

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Volume 17, Number 2

February 2002

What Is Happening to Our Young People?



Victory in Christ!

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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." Romans 8:1-3.

No one appreciates the experience of condemnation. To be condemned brings trauma to the soul. Those who are in Christ, through the Spirit will understand that sin condemns, because the law has been broken—"sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. Therefore, there can be no justification if the sinner is under the law that condemns him.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Let us not be deceived; to be justified is to be willing to be made willing to covenant with God to stop sinning, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The sinner cries out, "I have tried, but I have failed a thousand times!" Our continual failures to overcome have conditioned many of God's people to accept the devil's gospel—saved *in* their sins, but not *from* their sins. See Matthew 1:21.

The inspired words of our prophet will help us with the perplexities of our many failures:

"Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God's law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use.

"The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency." *The Upward Look*, 238.

We are surely living in the time of the end. The evidence is all about us. Jesus is coming very soon. Listen now to the voice of God through Inspiration as He speaks to us in this twenty-first century:

"We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have

preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 355.

By beholding Jesus, we can be changed into His image—overcoming as He overcame:

"As you ask the Lord to help you, honor your Saviour by believing that you do receive His blessing. All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask.

Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible." *The Ministry of Healing*, 514.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm 1:3.

The prosperity of the righteous is governed by their obedience to known truth, by walking and beholding, and by meditating upon the character of Christ in justification and sanctification. In this experience there is no condemnation. Praise God! If we are walking in the Spirit, we are then the sons and daughters of God in obedience to the law by the Holy Spirit's power. There is then no condemnation.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14.

We are not under the condemnation of the law then, but under grace. ✽

Ron Spear, Executive Editor

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

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What Is Happening to Our Young People?

John Korponay

As we look around us in our world and in our world church, it is becoming more and more obvious that the world is having more influence on the church than the church is having on the world. While spending a weekend with friends, my family and I watched a video of the 1999 International Pathfinder Camporee. What we saw and heard prompted me to write this article. We cannot and should not keep silent while innocent children are being deceived about God and the working of His Holy Spirit.

The theme of the camporee was “Discover the Power.” The video was made by the Adventist Communication Network (ACN). It did not show all of the programs, but it showed the main group activities and programs from each day. As we watched, our hearts sank lower and lower. I can hardly put into words my anguish of soul. If you were to look at the program from a Laodicean, broad-way mindset, you

would not see much wrong. There was not any approving of things like the use of drugs or alcohol, engaging in premarital sex, or other obvious sins. In fact, there was teaching against those activities. But as we looked at the program from the narrow-way mindset, as we should, it made us cringe. The nicest word I can use to describe what we saw is *terrible*. I believe the Bible term would be *an abomination*.

We saw hula dancing, other imitations of worldly music with singing and dancing, and engaging in miming, drama and comedy—all in the name of the Lord to excite our young people—and with the blessings of our church leaders. The profaning of the truth and the things of God to the level of worldly entertainment is included in the word *abomination*.

Some do not like to say that the church is in apostasy. It is too strong of a word for them. As we look up the dictionary definition, however, it becomes apparent what we are

talking about. Under the word *apostasy* we find, “Desertion of one’s faith, religion, party, or principles.”¹ What we are seeing and hearing is, “We believe our doctrines.” Yet we must ask the question, Is the way we are living and doing really in harmony with the spirit of those doctrines?

“The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and His law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they

seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error.”²

The theme of the whole camporee sounded good: “Discover the Power.” The methods used, though, were totally not conducive to receiving the Holy Spirit who is the Source of our power. The message of overcoming sin was presented, not in the power of the Holy Spirit, but in skits, drama, and dancing forms. To make it worse, the Star Wars motif was used to portray Satan and his angels as well as God’s angels in the battle with sin. As we listened, it also became apparent that frequent references were made to actors and singers in the world of entertainment whom the young people were trying to imitate. God’s angels were especially portrayed as being funny, fumbling, not totally understanding of what was going on, and arrogant. In one case they were portrayed as trying to outdo a movie star—instead of imitating in words and actions the self-denying, humble life of our Lord and Saviour, who is our Example in all things. This is all contrary to a clear “Thus saith the Lord” from Sister White:

“I have a message for those in charge of our work. Do not encourage the men who are to engage in this work to think that they must proclaim the solemn, sacred message in a theatrical style. Not one jot or tittle of anything theatrical is to be brought into our work. God’s cause is to have a sacred, heavenly mold. Let everything connected with the giving of the message for this time bear the divine impress. Let nothing of a theatrical nature be permitted, for this would spoil the sacredness of the work.”³

“We are handling subjects which involve eternal interests, and we are not to ape the world in any respect. We are to follow closely the footsteps of Christ. He is a satisfying portion and can meet all our wants and necessities.”⁴

When three top leaders of our church, who were in attendance, were interviewed by the ACN reporters, they were each asked at separate times what they thought of

the spirit at the camporee and, generally, of the apparent revival that is taking place among the young people in the North American Division and elsewhere. Their responses were very close to the same—that they were excited because God was giving His Spirit to the young people. They interpreted what is happening with our

appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”⁵

It should not be hard to discern whether the things taking place at this event were the outworking of the Holy Spirit or whether they were counterfeit.

young people (earliteens, youth, and young adults)—in the clown, magic, music, and drama ministries—to be manifestations of the Holy Spirit, empowering us to finish the Lord’s work. Brothers and Sisters, in the light of the warnings given in the Spirit of Prophecy, it should not be hard to discern whether the things taking place at this event were the outworking of the Holy Spirit or whether they were counterfeit.

“Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. . . .

“The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many of the churches. Picnics, church theatricals, church fairs, fine houses, personal display, have banished thoughts of God. Lands and goods and worldly occupations engross the mind, and things of eternal interest receive hardly a passing notice. . . .

“The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it

Satan has long been doing this in the churches of Babylon, but now, incredibly, we see that our church is being deceived by him also. Sister White prophesied that these kinds of things would take place just before the close of probation, but that it would be the work of another spirit—not God:

“It is impossible to estimate too largely the work that the Lord will accomplish through His proposed vessels in carrying out His mind and purpose. The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.”⁶ Certainly we are living in that time today.

“The third angel’s message is to be given in straight lines. It is to be kept free from every thread of the cheap, miserable inventions of men’s theories, prepared by the father of lies, and disguised as was the brilliant serpent used by Satan as a medium of deceiving our first parents. Thus Satan tries to put his stamp upon the work God would have stand forth in purity.”⁷

Continued on page 22



Orderliness

This month we share with you the next in a series of articles that discuss how we can cultivate Christian character traits in the hearts of our children. "The Garden of the Heart," in the February 2001 issue of Our Firm Foundation, laid the foundation for this series. It is available upon request.

The Editors

In this series we have been studying about the garden of our children's hearts, and the responsibility that God has given us to cultivate the beautiful fruit of lovely characters.

I have often noticed that when the Spirit begins to work in our hearts as parents, and we determine to take up the work of cultivating right habits of character in our children, then the devil comes to discourage us. He reminds us of everything that needs to be done — to overwhelm us and to make us think that the task is just too hard. During these times we need to remember that we serve an almighty God, who loves us with an everlasting love, and that He is here to meet all of our needs, to help us over every difficulty, and to bring us the joy that He has for us.

Let us now consider the trait of orderliness, and some practical ways that we can help our children to practice it in their daily lives. Orderliness simply means that we organize our time and possessions in such a systematic way that they show order. It means that we make the most efficient use of our resources. Orderliness is a part of the character of God, and the Scriptures tell us that it should be a part of our character as well. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

That little word "all" means *everything*. Every aspect of our lives should be conducted with orderli-

ness. My drawers, my kitchen cupboard, my closet, the bathroom cupboard, and the entire house should be orderly. As we learn to be orderly in our temporal life, we also become aware of our need to be orderly in our spiritual life. When we save time by keeping things orderly, we also redeem time to invest in our walk with God and to enhance our family relationships.

Surround Children With an Orderly Environment

What happens if a young child is placed in a room where there are bright colors and many different toys tossed around the room in a disorderly way? — He soon begins to get excited and agitated — not restful and contented. In this environment the child's senses are so over stimulated that he becomes confused and very difficult to manage. When you give the child too many things, he tries to take hold of each one, and so he runs from one thing to another while his confusion and frustration builds. This is one way we build short attention spans in our children.

Then this short attention span often gets classified as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Many children are prescribed heavy medications to calm and subdue them, but the problems often follow them on throughout life. Let us not develop a hyperactive child by having an over stimulating, disorganized environment, and while failing to use proper discipline.

You can take the very same child to another room with plain pastel walls and a few tastefully chosen and organized things for the child to enjoy, and his response will be very different. He will be more calm, and he can actually enjoy entertaining himself.

Simplify the Home

When we moved from our suburban setting to a country setting, our children had many toys. Even after conducting three garage sales in which we sold many of them, we still found ourselves with boxes of toys when the packing was finished.

After we moved into a little fifth-wheel trailer out in the country, we simply did not have room for all of those boxes of toys. Eliminating all but a few choice little toys, we discovered something very interesting: When we gave our children a natural environment in God's creation, and started to give them more of our time and attention, they were very satisfied. They did not need all those toys. Simplifying our home and the lives of our children in that aspect was a tremendous blessing!

We also found it helpful to simplify our wardrobes. We have four seasons where we live, so we have warm/hot-weather clothes and cool/cold-weather clothes. When the children were little, we would take the cold-weather clothes out of their closets in the summer so all that they had to manage was what was needed on a regular day-to-day basis. When the children were older, they easily managed their entire year-round wardrobe. The girls shared a small closet that held all their clothes — including their snowsuits, winter coats and sweaters — and they shared one dresser with five drawers. As we have simplified the things in our home, a restful order of things has been much more easily maintained.

Teach Orderliness in Habits of Play

It is not uncommon for a child to go to the bookshelf and pull out eight to twelve books at one time,

but then as a result they immediately become over stimulated. This causes them not to look at any book really well. Also, as they flip through them quickly, often without care, pages are torn and the experience is not a very happy one. To teach orderliness in children, I have found it to be very helpful to establish a simple rule—that they may have only one book out of the bookshelf at a time. When we gave our children some books that were theirs to look at, we told them, “These are your books. You may look at any one you wish, but take only one book out of the bookshelf at a time. When you are finished with that one, put it back in its place, and then you may look at another book.”

If you do this, you will find that your children will enjoy looking at the books much more. They will turn the pages more carefully and have a longer attention span. Then when they are satisfied, they can take the book back to the shelf, put it in, and get another one out. These things, that seem so small, will cultivate the habit of orderliness.

Promote Orderly Work Habits

We can teach our children to be orderly in all their work habits. We can teach orderliness when we give them chores to do each day. When we ask them to help with the dishes, this is an opportunity to teach them to do it in an orderly way. Show them how, when putting the dishes away, to stack the little bowls in the little bowls, the bigger bowls in the bigger bowls, and the plates on the plates, and so forth.

One time when we were traveling on an airplane, I was seated across the aisle from a little girl who had not learned the lesson of orderliness. When she opened the earphone set that the airline had provided in cellophane wrappers, off came the wrapper and down it went on the floor beside her seat. She kept up this habit with all the things that she wanted to discard. After a few minutes, there was a pile of wrappers developing in the aisle. When her mother looked down and saw the trash right around her

daughter’s seat, she got up and crossed the aisle to her little daughter and said, “Now you should not throw your garbage on the floor. That is not nice. Don’t do that anymore.” And the mother picked up all the garbage and discarded it properly.

However, the next time the little girl had something to discard, where do you think her hand went?—Out to the aisle. Just as she was about to let it go, she happened to turn around and look at me, and I smiled at her. She immediately withdrew her hand and stuffed the cellophane paper in the seat-pocket in front of her.

Many parents are not teaching their children the importance of cultivating orderliness. This mother would have taught her lesson much more effectively if she had said, “Honey, Mommy wants you to pick up all these things, and you can put your trash right here in the seat-pocket.” We do not help our children when we do the work for them. If the sink still has spots after it has been carelessly wiped out, bring your child back to the kitchen to finish the job in an orderly way. Then you may soon be surprised to find that the little jobs you ask your children to do will be done even beyond your expectations.

Instill Regularity

When seeking to cultivate orderliness, we must remember the importance of implementing a regular family schedule. We have talked about schedules before, so I will not go into detail here. I am sure you can easily see how important it is to have orderliness in the routine of the day, as well as in the physical surroundings.

We have experienced the blessing of orderliness in our home and family. Cultivating orderliness has made my work, particularly as a mother, much easier and more enjoyable. What a joy it has been to see the power of Christ work through the daily choices of our children in the simple habits of order!

In conclusion, I encourage you to consider these words from the

inspired pen on the importance that God places on orderliness in our homes, and, as a result, you will experience the blessing for yourself and your family:

“A well-regulated, orderly family is a pleasing sight to God and ministering angels. You must learn how to make a home orderly, comfortable, and pleasant. Then adorn that home with becoming dignity, and the spirit will be received by the children; and order, regularity, and obedience will be more readily secured by both of you.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 259. May you be blessed as you seek to follow this counsel in the spirit and power of our Lord and Saviour. ✨

Next month we will discuss how to cultivate diligence.



Cultivating Christian Character in Children

Alane Waters

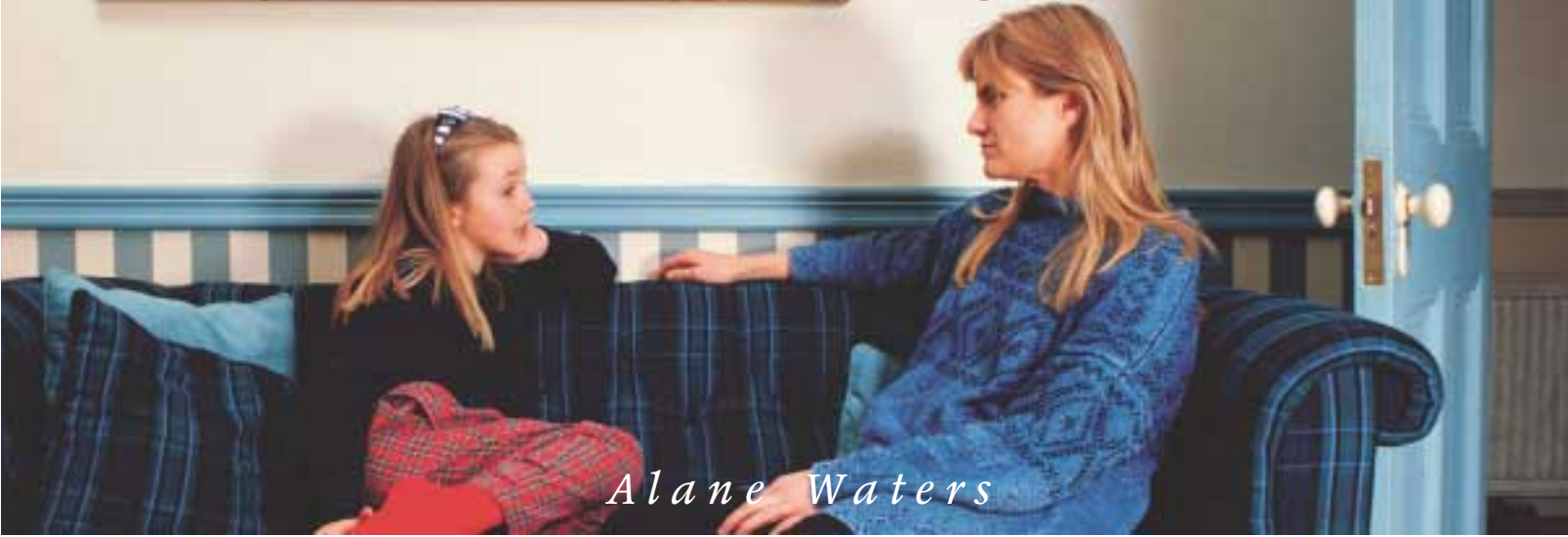
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Rebellion and Restoration



Alane Waters

Why is rebellion so terrible? 1 Samuel 15:23 says, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” That is pretty scary, isn’t it? To think that when my child is rebellious, the devil has control of his will and mind, just like in witchery! It is like a spell that can only be broken by the power of God. Let us look at some of the causes of rebellion in our children.

Parental Example

When we parents don’t “walk our talk” we can plant the seeds of rebellion in the hearts of our children. We can know the truth; we can talk about the truth, but unless we live it in our homes, we are not “walking our talk” — thereby planting the seeds of rebellion. Jesus said it like this in Matthew 15:8: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”

After a long weekend of meetings, a man and his wife met me at the back exit, and the man said, “We’ve been listening to you all weekend and it sounds really good.” Then, looking skeptical, he said, “Now you tell me what I’m going to do with *my* child. She is *rebellious*.”

I sent up a prayer for help because I knew I didn’t have the answer. “Tell me about your situation,” I replied.

“My daughter is eight years old, and she lies about everything. I could give you examples of lie after lie after lie.” He went on, “But that is not all. She doesn’t do anything we ask her to do. She just plays with her neighborhood friends and won’t even come in when we call her to help prepare supper.”

“You’ve heard the message on redemptive discipline, haven’t you?” I asked.

“Oh, yes, and we have corrected her!” he replied.

“But have you spent time teaching her what is right?” I questioned.

“Yes, we’ve done that, too,” he responded.

I then suggested a solution from my own experience: “The Lord is teaching me that when my children exhibit seeds of rebellion, disobedience, and disrespect, it is a call to me to look at my own life. I ask myself, ‘Am I teaching them that?’ ” I looked him in the eye and asked, “Have you considered the possibility that you have taught her to lie?”

“I don’t lie!” he exclaimed.

“I’m not saying you do; it happens very subtly — like when the phone rings and you cordially answer, ‘I’m so glad you called. You can call anytime. It’s great hearing from you again!’ Yet as soon as you hang up you say, ‘I wish they

wouldn’t bother me. I get so tired of talking to them!’ That is one way that parents could be teaching their children to lie without realizing it.”

He fidgeted with his keys as I pressed the point closer, “Sir, the Lord is showing me that the only way I can see my true condition is on my knees before my Father in heaven. I urge you to get on your knees and pray, ‘Lord, is there anything in my life that is causing my child to be rebellious?’ He will show you if you are willing. That is all I can tell you.”

All through the following week this man and his family remained a burden on my heart. The next week we were back in the same area. As soon as I arrived the phone rang. A familiar male voice said, “I’ve got to tell you what God has done this last week.”

“Oh, please do; I’ve been praying for you,” I replied.

“When you told me those things, everything inside of me boiled and seethed in anger. Yet that very night I somehow found myself kneeling beside my bed praying that prayer you told me to pray, and God opened up to me what I was really like.” His voice broke, “God showed me that *I* was the problem! I’ve been deceitful, dishonest, and a liar my entire life. I am the one who taught my daughter to lie.”

“Praise the Lord for that revelation! What did you do next?” I questioned.

He replied, “I asked God to forgive me. Then the very next morning I took my daughter into my arms, looked her in the eye, and asked, ‘Would you forgive me? It is Daddy who has taught you to lie. I want God to change my heart, and I want God to change yours. Honey, from now on things are going to be different in our home.’”

“What happened?” I pressed further.

“In less than two days she became a different child. She is now happy and helpful! The other morning after her kitchen duties were done, she turned to her mother and said, ‘Mother, don’t you have anything else I can help you with?’ And her face shone with joy and exuberance! She isn’t the same child!” he exclaimed.

God truly wants to change us—from the inside out. When we as parents are willing to put away our own rebellion and confess our sins, then God can begin to transform our children.

Beholding

A second way the seeds of rebellion can be planted in our children is by allowing them to behold rebellion. Whatever you permit your children to read, see, hear, or partake of, *that* is what they will become. That is why we are told, “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things.” Philippians 4:8.

A mother came to me about her three-year-old son: “He is so disrespectful and naughty! When I call him to come, he fusses and frets and is very disobedient.”

“What are you doing to teach him the right way?” I asked.

“I take time for him. We have Bible study together and family worship every day. Then he helps me with little chores,” she responded.

“What else does he have to do?” I inquired.

“I have special Christian videos for children that I let him watch while I do my work,” she replied.

“After watching these videos, what is your son like?” I asked.

“That is when I noticed that he is more disobedient and disrespectful,” she acknowledged.

One time a man and his young daughter visited our home. When it was time to leave, the father said, “All right, honey, it is time to go.” But the little girl did not want to leave. She just went on having a good time and ignoring her father’s comment. So he called again, “Daddy said we need to go now.”

“I don’t want to,” she answered.

When we as parents are willing to put away our own rebellion and confess our sins, then God can begin to transform our children.

Just because videos are labeled “Christian” does not mean that they are the best for our children to behold. Some of them present life artificially and make the children discontent with a real self-denying life. We have to be careful what we put before our children. The wrong is too easily learned.

Guidance and Discipline

A lack of guidance and discipline in a child’s early life is like fertilizer to a crop of rebellious weeds. We must teach them how to surrender their hearts and how to do what is right.

The vain philosophies of the world say that to have happy children you must allow them to do whatever they want to do, and when they want to do it. In fact, the problems can begin before the child is even born—by the pregnant mother indulging in every craving of her appetite.

We are also told to feed our infants on demand—every time they cry. Yet the more we feed them, the more they cry, because their systems have no time to digest the food, and they become sick.

Giving a child what he wants when he wants it, does not make a happy child. It makes a selfish, spoiled child. We must teach our children self-denial and obedience from the very start.

He called her three or four times before he finally added a threat: “If you don’t come right now, I’m going to leave without you!” Yet that didn’t bother her a bit. She acted as though she didn’t care if her father left her or not, because she knew in her heart that Daddy would not really leave her.

When that didn’t work he went to step three—bribery: “Honey, I’m going to walk down the stairs. If you come right behind me, when we get to town I will buy you an ice cream cone. Does that sound great?” The little girl jumped up and followed her dad right down the stairs.

Idle threats, bribery—these will never motivate true obedience. The laws of the home must be established. If not, when the children become teenagers they will have learned not to fear our threats; neither will we be able to afford bribes large enough to get them to do what we ask. They must learn to cooperate willingly, to truly surrender their hearts when they are small. Then the habit of obedience will continue when they are older.

Consistency

The fourth way we water the seeds of rebellion is by inconsistent enforcement of our rules. We expect varying degrees of obedience depending upon our circumstances. For instance, When we are too busy,

it is all right if they don't come right away when called. Sometimes we ignore their disobedience, their wrong choices, their squabbles, and sibling rivalry. Or we discipline one child for something and then let another one get by with the same thing. Or when we are at church or visiting Grandma, we ignore things that would receive a correction if we were at home.

Yet God's rules are *always* the same. The rewards and the consequences are the same. God says, "I am the LORD, I change not." Malachi 3:6. We must pattern our homes after God's order. Rules are worse than

know what to say: "Here, we believe, is the key to the problem you are having with your teenager. If your daughter responded to you in the same way as your son did with 'No, I'm not going to do that,' and turned and walked away, you would not accept that from her. You would come down very hard upon her with authoritative correction. Yet if you want your teenager to obey you, you must expect the same obedience from your younger child."

The sister flashed us a smile of relief as if to say, "Thank you. I felt that they were being so unfair!"

Rules are worse than useless if they are not consistently enforced. A lack of consistency encourages the growth of rebellion in the heart.

useless if they are not consistently enforced. A lack of consistency encourages the growth of rebellion in the heart.

A family came to counsel with us about their children—a teenage daughter and a four-year-old son. The young lady sat next to her parents, and the little boy played on the floor, while the mother explained, "We are concerned about the seeds of rebellion we see taking root in our daughter's heart. When it is time for homeschool, she doesn't *feel* like doing it. It becomes a real battle every time. Her attitude is increasingly negative about everything."

Meanwhile, the sister noticed that little brother's shoelace was untied. So she called him over to tie his shoe, but the little boy ignored her. She called again, but he said, "No," and turned and walked away.

The mother saw what happened, so she called her son over to her, but again he said, "No." Yet the mother continued with her conversation, allowing the child to get away with disobedience, disrespect, and rebellion.

We didn't need to hear more explanation of their situation to

However, I reminded her, "Even so, you are responsible for your own choices—no matter what your little brother does."

"Yes, I know," she submitted.

The parents also saw the problem and took up the work of establishing consistency and fairness in their home. Their teenager was willing to surrender her heart also, and she is now a lovely, committed Christian young lady—free of rebellion.

Idleness

A fifth source of rebellion is idleness: "Behold, this was the iniquity of . . . Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and *abundance of idleness.*" Ezekiel 16:49. (All emphasis supplied by author unless otherwise noted.) If we do not teach our children the joy of helpfulness and service, they will rebel at the little things we ask them to do.

I used to give my children all the play time they wanted. I was told that a good mother does that. However, the Lord called to my heart, and so I began to give my children things to do. Now even children who are visiting in my

home are given the opportunity to serve so they can be happy. I always have a little duty list ready.

One summer a family came to our house. I asked the children to go out to the garden and weed a couple of grow beds. Most of the children went out cheerfully, but one little girl did not want to go. As a disciplinary measure, the mother made her sit on our porch swing in the shade by herself for a while. The consequence was not hard, but the child's heart was not surrendered.

I talked with the mother, and she began to see that the little girl did not want to help weed the garden because she was not used to keeping her hands busy. The mother decided that from then on things would be different.

If you were to meet that little girl today you would find her to be one of the happiest and most helpful of girls. One day she even said, "Mother, I want to be responsible for cleaning the *entire* house. I want to wash the potties, scrub the floors, sweep, dust—everything. I want it to be all *my* responsibility." She has truly found the joy of serving others and the blessings of useful work! She works hard and without complaining.

Our children need to be needed. That is one of the best ways to make them feel like part of the family. Useful occupation encourages positive attitudes and helps them to be obedient, respectful, energetic, contented, and happy. Then those rebellious weeds will have no time to grow in their hearts.

A Barren Land

Finally, rebellious weeds thrive in an environment devoid of joy, happiness, and true companionship. David says, "The rebellious dwell in a dry land." Psalm 68:6.

There is a part of Australia said to be very dry, barren, and withered—so much so that it is dangerous to drive across it. You may not pass another vehicle for four days. People have died out there because their car overheated, and they did not have enough water to keep themselves alive until help came.

Whether or not our homes are like a dry and barren land has everything to do with Mom and Dad. When Dad is out in public, he is energetic; he wears a nice smile; he greets people enthusiastically; he has time for people; he takes an interest in them and listens to them—he is outgoing! Yet when Dad comes home, he is sullen, withdrawn, and his mind is on other things. He is aloof—uninvolved with the family. He reads the newspaper, watches the news, and sits at the computer, but he has no time for his children. Doesn't that sound like he's rather "dry" and "barren" in the home?

Mom is very busy, too, with her social life. She loves her occupation. She has energy to improve her skills and get a higher professional degree. She likes to lead the social committees at the church. She is out, out, out—available for everybody but her own children. No time for them! She rushes them off here and there so that she can do her own thing.

I used to be that kind of a mother. Even when I was within the walls of my home, I was not there in heart. I put my little ones off into the bedroom and bought them more and more things with which to entertain themselves. Yet all they wanted was me!

Even if we are not too busy, we often fall into the other ditch, saying, "I've blown it; I'm no good." We focus on the negative—how we make mistakes, lose our temper, do everything wrong, and so forth. The devil then chimes right in and grinds us into the dust. Consequently, the very things we choose to think, we become.

Parents of this kind create a dry and barren atmosphere in the home. And when our children lose their respect for us, the rebellious weeds grow and finally bear an evil crop. Yet it does not have to be that way. God is calling us today: "Wilt thou be made whole?" John 5:6. Hoping that *someday I will be cheerful in my home, or someday I will have time for my children*, will never make it happen. *Today* we must get up and grasp God's power to have our

hearts and homes filled with His love. Then our homes will be like "a land flowing with milk and honey." Exodus 3:8. This can be our experience right now!

Change

We need to go to our knees and pray like Daniel: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled. . . . O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces. . . . To the Lord our God belong mercies and

of the king's meat." Daniel 1:8. He made a choice. He decided not to follow the vain philosophies of the world, but rather the path of self-denial and service. He made a *firm resolve* and maintained an excellent spirit. That is what God is calling us to do today: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah 27:5. In God's strength and by His guidance, we can uproot every weed of rebellion growing in our hearts and homes.

I put my little ones off into the bedroom and bought them more and more things with which to entertain themselves. Yet all they wanted was me!

forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." Daniel 9:5, 7, 9. Just as the problem of rebellion began with us, so does choosing to respond to God's solution. He is merciful, longsuffering, and forgiving. He will forgive us and empower us to start all over again with new principles.

At the beginning of Daniel's experience in Babylon he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion

God can transform the most rebellious heart—whether mine or my child's. He is the "God of all flesh" and there is nothing "too hard" for Him. Jeremiah 32:27. It is our choice. I have chosen His way. What will you choose? ✨

This message is also available from Hope International on video for \$7.50 each, or you may order the 6-tape audio cassette album advertised below.

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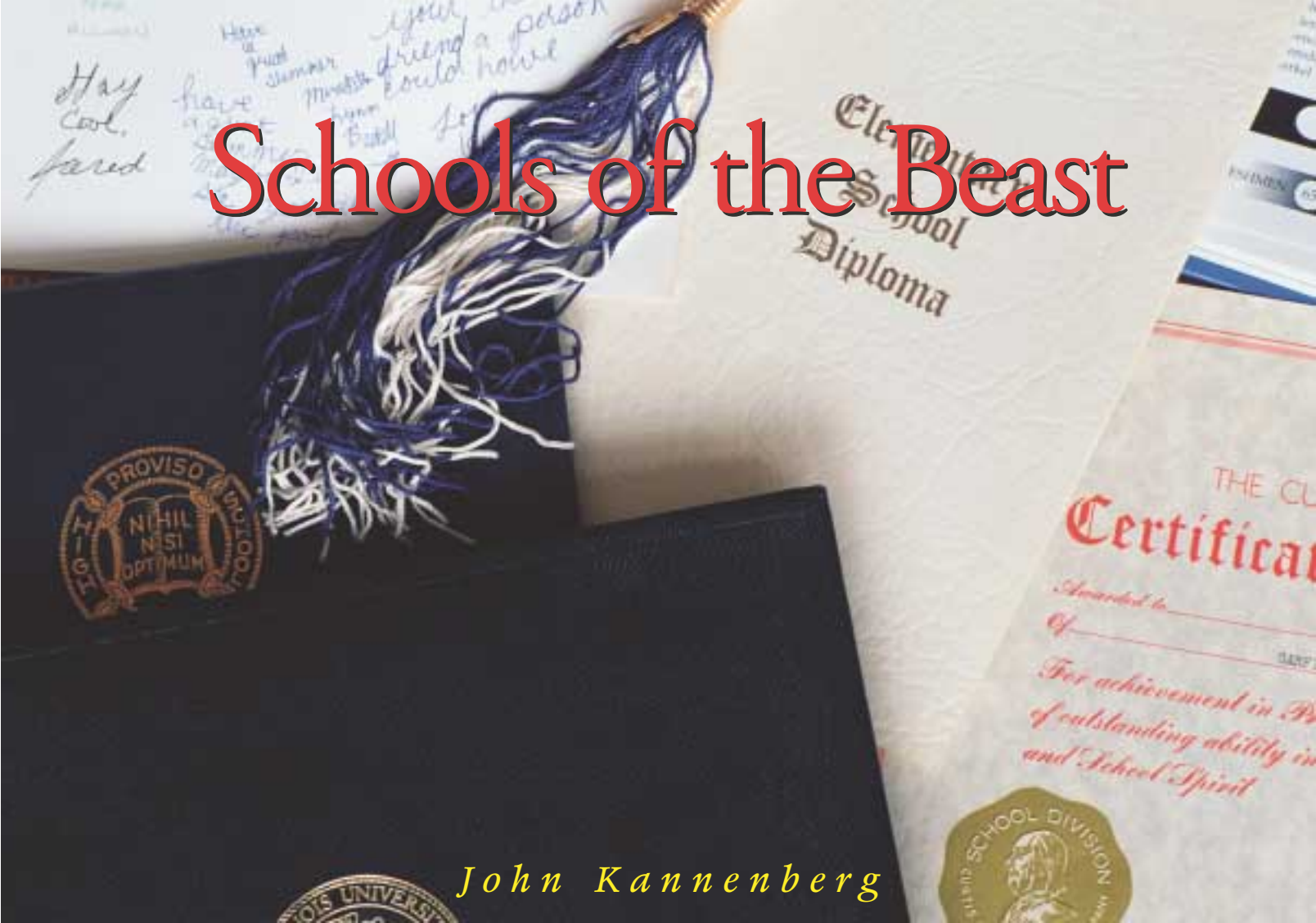
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Schools of the Beast

John Kannenberg

Perhaps one of the worst world-wide conflicts our world has ever experienced occurred in the century just ended. We called it World War II. We look back to it with horror at the crimes committed against humanity and God. How could such a thing have happened?

The circumstances which led to the rise of Adolf Hitler are numerous. By promising to fix unemployment, inflation, and to bring Germany to its “rightful” place of dominance over other nations, he quickly rose to the top of German politics. Yet it did not happen overnight. In the early days of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party’s rise to power it was having difficulty convincing the adult citizenry of its plans. Therefore, Hitler decided to focus his schemes of indoctrination on the youth of Germany. As youth are very impressionable and naïve, he hoped to mold and build up a new generation of people who

would be supportive of his policies and who would help form his envisioned 1000-year reign of the Third Reich.

This strategy worked very well. Soon there were groups of Hitler Youth everywhere in the country. Before long, membership in these groups was mandatory for nearly all youth. By controlling and forming the minds of the youth, Hitler was able to bring his terrible Nazi juggernaut to power. The rest, as they say, is history.

Are there any lessons to be learned from this?—Of course! Children are the future. How we train them greatly influences how they will turn out. God’s Word has something to say about this as well: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6.

Are we training up our children in the way they should go? Or are

we letting Satan train up our children in the way *he* wants them to go? Are we educating our children in schools controlled by God or by Satan?

I recently came across a fascinating statement in a pamphlet on education which was compiled mainly from the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. The following statement, written by E. A. Sutherland, when compared with the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible, clearly speaks the truth:

“The early reformers found it necessary to have their own courses of study, textbooks, teachers, methods, principles, etc. They separated themselves completely from the popular schools of the day. It required courage and faith in those days to take such a stand, and it will require even more courage and faith for those who are preparing for translation to take the stand which the Testimonies are pleading for

them to take. They knew that if their children should go to the schools where the popular education was given they would receive the mark of the Papacy, or the beast.

“Those who are living up to the light at the present time will see, even more clearly, that if their children continue to go to the popular schools, they will receive such principles as will compel them to assist in giving life to the image to the beast. Anyone who has a knowledge of the third angel’s message, and who will take the trouble to examine the studies and methods of the popular system of education, can see that the books are filled with those errors which will oblige those who are receiving their education from them to take the dreadful step which will bring upon the world a religious and civil darkness, greater than has ever been known before.

“The command found in Revelation 18:4, ‘Come out of her, my people,’ means to come out of those institutions which will place in the minds of our young people principles which are apt to make them join the class of worshipers of which we read in 2 Timothy 3:5: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” As faithful watchmen, we should be just as desirous of getting our children out of the popular schools as we are to call the older people out of the popular churches. The popular churches are only a product of worldly education; so to get at the root of the matter, we must separate ourselves from that which creates the condition in which all the religious world, at present, finds itself.”¹

How reassuring it is to have such clear and unambiguous guidance given to us! Guidance that will prevent us from falling into the traps Satan has set before us in these last days.

So what of the popular schools of the world? What defines a “popular school”? Obviously if a school does not have Christian teachers, Christian administration, Christian ownership, Christian governance, and a Christian curriculum, it

would be classified as a popular school. Your local junior colleges, public high schools, and state universities would most definitely be considered popular schools. As such, they are not places that either we or our children should attend. Would we assist in giving life to the beast? Will we follow the words of the Revelator and “come out” of those places of learning?

Are you considering sending your children to the local high school because it is free and convenient? What about pursuing a degree at a public university or college? Consider the following counsel:

Would it not be presumption to place yourself unnecessarily in a school where the teachers do not have respect to the Lord’s commandments, where the Sabbath is not recognized as His sign?

“It has frequently been seen that what seemed to be favorable opportunities for obtaining an education in worldly institutions, were snares of the enemy. The time of the student has been occupied, to the exclusion of the study of God’s Word. They have completed the course of study, but they were not fitted to take up the study of the work of the Lord.

“It is not necessary for you to go to a worldly school to obtain an education; for there are excellent opportunities before you in schools conducted by those who understand the truth, and where you can receive an education in Bible knowledge. If you desire to fit yourself for medical missionary work, you can find at Loma Linda the very best opening. If you need preliminary work, this you can obtain at the college in Healdsburg. Would it not be wisdom for you to attend one of these schools, rather than to place yourself in the company of those who neither teach nor obey the commandments of God?

“You will have severe enough battles to fight, even when you place

yourself under the best influences possible. Would it not be presumption to place yourself unnecessarily in a school where the teachers do not have respect to the Lord’s commandments, where the Sabbath is not recognized as His sign? . . .

“Our young men need, above all else, to be thoroughly instructed that they may teach the way of the Lord to perishing souls. ‘The words that I speak unto you,’ says Christ, ‘they are spirit, and they are life.’ John 6:63. Study the Word. The strictest fidelity is to be cherished. The love of the truth, and a genuine desire for improvement in the understanding of the Word, will make you that ye

shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the service of God. As you learn, you should seek for opportunities to explain the truth to others.”²

As hard as it may be to accept, “Christian” and worldly institutions alike are giving life to the beast. Would you put yourself or your children on Satan’s ground, to be prepared to receive the mark of the beast?

Seventh-day Adventist Schools

But what about our own Seventh-day Adventist schools? Surely these are safe places for education. Are they? — The answer is Yes! Seventh-day Adventist schools which stay true to God’s Word are *the* premier places for education. They are the foremost place to teach the truths of how man may be restored from the Fall, sanctified in the truth, ready to proclaim the loud cry, and ready for translation. In other words, they are the only places where we may be *truly* educated.

Sadly, however, many of our primary, secondary, and higher-level schools have ignored the timely

warnings which we just read above. Every Seventh-day Adventist college and university known to this writer employs non-Adventist adjunct professors, lecturers, and instructors. Many have full-time regular professors who are not Seventh-day Adventists. A number of our schools have academic departments chaired by nonbelievers.

Will we just disregard the admonition that “every teacher should be under the full control of

terrible beliefs and doctrines learned at the popular schools will they unwittingly present to our students? What fallacies have they sincerely accepted which may, in fact, lead them and their students to receive the mark of the beast?

It is amazing to realize that the entire religion department faculty of one of our universities received their highest religious and theological degrees from various secular and worldly institutions.⁴

Finally, and sadly, we now see that one of our colleges has linked hands directly with Rome. This college has joined a consortium of state, private, and Roman Catholic universities which offer cross-registration with each other.⁷ Incredible as it may seem, Seventh-day Adventist students are currently studying under Jesuit and other Roman Catholic professors. The credits they earn in these classes, which they are taking through cross-registration, apply toward their degree in our Seventh-day Adventist institution.

Consider once again the words of E. A. Sutherland, quoted above: “Anyone . . . who will take the trouble to examine the studies and methods of the popular system of education, can see that the books are filled with those errors. . . .” When, if not now, will we “come out”?

Families around the globe are making considerable sacrifices to send their children to our schools. Let us be sure to give them an education that will prepare them for eternity. Believers everywhere are yearning for the day when our Saviour will return to take us home. Let us, by the grace of God, the faith of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit, come out of all worldly institutions that we may go forth with even more courage and faith than did the great reformers before us. By this we may better prepare to finish the work and be translated to be forever with our God. ✨

References:

- ¹ E.A. Sutherland comments in: Ellen G. White, *Pamphlets, Special Testimonies on Church Schools*, 1898, 81.
- ² *Loma Linda Messages*, 184.
- ³ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 67.
- ⁴ *La Sierra University Website*, www.lasierra.edu/schools/religion/Faculty/index.html (July 23, 2000).
- ⁵ *Columbia Union College Website*, www.cuc.edu/bulletin/Instructional%20Faculty.pdf (November 15, 2000).
- ⁶ *Andrews University Website*, www.andrews.edu/SEM/faculty/ (November 15, 2000).
- ⁷ *Atlantic Union College: refer to, Consortium of Worcester Colleges, Inc. Website*, www.cowc.org/members.html (November 15, 2000).

When will we heed God’s admonition and have courage and faith to be like the early reformers who “separated themselves completely from the popular schools of the day”?

the Holy Spirit”?³ The early reformers, who understood this principle, acquired their own teachers who were under the full leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is clear that we are not called to a lower standard than they were, but rather to one even greater and higher, that we may be ready for the time of darkness which is soon to fall upon the world.

Would we allow Unitarians to teach Sabbath school in our churches?—No. Would we allow Christian Scientists to speak at the eleven o’clock Sabbath service in our churches?—No. So why do we let them teach and mold the minds of the young people in our schools?

And what of our own Seventh-day Adventist teachers? We continue to preach and laud the benefits of Christian education. But what kind of example are we showing to our students when many Seventh-day Adventist teachers themselves do not believe in Seventh-day Adventist Christian education? They exemplify this unspoken disbelief by obtaining their Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral degrees from worldly schools. Is it not employing a double standard to expect our students to be educated at Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions but not the teachers who teach there? What

Furthermore, a quick glance at another Seventh-day Adventist college’s website revealed that nearly two-thirds of all full-time professors and instructors received their Master’s degrees from worldly, popular schools.⁵ At the same SDA college, less than ten percent of those with doctorate degrees received their degree from a Seventh-day Adventist institution.

Even in our denomination’s largest and most well-known seminary we find that many of the professors have been educated at non-Seventh-day Adventist seminaries.⁶

What then is the purpose of having our own seminary when our very own educators see nothing wrong with attending and learning at those seminaries which are supported by the various popular churches of our day? If we were to follow such reasoning to its logical conclusion, we would think it just as well to close the doors of our own seminaries and all go study at one of the Baptist, Calvinist, or Catholic seminaries to receive an education. When will we heed God’s admonition and have courage and faith to be like the early reformers who “separated themselves completely from the popular schools of the day”?

Baptism for the Dead?

Holy Bible

How to mark your Bible and be ready to share your faith

“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

1 Peter 3:15. We need to be able to give an answer for our faith. Marking your Bible can give you the edge you need. It takes work, but the rewards are worth all the effort.

We pray that you will be blessed by these studies. As you mark them, may you be encouraged to spend more time in God’s Word and to search out the hidden things of God. Always be sure to look for opportunities to share them with others.

The Editors

Bible Marking Directions

- On a blank page in the front or back of your Bible, write the study title, the code, and the first reference. This month’s entry would appear as follows: **Baptism for the Dead (BFD) 1 Corinthians 15:29-30.**

- Turn to the first verse and write the code, the comment (if you wish to use the comments), and the next reference beside it. If the comment is long, you can write it at the top or bottom of the page, with an asterisk or the code of the study to refer you to it.

- Turn to the next text and repeat the process until you come to the end. Beside the last text, write the study code and “End.”

- Go through the study to check for broken links.

- Share the study with someone!

Some who profess to believe in the Bible teach that we can secure the salvation of deceased family members by being baptized on their behalf. What do the Scriptures say? Would you know how to meet such a teaching with a “thus saith the Lord”? This study should give you some answers!

1 Corinthians 15:29-30 — Put a “#1” next to this reference, because 1 Corinthians 15:29 is used twice in this study.

Romans 6:3-5 — Baptism symbolizes the death of our old nature and the beginning of a new life. So why did Paul mention baptism for the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 — Some of the Corinthians believed that the dead would never rise. Some also practiced baptism for the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:29 — Put a “#2” after this reference. Paul argued that if the dead were never raised, why did they baptize them?

Romans 14:12 — Each person will answer to God for his own actions and decisions.

Ezekiel 14:14 — No one can be saved for another; no one can be baptized for another.

Acts 2:38 — A dead person cannot repent.



For more information on Bible marking, or for a greater selection of studies, go to <http://www.biblemarking.com> or refer to “Mark Your Bible!” in the August 2001 issue of *Our Firm Foundation*.

As we were searching the internet, my wife and I stumbled onto an interesting document that addresses the question, "What Do Catholics Think of Seventh-day Adventism?"¹

The authors of this document give a brief synopsis of Adventist history, beginning with William Miller and his failed October 1844 prediction of Jesus' second coming; Hiram Edson and his revelation that Jesus would come not to earth but to the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary in heaven; Joseph Bates' promotion of the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath rather than Sunday; and that E. G. White adopted their ideas and carried them into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They mention Sister White's 700 visions, and over 50 books written on many subjects, with her most popular books being *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*.

Then it lists "Adventist Beliefs." The following are some exact excerpts off the internet:

"Adventist Beliefs—Seventh-Day Adventists agree with many Catholic doctrines, including the Trinity, Christ's divinity, the virgin birth, the atonement, a physical resurrection of the dead, and Christ's Second Coming. They use a valid form of baptism. They believe in original sin and reject the Evangelical teaching that one can never lose one's salvation no matter what one does (i.e., they *correctly* reject 'once saved, always saved').

"Unfortunately, they also hold many false and strange doctrines. Among these are the following: (a) the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon; (b) the pope is the Anti-christ; (c) in the last days, Sunday worship will be 'the mark of the beast'; (d) there is a future millennium in which the devil will roam the earth while Christians are with Christ in heaven; (e) the soul sleeps between death and resurrection; and (f) on the last day, after a limited

period of punishment in hell, the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist rather than be eternally damned. . . .

"Many Adventists insist that, as a matter of discipline (not doctrine), one must not eat meats considered unclean under the Mosaic Law (many endorse total vegetarianism), and one must avoid 'worldly entertainments' (card-playing, dancing, smoking, drinking, reading non-religious books, listening to non-religious music, watching non-religious television, going to the movies, etc.).

"Adventists also subscribe to the two Protestant shibboleths, *sola scriptura* (the Bible is the *sole* rule of faith) and *sola fide* (justification is by faith alone). Other Protestants, especially conservative Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, often attack Adventists on these points, claiming they do not really hold them, which is often used as 'proof' that they are 'a cult.' However, along the spectrum of Protestantism (from high-church Lutherans and Anglicans to low-church Pentecostals and Baptists), there is little agreement about the meaning of these two phrases or about the doctrines they are supposed to represent.

"Adventist Anti-Catholicism—As is clear from some of the beliefs listed above, Adventist theology is intensely anti-Catholic. Many Catholics who do not frequently come in contact with Adventists or their literature do not realize just how hostile they can be toward the Church.

"Trying to give others the benefit of the doubt, Catholics may suppose that anti-Catholicism is part of Adventism's radical fringe. Unfortunately, this is untrue. Adventists who are moderate on Catholicism are a minority. Anti-Catholicism characterizes the denomination because it is embraced in White's 'divinely inspired' writings. A few illustrations help indicate the scope of the problem:

" "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots . . ." is further declared to be "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:4-6, 18. The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome' (*The Great Controversy*, 338 [382]²).

" 'It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal Church of Christ . . . and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him [Satan] through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage' (ibid., 48 [50]).

" '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 let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And has [had]³ she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries. . . . Rome is aiming to reestablish her power, to recover her lost supremacy' (ibid., 507-508 [580-581]).

" 'God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of



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which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectingly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever [shall] believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution' (ibid., 508-509 [581]).

"Strong stuff! Unfortunately, most Adventists believe this. Bear in mind that these quotes are not taken from an obscure work of White's that nobody ever reads. They are from what is probably her single most popular volume, *The Great Controversy*.

"Adventist Eschatology –

Seventh-Day Adventism is basically consumed with the concept of the last days. It was formed from the remnants of the Millerite movement, which was created to await the world's end. In White's end times view, the Jewish Sabbath and the Catholic Church play prominent roles.

"According to her, the papacy is the seven-headed beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1-10. Accompanying this beast is a lamb-like beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18). The latter causes the world to worship the former and has an image made of it. White proclaimed that the second beast is the United States (*The Great Controversy*, 387-388 [440-441]), and that it will force people to worship the papacy by 'enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy' (ibid., 389 [442]). This observance, she says, is Sunday worship rather than Saturday worship.

"White claims that the papacy changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, making this change a mark of its authority. In her view, there will come a time

when the United States will establish a 'national Sunday law' and compel its citizens to worship on Sunday and thus take the mark of the beast. It will not compel them to become Catholics, but to join a Protestant state-church that is an 'image' of the papacy, and thus, 'the image of the beast' (ibid., 382-396 [435-450]).

"Seventh-Day Adventism cannot change its views on the Catholic Church being the Whore of Babylon without admitting that it was wrong on Sunday worship. It cannot admit that Sunday worship is not the mark of the beast without changing its views on the Jewish Sabbath. Seventh-Day Adventism cannot cease to be anti-Catholic without ceasing to be *Seventh-Day Adventism*.

"There is a 'moderate' wing of Adventism that is more open to Catholics as individuals (though still retaining White's views concerning the papacy). In fact, White was willing to concede that—in the here and now (before the end times)—some Catholics are saved. She wrote that 'there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than [that of] Rome, will thereby honor popery above God' (ibid., 395 [449]).

"Unfortunately, this one tolerant statement is embedded in hundreds of hostile statements. While this aspect of her teaching can be played up by her more moderate followers,

it is difficult for them to do so, because the whole Adventist milieu in which they exist is anti-Catholic. The group is an eschatology sect, and its central eschatological teaching, other than Christ's Second Coming, is that the Second Coming will be preceded by a period in which the papacy will enforce Sunday worship on the world. Everyone who does not accept the papacy's Sunday worship will be killed; and everyone who does accept the papacy's Sunday worship will be destroyed by God.

"Even moderate Seventh-Day Adventists still wish to lead Catholics out of the Church, and because they are moderate in their presentation, they have an increased chance of doing so. For this reason, it is important that Catholics realize at the outset how anti-Catholic Seventh-Day Adventism is in the end.

"By virtue of their valid baptism, and their belief in Christ's divinity and in the doctrine of the Trinity, Seventh-Day Adventists are both ontologically and theologically Christians. But Christians, once separated from the Church our Lord founded, are susceptible to being 'tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine' (Eph. 4:14)."

Closing Comments: It is very interesting to observe that we are being watched, and, to a degree, already labeled—"how anti-Catholic Seventh-Day Adventism is in the end." Are we ready for what is coming upon the earth for God's people? ✨

References:

- ¹ www.catholic.com/library/Seventh_Day_Adventism.asp
- ² The page numbers which appear on the website do not correspond with standard Seventh-day Adventist pagination for *The Great Controversy*. The standard pages are given in brackets.
- ³ All words in brackets are from the original wording of *The Great Controversy*.



Courtship Counsel

C. Lester Bond

QUESTION

I am a young man twenty-four years of age and have been keeping company with a young woman for two years. We are both Seventh-day Adventists, and plan to give our lives to help finish the Lord's work.

We have planned to marry, but now the question in my mind is whether I should marry anyone without loving her more than I do this girl. I think a great deal of her — as much as I think of my sisters, or more, and more than I ever have thought of anyone else. It would break her heart if I didn't marry her, but do I love her enough?

I have always felt that marriage is a very serious thing, and that it would be most disastrous to find out too late that I really don't love the girl. I feel that I should be so desperately in love that I just couldn't live without her. I fear lest I might make a mistake and lest perhaps the right one would come along after I had married another.

I have not been a Christian many years, and I have had many sweethearts of the world. This is the only Christian girl with whom I have ever kept company. Would I be violating any Christian principle to quit her and try another girl even though we are engaged?

ANSWER

The purpose of courtship is to enable young people to know one another sufficiently well to embark together upon life's voyage. Where no such end is anticipated, courtship has little or no meaning and generally proves a real curse to the participants. Before entering upon courtship, young people should, through wholesome group association, have opportunity to observe the habits, qualities, and characteristics of each other, and thus be in a position to judge wisely when the proper time arrives for association in courtship. Being a period of stress

and strain in many respects, courtship should not be unduly protracted. The purpose of courtship can usually be met in a period ranging from six months to a year. Association during this period is always more wholesome and profitable if carried on mainly in the home of either the young woman or the young man. This gives opportunity for each to become acquainted with the other's parents and other members of the family, and it also makes it possible for parents to advise intelligently regarding the engagement and marriage.

Engagement itself is a very serious matter, and a young man should not ask a young woman to promise to become his wife until he is thoroughly satisfied that he loves her genuinely and that she in turn loves him and is the one who will be a real helpmeet for him.

The period of engagement should be comparatively short — only long

enough for the wedding plans to be arranged and the house or apartment furnished. True lovers will be as modest and sincere in their conduct during this period as at any other time of their friendship.

Engagement does not grant license for familiarity. Instead, it is a time for careful and prayerful reflection and preparation for one of life's greatest responsibilities—the establishment and conducting of a home.

Marriage, indeed, is a serious thing, and one should never enter into the marriage relationship unless he truly loves the one he plans to marry. It is apparent that you have had ample time to become acquainted with the young woman concerned and to know whether or not you loved her before you became engaged.

From your letter it is evident that in your associations with young women, you have followed the practice which is becoming more and more prevalent—that of being free and familiar in your association. This has affected you as it always does anyone who follows such a course. You have been led to seek satisfaction in physical charm and physical contacts rather than through those things which constitute real charm and attraction—the character and talents of real worth in the life. You have permitted yourself to become infatuated with girls on so many occasions that now it is difficult for you to distinguish between infatuation and real love.

“Love is a precious gift, which we receive from Jesus. Pure and holy affection is not a feeling, but a principle. Those who are actuated by true love are neither unreasonable nor blind. Taught by the Holy Spirit, they love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves.

“Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor

God. Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve.”¹

“Love is a plant of heavenly origin. It is not unreasonable; it is not blind. It is pure and holy. But the passion of the natural heart is another thing altogether. While pure love will take God into all its plans, and will be in perfect harmony with

the girl by being unduly familiar with her, you should sincerely confess your wrongdoing and seek her forgiveness.

You state that you have been keeping company with this girl for two years, and that you are betrothed, and yet you do not know whether you love her sufficiently to marry her. Now, after such a long time you contemplate breaking off that friendship. Under these circum-

Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God.

the Spirit of God, passion will be headstrong, rash, unreasonable, defiant of all restraint, and will make the object of its choice an idol.

“In all the deportment of one who possesses true love, the grace of God will be shown. Modesty, simplicity, sincerity, morality, and religion will characterize every step toward an alliance in marriage.”²

You state that you love the girl more than you have loved anyone else with whom you have ever kept company. It would rest alone with you whether or not you love her enough to marry her. You state that she is a good Christian girl. If you have many things in common, such as educational attainment, recreational interests, and family environment, it is likely that through marriage and your intimate association with each other, your affections for each other would continue to grow and become the type that would bind your hearts more and more to each other.

In the statements quoted above, you will observe that love is not blind; it is not unreasonable. In other words, the one who is truly in love will not depend entirely upon feelings, but will be reasonable in his attitudes and reactions toward the one loved. If you have made mistakes in your association with

stances a grievous injustice is being done to this girl. By monopolizing her attention for two years you have deprived her, no doubt, of many opportunities of becoming acquainted with other worthwhile Christian men. Now, you are considering “walking out” on her. It is neither chivalrous nor honorable; neither is it fair or just. If, however, you do not love the girl, you should be man enough to go to her and tell her so in as kindly a way as possible, and then end this relationship, allowing her to proceed anew with her life.

In *Messages to Young People* we are told, “If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated.”³ If you will follow this plan closely and sincerely, keeping close to your heavenly Father, it will prove a safeguard to you. ❄

Adapted from the “Counsel Corner” question-and-answer column in *The Youth's Instructor*, May 10, 1938.

References:

¹ *Messages to Young People*, 435.

² *Ibid.*, 459.

³ *Ibid.*, 460.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Sealing



Bob Jorgensen

This is the last in a three-part series of articles on the subject of the church. Much misunderstanding exists as to what different groups believe, and which view is correct. This series attempts to set forth answers to these difficulties. Parts 1 and 2 are available from Hope International upon request.

The Editors

It should go without saying that in order for a message to be able to test a person and determine his destiny for eternity, it must be truth of at least the same order and magnitude as that which came to the Jewish nation. Please observe that the same truth that was to test all people and all nations (the truth that the Man Jesus Christ was the Messiah) was committed first to the nation of Israel. For over a thousand years they were the covenant people who alone had the stewardship of the legitimate services and sacrifices that contained the embryo of the ultimate testing truth that was to come through the Jewish nation.

Having the privilege of being the first to hold the oracles and services that prefigured this truth, also meant that they would be the first to be confronted with its test. These points are of great significance in compar-

ing the chosen people anciently with the chosen people of modern times. The message that tests and seals people for eternity must be able to test and seal first the people who have held the oracles, services, and ceremonies that prefigure that ultimate testing truth. It must first test the people who hold it, before it can have prominence in testing the world.

Another point to note is that while ancient Israel were God's chosen people, there were some very bad things that took place among them. You may recall the careers of Manasseh, Ahab, King Saul, and others. Even when the apostasy was so bad that true spirituality existed only "underground" in Israel, the Jewish church was still called "My people" by God. They had not been faced and tested yet with the ultimate truth for which their existence was preserved. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 455–456, indicates that God allowed Israel to be taken into captivity in order to preserve their potential to fulfill the divine purpose of bringing forth the Messiah from among Israel. Certainly we can see that even though people in leadership were serving idolatry and promoting apostasy, that did not

close their door of opportunity and purpose. Even shortly before Christ's ministry came to a close it was possible for the high priest and other apostate leaders of Israel to repent and be converted and become a part of the reformation that was to begin first within Israel.¹

There is a most valuable commentary on the final sealing event as described in Ezekiel 9—this commentary is found in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 207–216. It is surprising to observe how often things that are clearly stated in Inspiration are ignored or overlooked by many within the church. This section describes what will transpire "in the church" at the time when the sealing commences. This is spoken of as a time when the people in the church will be under great pressure to turn away from loyalty to God's law. Clearly, they will be under pressure to give in to the overwhelming movement in support of Sunday observance. Notice carefully the characteristics mentioned in this section:

- Those who have had the greatest light and privileges are contaminated by prevailing iniquity in the church.

- There are two classes: one class that has increasing love for God's precepts; another class that holds them in contempt *in the church*.
- The time for God's visitation has almost come *in the church*.
- Those who walk in the light will see signs of approaching peril *in the church*.
- It is their duty to labor diligently to save others *in the church*. There is no mention of calling the church Babylon and telling people to withdraw their membership.
- It is at this time that the danger and depression of *the church* are the greatest.
- There is a little company that is standing in the light *in the church*. Obviously the vast majority *in the church* are not standing in the light at the time described here when the sealing commences.
- The prayers of this faithful little company will be raised—especially for the *members of the church* who are doing after the ways of the world. We would just briefly note that this church has visibly identifiable rolls of membership.
- At this time the Lord comes forth as an Avenger. It is not necessary to call people to leave the church, because God will cause a clear demarcation to occur between the true and the false members when the sealing takes place.
- The sighing and crying ones are holding forth the words of life *in the church*.
- They are distinguished by their efforts to reprove, counsel, and entreat, and by their soul anguish *in the church*.
- Some who had been dishonoring God repented and humbled their hearts *in the church*.
- The glory of God had departed from "Israel" *in the church*.
- Their soul anguish is expressed in lamentation, weeping, reproofs, and warnings *in the church*.
- The other class are trying to throw a cloak over the existing evils *in the church*.

- The little company are vexed day by day with the sins and iniquitous abominations promoted by the rest of the unrighteous church members *in the church*.
- They mourn before God to see true religion despised *in the church*.
- They lament and afflict their souls because of the corruption and apostasy which are evident almost everywhere "*in the church*."
- The servants of Satan triumph *in the church*.
- God is dishonored, and the truth is made of none effect *in the church*.

leaving the church, and that "the church is Babylon." I have seen a lot of bitter vindictiveness, a lot of angry accusations and denunciation, a lot of sarcasm and ridicule, a lot of name calling and jumping to conclusions, but I have seen precious little of the anguish of spirit, the sighing and crying that is described by the prophet as the earmarks of the *faithful little company in the church*.

It has often seemed to me that there are many who would be very upset if God should offer to the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church the opportunity to repent and be His chosen vessel in pro-

If all these descriptions that are pointed out here are not talking about the denominated, conference-organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, then I beg of you to tell me what church it is talking about. . . .

- "Here we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God."
- The "dumb dogs" that would not bark will suffer the vengeance of God, and will never again lift their voices to teach the truth.

Surely, my brothers and sisters, we can see that what is being discussed here in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, is the final confrontation of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist denominated, organized, conference church with the final testing, sealing truths to be given *in the church*! There has been no call to have the faithful members withdraw from membership. There has been no message denouncing the church as Babylon. There have been faithful messages of warning and reproof given *in the church*. Mourning and soul anguish have been a characteristic of those who are the "true children of God" *in the church*. Frankly, I have not seen much of this spirit on the part of most of those who are promoting the idea of

claiming the last message to the world. The attitude of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son more suitably accords with their attitude. Maybe we would see some valuable lessons of application in the story if we were to apply it to a *prodigal church*.² Many among us do not seem to want to see the church healed. Is this the true reflection of the thoughts of God regarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Many other passages of Inspiration describe similar characteristics of the time when the sealing takes place—the time when in the church there will emerge a pure and faithful remnant just as in ancient Israel there eventually emerged, at the time of their visitation, a pure and faithful Witness who brought all Israel to the bar of judgment and accountability.³

If all these descriptions that are pointed out here are not talking about the denominated, conference-organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, then I beg of you to tell me what church it is talking about that

is God's sanctuary—His people who have had great light, the people whose leaders have stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people and of momentous truth. Without malice I would quietly ask, "Is it your group?" I can only believe that it is the denominated Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To be a member of the church does not mean at all that I support the apostasy or the worldliness that is flooding in. Rather, it indicates that I recognize that God is the rightful Owner of the church, and that I am to be a voice calling every church member to return his rightful allegiance to God. I am to call upon my fellow church members to heed

the most solemn and important truths ever given to mortals, which have been committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Membership in the denominated, conference Seventh-day Adventist Church is not an issue of supporting everything that is done by the leadership of the church, but rather, it signifies that I firmly believe that God has designated the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church as being the visible entity in which He will bring forth a living demonstration of the final developments of the truths that will test the world.

In Conclusion

Oh, brothers and sisters, let us be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow

to wrath." James 1:19. May God help each one of us to hear His voice, and to pray for His working in a clear way in His church. Let us claim the church that God claims. Let us wrest back to loyalty to God alone, by *spiritual conquest*, the vineyard that belongs to the Master. Let us not be ready to close the door before God closes it, for in so doing we would be showing that we are under the deception of the great adversary—Satan—no matter how high our claims to truth. ✨

References:

- ¹ See *Christ's Object Lessons*, 277; *The Desire of Ages*, 577–578; and so forth.
- ² See *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 250–251.
- ³ For examples see *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 75–84, 136; *ibid.*, vol. 1, 179–184.

Continued from page 5

Much of what we see happening in our churches today is startling to many of us who grew up in the message, believed, and are older now. As young people we were taught that this type of entertainment and music emanated from Satan and were part of his deceptions. We were not to look to the world for entertainment or for examples in the theater, movies, or television.

Either we were taught wrong, or God has changed the way His Holy Spirit works. Is He approving methods now that He emphatically disapproved of in Sister White's day—and even just a few years ago? The heartbreaking thing in all of this is that the 22,000 young people at the camporee were being taught and led to believe that this is the way of the Holy Spirit's power. That realization should take us to our knees in deep repentance and confession of our worldly Laodicean condition.

This situation reminds us of the worship of the golden calf by the Israelites in the wilderness under the leadership of Aaron. He, like so many today, mistakenly thought that letting the people have what they wanted—the way they wanted it—would help them keep in their minds the true God, whose voice

they had heard just a little while before. See Exodus, chapter 20. After he finished making the calf, he proclaimed, "To morrow is a feast to the LORD." Exodus 32:5. The people brought offerings as if to God, but the Lord considered them all "corrupted."

"How often, in our own day, is the love of pleasure disguised by a 'form of godliness'! A religion that permits men, while observing the rites of worship, to devote themselves to selfish or sensual gratification is as pleasing to the multitudes now as it was in the days of Israel. And there are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and thus encourage them in sin."⁸

Brothers and Sisters, these issues have not gone away since that camporee was held. Many of the camp meetings continue to use that same type of program—worldly music, skits, clowns, and so forth—for our young people. We are witnessing awful things among God's people. Yet there is warning, counsel, and encouragement for us as we see these things going on in our church:

"Of all the sins that God will punish, none are more grievous in His sight than those that encourage others to do evil. God would have His servants prove their loyalty by

faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be. Those who are honored with a divine commission are not to be weak, pliant timeservers. They are not to aim at self-exaltation, or to shun disagreeable duties, but to perform God's work with unswerving fidelity."⁹

These things are definite signs that the Holy Spirit of God is about to be poured out upon those who yet remain faithful: "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children."¹⁰

I want to leave you with this penetrating question of the apostle Peter in his second letter: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" 2 Peter 3:11. ✨

References:

- ¹ *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 69.
- ² *Prophets and Kings*, 178.
- ³ *Evangelism*, 137.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.
- ⁵ *The Great Controversy*, 463–464.
- ⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 2, 36.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ⁸ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 317.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 323–324.
- ¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, 464.



The Entertainment Syndrome

Standish, Colin D. / Standish, Russell R.

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Spear, Ron D.

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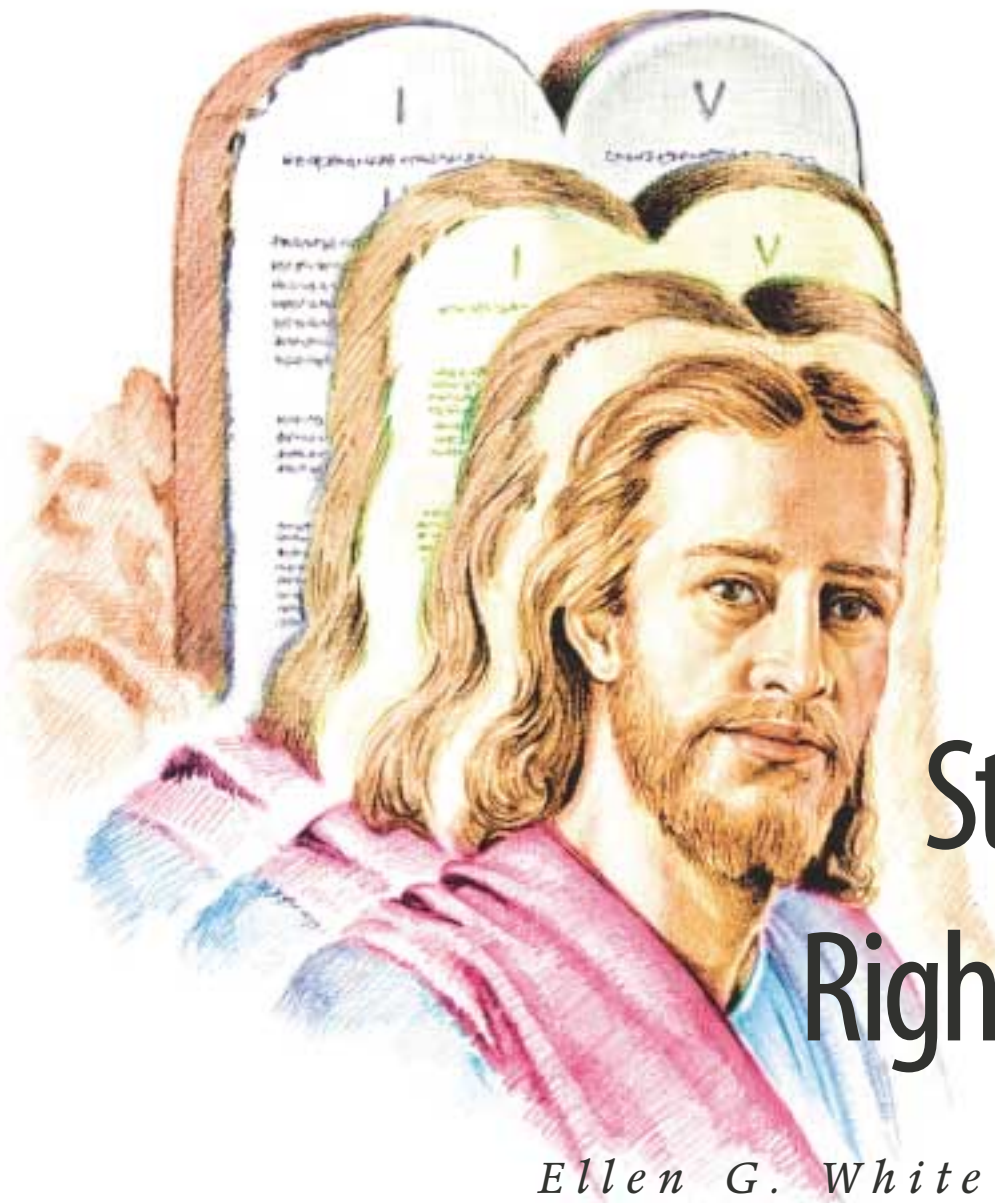
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The True Standard of Righteousness

Ellen G. White

The world is to be no criterion for those who follow Jesus. He has said, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." 1 John 3:13. "It hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:18-19. Again, it is written, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

The question now to be asked is, Are the professed followers of Christ complying with the conditions upon which the blessing is pronounced? Are they separating in spirit and practice from the world? How hard to come out and be separate from worldly habits and customs. But let us look well to it that Satan does not allure and deceive us through false representations. Eternal interests are here involved. God's claims should come first; His requirements should receive our first attention. Every child of fallen Adam must, through the transforming grace of Christ, become obedient to all God's requirements. Many close their eyes to the plainest teachings of His Word because the cross stands directly in the way. If they lift it, they must appear singular in the eyes of the world; and they hesitate and

question, and search for some excuse whereby they may shun the cross. Satan is ever ready, and he presents plausible reasons why it would not be best to obey the Word of God just as it reads. Thus souls are fatally deceived.

One of Satan's most successful deceptions is to lead men to claim to be sanctified, while at the same time they are living in disobedience to God's commandments. These are described by Jesus as those who will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Matthew 7:22. Yes, those who claim to be sanctified have a great deal to say about being saved by the blood of Jesus; but their sanctification is not through the truth as it is in Jesus. While claiming

to believe in Him, and apparently doing wonderful works in His name, they ignore His Father's law, and serve as agents of the great adversary of souls to carry forward the work which he began in Eden—that of making plausible excuses for not obeying God implicitly. Their work of leading men to dishonor God by ignoring His law, will one day be unfolded before them with its true results. The conditions of eternal life are made so plain in God's Word that none need err, unless they choose error rather than truth because their unsanctified souls love the darkness rather than the light.

The lawyer who came to Christ with the question, "Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17) thought to catch Christ; but Jesus laid the burden back upon the lawyer. "What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:26-27. Then said Christ, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Verse 28. These words meet the individual cases of all. Are we willing to comply with the conditions? Will we obey God and keep His commandments? Will we be doers of the Word and not hearers only? God's law is as immutable and unchangeable as His character. Whatever men may say or do to make it void, does not change its claims, or release them from their obligation to obey.

We need divine enlightenment daily; we should pray as did David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm 119:18. God will have a people upon the earth who will vindicate His honor by having respect to all of His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous, not a yoke of bondage. David prayed in his day, "It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law." Verse 126.

Not one of us can afford to dishonor God by living in transgression of His law. To neglect the Bible and give ourselves up to the pursuit of worldly treasure is a loss which is beyond estimate. Eternity alone will reveal the great sacrifice made by many to secure worldly honor and worldly advantages, at the loss of the soul, the loss of eternal riches. They might have had that life which measures with the life of God; for Jesus died to bring the blessings and treasures of heaven within their reach, that they might not be accounted poor and wretched and miserable in the high estimate of eternity. None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of

discover to themselves the deformity of their character. Neither Joseph, Daniel, nor any of the apostles claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than to knowingly sin against Him, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have acknowledged themselves to be sinners, unworthy of His great favors. They have felt their weakness, and, sorrowful for their sins, have tried to copy the Pattern Jesus Christ.

There are to be but two classes upon the earth—the obedient children of God and the disobedient. Upon one occasion Christ thus set before His hearers the Judgment

Satan is ever ready, and he presents plausible reasons why it would not be best to obey the Word of God just as it reads. Thus souls are fatally deceived.

God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of His government in earth and in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised His law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes. The character building is to go on during the hours of probation. Day by day their actions are registered in the books of heaven, and they will, in the great day of God, be rewarded as their works have been. It will then be seen who receives the blessing. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

Those who make a raid against God's law are warring against God Himself; and many who are filled with the greatest bitterness against the commandment-keeping people of God, make the loudest boast of living holy, sinless lives. This can be explained only in one way: they have no mirror in which to look to

work: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall

answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:31-40.

Thus Christ identifies His interest with that of suffering humanity. Every attention given to His children He considers done to Himself personally. Those who claim modern sanctification would have come boastfully forward, saying, "Lord, Lord, [do you not know us?] have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Matthew 7:22. The people here described, who make these preten-

great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah.

If ever there was a time when we needed faith and spiritual enlightenment, it is now. Those who are watching unto prayer, and are searching the Scriptures daily with an earnest desire to know and do the will of God, will not be led astray by any of the deceptions of Satan. They alone will discern the pretext which cunning men adopt to beguile and ensnare. So much time and attention are bestowed upon the world, upon dress and eating and drinking, that no time is left for prayer and the study of the Scriptures.

Christ died for them that they might have life. He opened before them the way whereby they might, through His merits, keep the law of God. Christ says, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:8. How hard men work to close that door; but they are not able. John's testimony is, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Revelation 11:19. Beneath the mercy seat, within the ark, were the two tables of stone, containing the law of Jehovah. God's faithful ones saw the light that shone forth to them from the law, to be given to the world. And now Satan's intense activity is to close that door of light; but Jesus says that no man can shut it. Men will turn from the light, denounce it, and despise it, but it still shines forth in clear, distinct rays to cheer and bless all who will see it.

God's children will have a fierce conflict with the adversary of souls, and it will become more exceedingly bitter as we approach the close of the conflict. But the Lord will help those who stand in defense of His truth. Many who see the light will not accept it, fearing to trust the Lord. Jesus says, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Matthew 6:25-29.

The great Master Artist has provided the beautiful things in nature as an expression of His love to us. He has given the delicate tint

Those who are watching unto prayer, and are searching the Scriptures daily with an earnest desire to know and do the will of God, will not be led astray by any of the deceptions of Satan.

tious claims, apparently weaving Jesus into all their doings, fitly represent those who claim modern sanctification, but who are at war with the law of God. Christ calls them workers of iniquity, because they are deceivers, having on the garments of righteousness to hide the deformity of their characters, the inward wickedness of their unholy hearts. Satan has come down in these last days, to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep's clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf cannot be discerned only as we go to God's

We want the truth on every point, and we must search for it as for hid treasures. Dishes of fables are presented to us on every hand, and men choose to believe error rather than truth, because the acceptance of the truth involves a cross. Self must be denied; self must be crucified. Therefore Satan presents to them an easier way by making void the law of God. When God lets man have his own way, it is the darkest hour of his life. For a willful, disobedient child to be left to have his own way, to follow the bent of his own mind, and gather the dark clouds of God's judgment about him, is a terrible thing. But Satan has his agents who are too proud to repent, and who are constantly at work to tear down the cause of Jehovah and trample it under their feet. What a day of sorrow and despair when these meet their work with all its burden of results! Souls who might have been saved to Jesus Christ have been lost through their teachings and influence.

to the flowers, and if He has done so much for a simple flower, "which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Verse 30. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Verse 33.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die that He might redeem man from the power of Satan; and will He not care for man, formed in His image? Many see the reasons of our faith, but they dare not risk the consequences of obeying it. They fear that if they do, they cannot support their families; and so they settle back into unbelief, and continue in transgression of the law. They lack faith in God; they dare not trust His promises. Such are rebuked by the lessons of Christ, in which He teaches that God notices the fall of even the sparrows; not one of them falls to the ground without His notice. Our heavenly Father will not leave His children who put their trust in Him, and venture out upon His promises although the outlook is dark and forbidding. He understands every circumstance of our life. He sees and knows how we are situated. He is acquainted with all our sorrows and griefs. He knows us each by name, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; for He has been tempted in all points like as we are, and knows how to succor those who are tempted. Jesus is our Helper, and He will have a care for all those who trust in Him.

God has entrusted to us individually talents that are to be increased by use. Reason has been granted us with which to glorify God. In everything we are to show our allegiance to Him. Our powers were not given to us merely to be employed for ourselves. They are to be used to accomplish certain ends, to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Christian principles must be interwoven with our life and our experience. The life we now live must be by faith in the Son of God. We must live to please

Jesus; by thus living, our faith and confidence in Him will grow stronger day by day. We will comprehend what He has done for us, and what He is willing to do for us, and will possess a cheerfulness as well as an earnest desire to do something to show our love for Jesus. Doing will thus become habit. We will not question whether we will obey, but will follow the light, and work the work of Christ. We will not study convenience, nor question whether our temporal

our fullest service? Christ's yoke we must wear, Christ's burden we must lift; but the Majesty of heaven declares that His yoke is easy and His burden light. Shall we shun the self-denying part of religion? Shall we shun the self-sacrifice, and hesitate to give up the world with all its attractions? Shall we, for whom Christ has done so much, be hearers and not doers of His Words? Shall we, by our listless, inactive lives, deny our faith, and make Jesus ashamed to call us His brethren?

Our heavenly Father will not leave His children who put their trust in Him, and venture out upon His promises although the outlook is dark and forbidding.

interests will be improved if we obey. Those who love Jesus will love to obey all His commandments. They will search the Bible closely to know of the doctrine. Naught but truth will satisfy them, for they are Christ's representatives on earth.

Christ declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6. His followers must be as near like Him as possible. We cannot speak as He spoke, and yet we are to imitate Him; for He is our Pattern. We are to erect no false lights, present no heresies for truth. We must know that every position we take can be sustained by the Word of God. It is a day when the commandments of men are everywhere urged upon the people as the commandments of God. But it is a solemn, a fearful thing to teach false theories, and lead minds away from the truth which sanctifies the soul.

We want the truth on every point. We want it unadulterated with error, and unpolluted by the maxims, customs, and opinions of the world. We want the truth with all its inconvenience. The acceptance of truth ever involves a cross. But Jesus gave His life a sacrifice for us, and shall we not give Him our best affections, our holiest aspirations,

The Ten Commandments came from the Highest Authority, and are we obeying them? They are the will of God made known to man. It was Satan that commenced to war against them, and it is he that inspires men to keep up the warfare.

None will enter the holy city, the paradise of God, but as conquerors—those who have separated themselves from the world, and stood in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints, and have fought the good fight of faith, looking constantly to "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2. Then let us, like Christ, work unselfishly to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth. Our whole heart, body, soul, and strength, are required in this work; and if we labor with fidelity, irrespective of the applause or censure of the world, we shall hear the "well done" from the Majesty of heaven, and receive the crown, the palm branch of victory, and the white linen which is the righteousness of the saints. ❀

Review and Herald, August 23, 1885.



Hold Fast, and Repent

Ellen G. White

Like the teachers of Israel, you may explain Bible truth to others, and yet not practice it in your daily life. If the Jews had possessed an experimental knowledge of the Scriptures, they would not have been ignorant of the power of God. Like them, we have great light and privileges; but many do not respond to these, and herein lies their peril. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, His tears were for all who abuse present privileges. He wept that so many who profess His name fail to become what God designed them to be; that they continue in sin and weakness, while He is willing and able to save them if they will but come to Him. The Saviour says, "What more could I have done that I have not done in it?" He has dealt with His people as a loving father with a wayward and rebellious child. But He sees grace resisted, privileges abused, opportunities slighted. Where He had a right to expect earnest, vital piety, He sees insincerity, hollow formalism, and Pharisaic pride. Neglect of light is chargeable on those whom God has entrusted with great and solemn truths. Ingratitude for God's mercies, abuse of blood-bought privileges, stand registered against many in the books of heaven, and are treasuring up for them wrath against the day of wrath. Vengeance will surely be visited on those who

You to whom are committed the sacred, testing truths for this time, are you faithful to your God-given trust? Everyone wields an influence over the destiny of other souls. "Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. A faithful discharge of duty on your part will have a telling influence on the impenitent; but if you neglect the work which God has given to you, some soul will be lost. Consider this matter, I pray you, in the light of God's Word; and may your souls feel the burden of your entrusted responsibility. Oh, that there might be a turning to the Lord by every member of the church, that the earnest, fervent piety of each might

be a message of warning to the sinner! "Be zealous therefore, and repent," (Revelation 3:19) is the Word of God to His professed people. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Revelation 2:5.

Many of our people are backsliding from God. We need to arouse. Let every soul that has named the name of Christ depart from iniquity. We want a pure Christianity. Great dangers are lurking for us on every side. When they most need the presence of God, many have it least. They are in danger of becoming like the Jewish nation, who knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God.

have had so great light, yet are so cold and unimpressible that no light shines from them to the world.

God has loaded us with His benefits. Immortal blessings have been poured upon us in great measure. Messengers have been sent with warnings, reproofs, and entreaties. God's servants have wept and prayed over the lukewarm state of the church. Some may arouse, but only to fall back into unconsciousness of their sin and peril. Passion, worldliness, malice, envy, pride, strife for supremacy, make our churches weak and powerless. Some of Christ's ambassadors are carrying a heavy burden on their souls, because their message is treated by so many as an idle tale. The eye of Jesus, looking down the ages, was fixed upon our time when He said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Luke 19:42. It is still thy day, O church of God, whom He has made the depository of His law. But this day of trust and probation is fast drawing to a close. The sun is fast westering. Can it be that it will set, and thou not know the things that belong unto thy peace? Must the irrevocable sentence be passed, "But now they are hid from thine eyes"? Verse 42. I tell you there is need to be alarmed. It is time to seek God earnestly, saying with Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." It will be of no avail to make a spasmodic effort, only to fall back into spiritual lethargy and lukewarmness. The past, with the slighted mercies, the admonitions unheeded, the earthly passions uncorrected, the privileges unimproved, the soul temple filled with desecrated shrines—all is recorded in the books of heaven. But most solemn moments are still before you. Because of past neglect, the efforts you make must be the more earnest.

The Saviour speaks to His people, "Be zealous and repent." It is not ministers whom you have slighted; it is not the warnings of men that you have rejected; it is not My delegated prophets that you have refused to hear, but your

Redeemer, your only Hope. If ye are destroyed, it is yourselves alone that are responsible. Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life. "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Luke 13:34. I desired to save you, but ye would not be doers of My Word. The arm strong to save, is also strong to punish. Jesus is now looking from heaven above with yearning pity upon thee, even thee in this thy day, O thoughtless, careless soul. But unless there is in our churches a general arousing,

now may not be as strong tomorrow. Satan's snare may close about you. The candlestick may be moved out of its place, and you left in darkness. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." Hebrews 12:25. Says the true Witness, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Revelation 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the Word of God, or through His delegated messengers, is a knock at the door of the heart; it is the voice of Jesus, asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, your determination to open becomes weaker and weaker. If the voice of Jesus is not heeded at once, it becomes confused

It is still thy day, O church of God, whom He has made the depository of His law. But this day of trust and probation is fast drawing to a close. . . . I tell you there is need to be alarmed. It is time to seek God earnestly.

unless there is an individual work of confessing and putting away sin, unless all shall give earnest heed to the things that belong to their peace, the words of Christ may at any moment be applicable to them: "Now they are hid from thine eyes." I entrusted thee with a solemn, sacred message of truth to be made known to others, but thou hast been unfaithful to thy holy trust. Souls have not been enlightened, warned, and urged to repentance. Their blood will I require at thy hand.

Will our churches humble themselves before the Lord in this Day of Atonement? Will they put away the sins which defile their garments of character, and separate them from God? The present is our day of visitation. Look not to a future, more convenient season, when the cross to be lifted will be less heavy, when the inclinations of the carnal heart will be subdued with less effort. "To day" saith the Spirit of God, "if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 4:7. Today go about the work, else you may be one day too late. The impression that you have

in the mind with a multitude of other voices, the world's care and business engross the attention, and conviction dies away. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of time, and of the great eternity beyond. The heavenly Guest is standing at your door, while you are piling up obstructions to bar His entrance. Jesus is knocking through the prosperity He gives you. He loads you with blessings to test your fidelity, that they may flow out from you to others. Will you permit your selfishness to triumph? Will you squander God's talents, and lose your soul through idolatrous love of the blessings He has given?

There are some whose hold on life is weakening. Disease is preying upon them. Soon will come the time for the separation from all earthly things. Will they venture to trifle with God now? Will they rob Him by withholding help from His cause? Are there any who will prefer perishable, earthly treasure to the heavenly, immortal substance? Christ is making His last appeal to

hearts. How importunate His entreaty, how reluctant He is to give you up to separation from His love and presence forever! Still is heard the step of Him who waiteth at your door; His voice is yet pleading for entrance; but there is a point beyond which His forbearance will not reach. Shall the words be written over the doomed doorway, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone"? Hosea 4:17. Shall it be spoken concerning you, He is joined to his idol of sensuality: let him

aged soul cry as did Jacob, for the Comforter. Never trust in what you yourself can do. Your wisdom is but foolishness. Ever keep in heart the knowledge that we are laborers for God. The Lord is leading His church in these last days as He led ancient Israel. While He gives them warnings, reproofs, and encouragement through His delegated servant, Christ, the Angel of the covenant, who in the pillar of cloud and of fire went before the Hebrew host, is the Leader of His people today. Provoke

Christ . . . is the Leader of His people today. Provoke Him not with your murmurings, by your selfish withholding from His cause, by cherishing iniquity; for in the face of great light He will not pardon your continual transgressions.

alone? He is joined to his idol of earthly treasure: let him alone? He is joined to his idolatry of self: let him alone? The Sun of righteousness may set this very day for those who have had great light and privileges, and have not improved them. You have no time to loiter, no time to consult your convenience. It is now, even now, that you are to be zealous and repent. Oh, it is peace that you need—Heaven's forgiveness, peace, and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; but Jesus offers it as a gift. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it. Many are weary of their half-hearted service. Their souls cry out after the living God. We are so weak, so helpless, yet so desirous for a better state of things, that we turn away from a religion that has no divine manifestation. We cannot be satisfied with a form of godliness. We must have the deep movings of the Spirit of God in the soul.

Let the minister of God in his labors lean upon the arm of infinite Power. Let him lay bare his soul in the secret place alone before God. Let him with loathing put away soul defilement. Let the weary, discour-

Him not with your murmurings, by your selfish withholding from His cause, by cherishing iniquity; for in the face of great light He will not pardon your continual transgressions. The warning to the Sardis church is applicable at this time: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 3:1-3. And to us also the promise is extended: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Revelation 3:4-5. ✠

Review and Herald, November 2, 1886.

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letters to the editor

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I love the truth in *Our Firm Foundation* and am thankful for those who stand for the “firm pillars” of our faith.

HB, Illinois

It was a joy to receive *Our Firm Foundation* this month, (which is the response each month)! And it is always an extra happy response to have the opportunity to order your camp meeting tapes. For those of us who are unable to attend the camp meetings, it is such a blessing to receive these tapes and share them with others! One day in Heaven the results of all these wonderful messages will be known. Praise God!

EK, Canada

From Overseas

We, your brothers in Romania, appreciate very much your publications, especially the magazine *Our Firm Foundation* about the controversy in the Seventh-day Adventist church. I am interested in “*Issues Clarified* and *The Omega of Apostasy* by Ron Spear. May God bless you all for your work!

SC, Romania

Greetings to you in the most highly exalted name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

We received the magazine *Our Firm Foundation*. We are thanking you for your goodness in Christ.

MK, India

We are a group of Adventist students who would appreciate the opportunity of receiving your publications here. We are all literature evangelists in our local school, with the ultimate aim of toiling hard to spread the Gospel of God in our local community. But due to the unavailability of certain materials, true Adventism is dying fast in this satanic world, especially in Ghana which is bursting with sin in every corner.

Please, we need publications like yours which will aid us to prepare and watch for the Lord’s coming. People are so thirsty for the Lord’s

message which is vital for their salvation!

Would you please help us to obtain these books without charge to aid us in spreading the gospel throughout our community? The books are, *The Desire of Ages*, *National Sunday Law*, *Great Controversy*, *Spirit of Prophecy* books, KJV Bibles (especially needed).

We shall be very grateful if you will dispatch to us the series of recorded cassettes for our evangelistic work since we have the machines for its operation.

YS, Ghana

A friend shared *Our Firm Foundation*—January 1996 issue—with me. It was so touching and unfolded the truth to me. I am now a converted Seventh-day Adventist, and this year I will go and preach to others the Word of God.

I am now asking for your support. I need two Bibles to use in my evangelism. My younger brother also wants to join me in preaching the Word of God, especially the end-time gospel. Your support is greatly appreciated for two Bibles to use in evangelism.

RM, Zimbabwe

I am a new convert who knows little about the doctrines of the church. In my area in Ghana the church faces a lot of problems that impedes or hinders its growth and development. One of these problems is the non-availability of pastors and church elders in most churches. In my area for instance we have only one pastor to run about 5 churches. Also we lack those essential books which serve as a reference for most Adventist teachings. Those and other problems are rendering most of the new converts and even old members to backslide.

Talking about myself, my mother is a pagan and my father attends an Evangelical Presbyterian church. But God loves me so much that their authority and pressure could not make me join any of them in their religion, even before I came across the Advent-

ist message. I am a student boy of 17 years of age. As a result of my decision to be an Adventist, it brought a lot of obstacles on my way, my father partially rejected me and my mother disapproves my failure to eat unclean animals. But these challenges will not overcome my decision to do the will of God.

I therefore request those essential books which we lack, please, I plead.

AI, Ghana

I am writing to inform you that I received the magazines that you sent me. The first ones reached me in June about the “Garden of the Heart” and the “Dividing Prophecy.” The other parcel of “The Sabbath” reached me last week.

I will always appreciate your publications! They are a source of our spiritual study here in this part of Africa. Recently I gave different parts to the youth of our church and they presented the afternoon programme to educate the parents on the topic of “The Garden of the Heart.” It was a reviving moment for the parents! It really benefited them on tendering the hearts of our children. All the members of the staff at my work place are thankful for every publication that I share with them.

EK, Zambia

Some time ago a friend of mine was not a Sabbathkeeper so I tried to tell him about the Sabbath. Two months later I used the books *The Lord’s Day* and *a National Sunday Law* and the Bible to explain the Sabbath to him and he understand. Then he asked me to let him keep the book so that he can read and get the real understanding. So now he is an Adventist, but I no longer have that book, so please send me one and a Bible so that I can spread the Word of God to get more people for God. And please keep my friend in your prayers so his sister, who does not believe in the Sabbath, will not influence him to return to his family’s religion.

AB, Ghana

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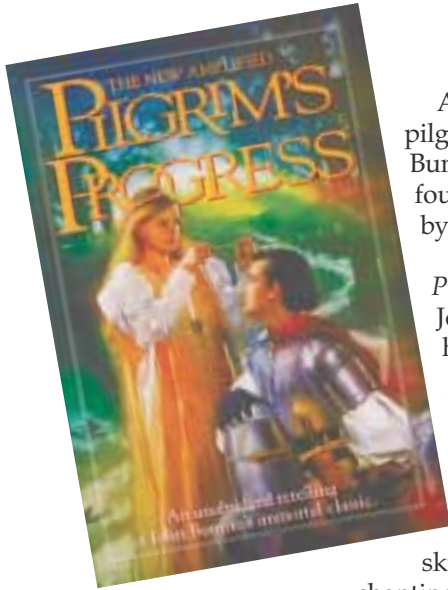
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