyes to some duty I had been neglecting, by His grace, I wouldn't say, “Oh boy, just another rule; this has gone too far!” Instead, I would say, “Thank you, Lord, for your wisdom and love to tell me this. I know it's for my best. Do I have to wait until tomorrow, Lord? Can I start now?”

When Peter truly knew Jesus, he didn't shrink from dying the way Jesus did. His only request was to be crucified upside-down. Can you see the difference? The Bible says, “Come, let us reason together.”

How foolish—and I mean utterly foolish—can we be by saying it really doesn't matter what we eat, as long as our food isn't unclean! Or that it really doesn't matter what we watch on television? Even if it is a good program, is it robbing God of His time? Music and dress are other areas that we can get hung up on, or feel resentful about, and these are just a few.

That was my problem. I was always trying to justify my way of doing things. Friends, I took the wide path leading to destruction. I did my own thing. I had money,

worldly pleasure, and everything else that the devil had to offer. Yet I was still not really happy!

It was when I gave my heart fully to Jesus Christ, and said, “Lord, I am tired of having it my own way,” that I began to understand the Scripture in a new way as had Nicodemus.

Please read the chapter on Nicodemus in *The Desire of Ages*, beginning on page 167. Read it prayerfully. It will explain what I have been trying to say.

Praise God, I asked for that eyesalve He freely offers! See Revelation 3:18. What a blessing it has been for me and my family! Now I see the do’s and don’ts in an entirely different way. Now I realize that they are my protectors.

Friends, I don’t mind being different anymore. I am thankful for 1 Peter 2:9, which says, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

When we give ourselves fully to God, we have the privilege of walking with Him as did Enoch—not in a trance, but as we take care of our everyday duties. Then we will live what we say we believe. Only as we fully commit our lives to the Life-Giver can *He* impart to us a sweet rest and peace of mind.

Yes, now I can truly say that being an Adventist has changed my life! I love now what I used to hate, and I see more clearly what used to be obscure and dreary.

Because of this change, people are coming up not only to me, but also to my wife and three children. They ask us questions like: “I see you’re strict vegetarians. How do you feel? Why don’t you eat like everybody else?” My wife has been asked about her dress many times—and it wasn’t because she made herself a gazingstock. These are opportunities to witness for our faith, friends!

Our children have been asked, “Don’t you think your parents are too strict because you don’t watch television? Why are you having school at home? Why can’t you eat between meals? Don’t you feel cheated because you can’t listen to contemporary Christian music?” Their answer is No, because they don’t even miss it! They know they have chosen a better way!

As you begin to have a real relationship with Jesus Christ, our Great Example, you will truly see that being different from the



world, and maybe even from many Seventh-day Adventists, is not legalism or a curse. You will see that being different is a blessing! It is, quite simply, a sign of God’s protecting love.

Today I am thankful that being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian has changed my life. Time is so short—don’t put this off for one more day! Drop to your knees and truly give Jesus your whole heart. Ask Him with an open mind, “What must I do to be saved?” Take time to hear that still small voice. I promise, you will see how to have a wonderful walk with God! □

<sup>1</sup> All Biblical quotations are from the New King James Version.

# Upcoming Meetings

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

**Riverside, CA . . . . . Jan. 16**

*Evangelical Formosa Church  
1363 W. Linden Street*

**Dulzura, CA . . . . . Jan. 30–31**

*Dulzura SDA Church  
17880 Highway 94*

**Eatonville, WA . . . . . Feb. 2–6**

*Winter Week of Prayer  
Speaker: Jeff Wehr  
Sabbath Speakers: Jeff Wehr, Rob McClintock*

**Eatonville, WA . . . Feb. 21–28**

*Medical Missionary Training Seminar  
Life Abundant Missionary Institute*

**Alvarado, TX . . . . . Mar. 26–28**

*Alvarado Senior Center  
200 N. Spears*

Look for our “Upcoming Meetings” announcements in future issues. If you need more information please call Hope International, (360) 832-6602, and ask to speak to someone in the Evangelism and Revival Department.



A photograph of a hand resting on an open Bible, with pink flowers scattered around it. The word "Preparing" is written in a large, elegant, red script font over the top left of the image, and "for Heaven." is written in a similar font over the bottom right.

# Preparing for Heaven.

By Ellen G. White

**A**ND he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." Zechariah. 3:1-3.

Here we find a representation of the people of God of today. As Joshua stood before the angel, "clothed with filthy garments," so we stand in the presence of Christ, clothed in garments of unrighteousness. Christ, the angel before whom Joshua stood, is now interceding for us before His Father, as He is here represented as interceding for Joshua and His people who were in deep affliction; and Satan now, as then, stands by to resist His efforts.

Ever since his fall, it has been the work of Satan to oppose Christ's efforts to re-

deem the race. In the Bible he is called an accuser of the brethren. It is said that he accuses them before God day and night. See Revelation 12:10. Pointing to their sins, as he did to the filthy garments of Joshua, he says: "They profess to be thy children; but they do not obey thee. See the traces of sin upon them. They are my property."

This is the argument that he employs concerning God's people in all ages. He pleads their sinfulness as the reason why Christ's restraining power should not

hold him back from exercising his cruelty upon them to its fullest extent. But to the accuser of His people, the Saviour says, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Have I not thrust my own hand into the fire to gather this brand from the burning?"

So long as the people of God preserve their fidelity to Him, so long as they cling by living faith to Jesus, they are under the

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**"They profess to be thy children; but they do not obey thee. See the traces of sin upon them. They are my property."**

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protection of heavenly angels, and Satan will not be permitted to exercise his hellish arts upon them to their destruction. But those who separate themselves from Christ by sin are in great peril. If they continue to disregard the requirements of God, they know not how soon He may give them over to Satan, and permit him to do to them according to his will. There is, therefore, the greatest necessity of keeping the soul free from defilement, and the eye single to the glory of God; of thinking soberly and watching unto prayer continually.

Satan is now more earnestly engaged in playing the game of life for souls than at any previous time; and unless we are constantly on our guard, he will establish in our hearts, pride, love of self, love of the world, and many other evil traits. He will also use every possible device to unsettle our faith in God and in the truths of His Word. If we have not a deep experience in the things of God, if we have not a thorough knowledge of His Word, we shall be beguiled to our ruin by the errors and sophistries of the enemy. False doctrines will sap the foundations of many, because they have not learned to discern truth from error. Our only safeguard against the wiles of Satan is to study the Scriptures diligently, to have an intelligent understanding of the reasons of our faith, and faithfully to perform every known duty. The indulgence of one known sin will cause weakness and darkness, and subject us to fierce temptation.

Joshua is represented as pleading with the Angel. Are we engaged in the same work? Are our supplications ascending to God in living faith? Are we opening the door of the heart to Jesus, and closing every means of entrance to Satan? Are we daily obtaining clearer light, and greater strength, that we may stand

in Christ's righteousness? Are we emptying our hearts of all selfishness, and cleansing them, preparatory to receiving the latter rain from Heaven?

Now is the time when we are to confess and forsake our sins, that they may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out. Now is the time to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of

the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1. It is dangerous to delay this work. Satan is even now seeking by disasters upon sea and land to seal the fate of as many as possible. What is the defense of the people of God at this time?—It is a living connection with Heaven. If we would dwell in safety from the noisome pestilence, if we would be preserved from dangers seen and unseen, we must hide in God; we must secure the protecting care of Jesus and holy angels. In these days of peril, the Lord would have us walk before Him in humility. Instead of trying to cover our sins, He would have us confess them, as Joshua confessed the sins of ancient Israel. We profess to be the depositories of God's law. We profess to be building up "the old waste places," and to be raising up "the foundations of many generations." Isaiah 58:12. If this great and solemn work has indeed been committed to us, how important that we depart from all iniquity!

The third angel's message is to lighten the earth with its glory; but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the

Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it when it shall have swelled into the loud cry.

As the intercession of Joshua was accepted, the command was given to those that stood by, "Take away the filthy garments from him."

Zechariah 3:4. And unto Joshua the Angel said, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with

change of raiment. . . . So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments." Verses 4-5. Even so will all those who come to Jesus in penitence and faith receive the robe of Christ's righteousness.

As we approach the perils of the last days, the temptations of the enemy become stronger and more determined. Satan has come down in great power, knowing that his time is short; and he is working "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." 2 Thessalonians 2:10. The warning comes to us through God's Word that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect.

Wonderful events are soon to open before the world. The end of all things is at hand. The time of trouble is about to come upon the people of God. Then it is that the decree will go forth forbidding those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord to buy or sell, and threatening them with punishment, and even death, if they do not observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble,

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**Are we emptying our hearts of all selfishness, and cleansing them, preparatory to receiving the latter rain from Heaven?**

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such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1. By this we see the importance of having our names written in the book of life. All whose names are registered there will be delivered from Satan’s power, and Christ will command that their filthy garments be removed, and that they be clothed with His righteousness. “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Malachi 3:17.

In the time of trouble, Satan stirs up the wicked, and they encircle the people of God to destroy them. But he does not know that “pardon” has been written opposite their names in the books of heaven. He does not know that the command has been given, “Take away the filthy garments” from them, clothe them with “change of raiment,” and set “a fair miter” upon their heads.

If we could only see the many dangers from which we are daily preserved by the holy angels, instead of complaining of our trials and misfortunes, we would talk continually of the mercies of God. How precious in the sight of God are His people!

The exhortation of the prophet is, “Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you.” Zephaniah 2:1–2. “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which

have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger.” Verse 3.

In view of what is soon to come upon the earth, I entreat you, brethren and sisters, to walk before God in all meekness and lowliness of mind, remembering the care that Jesus has for you. All the meek of the earth are exhorted to seek Him. Those who have wrought His judgments are to seek Him. Let self break in pieces before God. It is hard to do this; but we are warned to fall upon the rock and be broken, else it will fall upon us, and grind us to powder. See Matthew 21:44. It is to the humble in heart that Jesus speaks; His everlasting arms encircle them, and He will not leave them to perish by the hands of the wicked.

What is it to be a Christian?—It is to be Christlike; it is to do the works of Christ. Some fail on one point, some on another. Some are naturally impatient. Satan understands their weakness, and manages to overcome them again and again. But let none be discouraged by this. Whenever little annoyances and

trials arise, ask God in silent prayer to give you strength and grace to bear them patiently. There is a power in silence; do not speak a word until you have sent up your petition to the God of heaven. If you will always do this, you will soon overcome your hasty temper, and you will have a little heaven here to go to heaven in.

God wants His people to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts. See Psalms

24:3–5. Will it make them unhappy to do this? Will it bring unhappiness

into their families if they are kind and patient, courteous and forbearing?—Far from it. The kindness they manifest toward their families will be reflected upon themselves. This is the work that should be carried forward in the home. If the members of a family are not prepared to dwell in peace here, they are not prepared to dwell in the family that shall gather around the great white throne. Sin always brings darkness and bondage; but right-doing will bring peace and holy joy.

The work of overcoming is a great work. Shall we take hold of it with energy and perseverance? Unless we do, our “filthy garments” will not be taken from us. We need never expect that these will be torn from us violently; we must first show a desire to rid ourselves of them. We must seek to separate sin from us, relying upon the merits of the blood of Christ; and then in the day of affliction, when the enemy presses us, we shall walk among the angels. They will be like a wall of fire about us; and we shall one day walk with them in the city of God.

When tempted to sin, let us remember that Jesus is pleading for us in the heavenly sanctuary. When we put away our sins and come to Him in faith, He takes our names on His lips, and presents them to His Father, saying, I have graven them upon the palms of my hands; I know them by name. See Isaiah 49:16; Exodus 33:17. And the command goes forth to the angels to protect them. Then in the day of fierce trial, He will say, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Isaiah 26:20. What are the chambers in which they are to hide?—They are the protection of Christ and holy angels. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. They are in different compa-

**Whenever little annoyances and trials arise, ask God in silent prayer to give you strength and grace to bear them patiently.**



nies, and in all parts of the earth; and they will be tried singly, not in groups. Every one must stand the test for himself.

There has never been a time when the people of God have had greater need to claim His promises than now. Let the hand of faith pass through the darkness, and grasp the Arm of

Infinite Power. While we speak of the necessity of separating from sin, remember that Christ came to our world to save sinners, and that "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Hebrews 7:25. It is our privilege to believe that His blood is able to cleanse us

from every spot and stain of sin. We must not limit the power of the Holy One of Israel. He wants us to come to Him just as we are, sinful and polluted. His blood is efficacious. I entreat you not to grieve His Spirit by continuing in sin. If you fall under temptation, do not become discouraged. This promise comes ringing down along the line to our time: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. I feel that for this one promise a continual song of thanksgiving ought to go forth from the lips of mortals. Let us gather up these precious jewels of promise, and when Satan accuses us of our great sinfulness, and tempts us to doubt the power of God to save, let us repeat the words of Christ, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. □

*Review and Herald*, November 19, 1908.

**It is our privilege to believe that Christ's blood is able to cleanse us from every spot and stain of sin.**

## How will Satan try to deceive the whole world?

"Through the two great errors, the **immortality of the soul** and **Sunday sacredness**, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome." *The Great Controversy*, 588

This statement inspired Jacob Teske to write two books that you can share with your friends and neighbors—or bulk mail to a Zip code of your choice:

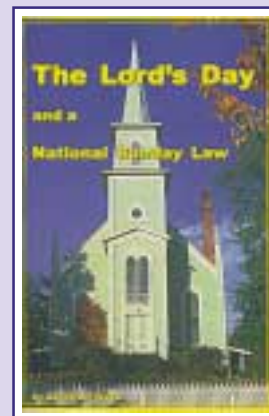
### *The Lord's Day and a National Sunday Law*

We believe this easy-reading booklet is by far the most powerful and complete presentation on the Sabbath issue to date.

**Quantity Pricing:\***

- 1-10 books: 85¢ each
- 11-239 books: 65¢ each
- 1-4 cases (240 per case): 45¢ each
- 5 or more cases: 35¢ each

**Bulk mail price:** 50¢ each (shipping included)



### *Immortality of the Soul and Spiritualism*

While the belief in the immortality of the soul seems to be an innocent philosophy, it lays the foundation of a whole false religion—spiritualism. This 32-page booklet is just right to hand out—in quantity! It's also a good follow-up for communities that have already received other material.

**Quantity Pricing:\***

- 1-10 books: 65¢ each
- 11-299 books: 55¢ each
- 1-7 cases (300 per case): 40¢ each
- 8 or more cases: 30¢ each

**Bulk mail price:** 45¢ each (shipping included)



\*Please see page 2 for shipping and sales tax information.



## Dear Reader,

We have provided this *NewsWatch* corner in order to keep you posted on headline news that relates with prophesied last day events.

If you have a news item of interest and would like to share it with us, please send us a copy. See page 2 for our mailing address and fax number.

### Natural Disaster

When Jesus was asked by His disciples “what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3) among the many tokens He gave as indications of His near return was, “pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven (Luke 21:11).”

In the recent natural calamity caused by Hurricane Mitch, we see the fulfillment of the Saviour’s words. The storm, with winds up to 180 mph, hit the coast of Central America, where the torrential rainfall amounted to at least 50 inches in three days! This tremendous amount of rain caused many mudslides. Among them was a tragic mudslide which occurred when the Casitas volcano crater filled with water and broke loose decimating several villages in its path below.

The storm has “left more than 10,000 people dead across Central America, with 13,000 missing (and presumed dead) and a staggering 2.8 million homeless.” *Newsweek*, November 16, 1998.

“The storm exacted a staggering economic toll, one that will take decades—and billions in outside economic aid—to recoup. Honduras and Nicaragua, the two poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti, suffered most. Nearly 70 percent of Honduras’s key crops—bananas, rice, beans, and corn—were destroyed, along with 15,000 coastal homes and more than 90 bridges.” *U.S. News & World Report*, November 16, 1998. May God help us to finish the work that this long story of suffering and sin may be at an end and we may go home with Him!

### Early Hit From Computer Bug

“Experts believe that many computers may crash at midnight on Dec. 31, 1999, because they use double digit dates like 97 and 98. Computers controlling operations such as payroll or pensions may die or spew out erroneous data when faced with the double zeros of the year 2000.

“Businesses and governments around the world have been cranking up efforts to solve the problem before time runs out.

“But Kyte [Andy Kyte, Gartner Group analyst] explained that many computer systems that deal with dates often run operations where they need to refer 12 months ahead—meaning that many computers will start to fail on Dec. 31, 1998.” *CNN*, November 3, 1998.

We can now understand more clearly Christ’s words when He spoke of “distress of nations, with perplexity.” Luke 21:25.

### Economy at Risk

The October 12, 1998, issue of *Newsweek* magazine has a front-page story entitled “THE CRASH OF 99? IT DOESN’T HAVE TO HAPPEN—BUT HERE’S WHY IT MIGHT.” The article states: “Americans may have been lulled into a false sense of security, and it is hard to overlook the eerie parallels with the late 1920s. . . . The United States is the last great domino propping up the world economy. If it falls, woe to us all.”

Also, the *U.S. News & World Report*, October 19, 1998, issue quotes a major financial institution, J. P. Morgan, as forecasting “a U.S. recession in 1999.”

The Holy Bible has much to say about money. The book of Revelation tells of a time when our government will forbid all people to buy or sell save those who have the

mark. See Revelation 13. Revelation 18 speaks of a time when the merchants of earth will mourn because of the destruction of Mystic Babylon, “for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.” Revelation 18:11. And then there is the reference in Isaiah 2:20, which speaks of those who had no interest in preparing for eternal life, casting their idols of silver and gold to the moles and the bats at Christ’s Second Coming. If we would not be among this sad class, we must follow the counsel of our Saviour when He said “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:20–21.

These and a multitude of other events herald the soon coming of our great King Jesus Christ. □





Philip Garber

## Is Sunday a Cure for the Moral Crisis?

Today we are seeing a resurgence of the idea that Sunday-keeping would solve the moral crisis that we see in our nation today. Jack P. Lowndes, executive director of The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States, states in a letter: "Our research indicates that the decline in morality in the United States parallels the decline in observing the Lord's day."—March 30, 1998.

Also, quoting from *Sunday*, the Fall 1998 issue by The Lord's Day Alliance, we find under the *Editor's Notebook* the caption "Christian Principles Are Vaccine for Moral Sickness." Lowndes, the editor, states that "we at The Lord's Day Alliance emphasize the keeping of

the Lord's Day because of who God is and what He requires of His followers. We believe that the solution to many of our problems is in keeping the guidelines He has given us in the Ten Commandments, including observing the Lord's Day as a day of worship and rest.

"To respond to today's moral crisis, Christians need to make every effort to uphold the principles of the Ten Commandments. These principles must be applied to our lives and they need to be taught in our churches and homes without apology."

The obvious message in the above quotation is that Sundaykeeping would somehow cure the moral problems of our nation. This is the very

message that we were told would be proclaimed just before the final crisis. The religious leaders would "put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called 'Christian sabbath,' and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society. This claim is especially urged in America, where the doctrine of the true Sabbath has been most widely preached." *The Great Controversy*, 587.

The current trend of religious thought seems to promote the idea that somehow in order for our nation to return to morality we must pass legislation which they believe will bring our nation back to God through civil laws. Ideas such as these have been portrayed by many religious thought leaders.

One such letter by Alan Keyes, Chairman of The Declaration Foundation, plainly declares: "While there are many causes of the moral difficulties our nation faces, we direct our attention specifically to the responsibility our governmental officials must assume for the establishment of moral standards in America by renewing their acknowledgment of the fundamental moral principles of American public life."

While we cannot help but agree that the moral fiber of the nation is in a sad state, we cannot agree that leaders of government should try to enforce a moral standard that could in any way infringe upon anyone's right to worship God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience.

It would appear that the principles of Protestantism that have made this nation a great bul-



wark of religious freedom are swiftly being forgotten today. Let us briefly go back in history and see what made Protestantism so great:

Quoting from *The Great Controversy*, 197, we read: “One of the noblest testimonies ever uttered for the Reformation was the Protest of-

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**Satan is still as much opposed to the Scriptures being made the guide of life as he was in the sixteenth century.**

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ferred by the Christian princes of Germany at the Diet of Spire in 1529. The courage, faith, and firmness of those men of God gained for succeeding ages liberty of thought and of conscience. Their Protest gave to the reformed church the name of Protestant; its principles are ‘the very essence of Protestantism.’ — D’Aubigné, b. 13, ch. 6.”

Among the most basic principles underlying the Protest by the princes of Germany was the simple truth that “To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the state, and this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion. Every

secular government that attempts to regulate or enforce religious observances by civil authority, is sacrificing the very principle for which the evangelical Christians so nobly struggled.” *The Great Controversy*, 201.

The writer continues by pointing out that “ ‘this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the

power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the Word of God above the visible church. In the first place, it rejects the civil power in divine things, and says with the prophets and apostles, “*We must obey God rather than man.*” See Acts 5:29. In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes farther: it lays down the principle that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God.’ — D’Aubigné, b. 13, ch. 6.” Ibid., 203–204.

My purpose in relating this history to you, the reader, is not only to

instill a love for religious liberty but also to inspire an army of workers who in their sphere will uphold the great truth enjoined by the Protestant princes of religious freedom! May we do our part to educate and warn those who have forgotten the great truths that made the Reformation such a success. Certainly we can see that any attempt to bring America back to God through civil legislation would be a serious blow to the fundamental principles, not only of the Protestant Reformation, but also to the Constitution of the United States of America.

In light of the knowledge that we gain as we review the history of the Protestant princes of Germany, we cannot help but see that “the experience of these noble Reformers contains a lesson for all succeeding ages. Satan’s manner of working against God and His Word has not changed; he is still as much opposed to the Scriptures being made the guide of life as he was in the sixteenth century. In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant

principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the Rule of Faith and Duty. Satan is still working through every means which he can control to destroy religious liberty. The antichristian power which the protesters of Spire rejected, is now with renewed vigor seeking to re-establish its lost supremacy. The same unswerving adherence to the Word of God manifested at that crisis of the Reformation, is the only hope of reform today.” Ibid., 204–205.

Those who are advocating the idea that Sunday desecration is somehow responsible for the great decline of morality in our nation, seem to miss the obvious point that the only standard of right and wrong is that which is found in the Holy Scriptures, and Sunday-keeping is nowhere in all the pages of the Holy Writ endorsed as a commandment which mankind is morally obliged to obey. It is also strange that those who endorse Sunday observance quote the fourth commandment as found in Exodus 20:8–11 as proof that Sunday should be kept—when any thinking mind cannot help but see that Sunday is not the day referred to at all. Rather, it refers to Saturday as the Sabbath day, a

day that has been kept by the Jews as the Sabbath for thousands of years and by Christians since apostolic times.

### **Pope's Call for Sunday Attendance Is Encouraging to The Lord's Day Alliance**

"For 110 years it's been crusading—with Sundays off, of course."

Recently "the Atlanta-based Lord's Day Alliance of the United States got a helping hand from the

"This is something we've been fighting a long time," Lowndes said. . . . "If our founders were worried about people not resting on Sunday in 1888, I can't imagine what they'd think of things now."

"We believe what the Bible says: "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." It should be a day of rest, worship and good works.' "

There are indications, though, that organizations

begins with the caption, "Sunday Rest Catching On." "Sabbath rest is 'not a new idea,' admitted the Detroit Free Press in a recent article. It is as old as Creation itself.

"But it seems to be making a comeback in the United States and around the world, said the paper, quoting Jewish and Christian locals who observe it—as well as Pope John Paul II's recent letter on the subject."

The events currently happening around us bring home the truth that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled very swiftly. The book entitled *The Great Controversy*, although written over one hundred years ago, is accurately being fulfilled today. As the author states, referring to our day, "Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. She can read what is to be. She bides her time, seeing that the Protestant churches are paying her homage in their acceptance of the false sabbath, and that they are preparing to enforce it by the very means which she herself employed in bygone days. Those who reject the light of truth will yet seek the aid of this self-styled infallible power to exalt an institution that originated

with her. How readily she will come to the help of Protestants in this work, it is not difficult to conjecture." *The Great Controversy*, 580.

We are beginning to see the fulfillment of the words of Revelation 17:17. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

Here we see that Scripture predicts that Protestantism will give its kingdom to the beast power, which is the Papacy. We can clearly see when comparing prophecy with the actions of such organizations like The Lord's Day Alliance, that they are currently of a mindset to work very closely with Rome. When we look at the joy manifested by The Lord's Day Alliance in getting "a helping hand from the pope" for the enforcement of Sunday, we can see that the prophecy of Revelation 13 is very near completion.

It also seems to me that now is the time to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with the truth regarding God's true Sabbath, because very soon we shall have to answer for our faith. □

**Pope's Call For Sunday Attendance Is Encouraging To Lord's Day Alliance**  
By Jeffrey Scott, Atlanta Journal-Constitution

For 110 years it's been crusading—with Sundays off, of course.

And recently, the Atlanta-based Lord's Day Alliance of the United States got a helping hand from the pope in its long-running campaign to keep the faithful in their pews and out of the shopping malls on Sunday.

In an "apostolic letter," John Paul II urged Roman Catholics to go to church on Sundays. Cultural activities and



LDA representatives including (l/r) the late James and Margaret Wesberry and Mrs. Harmon Caldwell met several years ago with the Pope in Rome.

I can't imagine what they'd think of

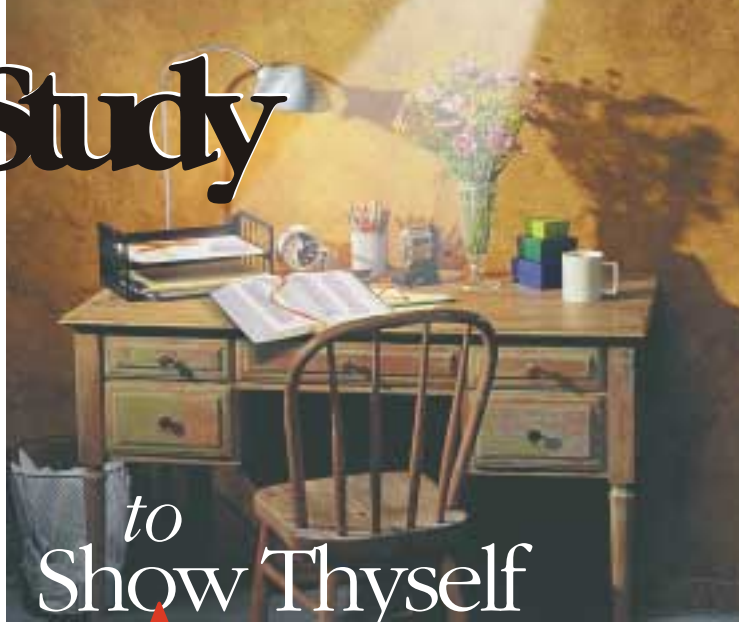
pope in its long-running campaign to keep the faithful in their pews and out of the shopping malls on Sunday.

"The pope's decree comes at a time when attendance at Sunday Mass has declined. That decline is a distressingly familiar issue to Jack Lowndes, executive director of the interdenominational Lord's Day Alliance.

such as The Lord's Day Alliance are having an impact. "There is a growing movement to make Sunday a day of rest," Lowndes said. "And it's not all based on rest and worship, although that is why we support it." *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 8, 1998.

Another collaborative report from *The National Catholic Register*, September 6–12, 1998,

# Study



## to Show Thyself

# Approved. . . **Part 1**

By Sally Hohnberger

As I have read rapidly, thinking that there was so much to read and so little time to learn all I needed to learn, I realized I was unable to retain what I had read. In frustration I sought God's will for me. He reminded me of a friend saying to me, "Slow down your studies so you can learn faster." Well, I thought that advice was foolishness when I first heard it, for weren't there all the books to read? How could I ever gain all the knowledge I needed if I didn't read quickly? However, when I realized that God was asking me to slow down in this way, I decided to try it. Friends, I found that by reading more slowly, I did learn faster. Grace and virtue attended this method. God led me to practicalize the Biblical precepts which have given guidelines to my personal life today.

### Slow Down Your Studies

#### Don't Read Or Eat Too Fast!

I liken reading to eating. We can only eat so much at a sitting without causing indigestion, fermentation and problems. As it

is in the physical, so it is in the spiritual. When I read too quickly, it is like swallowing my food without proper chewing. The thought occurred to me that reading for hours without stopping would not do me any more good than eating for hours at a time—nonstop! Think about it! In my studies, therefore, I saw a need to stop

every little while and lay down my book (fork), in order to think and pray about (chew and digest) what I was reading. I must learn to ask and see what this passage, this topic, is teaching *me*—what it has that I need *now*. All of us spend too much energy applying the Scriptures to others, don't we?

In problem solving I began to see that not stopping to think and "chew" over what I read after each paragraph created indigestion and confusion in my thinking. I did not retain what I had just read. Guilt and despair were common for me, because I wasn't living up to what I was reading about God's standards. I didn't know how to obey. I kept vague facts, but not concepts of how it was to be practically applied to me today.

As I pondered my dilemma, God helped me to discover that it wasn't more knowledge that I needed, but rather to make a decision and to apply what I *already knew* of how to follow after Christ. So, it wouldn't hurt me to slow down my reading, would it? This is experimental religion. When I cooperated with God in retraining my reading habits, I found it required my surrender—first, to do it God's way, and, second, an effort to choose to deny my former inclinations to keep on reading. Then I discovered that I retained what I read. It was very helpful to me. I even began to remember the book and page from which I had read something that was personally meaningful and life-changing to me, which I never

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had done before. I came to realize that it is Divinity working with humanity that makes the difference. In changing habits, I found that I have my part, while God has His part. If I don't put forth my effort, God cannot add His grace, which multiplies my effort and transforms misconceptions or wrong emotions in my life.

In slowing down, I was personalizing the instructions by asking, "How will this knowledge affect my response in a trial with my husband, children, or friend within my home life today?" This made a difference in how I responded. When Jim and I didn't see things the same way, I sought God's directions in what to do, and He instructed me often according to what I had just read. Most often it began by my surrendering wrong feelings and emotions for Christ to subdue, before I was prepared to respond correctly as Christ would have me. In this way Christ was becoming a personal Saviour to me. As a result, I responded slowly, not only to my husband, but to any irritation when a conflict of the wills arose between my child and me. I cried out often to God, and He helped me know how to handle the various conflicts rightly. My child, by being brought to a surrendered position before God, tasted grace in his heart, which changed him. What a blessing! This must be the school of Christ! Even my conduct of school academics and will-training changed for the better, for Christ was my Principal, leading, guiding and directing me in the way that I should go. Priorities in life became clear. Our home ran more smoothly and quietly. We all were happier as a result of seeking and surrendering to God's will and way. God gave concrete directions on how to do not only the academics successfully for life here, but also character develop-

ment successfully for life today and for life eternal.

I found reading God's Word and the Spirit of Prophecy in this way changed my life! God became a real Helper to me personally. I found that He is interested in every detail of my life, and that He has specific counsel and directions for me. Friends, He will do that for you too!

I believe this is where primitive Godliness begins. Through this personal relationship with God as my Teacher, interpreting the Scriptures to me today, He takes His rightful place as my God. My dependence, my trust and obedience grew from cultivating this one new habit of reading more slowly with God.

### **A Color-Coding System**

To enhance and direct my mind during Bible and Spirit of Prophecy studies, I have found it helpful to mark neatly and distinctly, according to a color-coding system, the different ideas presented. For example, one of the greatest lessons I had to learn was the distinction between God's work and my work in working out my salvation. So I marked my part of the equation—what I must do or be—in blue. In the sanctuary, blue represents obedience.

I chose pink to denote my child's part, or anything specific to infants and young children.

In marking God's part, I used red. Red represents the power and blood of Christ, which washes away our sins. It also represents His promises, or anything to do with God.

This distinction helped me to see that I was trying to do God's part, trying to change my desires and emotions. No wonder I couldn't change them! This method of color coding brought this fact vividly to my mind, so I could co-

operate and change my direction and effort.

Orange represents cautions, re-proofs, or corrections.

Brown is used for Satan's wrong ways of life. Brown highlights the thoughts, words or actions that are evil. Evil is any selfishness. I liken brown to the dirt from which we need to be cleansed.

Green represents anything to do with faith. Biblically, green denotes faith.

Yellow is to highlight any information that I find interesting or that I may want to find at a later date. I use this color sparingly, or it gets too hard to read.

A box around words is used to highlight key words or topics that I have a special interest in finding the answers to at a quick glance.

I have found that the 8-colored Pentel pencil is very useful. It marks lightly and does not make all the markings offensive. However, discipline yourself to mark sparingly and not everything.

This color-coding system, reiterates to my mind God's part as being separate from my part, as I read and reread these passages. This method slows me down and makes me think more. I can find topics and references more easily. I suggest that you try this system, or make one up of your own. My friend Alane does a similar coding system which varies from mine. A color-coding system will make your study time more meaningful and aid in the retention of these special truths. □

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### **Coming up . . .**

**Part 2:** We will look at three little disciplines that will help you get more out of your devotional time.



By Clark Floyd

In the year 1941, World War II was in progress in Europe. The United States, although supplying aid to England and France, was not officially involved in the war. In fact, concern over the European war and how best to avoid being caught up in it, resulted in what was termed “the Great Debate,” an argumentative discussion on what to do in regard to the war. Isolationists wanted to stay totally out of the war, while interventionists desired to avoid war while still sending all possible aid to Hitler’s enemies. The debate was carried on in Congress, on the radio, in public forums, and in bars—wherever people were gathered.

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The Japanese had begun the invasion of China in the summer of 1937. This brought strong protests from the United States. In 1940, President Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States, and later a commercial blockade of Japan was put into effect. The Japanese, while planning their attack against the U.S. fleet of ships at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, were involved in deceitful negotiations with the American government.

Joseph Clark Grew, our ambassador in Tokyo in January 1941, indicated that the Japanese might “attempt a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor using all their military facilities.” When the attack was on its way,



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army radar tracked a cloud of aircraft approaching Pearl Harbor from the north. An officer concluded that it was a flight of B-17s due in from California.

The Japanese secret codes had been broken and messages received “had alerted U.S. policy makers to the realization that Japan, while negotiating in Washington for an end to the crisis, was simultaneously preparing for war. But where was the Japanese fleet?”<sup>1</sup>

Although the United States was forewarned, somehow the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was a complete surprise! Great losses were suffered. There were 2,403 dead; 1,178 wounded; 169 aircraft destroyed; 3 ships destroyed; and 18 others damaged. The United States was down, but not out. Except for the men who had lost their lives, there was a second chance.

Rallying around the battle cry, “Remember Pearl Harbor,” in the years to follow, the United States successfully recovered against the Japanese. And on Wednesday, August 15, 1945, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* announced in its headlines, “Great War Ends!” with a subheadline, “Japs Will Surrender to Gen. MacArthur.”

### Jesus Forewarns

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus spoke with His disciples as they entered into the area of Caesarea Philippi, and “from that time forth” began to show them “how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” Matthew 16:21.

Later “while they abode in Galilee,” Jesus again forewarned His disciples, “the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.” What was the response? “They were exceeding sorry.” See Matthew 17:22–23. Yet they didn’t really understand!

Again as Jesus and the disciples began what would be His last journey to Jerusalem, Jesus gathered His disciples about Him and counseled them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief

priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” Matthew 20:17-19.

Even though the words were clear and distinct, the disciples “understood none of these things.” Luke 18:34. In fact, the mother of James and John, who was also there, completely missed the significance of what Jesus said. She asked that her sons be seated on the right and left hand of the Saviour in His kingdom. See Matthew 20:20–21.

Clearly, Jesus had attempted in every way to forewarn His disciples of the coming crisis. However, their preconceived ideas—connected with their failure to understand prophecy, placed a

block in their minds that prevented them from understanding the crystal-clear words of Jesus. Self was still a controlling factor in each of their lives. “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” Luke 22:24.

But Jesus understood from prophecy what the reaction of the disciples would be. As they left that last supper together in the upper room, Jesus quoted from

Zechariah, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be

scattered abroad.” Matthew 26:31; see also Zechariah 13:7. At the same time, He told them of a second chance to come, “But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.” Matthew 26:32.

In *The Great Controversy*, 594, we find the following: “Before His crucifixion, the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully

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destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them.”

After the resurrection, Jesus met with His disciples on several occasions. The first notable such occasion was on the road to Emmaus when He met with two of the disciples and opened to their understanding the prophecies concerning His kingdom.

And just before His departure from earth, “being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Acts 1:4-5.

But notice again their reply, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Verses 7-8.

Jesus’ emphasis was on witnessing to others, while the disciples’ emphasis was on the restoration of the kingdom in this world. Can we too get into the same trap of emphasizing the restoration of the kingdom through the Second Coming while forgetting the witnessing the Lord would have us do before the Second Coming takes place?

In these last days many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled. Are

God’s people ready for what is coming upon the world as “an overwhelming surprise”? My brother, my sister, are you ready? Do you have a true connection with the Vine? Have you let go of the things of this world? Is Jesus the Supreme Ruler of your life?

Again, Ellen White, after referring to the failure of the disciples to remember the words of Jesus in regard to His coming crucifixion, states, “So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready.” Ibid.

Both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us of events that are to occur in the days before Jesus comes. “Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: . . . there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. . . Iniquity shall abound.” Matthew 24:6-7, 12.

“As it was in the days of Lot. . . Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Luke 17:28, 30. “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:37.

Not a week goes by that we do not see some kind of fulfillment of prophecy in regard to last-day

events. As in the days of Lot, homosexuality is becoming accepted as normal by many people in the United States while millions, having that leaning, are “coming out of the closet.” Recently, the State of New Jersey passed legislation allowing homosexual parents to adopt children just as normal parents do.

Wars and rumors of war continue. The frequency of natural disasters is at an all-time high and is expected to increase. New pestilences are increasing as old ones become more serious. Financial disaster has already visited many Asian countries and is creeping closer to the United States as the Y2K and the stock market problems loom on the horizon.

The Religious Right is gaining power on the one hand, while on the other hand immorality in the life of our president—as long as we have good financial times—is accepted by society at large as being all right. However, the pendulum is ready to swing the other way as the Papacy and many Protestants speak out for Sunday legislation.

Spiritualistic encounters are happening more often, including appearances of the “Virgin Mary” in many countries as well as in the United States.

Again, my brother, my sister, I ask, Are you ready? Is Jesus number one in your life? Are you obedient to His calling upon your life? You are forewarned, but are you ready? You are in the time of your second chance. There will not be another! □

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *National Geographic*, December 1991, 65.

# My Story

## **Phil Garber shares how he discovered the Adventist message**

I can still remember when, as a youth years ago, I rode to church one Sunday morning with my parents and observed someone working in his yard. I felt what I believed was righteous indignation as I asked my parents, “Doesn’t he know he shouldn’t be working on Sunday?” It was not until years later that the Lord would bring me to a realization that I had “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” See Romans 10:2.

I was born into the home of conservative German Baptists. The German Baptists are very similar to the Amish in dress and their way of life. The particular group of German Baptists that my folks belonged to for the first two years of my life still traveled by horse and buggy, and did not use electricity—telephones, televisions, radios, and so forth. We lived on a small Ohio farm where we had a garden, fruit trees, cows and chickens. We had a simple life, but we were happy! The Bible was read in our home every day for family worship—as often were other stories of God’s faithful heroes of yesteryear. My favorite stories were of the Waldenses. Thus, early in life I gained a keen appreciation for the Holy Bible and for stories of God’s faithful people of ancient times.

One night at the age of thirteen, as I stood gazing up at the starry heavens, I came under the conviction of my need to follow God. Soon I was baptized into the German Baptist Church. My understanding of Jesus and the plan of re-

demption was very limited. My religion consisted more in the order and customs of the church—rather than in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

As the years advanced, my parents began encountering marital problems, which finally led to their divorce. The turmoil of a divided home, along with an asthma problem, resulted in my living with another family in the mountains, where the fresh mountain air relieved my asthma considerably. There I attended a small one-room Christian school for my last two years of high school.

At that time in my life I found that I had a great hunger to read my Bible which I read morning and evening. I remember that people around me thought I was reading my Bible too much, but none of their concerns daunted me. So while other youth played with their games and hobbies, I came home from school to read my Bible. Thus, I believe, God was preparing me for the opening of my understanding to greater truth.

In the year of 1984, at the age of twenty, I experienced events that would forever change my life. At that time I was living with my father who had also moved to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. I had become increasingly disenchanted with the religion of my youth. I could find no harmony between the teachings of the Bible and the teachings of my church, and this led me to pull back somewhat from attending.



Then some old acquaintances of my father visited our home. That evening an interesting conversation took place. The visitors were advocating that the law of God was still binding and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment ought to be kept today as verily as in Old Testament and apostolic times. The conversation had a profound effect upon my mind! I decided that I needed to study into the Scriptures to see if truly the law of God was still binding. I chose the book of Romans as my subject material. I believed that, since Paul in that book dealt largely with the subject of the law, I would find in it a more complete answer to my questions. I decided that my method of study would be to take each verse and analyze it separately and alone, rewriting the verse in my own words.

As I progressed with my study, I was amazed at what I found! Contrary to what I had been taught, the law was not done away with, but was actually strengthened and enjoined by the plainest statements of Holy Scripture. Many of the verses of Scripture began to take on new significance. Some of them that stood out were passages such as Romans 2:13: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified," and also the passage in Romans 3:31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." See also Romans 5:13; 7:7–14, 22; 8:3–4. I then came under a deep conviction that obedience to all of God's commandments was necessary, including obedience to the fourth commandment.

I began to keep the Sabbath privately at home. Those first Sabbaths still have a sacred effect upon my mind. As I worshiped the Creator, I felt His presence very near in simple song. Through walks in nature, I

gained a rich experience that I shall never forget. I can still remember the glorious, golden-orange sunsets that welcomed and ended the sacred Sabbath hours. I know that angels from heaven were very near me to impress my mind.

However, all did not continue as smoothly as it had begun. My family was not as excited about my newly found truth as I was. I found myself in nightly discussions regarding the validity of the law of God. At first, it was a trial to my faith, as I would nightly retire to my room with earnest prayer and at times with tears, imploring God to keep me from being deceived, while at the same time asking Him that I might not reject any truth He would be willing to show me. The opposition that I faced drove me to a deeper study of God's Word, and as I searched I found much more evidence that His law truly was unchangeable. I experienced a greater peace, knowing that God was truly leading me. My faith became much stronger because of the opposition I had faced.

About this time a notice arrived in the mail that attracted my attention. The advertisement explained that lectures were to be held in the local Seventh-day Adventist Church on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. At first, I avoided going, but finally, through the influence of a fellow co-worker, I went. I was excited about the plain and simple harmony of the prophecies. I was greatly impressed with the prediction of Daniel 7:25, showing the work of the antichrist power in his attempt to change the law of God. The Sabbath truth became even more important to me as I understood how the Roman Catholic Church had worked to undermine God's true Sabbath. The issue of Sabbath versus Sunday gained new significance as I realized how Sunday observance was a mark

of Rome's authority and how, when enforced by legislation, it will become the mark of the beast that the Bible so plainly warns against in Revelation 13 and 14.

A whole system of truth was opening up to my understanding. I saw that God has a remnant church of people who are commandment keepers (see Revelation 12:17), and who have been given a special gift called the Spirit of Prophecy. See Revelation 19:10. I saw that Jesus was my High Priest (see Hebrews 8:1) and that since 1844 He had entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary there to make a final atonement for His people and then to return for them. See Daniel 8:14; Revelation 11:18–19; Hebrews 9:28. I found great joy in reading the different books written by Ellen G. White—especially *The Great Controversy*—as they opened my mind in a greater way to understand and appreciate the Holy Scriptures.

As I look back over my experience, I praise God for His providential leading in my life. I fully believe that God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church the great and final message of warning to the world. See Revelation 14:6–12. I hope that you who have grown up in this message appreciate the great truths committed into your hands. And if perchance you have lost your first love, please pray that God will restore it to you again. If you have never heard these truths before, I invite you to search and see if these things are so. You will receive a great blessing as you do!

Finally, I would like to give God all the praise and glory for the way He has led me into such a precious message. To Him alone belongs all the honor. □





Art: Joe Manscalco

**An attack has been made on the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. Is there enough evidence in the Bible to support such a belief?**

# *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Cultic Or Biblical? Part 1*

“A Book That Is *Shaking* Adventism.”<sup>1</sup>

**S**o read the recent headline of an independent, liberal, Adventist magazine describing the impact of a book called *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*.<sup>2</sup> Written by one Dale Ratzlaff, a former Seventh-day Adventist pastor and Bible teacher, the book launches yet another attack on the historic Adventist sanctuary doctrine, declaring it to be un-Biblical, anti-gospel, and guilt-producing.

It is not the first time we have heard this claim, and it certainly will not be the last. But the present writer believes that those who rightly cling to the Biblical roots of Adventism have an obligation to affirm what the Bible truly teaches in the face of these charges. We cannot take the chance that anyone will assume that persuasive answers do not really exist if we remain silent. Our review of the Bible’s evidence may not convince the stubborn critic, but it may help the honest truth-seeker.

I have known Dale Ratzlaff for years. He taught my Bible Doctrines class during my junior year at Monterey Bay Academy in Central California. I still count him and his family (one of whom was a classmate) as my friends. For more than twenty years I have watched the New Theology work its inescapable logic on this man’s mind, leading him away from Scripture, away from the Spirit of Prophecy writings, and away from God’s remnant church. Another book by Ratzlaff, which attacks the seventh-day Sabbath,<sup>3</sup> gives further evidence of how Ratzlaff’s view of salvation compels him to reject Adventism’s basic doctrines.



By KEVIN PAULSON

Kevin Paulson, a freelance writer, resides in Redlands, California. He is the Editor of *Quo Vadis*, a new monthly magazine for Seventh-day Adventist young people.

Like Desmond Ford and others, Ratzlaff denounces the sanctuary doctrine as being contrary to Scripture and the gospel message therein contained. Like Ford, he insists that the Adventist understanding of the sanctuary and salvation comes from Ellen White—rather than from the Bible. But this article, the first in a series, will demonstrate that it is really Ratzlaff who contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible.

## The Key to the Whole Controversy

Never should we begin a discussion of Bible topics without answering the most basic question: Who, what, and where is our authority? Ratzlaff himself agrees:

“The first issue is authority. This must be settled in the mind of the reader once and for all. If we do not agree here, there is no further dialogue.”<sup>4</sup>

Ratzlaff continues:

“What is the final authority for the Christian? Evangelicals will immediately answer, ‘The Bible and the Bible only.’”<sup>5</sup>

A future article in this series will examine Ratzlaff’s claim that Seventh-day Adventists contradict this principle with their reverence for the writings of Ellen White. For now we simply wish to focus on the fact that while Ratzlaff claims to hold to Scripture alone as his authority, he is in fact very selective in his use of Scripture.

The most basic difference between historic Adventism and evangelical Protestantism is that the former uses Scripture comprehensively, while the latter uses it selectively.

A classic example of this is Robert Morey’s book *Death and the Afterlife*, in which he seeks to defend the doctrine of natural immortality against the beliefs of those who hold that the dead are unconscious. Morey claims that, “instead of giving priority to the clar-

ity of the New Testament,” Adventists “feel safer staying with the blurred vision found in the Old Testament.”<sup>6</sup> He then warns:

“We should appreciate the distinctive vagueness of the Old Testament and the distinctive clarity of the New Testament. We should avoid leveling the distinction between the testaments.”<sup>7</sup>

However, it is difficult to reconcile this claim of “vagueness” about the Old Testament with the praise accorded the Bereans in the book of Acts, who “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11. Some of the modern translations are even clearer in rendering this verse, stating that the Bereans “examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (NIV). In other words, they were testing Paul’s teachings by the Old Testament Scriptures, which, of course, were the only Scriptures they had at the time.

Paul himself writes: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16.<sup>8</sup> This verse is especially crucial as we review the evangelical doctrine of salvation, which Ratzlaff strongly promotes. Instead of following the Bible’s rule that Scripture should be its own interpreter (see 2 Peter 1:20–21; 1 Corinthians 2:12–14), evangelicals typically select a few passages from Paul’s writings which speak of the “works of the law” not saving anyone, and then they impose upon these passages the opinions of uninspired theologians.

Here, at the bottom line, is the basic problem with Ratzlaff’s assault on the sanctuary

doctrine, and the same assault of every other critic I know who shares his views. They not only refuse to let Paul himself define what he means when he says that the “works of the law” cannot justify, but they also fail to consider the words of Jesus regarding the conditions for receiving eternal life. Only when all this evidence is put together, along with the Old Testament Scriptures and the remainder of the New Testament, can a true understanding of salvation be found.

Because Ratzlaff departs from the comprehensive method of Bible study in which historic Adventism is rooted, turning instead to the selective, evangelical method of Bible study, he finds himself at odds with the Bible’s view of both salvation and the Bible doctrine of the investigative judgment. This article will demonstrate just how seriously Ratzlaff has departed from Bible truth.

## The “Gospel Test”

By his own admission, the core of Ratzlaff’s argument is his understanding of the gospel. For this reason, far more than any of the others he gives, he finds himself forced to reject the sanctuary doctrine. He writes in his own words: “Does the SDA doctrine of the

cleansing of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment distort, undermine, or contradict the one and only new covenant gospel of grace? This is the acid test. All that has been said thus far—as important as it is—fades, in comparison with this test.”<sup>9</sup>

Ratzlaff correctly understands that what we believe about salvation has everything to do with how we relate to the sanctuary doctrine. If we accept the

**Never should we begin a discussion of Bible topics without answering the most basic question: Who, what, and where is our authority?**

popular evangelical gospel, which teaches salvation by justification alone, we will have a very serious problem with the investigative judgment doctrine. But if we believe that salvation is accomplished by both justification and sanctification, the investigative judgment is found to be in perfect harmony with the gospel.

Which gospel does the Bible teach?

Repeatedly, Ratzlaff talks about the “new covenant gospel of grace” which he claims is contradicted by Ellen White and the sanctuary doctrine.<sup>10</sup> The problem is, Ratzlaff never permits the Bible to define what the new covenant is. He even makes the incredible statement that “in the new covenant the focus is not on *law*, but on *belief* in Christ.”<sup>11</sup> We will let the Bible speak for itself:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Jeremiah 31:31–33.

The New Testament repeats this new covenant promise in Hebrews 8, verses 8–10. In both of these passages, the writing of God’s law in the human heart is the means whereby the new covenant is established. See also Deuteronomy 30:14; Psalm 119:11; Romans 10:6–8; 2 Corinthians 3:2–3.

Ratzlaff claims: “Paul was very bold in his comments toward people who came to the churches he had founded with the additional requirement of law-keeping for salvation.”<sup>12</sup> Ratzlaff seems not to have read Paul’s writings very carefully. Paul declares

pointedly, in Romans 2:13: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

Is Paul then contradicting himself in the next chapter, where he writes that “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”? Romans 3:28; see also Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8–9; 2 Timothy 1:8–9. Not at all. Rather, the apostle is talking about two different kinds of works. The second

chapter of Romans—often ignored by evangelicals in their study of this epistle—explains in depth the difference between those who make their boast of the law while disobeying its precepts (see Romans 2:1–5, 17–23), and those who obey because of “the work of the law written in their hearts” (see verse 15). Here we see two different kinds of “works of the law”—the one kind which cannot justify (see verses 17–23), and the other which is the condition of being justified (see verses 13–15).

Here Paul again reflects the teachings of the Old Testament, which declares that the confessing and forsaking of sin must precede God’s forgiveness. See Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7.

In a similar tone, Jesus declared that if we are not willing to forgive people for offenses against us, God will not forgive our trespasses against Him. See Matthew 6:14–15.

Ratzlaff declares: “These good works (in sanctification) in *no way whatever* enter into the foundation of (the Christian’s) acceptance by God for salvation.”<sup>13</sup> He also makes the following comment about the Seventh-day

**If we believe that salvation is accomplished by both justification and sanctification, the investigative judgment is found to be in perfect harmony with the gospel.**

Adventist historic view of justification by faith:

“Most historic Adventists would also say that they believe in justification by faith. However, in this latter group, their understanding of this doctrine is often limited. They see justification as taking care of *their past sins*, but are often unclear about it providing *present and future* righteousness.

“Justification by faith is often seen as only one-half of the process of salvation.

The other half is sanctification. Often their concept of the gospel—the ground of salvation—*includes both*. In this way, human works—even if these works are works of faith—are included in sanctification, which is also included in the basis of salvation. . . .

“We conclude, therefore, that only the evangelical Adventists *clearly* understand justification by faith. In the other two schools of Adventist thought (historic and liberal) there is often some confusion on this most important doctrine.”<sup>14</sup>

Yet the apostle Paul is clear that sanctification and the Spirit’s inward work are part of the means of our salvation: “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” 2 Thessalonians 2:13. See also Philippians 2:12–13; Titus 3:5.

The Bible nowhere confines the believer’s salvation to the work of justification or forgiveness exclusively, nor does Scripture ever exalt one aspect of Christ’s work as having greater saving value than another. Nor does Scripture ever teach that God’s forgiveness covers any more than the believer’s past



sins. We have already noted two verses which state that the confessing and forsaking of sin are prerequisites for God's forgiveness. See Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7.

The New Testament declares: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. Notice that forgiveness is available *if* we sin, not *when*. The Bible knows nothing of any "advance" forgiveness for sins we might commit in the future, nor is there any Bible support for the idea of continuous forgiveness on account of inevitable shortcomings. Rather, forgiveness (justification) is provided *if* we sin (see 1 John 2:1), the reception of which is conditional on forsaking sin (see Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7). Nowhere does Scripture teach that Christians are continuously covered by Jesus' righteousness while falling into sin which they supposedly cannot avoid.

Ratzlaff follows the typical line of evangelical theology in claiming that sinless perfection is not a condition of salvation, and that to hold to the necessity of such perfection is to deny the gospel of grace.<sup>15</sup> But Ratzlaff fails to understand—as do so many others—that being saved by grace includes *both* justification and sanctification, as we have already seen from Scripture. See 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

The problem with evangelicals is that when they see phrases in the Bible like "by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:8) and the "gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17), they think this means salvation by justification only. However,

the Bible teaches no such doctrine. Being saved by grace through faith *includes* sanctified obedience (see Philippians 2:12–13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 5:9), and this sanctification will indeed be perfect before the coming of Christ:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23; see also 2 Peter 3:10–14; 1 John 3:2–3.

Ratzlaff condemns Ellen White for teaching that "the second coming of Christ is tarrying until the character of Christ [which was sinless] is perfectly reproduced in His people."<sup>16</sup> Yet the above Bible verses make it clear that Ellen White borrowed this teaching straight from Scripture.

Ratzlaff further criticizes Ellen White for teaching that "the fulfillment of God's promises to us are conditional upon our perfect obedience."<sup>17</sup> But the following Bible pas-

sage makes plain where she got this idea:

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Ratzlaff denounces Ellen White's teaching that "as Christ was perfect in His life, His followers are to be perfect in their lives."<sup>18</sup> But again, the following verses demonstrate the Biblical source of her views:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God

sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:3–4.

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

"And in their [the translated saints'] mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5; see also Zephaniah 3:13. □

**W**hat are the conditions of receiving eternal life? Have believers been exempted from facing a future judgment? Next month we will examine these questions as we continue this series.

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- <sup>4</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 32.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> Robert A. Morey, *Death and the Afterlife* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 23.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>8</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are from the King James Version.
- <sup>9</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 319.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 210, 215, 319, 325, 333, 340, 345, 352, 353.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 261 (emphasis original).
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 319–320.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 338 (emphasis original).
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 302–303 (emphasis original).
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 215–216.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* See also 210–211.



Your monthly magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*, is a blessing to us! We are thankful that a friend introduced it to us. It is full of truths—God’s truths! May God bless you all for your endeavors.

*PD, Michigan*

Hello, I am a fellow Adventist in dire need. Before the pope landed on Nigerian soil, my colleagues and I were involved in free mass distribution of the *Earth’s Final Warning* tabloids. My object has been to storm my present school, the University of Agriculture, with your tabloids. This University is in Benue State, one of the few regions in Nigeria visited by the pope. There are very few members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Makudi and very few indigenous ones.

I try to give the educated students and the staff at the university as much literature as possible. I give out tabloids while on the bus, or sometimes inside the school. I distribute many tract notes, which people pick up before you know it. At the present, my supply is getting low.

I give out at least six tabloids during my ride on the bus on Sabbath. People are interested in and also attracted to these tabloids. The pope’s picture on the front cover does not raise any suspicion.

So, Sir or Madam, please send me any tabloids that the Lord impresses you to give. If you would include similar tabloids or tracts, it would also be appreciated. My aim is to hasten Christ’s coming. I also want a crown decked with stars!

*MA, Nigeria*

Greetings in the Lord! I really enjoyed the recent *Our Firm Foundation* magazine—especially the articles entitled “Idols of the Remnant Church” and “Faith Amid Storm Clouds.” I like the improved format, too. Keep putting in those news notes about the signs of the end and Christ’s soon coming. We need to wake up the sleeping saints!

*RH, Maine*

I would like to show my appreciation for the work that you are doing to lift up Jesus by editing *Our Firm Foundation*.

It is now eight weeks that my family and I have been living in a refugee camp. We obtained two copies of *Our Firm Foundation* (June and July 1998 issues) from one of our colleague Seventh-day Adventist Church members here in Holland.

I kindly request you to send your publications to us on a regular basis to strengthen our faith and hope while we are waiting for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in the last days. Will you also pray for us and our country Rwanda?

Thank you. God bless you,  
*ZM, Holland*

First of all, I greet you through the name of Jesus our Saviour. Thank you very much for what you have done for me. Actually, I received your parcel. I never dreamed of receiving such a gift from anybody! I thank God for remembering me. The literature, the books, and the Bible—plus the books of prophecy have enlightened me very much. I have never come across

such truths! I feel that I owe a debt to you and to Jesus for though having done nothing to seek more truth you sent it to me.

Furthermore, I am requesting the following material: *Our Firm Foundation*, a Bible, and a Prophecy Correspondence Course. Please help me.

Since I do not have the funds to order books from you, please assist me in learning more from the books of Daniel and the Revelation.

May our Lord Jesus continue blessing you so that truth may be spread through your tireless efforts.

*BP, Kenya*

I have benefited a lot from your publications. It is my prayer that the Almighty Father reward you a hundredfold on whatever you have spent to equip me in my ministry.

I sincerely need *Our Firm Foundation* magazine, so kindly continue to send them to me. Thank you very much for your love, care, and concern.

*EA, Ghana*

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