



# *Our* Firm Foundation

## The Meaning of Trials

Volume 17, Number 7

July 2002

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Inevitable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary



# Will We Heed the Warning?

After September 11, 2001, more Bibles were sold than during the whole rest of the year put together. Many were asking the fearful question, “Is this the end?” Within six months, however, most of those Bibles were sitting on shelves gathering dust. Y2K had presented a similar fear to the world and to Seventh-day Adventist people, but then the days turned to weeks and months—and life continued as usual. September 11, 2001, is now history, and many of the terrorists are either dead or in detention, but our world is still in nervous confusion. Wall Street is bouncing up and down. The Israelis and Palestinians—all descendants of Abraham—are killing each other, and world leaders are searching for solutions to the violence and crime.

“Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.” Isaiah 59:14–15.

“The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 14.

“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” Isaiah 24:5–6.

“There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God’s Word, they would find a solution of the problems that perplex them.” *Ibid.*, 13.

## Warnings From God

The Spirit of Prophecy has been warning the remnant church for over 100 years. The condition of the world just before the coming of the Lord is described in both the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, yet, how many of God’s Seventh-day Adventist people are studying and preparing for the day of Christ’s return?

“But who reads the warnings given by the fast-fulfilling signs of the times? What impression is made upon worldlings? What change is seen in their attitude?—No more than was seen in the attitude of the inhabitants of the Noachian world. Absorbed in worldly business and pleasure, the antediluvians ‘knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.’ Matthew 24:39. They had heaven-sent warnings, but they refused to listen. And today the world, utterly regardless of the warning voice of God, is hurrying on to eternal ruin.” *Ibid.*, 14.

God has raised up the printed page as a messenger of warning—to leaders, pastors, and laity—to prepare our characters for the outpouring of the latter rain:

“Unless you speedily humble your hearts before God, and

confess your sins, which are many, you will, when it is too late, see that you have been fighting against God. Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, no longer unto reformation and pardon, you will see that these men whom you have spoken against have been as signs in the world, as witnesses for God. Then you would give the whole world if you could redeem the past, and be just such zealous men, moved by the Spirit of God to lift your voice in solemn warning to the world; and, like them, to be in principle firm as a rock. Your turning things upside down is known of the Lord. Go on a little longer as you have gone, in rejection of the light from heaven, and you are lost. ‘The man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation.’ Numbers 19:20.

“I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ’s delegated messengers, you reject Christ. Neglect this great salvation, kept before you for years, despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 97.

Only a few in every generation have accepted the requirements of salvation—compared to the population of the world and the membership of the church. Probation will close suddenly for the world and the church. See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 989. Let us heed God’s warnings now, before it is too late! ✨



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

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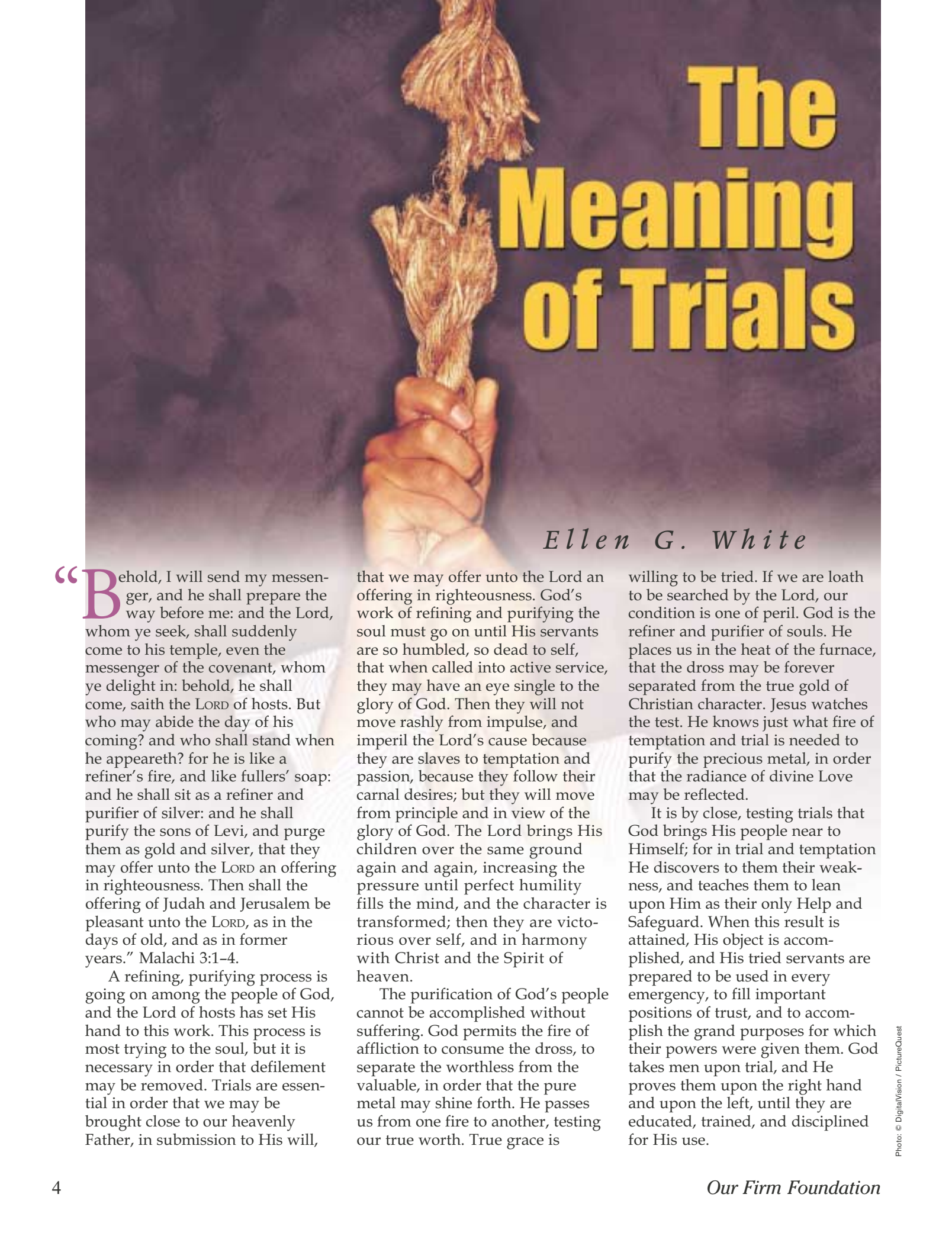
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# The Meaning of Trials

*Ellen G. White*

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” Malachi 3:1-4.

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will,

that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. God’s work of refining and purifying the soul must go on until His servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that when called into active service, they may have an eye single to the glory of God. Then they will not move rashly from impulse, and imperil the Lord’s cause because they are slaves to temptation and passion, because they follow their carnal desires; but they will move from principle and in view of the glory of God. The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven.

The purification of God’s people cannot be accomplished without suffering. God permits the fire of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, in order that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is

willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. God is the refiner and purifier of souls. He places us in the heat of the furnace, that the dross may be forever separated from the true gold of Christian character. Jesus watches the test. He knows just what fire of temptation and trial is needed to purify the precious metal, in order that the radiance of divine Love may be reflected.

It is by close, testing trials that God brings His people near to Himself; for in trial and temptation He discovers to them their weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him as their only Help and Safeguard. When this result is attained, His object is accomplished, and His tried servants are prepared to be used in every emergency, to fill important positions of trust, and to accomplish the grand purposes for which their powers were given them. God takes men upon trial, and He proves them upon the right hand and upon the left, until they are educated, trained, and disciplined for His use.

Trials will come upon us that are originated by the prince of evil. The enemy will contend for the life or the usefulness of the servants of God, and will seek to mar their peace as long as they remain in the world. But his power is limited. He may cause the furnace to be heated, but Jesus and holy angels watch the precious ore; and to the trusting Christian, grace will be found sufficient, and nothing but the worthless dross will be consumed. The fire kindled by the enemy can have no power to destroy the true gold.

At times the powers of darkness gather about the soul and shut Jesus from our sight, and we wait in sorrow and amazement until the cloud passes over. While under the trial, these seasons are terrible. Hope seems to fail, and despair seizes upon us. But in these dreadful hours we must learn to trust, to depend wholly upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, and cast our souls in their helplessness and unworthiness upon Him who is mighty to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. We shall never perish while we do this, never.

We need not be astonished at trial. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12-13.

Jesus says: "I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:1-2. There is a constant tendency among the trees of the Lord to be more profuse in foliage than in fruit. Just as the strength and nourishment of the grapevine are taken up in abundant foliage, and the fruit is not brought to perfection unless the vine is pruned, so the strength of the Christian will fail of its true end,

unless the heavenly Husbandman prunes away the useless growth. In prosperity the followers of Jesus often turn their thoughts and energies toward gratifying themselves, to securing worldly treasure, to the enjoyment of ease and pleasure and luxury, and they bring forth little fruit to the glory of God; then the heavenly Husbandman, in order to promote the fruitfulness of the branches, comes with the pruning knife of disappointment, loss, or bereavement, and cuts away the hindering growth.

One evening a gentleman who was much depressed because of

branches are cut off and cast into the fire. Let us be thankful that through painful pruning, we may retain a connection with the living Vine; for if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him. The very trial that taxes our faith the most severely and makes it seem as though God had forsaken us, is to lead us more clearly to Him, that we may lay all our burdens at the feet of Christ, and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange.

Let no Christian feel that he is forsaken when the hour of trial comes upon him. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your

*Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good.*

deep affliction, was walking in a garden, where he observed a pomegranate tree nearly cut through the stem. Greatly wondering, he asked the gardener why the tree was in this condition, and he received an answer that explained to his satisfaction the wounds of his own bleeding heart. "Sir," said the gardener, "this tree used to shoot out so strong that it bore nothing but leaves. I was obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, it began to bear fruit."

Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. In every affliction God has a purpose to work out for our good. Every blow that destroys an idol, every providence that weakens our hold upon earth and fastens our affections more firmly upon God, is a blessing. The pruning may be painful for a time, but afterward it "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Hebrews 12:11.

We should receive with gratitude whatever will quicken the conscience, elevate the thoughts, and ennoble the life. The fruitless

heavenly Father's notice. God loves and cares for the feeblest of His creatures, and we cannot dishonor Him more than by doubting His love to us. Oh, let us cultivate that living faith that will trust Him in the hour of darkness and trial! Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry men through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial, and the form of the Fourth will be with them in the furnace, however fierce its heat; and they will come forth from its flame with not even the smell of the fire on their garments.

Joseph was sold into Egypt. He was put into prison. The enemy strove to overwhelm him in darkness. The darkness was so great that it seemed every ray of hope was extinguished; but his faith took hold on God, and it was rewarded. God brought him out of the dungeon, and made him a light to the world.

Our heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and he knows their characters better than they do themselves. He sees that some have capabilities which are not directed

in the right way, but that if they could be turned into the right channel, they would bring glory to His name by advancing the cause of truth in the world. He places these persons on trial, and in His wise providence brings them into different positions, into a variety of circumstances, where they are tested in order that they may reveal what is in their hearts and make manifest the weak points of their characters, which have been hidden from their own eyes. God gives them opportunities to correct these defects, to polish off the rough corners of their natures, and to fit themselves for His service. If they do this work, then when He calls them into active service, they are

unseen, on the eternal inheritance, the immortal life, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? And while we do this, the fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine.

This world is not the Christian's heaven. It is the place in which to fit up for heaven. It is the scene of our life battles, our conflicts and sorrows. While here we must, if we would be successful, have a firm grasp of the better world, where, when the warfare is ended, will be found peace and everlasting joy.

Through all our trials, which have never been fully revealed to others, we have had an unflinching

alive for evermore." Revelation 1:18. "I know your sorrows; I have endured them. I am acquainted with your struggles; I have experienced them. I know your temptations; I have encountered them. I have seen your tears; I also have wept. Your earthly hopes are crushed, but let the eye of faith be uplifted, and penetrate the veil, and there anchor your hopes. The everlasting assurance shall be yours that you have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

God has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction, in order to prove them firm and true, to purge from them all dross and unrighteousness. It was after Abraham and his son Isaac had borne the severest test that could be brought upon them, that God spoke through His angel to Abraham, and said: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Genesis 22:12.

The work of pruning and purifying the people of God for heaven is a great work, and it will not be accomplished without great suffering on the part of the servants of God, because it will cost them something to bring their wills into harmony with the will of Christ. We must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross, and we are purified so that we reflect the divine Image. Those who follow inclination, and judge from appearances, are not good judges of what God is doing. They are filled with discontent. They see failure where there is indeed triumph, a great loss where there is only gain; and like Jacob, they are ready to exclaim, when trial comes upon them, "All these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36), when the fact is, that the very things of which they complained, were working for their good.

"No cross, no crown." One cannot be strong in the Lord and never experience trial. To have strength, we must have exercise. To have strong faith we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be called forth. Just before

*The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory.*

ready so that the angels of Heaven cooperate with them in their labors, and the purpose is fulfilled for which God called them to His service.

It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong, and modify their dispositions, and refine their manners. God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them, so that they may be purified.

The trials of life are God's workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters, and fit them for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. Then as we pass through trial, as the fire of affliction kindles upon us, shall we not keep our eyes fixed upon the things that are

Friend, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. While upon the earth, Jesus was ever touched with human woe, and although He is now ascended to His Father, and is adored by angels who swiftly speed to obey His commands, yet His heart, which loved, pitied, and sympathized with men, knows no change. It remains a heart of unchangeable tenderness still.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are." Hebrews 4:15. Jesus is acquainted with all our trials, and He does not leave us to struggle alone with temptations, to battle alone with sin, and to be finally crushed with burden and sorrow. Through His angels He whispers to you, "Fear not: for I am with thee." Isaiah 43:5. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am

his martyrdom, the apostle Paul said to Timothy: "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." 2 Timothy 1:8. It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. Our Saviour was tried in every possible way, and yet He triumphed continually in God. It is our privilege under all circumstances to be strong in the strength of God and to glory in the cross of Christ.

Every follower of Christ will have a cross to bear; and when he takes it up resolutely, though in weakness and trembling, he will find that that which seemed so terrible to him is a source of strength and blessing and courage. It will be a staff to him to help him on in his weary pilgrimage through this earth. Then shall the professed follower of Christ drop his cross, and seek to please those who are deriding his Lord? Shall he, for fear he will not receive honor of men, reject and despise the cross of Christ?

What if you do suffer, dear fellow Christian? The Master of the house suffered before you. Jesus, our Redeemer, Representative and Head, endured the testing process. He suffered more than we can be called upon to suffer. He bore our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. He did not suffer thus on His own account, but because of our sins, that we, relying on the merits of our Overcomer, might be victorious in His name. Christ was the exalted and glorious Commander of heaven, before whom the angelic hosts bowed in adoration, yet He condescended to give up His glory that He had with the Father, that He might save a fallen race; and shall we, in our turn, refuse to deny ourselves for His sake and the gospel's? Let the words of Paul be the language of our hearts: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14.

Christ requires all. His sacrifice was too great, too dear, to make it

possible that we should give less than all, and be accepted. Our holy faith cries out, Separation. We should not be conformed to the world, or to dead, heartless professors. The Scripture says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2. The way to heaven is a self-denying way. But when you think the way is too strait, and there is too much self-denial in the narrow path; when you say, How hard to give up all, ask yourselves the question, What

then ask, Is the way too strait?

Oh, that everyone might realize that Jesus has something in store for him vastly better than that which he would choose for himself! Would that all might come to understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the blessedness of righteousness! Would that all might see how powerless is all effort to contend with Omnipotence! Man is doing the greatest injury to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the

*When you think the way is too strait, and there is too much self-denial in the narrow path; when you say, How hard to give up all, ask yourselves the question, What did Christ give up for me?*

did Christ give up for me? This question puts anything that we might call self-denial in the shade.

Behold Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Look upon the great drops of blood that are forcing themselves from His pores while He is bearing the inexpressible agony of soul. Look upon Him in the judgment hall while He is derided, mocked, and insulted by the infuriated mob. Behold Him clothed in that old purple robe, and hear the coarse jest and cruel mocking. See them place the crown of thorns on that noble brow, and smite Him with a reed, causing the thorns to penetrate His holy temples, so that the blood drops trickle down His face and fall upon the ground. Hear the murderous throng eagerly crying for the blood of the Son of God. He is delivered into their hands, and pale, and weak, and fainting, He is led away to the hill of crucifixion. They stretch His form upon the cross, and drive the nails through His tender hands and feet. Behold Him hanging upon the cross through dreadful hours of agony until angels veil their faces from the scene, and the sun hides his light, refusing to shine upon the dreadful sight. Think of these things, and

mind and will of God. He is sowing to his flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by God, who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of His creatures. In order to be happy ourselves, we must live to make others happy. We must yield our possessions, our talents, and our affections, in grateful devotion to Christ, and in this way we may find happiness here and immortality hereafter.

The most trying experiences in the Christian life may be the most blessed. The special providences of the dark hours may encourage the soul in the future attacks of Satan, and equip the soul to stand most fiery trials. The trial of your faith is more precious than gold. But in order to endure the test, you must have that faith, that abiding confidence in God, that will not be disturbed by the arguments and temptations of the deceiver.

Take the Lord at His word. Study the promises, and appropriate them as you have need. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. Happy is the man, who, when tempted, finds his soul rich in the knowledge of the Scriptures, who

finds shelter beneath the promises of God. "Thy word," said the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11. We need that calm, steady faith, that undaunted moral courage, that none but Christ can give, in order that we may be braced for trial and strengthened for duty.

While on earth there will be no escape from conflicts and temptations; but in every storm we have a sure refuge. Jesus has told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33. The forces of Satan are marshaled against us, and we have to meet a diligent foe; but if we take heed to the admonition of Christ, we shall be safe. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41. There are foes to be

resisted and overcome, but Jesus is by our side, ready to strengthen us for every attack.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God. Faith beholds the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love Him. Faith sees the robe and the crown all prepared for the overcomer. Faith hears the song of the redeemed, and brings eternal glories near.

We must come close to Jesus in loving obedience if we would see the King in His beauty. There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believe! Believe! My soul cries, Believe! Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him, and will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you.

But remember that everyone who shall be found with the wedding garment on will have come out of great tribulation. The mighty surges of temptation will beat upon all. But the long night of watching, of toil, of hardship, is nearly past. Christ is soon to come. Get ready! The angels of God are seeking to attract you from yourself and from earthly things. Let them not labor in vain.

Faith, living faith, is what you need; the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Remember Calvary and the awful, the infinite sacrifice there made for man. Jesus now invites you to come to Him, just as you are, and make Him your Strength and your everlasting Friend. ✨

*Review and Herald*, April 10 and 17, 1894.



## Health for Today

Designed to fulfill its role as the 'right arm' of the evangelistic work, this outreach magazine contains practical information from Adventism's leading health professionals. It also introduces the reader to Ellen White, who was 100 years ahead of her time as a health promoter.

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*Our Firm Foundation*



# THE CITIES: TO LEAVE OR NOT TO LEAVE?

*Dave Westbrook*

In the article “Where are the Bereans?”<sup>1</sup> Stephen Chavez adds his voice to other recent *Adventist Review* authors on the subject of city living. This time it is the voice of derision raised against those who have followed God’s counsel in leaving the cities. It comes on the heels of a December article by George Knight entitled, “Another Look at City Mission.”<sup>2</sup> Although Knight’s subtitle posed the question, “What did she really say?” what followed was an article that makes of none effect much of what Mrs. White really *did* say on the subject.

## **Who Should Heed the Warning?**

Brother Knight states, “We find in Ellen White’s writings two sets of parallel counsel—one relating to institutions, advocating outpost ministry, and a second dealing with local church work, advocating working from within the city.”<sup>3</sup> We are informed that the Spirit of Prophecy would support people dwelling in the cities for purposes of local church outreach. Furthermore, it is implied that Mrs. White would advocate families moving

into the cities to reach out to lost souls.

Ellen White wrote: “He wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life. In a little while they will have to leave the cities. . . . If we place ourselves under objectionable influences, can we expect God to work a miracle to undo the results of our wrong course?—No, indeed. Get out of the cities as soon as possible.” *General Conference Bulletin*, March 30, 1903.

“To parents who are living in the cities, the Lord is sending the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the cities as fast as possible.” *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.

We ask, Just who was Ellen White writing to in the above paragraphs?

Brother Chavez is right when he says there are better role models to follow than Jonah. Consider one to

whom Ellen White pointed: “As God’s commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.” *Evangelism*, 77–78. George Knight assures us that this statement was made in relation to the location of our sanitariums; yet, Enoch was a person, not an institution.

Now, please consider the following statement made by Ellen White: “Close around us are cities and towns in which no efforts are made to save souls. Why should not families who know the present truth settle in these cities and villages, to set up there the standard of Christ?” *Christian Service*, 180. How are we to understand the message of the prophet here? Was she confused? If, in fact, there were not two opposing lines of counsel, how are we to understand what she meant? To answer that question we must consider the progressive nature of her counsel and warnings to leave the cities.

## **A Progressive Message**

Early statements from Ellen White regarding country living

point out the benefits of rural living and the pitfalls of city life. As time passed, however, her counsel to leave the cities became more pointed and urgent. The statement from *Christian Service* quoted above regarding families moving to cities was made in 1891, several years before the more pointed appeals that the time had come for God's people to relocate. In fact, God revealed that the need to leave the cities would become greater as time passed leading up to the Second Coming—"More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren

was time for this step-by-step process to begin.

The Sunday-law crisis beginning in the late nineteenth century signaled the need for God's people to start relocating out of the large cities. As early as 1897, we find this counsel: "The Protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country [places,] where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce. Thus they may bring their children up

understand that her strong appeals to leave the cities did not mean that we should drop our work cold and make sudden or rash moves. We must watch for the guiding hand of Providence. This situation, in fact, was paralleled during the siege of Jerusalem. While the Christians recognized the sign for their departure from the city, they could not leave until God made clear His timing through the providential retreat of the Roman armies.

This helps us understand why Ellen White would recommend to those living in the cities to "work for God in the neighborhood of their homes." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 128. This did not constitute counsel to remain indefinitely in the city. As we have just seen, she taught that we must not move ahead of the Lord's leading. Until such time as God should open the way to leave, we should be devoted to missionary endeavors. "More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so. Many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way. But until it is possible for them to leave, so long as they remain, they should be most active in doing missionary work, however limited their sphere of influence may be." *Review and Herald*, September 27, 1906.

We see here a process that takes time. The early twentieth century was a time of transition for God's people to change the way they worked the cities. It would be well to take this into consideration when looking at the case of S. N. Haskell—referred to in Knight's article. It should not surprise us that the Haskells moved into New York City in 1901. This was right around the time the signal to leave the cities was beginning to sound with greater clarity. In the coming days the message would become more urgent as Mrs. White would give these stirring appeals—"The time has come when, as God opens

*"We must make wise plans to warn the cities, and at the same time live where we can shield our children and ourselves from the contaminating and demoralizing influences so prevalent in these places."*

and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so." *Review and Herald*, September 27, 1906.

Even the very manner in which we should relocate was to involve a progressive process: "As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath, will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 464–465. Notice the progression: first moving to the smaller cities, later landing in secluded mountain homes.

Although many believe this warning points to a time yet in the future, in 1900 Mrs. White penned these words, "Get out of the large cities as fast as possible. Establish church schools. Give your children the Word of God as the foundation of all their education." *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 195. Clearly, she could see that it

with simple, healthful habits. I see the necessity of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis." *Country Living*, 21.

By 1903, it was absolutely clear: "The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities." *Ibid.*, 24.

Just three years later, in 1906, she would share the startling words, "'Out of the cities; out of the cities!'—this is the message the Lord has been giving me. . . . We must make wise plans to warn the cities, and at the same time live where we can shield our children and ourselves from the contaminating and demoralizing influences so prevalent in these places." *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.

### **As God Opens the Way**

Ellen White also made clear that such moves must be made under the guiding hand of God. Thus, we find her using phrases such as the following: "Until it is possible for them to leave," "Whenever possible," "As fast as possible," "As far as possible," "As soon as possible," and so on. Therefore, we should

the way, families should move out of the cities." *The Adventist Home*, 139 (1903). " 'Out of the cities; out of the cities!' — this is the message the Lord has been giving me." *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.

### Weighing the Counsel on Ellen White's Balances

Referring to Mrs. White's counsel regarding establishing sanitariums, Knight states, "When it came to a conflict between the denomination accomplishing its mission and rural living, the need to complete the mission successfully always won out from her perspective."<sup>4</sup> Thus, we are led to believe that leaving the cities was an optional issue, in contrast to reaching the lost in the cities. A closer look reveals, once again, a misrepresentation of the Spirit of Prophecy counsel on this subject.

In September of 1902, a group met to consider plans for the erection of a building in the city of Los Angeles to be used for a restaurant and sanitarium. There was an outpost location already functioning which was out of the city but "out at one side," as Mrs. White put it. Apparently, the needs of the people seemed to call for a center more accessible to those not on that side of the city. Nevertheless, the counsel remained, "I could not give advice to build a sanitarium in any city. I could not do it, because it has been so distinctly laid before me that when a sanitarium is built, it must be located where it can accomplish the end in view — the object for which it is established. . . . The word has come that sanitariums should be located out of the cities. God has a purpose in that." After reiterating some of the reasons for establishing sanitariums out of the cities, she recognized that she was repeating counsel already given with great clarity, "Well, I have written it; you have had it; it is just as forcible now as when I wrote it. I see nothing to change my mind in regard to Los Angeles on these points." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 248–249.

### Not a Call to Abandon the Cities

Without a doubt, an abandonment of the cities at this time would be diametrically opposed to the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy. Indeed, we must go after the lost living in these great centers of population — however, we must do it in God's way. In His Word and in the Spirit of Prophecy we find our manual. We are to "leave the cities, and like Enoch come from your retirement to warn the people of the cities." *Ibid.*, 250. "Said the messenger of God, 'Shall not the cities be warned? — Yes; not

established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20. Will we follow His plans, even when they seem to counter human wisdom? Jesus looked ahead to our day and asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. Thankfully, we were not left without an answer to that question, for this same Jesus, through John the Revelator, told us of a group of people living in the last days who "keep the commandments of God, and the *faith of Jesus*." Revelation 14:12. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

*"How can we really reach the masses for Christ if we do not live 'with them,' coming close to them by dwelling where they do?"*

by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.' " *Ibid.*, 253 (1902).

Yet, some will ask, "How will we reach the people in the cities while living outside of them? It doesn't seem practical! How can we really reach the masses for Christ if we do not live 'with them,' coming close to them by dwelling where they do?"

Sister White has the answer: "He [Enoch] did not make his abode with the wicked. He did not locate in Sodom, thinking to save Sodom." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1087 (1900). "When iniquity abounds in a nation, there is always to be heard some voice giving warning and instruction, as the voice of Lot was heard in Sodom. Yet . . . all that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them, even if they had lived in a place some distance away from the city." *Evangelism*, 78 (1903).

There is a deeper issue involved here. It is a faith issue: "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be

God stands ready to bestow such a blessing as we have never witnessed, if we will but trust in Him. If we will consecrate ourselves wholly to Him, devoting ourselves to much prayer and seeking with determination to follow His clear instructions, He will show us how to work. He promises, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5–6.

Just what is at stake here? Much is at stake, for what we decide will determine the effectiveness of our outreach to those lost souls we so desire to reach. "Much depends upon laying our plans according to the Word of the Lord and with persevering energy carrying them out." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 178. If we are, indeed, so concerned about effectively reaching the lost billions, it would seem that we would be most earnest in seeking to follow God's clear instructions on how to evangelize the cities. It is time for Seventh-day Adventists to lay plans according to the Word of the Lord!

## The Call to Awake

How can we conclude that the Spirit of Prophecy advocates God's people remaining in the cities today when we read such statements as the following? "I could not sleep past two o'clock this morning. During the night season I was in council. I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God's appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children. Some were loitering, making no determined efforts.

leave the large cities, but many are loitering there as Lot loitered in Sodom. World events are screaming at us that the end of all things is at hand; we hear the rumble "of the return of the Roman armies" in a call for Sunday legislation. It is time to wake up! Indeed, the Holy Spirit is impressing many that it is time to move to retired homes secluded in the mountains.

Mrs. White gave us some insight as to why such sentiments would be proclaimed from leaders in our own church. At times God

Just now it is imperative that Seventh-day Adventists study the counsel of God on this topic for themselves. Do not let someone else do this for you. It was written about the Bereans, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11.

Every wind of doctrine is blowing. We are seeing "the very last deception of Satan" among God's people, which is to "make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48. We have been warned that, "Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony." *Ibid.*

I, too, think of the Bereans; and I wonder if they have any kin. ❀

*Just now it is imperative that Seventh-day Adventists study the counsel of God on this topic for themselves. Do not let someone else do this for you.*

"The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit." *Country Living*, 6-7.

More than a century has passed since the signal was first given to

allows this to awaken those who are sleeping. "God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His Word to awake out of sleep." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 707.

### References:

- 1 Stephen Chavez, "Where are the Bereans?" *Adventist Review*, February 28, 2002, 5.
- 2 George Knight, "Another Look at City Mission," *Ibid.*, December 6, 2001, 25.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 4 *Ibid.*



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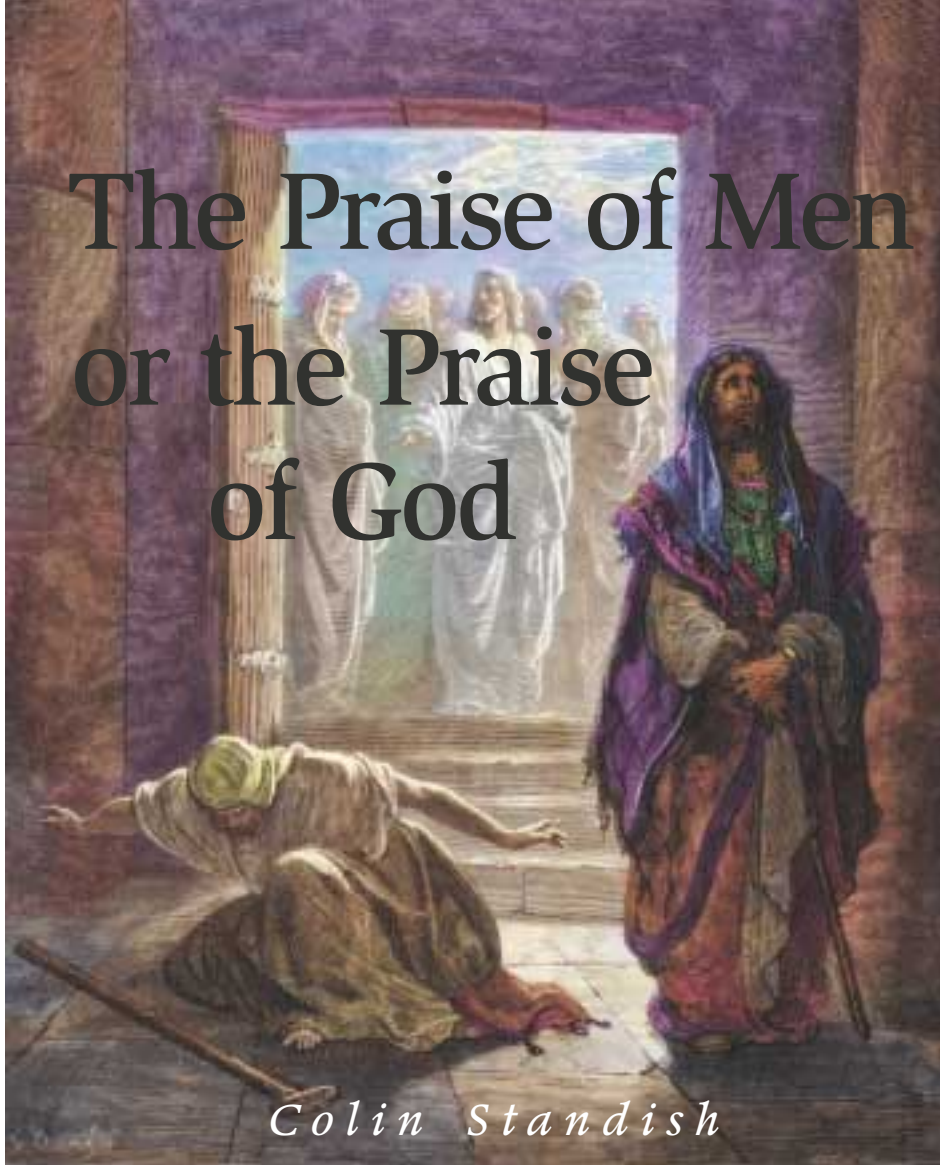
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# The Praise of Men or the Praise of God



Colin Standish

The gospel of John relates a remarkable exposé of the actions of the Jewish rulers who failed to acknowledge publicly the Messiahship of Christ. We discover John referring back to the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the rejection of Jesus.

“That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” John 12:38.

John reveals that many of the chief rulers recognized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Yet, they cowardly refused to publicly acknowledge this conviction. These were men of great authority and prestige in the nation of Judah. Let us look at John’s record:

“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they

did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” Verse 42.

The record is plain. These chief rulers believed on Jesus, but they did not confess Him. The servant of the Lord is specific as to the conviction of these men: “They were convinced; they believed Jesus to be the Son of God.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 106.

Why did they refuse to publicly confess Jesus, though they knew that He was the Son of God? The Bible record tells us that it was because they feared the Pharisees, and they feared to be put out of the synagogue (disfellowshipped).

John stated the bottom line of their failure to confess Jesus: “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Verse 43.

Sister White is even more specific: “It was not in harmony with their ambitious desires to

confess Him. They had not the faith that would have secured for them the heavenly treasure. They were seeking worldly treasure.” *Ibid.*, 106.

## The “Fear of the Jews” Today

This fear of those in high positions was not confined to the leaders of Christ’s day. Ever there have been a majority who, rather than risk their reputation or their personal ambitions, have been willing not only to silence their voice but ultimately denounce those who declare their allegiance to Christ and His principles.

In the end some will take part in fearful persecution. No wonder Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me.” Matthew 12:30. This principle was well understood by the servant of the Lord who discerned that those who trusted in their pastors and wanted to please them were very easily turned away from loyalty to Christ and His Word:

“Multitudes, trusting implicitly to their pastors, refused to listen to the warning; and others, though convinced of the truth, dared not confess it, lest they should be ‘put out of the synagogue.’ The message which God had sent for the testing and purification of the church, revealed all too surely how great was the number who had set their affections on this world rather than upon Christ. The ties which bound them to earth were stronger than the attractions heavenward. They chose to listen to the voice of worldly wisdom, and turned away from the heart-searching message of truth.” *Evangelism*, 198.

It is well known that one of the strategies of the Jesuits is to seek to train the Protestant parishioners to have as much dependent confidence in their pastors as the Roman Catholic communicants have in their priests. It is surely apparent that this condition now exists in most of the churches of Protestantism. But God has pronounced a terrible condemnation upon those who trust in man rather than trusting in Him.

“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.” Jeremiah 17:5.

### No Man Can Serve Two Masters

There is no way a true Christian can ever put absolute confidence in a man no matter how godly he may seem, or how high he is in holy office. God alone is worthy of our supreme and complete trust. Christ made two other statements that are relevant to our understanding of this passage:

*“Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.”*

“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” John 5:44.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24.

In the first passage Jesus is asking a question—How is it possible for men to seek honor of fellow human beings when God alone can bring such honor? The issue is a very clear one. If we are looking to men for praise, honor, and flattery, then we are determined to compromise our connection with the Lord. The servant of the Lord says flattery is more to be feared than criticism. The desire for flattery is highly addictive, especially in these end times. Consider the following warning that Paul gave in his second epistle to Timothy:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth,

and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

This warning is particularly important to us in this end-time situation. It is even more important to those who have been called to holy office—and to heavy responsibilities—because they are the ones who are called not only to enlighten God’s people but also to speak the truth in all its pointedness.

“It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy

for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 187.

If our burden is to please men and receive honor from them, then we will never present the testimony of the True Witness to Laodicea. While Christ’s statement in Matthew 6:24 does not specifically address the issue of *the praise of Christ or the praise of men*, it certainly does address the duplicity that can come in motivation. With God there is no compromise, either we serve Him or we serve the enemy of God—that is Satan. If we hold to Christ, we despise Satan. If we serve Satan, we despise and reject God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded by Luke, we learn there is a woe upon those who receive only praise from men:

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:26.

If we are receiving the praise of man, it is likely that we are either (1) preaching pleasing, ear titillating error, (2) preaching “pleasant” truth but not “present” truth, or (3) ignoring the call to give the

solemn warning message against self-deception, worldliness, apostasy and iniquity. In whichever area we fail, we are doing the work of Satan. A love to be received, honored, praised, and popular will cause any of us to fall for these deadly traps of Satan.

### The Example of Ahab

The wicked King Ahab had gathered around him hundreds of false prophets. They were willing to prophesy favorable things to the King—no doubt for his approbation and for the rewards that he would bestow upon them. Let us look at the example when Ahab had decided to battle against the king of Syria and had trapped King Jehoshaphat of Judah into joining him. When Jehoshaphat became concerned that this may not be the right thing, Ahab was able to gather 400 prophets who claimed blasphemously to be prophets of God.

“Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king’s hand.” 2 Chronicles 18:5.

But Jehoshaphat perceived that these prophets were not of God, for never have God’s prophets been in large numbers. Thus he asked Ahab, “Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?” Verse 6.

Ahab reluctantly called the true prophet Micaiah, who gave the answer that Ahab did not wish to hear:

“Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house.” Verse 16.

This prophecy was the forewarning of the death that came to Ahab as he fought against the Syrians. Instead of receiving praise and honor from the wicked king, Micaiah was placed in prison. But as he was led away he made it plain that he would not change his prophecy to placate the anger of

the king, for this was a prophecy that had come from God:

“Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king’s son; and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return in peace, then hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people.” Verses 25–27.

Now, just as it was in the days of Ahab, wicked men are looking for flattery of pastors or leaders who will not present the pointed testimony. The leaders would rather receive *the praise of men than the praise of God*. They have much greater fear of man than they do of God. How tragic!

### Paul’s Counsel

It is Paul who has dealt most strongly with this theme. Here are some of the outstanding warnings and counsels that Paul has given:

“Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” Ephesians 6:6.

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.” Colossians 3:22.

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10.

“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Romans 2:29.

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 2:4–6.

“For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” 1 Corinthians 4:4–5.

“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” 2 Corinthians 10:18.

*Those who will hear the praise of Christ are those who seek to serve and honor God and have a love for souls, those who will not compromise their message to flatter people away from eternal life.*

### The Delusion of Self-Exaltation

How important it is that we seek that which is above and not on the earth. See Colossians 3:1–2. Yet faithful Christians will not selfishly seek the praise even of God. Rather, they are so in love with the One who sent His Son to die for them that their only thought is to bring praise and glory to His name and lead others to His kingdom.

We can well remember the story of Elder Dudley Canright. It will be remembered that Canright was very much loved by the servant of the Lord, but he had great ambitions. By the 1870s he was one of the most powerful preachers in the Seventh-day Adventist movement. On one occasion he was asked to preach in a Sunday church—a large church in Chicago. He had taken with him a friend and fellow minister asking him to sit in the balcony and critique his sermon that night. By all accounts Canright preached a powerful message, and this was affirmed by the positive remarks of the people as they exited the church that evening. After the sermon Canright and his friend repaired to a park across the street from the church. After a short time Canright asked for his

friend’s evaluation. His friend responded that he had been so engrossed with the power of his message that he had forgotten his assignment to write a critique. That friend reported that Canright’s tragic response was, “I would be a great man if it were not for this unpopular message.” He was seeking the praise of men, rather than to fulfill the duties that God had laid upon him.

Canright soon followed these temptations of Satan, leaving the

Seventh-day Adventist faith. Twice he sought to return, but it appears that pride and the desire for human exaltation overwhelmed him.

Indeed, he became a preacher for the Baptist Church. Yet, never did he become a great success. He had thought that it was his great talent that was illuminating the message. But no, it was this great message of the everlasting gospel and the three angels’ messages that had made him the great preacher in his earlier days.

Those who seek the praise of men will never hear the praise of Jesus. Those who will hear the praise of Christ are those who seek to serve and honor God and have a love for souls, those who will not compromise their message to flatter people away from eternal life.

“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 25:40.

Never can a true Christian falter in his duty to warn and enlighten this earth and to preach the Word irrespective of the response of the hearers. If he has preached the truth in love and earnestness, then he can leave it to the Holy Spirit to seek to bring conviction to the hearts of his hearers. ✨



# The Purification of God's People

*Harvey Steck*

“**F**or the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11-14.

It will certainly be a glorious day when Christ comes in the clouds of heaven. Are you ready for that day?

Notice in Titus 2:14 that Jesus is purifying unto Himself a peculiar people. You and I profess to be part

of God's remnant people. Are we *pure* Christians? Are *you* a pure Christian? Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8.

Paul wrote, “Our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29. It is our privilege to cooperate with God today in His work of consuming sin *from* us. If we do not, then we will be consumed *with* our sins in the final destruction of the wicked. See *The Desire of Ages*, 107, 600.

## **A Grave Responsibility**

When you joined the Seventh-day Adventist church, were you taught your responsibility as a member?

“We take upon ourselves a grave responsibility when we unite

with the church. The church is God's family, and the members of this family are to be unselfishly interested in one another. They are to pray and work for one another's salvation. . . .

“If you think that a brother is in the wrong, go right to him. Do not go to someone else, because this will not cure the difficulty. . . .

“It will not do for any of us to get careless and indifferent in regard to our church membership. While on this journey that I am now taking, I have felt a most solemn responsibility to try to show our people that God holds them accountable to live lives that will keep the atmosphere of the church pure and fragrant. God is dishonored, and His Spirit is grieved, when this atmosphere is



tainted by careless living and by evil speaking." *Review and Herald*, January 19, 1905.

I have a "grave responsibility" when I become a member of the church—for myself *and* my brother. Am I my brother's keeper? When I see him going astray, do I go to him and work and pray with him? Or do I choose the easy way of turning my head—and gossiping to someone else? Many of the trials we face in our churches and self-supporting ministries could be avoided if we would follow Christ's plan in Matthew, chapter 18.

Listen to Sister White's burden for God's church:

"We want something besides Sabbath religion. We need the living principle, and to daily feel individual responsibility. This is shunned by many, and the fruit is carelessness, indifference, a lack of watchfulness and spirituality. Where is the spirituality of the church? Where are men and women full of faith and the Holy Spirit? My prayer is: Purify Thy church, oh God." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 99.

Do *you* have a living religion? If not, who can you blame—your parents? your spouse? your pastor? Are we tempted to be careless and indifferent? I know I have fallen to that temptation at times—and I am determined to discipline myself by God's grace. Notice her prayer: "Purify Thy church, oh God." Is that *your* burden? If it is, the work starts with *you*.

### God's Work and Our Work

We are assured that God is doing His part to purify His people:

"God is leading out a people who are peculiar. He will cleanse and purify them, and fit them for translation. Every carnal thing will be separated from God's peculiar treasures until they shall be like gold seven times purified." *Ibid.*, 431.

"Every true child of God will be sifted as wheat, and in the sifting process every cherished pleasure

which diverts the mind from God must be sacrificed." *Selected Messages*, book 2, 317.

If Christ should come today, would you be ready for translation? If not, Jesus wants to refine and purify you; but He will not do it without your submission and cooperation.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." *Philippians* 2:12-13; see also *Isaiah* 1:19-20.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know

steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the love of Jesus, and they will then be a light to the world." *Selected Messages*, book 2, 378.

Only through the ministry of Christ can this work of purification succeed:

"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." *Malachi* 3:3. We are the "sons of Levi" today, for "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." *1 Peter* 2:9; see also *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 340.

*Israel typified this work of purifying our souls when they afflicted their souls in preparation for the Day of Atonement.*

that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." *1 John* 3:2-3; see also *Ezekiel* 18:31; *1 Peter* 1:22-23; *2 Corinthians* 7:1; *Psalms* 119:9; *Isaiah* 1:16-18.

Sister White says, "The Saviour died to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. . . . Heaven is for those only who have purified their souls through obedience to the truth. It is a place where unsullied purity alone can dwell." *Review and Herald*, February 23, 1905.

Israel typified this work of purifying our souls when they afflicted their souls in preparation for the Day of Atonement:

"Let the church commence the work of purification before God by repentance, humiliation, deep heart searching, for we are in the antitypical day of atonement—solemn hour fraught with eternal results. . . . Let the individual members of the church be pure,

### Practical Religion Needed

"It is the purpose of God that His people shall be a sanctified, purified, holy people, communicating light to all around them. But only as they . . . make the principles of truth a part of their daily lives, can they be a praise and honor to God in the earth. It is the privilege of every Christian to receive grace to enable him to stand firmly for the principles of righteousness in the service of God." *This Day with God*, 53.

No matter how correct our theology is, are we *experiencing* the gospel? If you cannot see the gospel working in my life, if my family cannot see the gospel working in the privacy of my own home, *it is not just worthless—it is a curse!*

"God's people are to seek now, as never before, to be purified and sanctified, a holy people. . . . The grace of Christ alone can bring this about, making believers not only professors of the truth, but men and women who live the truth, and

thus reveal the principles of the gospel." *Review and Herald*, March 11, 1909.

### How God Purifies His People

God uses various methods to cleanse sin from our hearts:

**The Holy Spirit**—“The Holy Spirit’s teaching is God’s means of enlightening the minds and purifying the hearts of His people, guiding them in duty, shielding them from danger, keeping them in the fear and love of God, and in

“In these days He [God] has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of His people. As of old, He entreats the erring ones who profess His name to repent and turn from their evil ways. Now, as then, by the mouth of His chosen servants He predicts the dangers before them. He sounds the note of warning and reproves sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah. But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel as

**The Refining Furnace of Suffering and Trials**—“The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble?” *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 85.

“The Lord is willing to help us, to strengthen and bless us; but we must pass through the refining process until all the impurities in our character are burned away. Every member of the church will be subjected to the furnace, not to consume, but to purify.” *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 485.

“God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. . . . I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified.” *Early Writings*, 47.

For some of us, this bitter cup of suffering may be the most trying of God’s methods of purifying us. But is it not encouraging to know that good can come out of the most difficult experiences of life? Let us look for the silver lining on the clouds.

I encourage you to read Ellen White’s article entitled “The Meaning of Trials,” also found in this issue, for further comments on this subject.

We have looked at some of what we have been told about God’s work of purifying the members of His remnant church. Let us cooperate with God today, purifying ourselves as He is pure, so that Christ may welcome each one of us when He comes to take His faithful home. ✠

Next month we will study God’s work of purifying His church—that work of separating the unworthy members from the church.

*“The Lord is willing to help us, to strengthen and bless us; but we must pass through the refining process until all the impurities in our character are burned away.”*

patient waiting for His appearing.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, 4–5.

We may be preaching and praying for the latter-rain power of the Holy Spirit; however, if we resist His work of enlightening our minds and purifying our hearts, the power we receive will certainly be a counterfeit.

**Pointed Messages of Truth**—“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” *Jeremiah 6:16–19*; see also *Isaiah 58:1*.

Are we any different today? How would we have treated Jeremiah if we had lived in his day?

had ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given His servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, He will not always stay His hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 165; see also *ibid.*, vol. 1, 216.

Friends, when you hear the straight, pointed testimony that applies to your spouse, how do you respond? Or, if the preacher says something that the “worldly” person in the pew behind you needs to hear, what do you think? Now, what about when it applies to *you*?

**The Health Message**—“The work of health reform is the Lord’s means for lessening suffering in our world and for purifying His church.” *Ibid.*, vol. 9, 112–113.

Do you appreciate the health message as God has given it? Or is food one of your idols? Besides proper diet, what about the other health laws—such as trust in God, rest, exercise, water, sunshine, fresh air, and abstemiousness?



## Bible Marking

“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:

#### **Witnessing,**

**W1: John 17:3–4.**

- Turn to the first verse and write the comment (if you wish to use the comments), and the next reference in the margin near 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 reach the end. Beside the last text, write “**End W.**”

- Go through the study to check for broken links.

- Share the study with others!

The world is a busy place. All around us people are living and dying without knowing our kind heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. How can we be more effective for the Master in introducing Him to our families, friends, neighbors, and even those people whom we have never met? Let us pray that the Lord will give us a burden for souls.

## Witnessing

### Code: W

#### **W1: John 17:3–4.**

Jesus came to show the Father to sinners.

#### **W2: Galatians 5:22–23.**

We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that we may reveal the Father’s character too.

#### **W3: 2 Peter 1:5–11.**

Developing a Christlike character will take continuing effort.

#### **W4: John 15:4–8.**

If we, who are the branches, stay connected to Jesus, the Vine, our characters will reflect His.

#### **W5: 2 Peter 1:2–4.**

Daily study of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, prayer, keeping our mind set on Christ, and praising God in everything are the tools for staying connected.

#### **W6: John 17:18.**

Jesus had a plan for carrying His work on after He left the earth.

#### **W7: Matthew 28:18–20.**

We are to bear witness to the world that salvation has been offered to all.

#### **W8: Matthew 10:32–33.**

If we share our faith, Jesus will commend us to the Father.

#### **W9: Acts 1:8.**

The Holy Spirit gives power to our witness.

#### **W10: Acts 2:37–41.**

Just as the Holy Spirit worked among the early believers, He will be with us today.

#### **W11: 1 Corinthians 12:11, 18.**

All gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for use in service to God.

#### **W12: Romans 12:4–13.**

The gifts entrusted to us by God will become effective for winning souls to Christ if we submit them to Him. ✠

# The Shaking Caused By the True Witness

*John Korponay*

A vision of the shaking was given to Ellen White in the mid-1800s to encourage those people who were expecting Jesus' soon return. Many years have passed into eternity since that time. Yet, as we look with the eye of faith, we can finally see that the hour that has been tarrying so long—the last hour of the great controversy—is at hand; and, whether we are ready or not, it will come at its appointed time. Now there is only a little time left, not only to prepare but also to *be* ready.

Whether we are shaken out, sifted out, or hold true depends entirely upon the preparation we make for that final hour. The promise is given that God will protect and deliver us in that hour if we persevere: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10.

In light of the time in earth's history that we are in, let us examine Sister White's vision of the shaking. With a little thought we can picture it in our minds; but more than that, as with any of God's words to us, we need to put ourselves in the picture and apply the warnings, teachings, and councils to our personal lives. Then

the application to us, as a church, will take care of itself. Let us carefully read the vision as it is recorded in *Early Writings*, 269–272:

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"I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.

"Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.

"As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of

light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hasten to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight testimony. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.

"I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony

upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.

“Said the angel, ‘List ye!’ Soon I heard a voice like many musical instruments all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard, seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy. It thrilled through my whole being. Said the angel, ‘Look ye!’ My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet, their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy.

“The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Evil angels still pressed around them, but could have no power over them.

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold

upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’

“Great power was with these chosen ones. Said the angel, ‘Look ye!’ My attention was turned to the wicked, or unbelievers. They were all astir. The zeal and power with the people of God had aroused and enraged them. Confusion, confusion, was on every side. I saw measures taken against the company who had the light and power of God. Darkness thickened around them; yet, they stood firm, approved of God, and trusting in Him. I saw them perplexed; next I heard them crying unto God earnestly. Day and night their cry ceased not: ‘Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify Thy name, make a way of escape for Thy people! Deliver us from the heathen around about us. They have appointed us unto death; but Thine arm can bring salvation.’ These are all the words which I can bring to mind. All seemed to have a deep sense of their unworthiness and manifested entire submission to the will of God; yet, like Jacob, every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance.”

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Whenever an issue in the church comes up and people start taking sides, you hear some asking if this could be the shaking Sister White talked about, while others say this is not what she meant. I would like us to consider the shaking in a deeper, more personal and spiritual perspective.

In the first two sentences of the vision, it is apparent that Sister White is not talking about issues of theology or doctrine but issues of faith and internal struggle: “I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expres-

sive of their internal struggle.” True, there are outward signs of this faith and internal struggle, but that is just “expressive of their internal struggle.”

In the second paragraph, we are shown the cause of this struggle: “Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him.” Here, we see the battle between light and darkness. Those people who were not engulfed in darkness were “agonizing and pleading,” but those who “seemed indifferent and careless” were left so the angels could help those who were earnest and praying.

Now, let us look at what “those in darkness” means:

As we know, the whole world is in darkness because worldly people do not know what truth and righteousness is. The “careless and indifferent” ones are professed believers, who are also in the same boat with the worldlings who are in darkness, because they are as unconcerned about spiritual issues as those in the world.

On the other hand, the earnest, pleading ones see these issues in their true importance and perseveringly call on God for help. To me, one of the most fearful and sad parts of this vision is when Mrs. White saw that the “angels left those who made no effort to help themselves,” and she “lost sight of them.”

Observing from the outside, she did not understand what this fearful struggle was about. The angel’s answer to this question reveals the real cause of the shaking: “I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans.”

In the testimony to the Laodiceans, the issue is sin, blindness, and ignorance; they are blind and ignorant of their sinful condition. However, there are a few

faithful servants of the Lord, who are preaching the straight testimony. If we honestly look at our spiritual condition with discernment from the Holy Spirit, we can see that we have neglected to heed the testimony of the True Witness.

The Lord, in His great mercy and love for us, continues trying to arouse us to see our lost condition. He allows situations and conditions around us to unsettle our security. That security can be regarding our own righteousness by our thinking, “I believe the true doctrines of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and attend church,” or “the Lord has blessed me with material possessions” — making us feel secure against unexpected trouble or hard times, as did the rich fool in Luke 12:16–21.

The Holy Spirit impresses upon those who are shaken the fact of their Laodicean condition — pointing out sin that needs to be repented of, and what a sanctified life should be: “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:8.

At this point, Satan works with extraordinary effort and power to pull them back into the darkness, by promising worldly success, or keeping them busy making a good living, or with making ends meet, or just having fun — anything that keeps their eyes off of God. As nothing seems to change, the drama of the shaking is soon forgotten, and things go back to business as usual. These, who do not believe and apply the testimony

humbly and completely repented of their worldliness. Having submitted to the Holy Spirit’s convictions, light fills their minds, and they see the darkness. They realize that it was because of their sins that the light of God was shut away from them. As they long for more light, Satan tries to discourage them by insinuating doubts and sending temptations from within and without, which causes their “struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance.” From time-to-time there is a little respite, and joy over victories gained; but then, it is back to the battle, which is not against flesh and blood. See Ephesians 6:12.

As time goes on, they keep gaining victories over temptations, wondering how much longer this will go on. Then comes another shaking event, confirming their conviction of the nearness of the end, which gives them strength to continue their preparation so that they will not be left out at the time of the latter rain.

This type of shaking has been happening all around us for quite a while now. Nonetheless, waiting is also a part of the shaking, for it tests us to see if we just want to go to heaven, or if we are truly hungering and thirsting for the righteousness, purity, and holiness of heaven. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14.

Let us not be among those whom Sister White did not see anymore because the darkness enclosed them. If you will be willing to accept the straight testimony of the True Witness and let the Holy Spirit do a complete work in you, then you can be one of those she saw in the vision, who were “clothed with an armor,” and who “obtained the victory.” Look deep into your heart. Do not be deceived by the false prophets’ messages of peace and safety, for “sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3. ✨

*If we honestly look at our spiritual condition with discernment from the Holy Spirit, we can see that we have neglected to heed the testimony of the True Witness.*

How can the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts directly through church and world events? — I am sure every reader can recall at least one time when some world event — like the Columbine shootings or September 11 — caused them to think that the end of things cannot be far off. For others, it may have been when their local church switched to a celebration style of worship, or when they saw how our young people and even adult church members celebrated New Year’s Eve 2000, desecrating the Lord’s holy day with unbelievable profanity.

When world, church, or personal events cause a “shaking” in our hearts, it causes us to reexamine just why we believe what we profess to believe. The Holy Spirit is also there with the question, “Are you ready for judgment?” The person who is ready will not be shaken by these types of events because he is living in expectation of these things, listening to the Holy Spirit, afflicting his soul, and discerning the times.

of the True Witness, are soon enshrouded by darkness once again.

Sometime later another event takes place that shakes them; however, because they do not see that much has changed from the last time they were shaken, they think, Why get all up-in-arms again when nobody really knows when Jesus will come anyway? “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” 2 Peter 3:3–4. They continue doing their normal, religious church activities and get upset at those who keep reminding them of the shortness of time and stressing their need to prepare for the judgment.

Others, however, have seen the same events and felt the Holy Spirit impressing them of their need to be ready. As the True Witness has opened to them their Laodicean condition, they have



### Untraditional Families Complicate Terror Fund Distribution

**News Item:** “From among the roughly 3,000 victims of Sept. 11, at least one had two wives, some were married but had children out of wedlock, while many were divorced and remarried. Others, heterosexual and gay, lived with long-term partners now in legal limbo.

“Attorney Bill Mauk of Boise is helping coordinate hundreds of families’ requests for legal aid. . . . ‘The stereotype of a traditional family with a surviving spouse and a couple of kids is probably the exception rather than the rule,’ he said.

“That multiplicity of family forms, including domestic partnerships, is complicating the task of Kenneth Feinberg, who oversees the Federal Victim Compensation Fund and is working on criteria for handling claims.

“ ‘I am struck, in meeting with families, by the concept of the extended nuclear family—children by multiple spouses, aunts and uncles who were pivotal to the victims’ lives,’ Feinberg said in a telephone interview.” *The News Tribune*, February 17, 2002.

**End-Time Perspective:** This piece of news goes back some months, but is worthy of reading. What a sad day for America! This report is not just a reminder of the state of our society but is also a lesson that if we obey God’s commandments we are saved from consequences that we do not know even exist.

The reported complication to fund distribution to the victims of 9-11 illustrates the confusion and

chaotic condition our society is experiencing. The “concept of the extended family” sounds sophisticated and up-to-date, but, in reality, the benefits to children and society are, at best, inferior when the two most important people that shape our self-identity—a male father and a female mother—are largely missing. This forces children to look elsewhere to fill the need and void in their lives.

It is also interesting to notice, when reading the whole article, how this situation is accepted as good and normal—perfectly showing the truth of the “frog in the pan on the stove” analogy.

The only way we can keep from accepting the confusion around us, and eventually assimilating into it, is by daily growing in righteousness and overcoming the temptations that come from our carnal nature. “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” James 1:14. We need to be drawing ever closer to the light, submitting to God and resisting the devil (see James 4:7) in order to dispel the darkness around us.

### Progression or Regression?

**News Item:** The following two paragraphs are taken from two letters that were written by pastors in the South Pacific Division to the secretary of the division concerning the ban last year of Desmond Ford from pulpits in Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are very revealing:

#1) “ ‘I think a major problem in this country is that many of our administrators do not realise that the theological pendulum has swung away from the right wing position of those who have influenced this decision. So much so, that they do not know that the Church today believes essentially the same as Des on those very contentious issues for which he was dismissed! This is confirmed, for example, by Fritz Guy in his book *Thinking Theologically*, (Andrews University Press, 1999)

page 90: “Subsequent Adventist thinking in North America seems to have moved closer to his [Ford’s] position and further away from that of those who dismissed him.” ’ ’ ’

#2) “ ‘I am aware that there will be a chorus of holy horror from the heavy conservatives who do not really understand the gospel. Some of them have a frightening capacity for vilification and condemnation which you and I have sadly witnessed through the years. But can we honestly allow such a Pharisaical stance to govern our actions? I think not.’ ” *The Remnant Herald*, April 2002.

**End-Time Perspective:** The good news is that the administration of the division did not allow Dr. Ford to speak in our churches. The revealing statement is, “The Church today believes essentially the same as Des on those very contentious issues for which he was dismissed” as a pastor. The writer observes that this change did not happen only in the South Pacific Division, but also in the North American Division.

Over the years, we have been watching the devastating results of the “new theology” in our churches, while we are told by those that espouse this theology that it is the answer to our “felt” needs. The word “felt” actually puts it very well, for it tries to make people “feel” good about themselves without repenting, by telling them that God “feels” good about them.

The second writer states, “I am aware that there will be a chorus of holy horror from the heavy conservatives who do not really understand the gospel.” From looking at Scripture, it seems that Jesus and the disciples would be included in the “heavy conservatives” group because according to Matthew 3:2; 4:23; 9:13, 35; Mark 1:14–15; 6:12; and Luke 5:32, we notice that they all preached repentance as a condition to enter the kingdom—and they were *the* preachers of the gospel of the kingdom. ✨



# The Shut Door

*Ron Spear*

**A**s we seek to understand the three angels' messages and their application to the final generation, let us carefully and prayerfully review the experience of the Millerite movement, its relationship to the first angel's message, and the great disappointment of October 22, 1844.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:6-7.

The everlasting gospel calls us to experience victory in Christ over all sin. This experience can be ours through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit only if we seek for it with all of our heart.

## **The Shut Door and the Great Disappointment of 1844**

Historians tell us there were at least 50,000 believers in the Millerite movement. After October 22, 1844, only a handful of faithful souls stood fast. It was this small group that became the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They had the experience of the first angel's message. Let us review the prophet's explanation of the shut door:

"There was a shut door in Noah's day. There was at that time a withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the sinful race that perished in the waters of the Flood. God Himself gave the shut-door message to Noah:

"My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years' (Genesis 6:3).

"There was a shut door in the days of Abraham. Mercy ceased to

plead with the inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot, with his wife and two daughters, were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven.

"There was a shut door in Christ's day. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, 'Your house is left unto you desolate' (Matthew 23:38).

"Looking down the stream of time to the last days, the same infinite power proclaimed through John:

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth' (Revelation 3:7).

"I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those



who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

“Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach. And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. These two classes are brought to view in the vision—those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 63–64. For further study, see *A Word to the Little Flock*, 14; *Early Writings*, 13–15, 100–101; *Ellen White and Her Critics*, 589; *Medical Ministry*, 89.

“The churches that refused to receive the first angel’s message, rejected light from Heaven. That message was sent in mercy to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding, and to seek a preparation to meet their Lord. God has ever required His people to remain separate from the world, that they might not be allured from their allegiance to Him.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 230–231.

### **Christ Cleanses the Temple**

“The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again

and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 406.

The church had rejected Christ after the first cleansing of the temple; yet, before His crucifixion, there was a second cleansing. These two cleansings of the temple have a parallel in the Second Advent movement. When the second angel’s message was given in 1844, it paralleled the first cleansing of the temple. In the end of time, when the latter rain produces the loud cry at the end of the Advent movement and Revelation 18:1–5 is fulfilled, the second cleansing will find its parallel.

We must remember that in 1844, the Protestant churches fell because they rejected the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 and the first angel’s

oppose. But their ignorance is not such as God will excuse, for He has given them light, and they reject it.” *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 408; see also *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 63–64, 83–84.

Please note: Those who had been exposed to the first angel’s message and rejected the experience went out in darkness. The door was forever shut. They went beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit. This same shut-door principle was experienced by the people in Noah’s day, in Abraham’s day, and in Christ’s day.

“It was to separate the church of Christ from the corrupting influence of the world that the first angel’s message was given. But with the multitude, even of professed Christians, the ties which bound them to earth were stronger than the attractions heavenward.

*Those who had been exposed to the first angel’s message and rejected the experience went out in darkness. The door was forever shut.*

message. At the time of the second and final cleansing of the temple, those who reject the sanctuary message and the first angel’s message will not comprehend the second and third angels’ messages, and they will go out in darkness. This will be the second shut-door experience.

“From Christ, the Light of the world, shone forth the clear, bright beams of His Father’s glory. Yet, the Jews comprehended it not.

“Thus it is in our day. The light of truth is shining upon us clearly as it shone upon the Jewish people, but the hearts of men are as hard and unimpressible as in the days of Christ. . . . Many who claim to be standing in the light are in darkness and know it not. They have so enshrouded themselves in unbelief that they call darkness light, and light darkness. They are ignorant of that which they condemn and

They chose to listen to the voice of worldly wisdom, and turned away from the heart-searching message of truth. . . .

“Those who perished in the waters of the flood had an opportunity to escape. All were urged to find refuge in the ark; but the multitudes refused to heed the warning. So when the first angel’s message was given, all who heard were invited to receive it, and share the blessing to follow its acceptance; but many scorned and rejected the call. One turned to his farm, another to his merchandise, and they cared for none of these things. Inspiration declares that when the antediluvians rejected Noah’s words, the Spirit of God ceased to strive with them. So, when men now despise the warnings which God in mercy sends them, His Spirit after a time ceases to arouse conviction in their hearts.

God gives light to be cherished and obeyed, not to be despised and rejected. The light which He sends becomes darkness to those who disregard it. When the Spirit of God ceases to impress the truth upon the hearts of men, all hearing is vain, and all preaching also is vain." *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 231–232.

### Messages to be Repeated

The three angels' messages are again before us. They are to be repeated to test the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in this final generation:

*Like those in 1844 who rejected the everlasting gospel, those in our day who reject the first angel's message and its experience will go out in darkness, beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit.*

"The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old. The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other. The Old Testament presents lessons from the lips of Christ, and these lessons have not lost their force in any particular.

"The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to

give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be." *Selected Messages*, book 2, 104–105.

"The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and

comprehend will be taxed to the utmost." *Evangelism*, 196.

### The Shut Door Repeated in the Final Generation

As the first angel's message experience—the everlasting gospel—burned out the worldliness of God's people in 1844, so in this very end time that same experience will come to the Seventh-day Adventist people to burn out their worldliness. Like those in 1844 who rejected the everlasting gospel, those in our day who reject the first angel's message and its experience will go out in darkness, beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit. Tragically, the door will shut for the majority of Seventh-day Adventists.

Those who reject the first angel's message will not comprehend nor experience the three angels' messages. Because they remain in the lukewarm Laodicean condition, and they know not that they are spiritually blind, they will be spewed out of the mouth of God, to eternal darkness. See

*Testimonies*, vol. 6, 408. They are also represented by the tares, which will be separated from the purified wheat.

"The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares. Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. 'They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' Malachi 3:17. Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 234–235.

"Already preparations are advancing, and movements are in progress, which will result in making an image to the beast. Events will be brought about in the earth's history that will fulfill the predictions of prophecy for these last days. . . .

"This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 976.

### The Condition of Salvation

The first angel's message can only be understood when we see the angels as symbols of a people with an experience. What is that experience?—It is victory over all sin in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 455–456; *ibid.*, vol. 6, 17–18; *Selected Messages*, book 2, 387.

The everlasting gospel is invested in the seeker for truth, when in their zeal they understand that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, along with the angels, cooperate to provide the power to overcome all temptation and sin. The true believers will be instructed to prepare for the judgment and to worship God in holiness, perfecting a character that can be trusted for eternity. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, 330-333.

Inspiration provides the condition, the requirements, and the experience for salvation in the first angel's message:

"How hard it is for man to walk humbly with God, to believe His Word and accept His plans. Satan's propositions appear to present great advantages, but they end in ruin. Over and over again men have found out by experience the result of refusing to walk in the path of obedience. Will not others gain wisdom from their experience? Let us think of the experience of our first parents and be afraid of any plans that are not based on obedience to God's will.

"When will men learn that God is God, not man, and that He does not change. Every calamity, every death, is a witness to the power of evil and to the truth of the living God. The Word of God is life, and it will abide forever. Through all eternity it will stand fast. How can man, knowing what God is and what He has done, choose Satan's way instead of God's way? There is only one path to Paradise restored—the path of obedience." *The Upward Look*, 318.

### Encouraging Promises

Listen to these precious promises:

"If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ—the yoke of obedience and service—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed,

all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved." *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 101.

"Open the windows of the soul heavenward, and let the light of the Sun of Righteousness in. Do not complain. Do not mourn and weep. Do not look on the dark side. Let the peace of God reign in your soul. Then you will have strength to bear all your sufferings, and you will rejoice that you have grace to endure. Praise the Lord, talk of His goodness, tell of His power. Sweeten the atmosphere which surrounds your soul." *Selected Messages*, book 2, 266-267.

*"From Christ is flowing the living stream of salvation. . . .  
When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change,  
wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook."*

"Turn to the Lord, ye prisoners of hope. Seek strength from God, the living God. Show an unwavering, humble faith in His power and His willingness to save. From Christ is flowing the living stream of salvation. He is the Fountain of life, the Source of all power. When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He will do this for the glory of His name." *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 12.

"Let the gospel message ring through our churches, summoning them to universal action. Let the members of the church have increased faith, gaining zeal from their unseen, heavenly allies, from a knowledge of their exhaustless resources, from the greatness of the enterprise in which they are engaged, and from the power of their Leader. Those who place themselves under God's control, to be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events or-

ained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotency, pointing to what they cannot do. Putting on the armor of Heaven, they will go forth to the warfare, willing to do and dare for God, knowing that His omnipotence will supply their need." *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 14.

"That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, 'This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.' There is not a negative in that law, although it

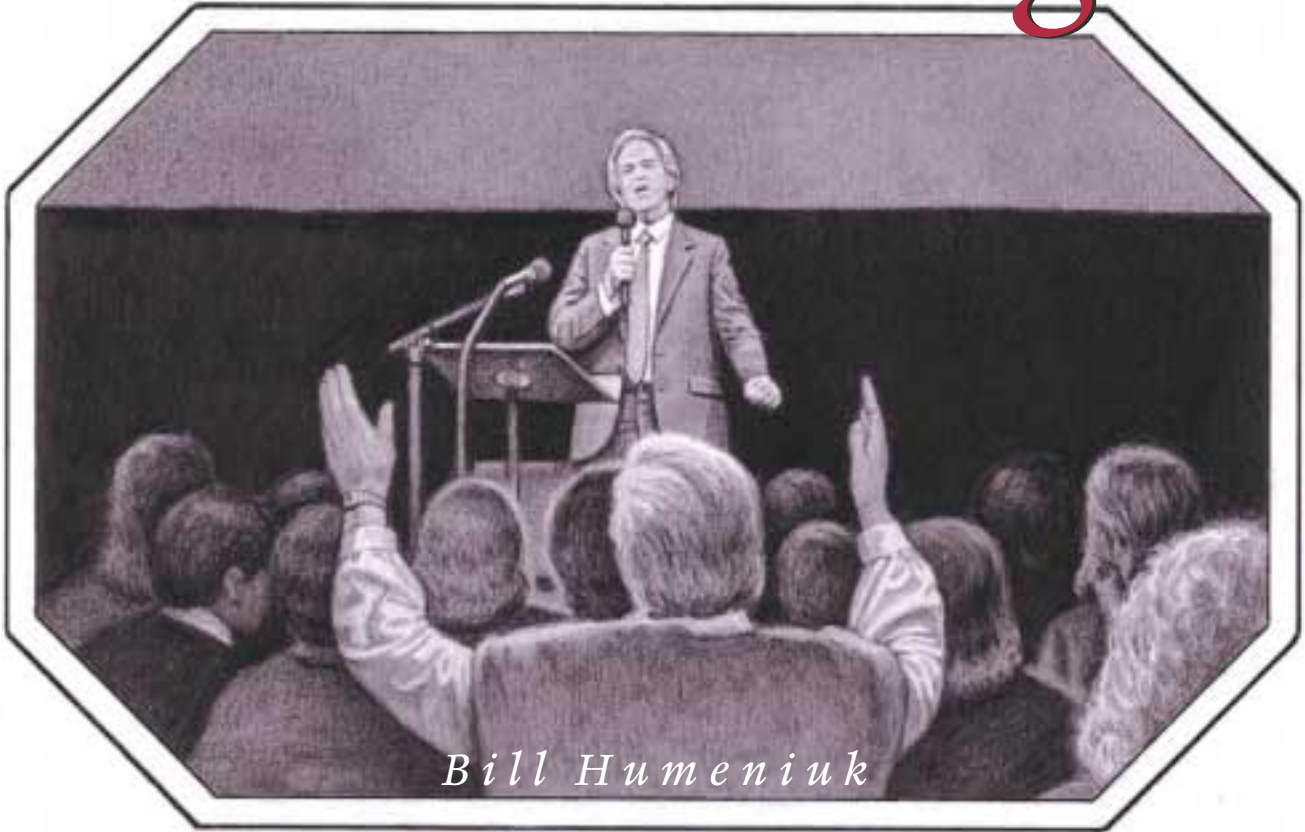
may appear thus. It is DO and Live." *God's Amazing Grace*, 134.

The experience of the first angel's message will provide the seeker for truth the understanding of the second and third angels' messages, and the power to respond to every life situation like Jesus did. I leave the reader with these inspired words of encouragement:

"Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. By prayer, by the study of His Word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go." *The Ministry of Healing*, 182.

Let us grasp these powerful promises of God with the hand of faith. May we have a daily, living experience that will prepare us to accept and proclaim the three angels' messages with power. ✨

# Smooth Things



*Bill Humeniuk*

**T**he recent trip to Africa was an awesome eye opener for our group, who worked among the poor and needy people in Kenya and Ghana. The poverty and hardships there alerted me personally to the life of ease and smooth ways that typical Americans enjoy – and even we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, take for granted and abuse.

I think of Christ's admonition to come after Me, deny yourself, take up thy cross, and follow Me. How many of us, whether in large churches or in tiny home churches, recognize the need, admonition, and warning of the True Witness as He addresses His people in Luke 9:23 and also in Revelation 3:14–20?

A crisis beyond description is approaching. *Prophets and Kings*, 537, says, "The world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis." We have been told, "A storm is arising that will *wrench and test* the spiritual foundation of everyone to the utmost." *Testimonies*,

vol. 5, 129. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) And in *Prophets and Kings*, 626, we read, "Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the Word of God and striving to conform their lives to its precepts." Yet, how many of us are giving heed to these warnings?

How long is the ministry in our pulpits going to continue to preach smooth, spiritual "mush" in preparation for the "stupendous crisis"? What earnestness do our ministers and laity express by their life of ease in preparation for this *final hour*? I found in Africa much more earnestness and concern than I find in America; and yet, the privileges, knowledge, and opportunities are much less there than here – due to the lack of Bibles, Spirit of Prophecy books, and other materials.

## Need for a Startling Message

The following passage from the servant of the Lord speaks to my heart and alerts me to my most urgent need; I trust it will speak to your heart also: "The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a *startling* denunciation, and is applicable to the *people of God* at the *present time*. . . . The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at *ease*, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments. . . . The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the *True Witness* who speaks, and His testimony must be correct." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 252–253.

"Many inquire: Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the *Testimonies* continually charge us with backsliding and with grievous sins? We love the truth; we are prospering." *Ibid.*, 254.

Jesus sees the true condition of the heart. He sees how deplorable we are in the light of the cross. He also sees that “*stupidity* [in a stupor; stupefied] in this watching time is sealing the senses of God’s people as to the signs of the times.” *Ibid.*, 255–256.

September 11 came and went—over six months ago now. I saw a mild awakening among our people then, but not today. Many are at ease again and seeking worldliness, prosperity, and peace. Remember, “It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin.” *Ibid.*, 257. What love, what pleading is shown as God continues to delay His coming, waiting, “not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance”! 2 Peter 3:9.

Are you and I heeding the message of the True Witness as He continues pleading, waiting, and knocking? What about our ministry—our pulpits, our churches—are we pleading with our people who are looking only for smooth messages?

“Ministers who are preaching present truth should not neglect the *solemn message* to the Laodiceans. The testimony of the True Witness is *not* a smooth message. . . . The True Witness declares that when you suppose you are really in a good condition of prosperity you are *in need of everything*.” *Ibid.*

### Following Moses or Aaron?

Study Exodus, chapter 32, and compare the ministries of Moses and Aaron. While Moses was on Mount Sinai communing with God for the special work of preparing God’s people for advancing to the promised land, the people wanted a “smooth message” regarding other gods, and they requested that Aaron present this to them.

Notice in verse two that Aaron offered no resistance; he did not stand *firm* to his commitment and calling from the Lord. He simply gave in and gave them a “smooth message”—to remove their golden earrings—then he formed the golden calf, and called it a “feast to

the LORD.” Verse 5. Then we see that the people reacted in celebration: they ate, drank, rose up to play, and began to sing and dance around the calf (see verses 6, 18–19), instead of listening to the still, small voice of the Lord (see 1 Kings 19:12).

Now, look at Moses and his reaction; he stood *firm* and unmoved by anything the people wanted. In verse 20, we see that Moses destroyed the golden calf, and turned to Aaron, accusing him of the *great sin* of providing a “smooth message.” He then appealed to the people to *stand with the Lord* and *consecrate* themselves to Him. See verses 26, 29.

*“It is in the time of conflict that the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then that the standard-bearers need to be firm and let their true position be known.”*

Furthermore, “God will not be trifled with. It is in the time of conflict that the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then that the standard-bearers need to be *firm* and let their *true* position be known. . . . *Shirkers* can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might into the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will.” *Ibid.*, 272.

### Speak Unto Us Smooth Things

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.” Amos 6:1. God is calling. It is time for action, time to rise off our padded seats! Let us not be as Israel, who asked the prophets, “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.” Isaiah 30:10. When we preach smooth things and do not warn our people, we are preaching deceits.

“Some who occupy the position of watchmen to warn the people of danger have given up their watch and *recline at ease*. They are unfaith-

ful sentinels. . . . To them everything seems to be going well, and they see no necessity of raising the *faithful, trumpet notes of warning* which they hear borne by the plain testimonies. . . . They say in heart, if not in words: ‘This is all uncalled for. It is *too severe, too harsh*. These men are unnecessarily disturbed and excited, and seem unwilling to give us any rest or quietude. . . . Why don’t they prophesy smooth things, and cry: Peace, peace? Then everything would move on smoothly.’

“These are the true feelings of many of *our people*. And Satan exults at his success in controlling the minds of so many who profess

to be Christians. He has deceived them, benumbed their sensibilities, and *planted his hellish banner right in their midst*, and they are so completely deceived that they know not that it is he.” *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 440.

What a powerful warning to our watchmen and our people! My dear people, it is time to awake, time for a decided reformation, for true repentance. It is time to live a sanctified life.

“Those who take God at His word, and obey His commandments with the whole heart, will be blessed. He will be their shield of protection. But the Lord will not be trifled with. Distrust, disobedience, alienation from God’s will and way, will place the sinner in a position where the Lord cannot give him His divine favor.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 411.

God has pulled out all the stops to save His people. It will not be much longer. God will not be trifled with! The end is upon us. Will you seriously and solemnly accept His admonition and correc-

tion so that you can become transformed? He earnestly desires to stir our hearts and to save us. He wants to save us from our Laodicean, lethargic, and indifferent condition, and is pleading with and waiting for His people.

Listen to the words of the Holy Spirit through His servant: "This mighty angel comes bearing no soft, smooth message, but words that are calculated to *stir the hearts* of men [and women] to their very depths. . . . Are we indeed as the human agencies, to cooperate with the divine instrumentalities in sounding the message of this mighty angel who is to lighten the

control us. Oh, please, my Jesus, protect our people, and awaken our people in this final hour. Protect us from every wind of doctrine that is blowing—and especially from the smooth, spiritual "mush" that we so frequently hear from the pulpits, which puts us to sleep in carnal security. That is what the Spirit addresses through our prophetess in the next quotation:

"The ministers preach smooth things to suit carnal professors. They dare not preach *Jesus and the cutting truths of the Bible*; for if they should, these carnal professors would not remain in the church.

*If we do not heed the message of the three angels . . . we will be leavened with the prevailing apostasy, and another spirit will control us.*

earth with his glory? . . . Those who would preserve their allegiance to God, who are active in His service, become *the mark of every shaft and weapon of hell*. If those who have had great light have not corresponding faith and obedience they soon become leavened with the prevailing apostasy; another spirit controls them. While they have been exalted to heaven in point of opportunities and privileges, they are in a *worse condition* than the most zealous advocates of error. . . . Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth. . . . We have no time to confer with flesh and blood." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1015–1017.

### **Need for the Straight Testimony**

If we do not heed the message of the three angels, brightened with the message of the fourth, we will be leavened with the prevailing apostasy, and another spirit will

But as many of them are wealthy, they must be retained, although *they are no more fit to be there than Satan and his angels*. This is just as Satan would have it. . . . Those who followed Him [Jesus] had to renounce the world. These smooth things originated with Satan and his angels. They formed the plan, and nominal professors carried it out. Pleasing fables were taught and readily received, and hypocrites and open sinners united with the church. If the truth had been *preached in its purity*, it would soon have shut out this class. But there was no difference between the professed followers of Christ and the world. . . .

"Jesus and all the heavenly host looked with disgust upon the scene; yet *God had a message for the church* that was sacred and important. *If received*, it would make a *thorough reformation in the church*, *revive the living testimony* that would *purge out hypocrites and sinners*, and *bring the church again into favor with God*." *Early Writings*, 228.

I have a deep, deep fear for our beloved church because of what the Spirit revealed to His servant: "I saw that individuals would *rise up* against the plain testimonies. It does not suit their natural feelings. They would choose to have *smooth things* spoken unto them, and have peace cried in their ears. I view the church in a more dangerous condition than they ever have been. Experimental religion is known but by a few. The *shaking* must soon take place to *purify the church*." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 284.

Do you sense the Lord of hosts speaking to your own soul? God is speaking to us: Do not follow feelings or eat smooth, spiritual "mush." Let us hasten to join God in purifying the church.

The smooth things, which originated with Satan, must be replaced by the truth, preached in its purity, which will work reformation, and hasten the end and the coming of our Saviour.

My prayer is that all of God's people will stand up, accept the message of the True Witness, open the door, and sup with our Lord while the door of mercy is open. Let us get serious in this *last hour!*

And now, God is speaking to those who represent Him and speak to God's people from the pulpit; I trust they, too, will respond to God: "God is correcting, and proving, and purifying His people. Stand out of the way that His work be not hindered. He will not accept a smooth testimony. Ministers must cry aloud, and spare not." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 216.

My dear people—leaders and ministers: Where do we stand today? Are we playing with God and celebrating at the very borders of eternity? Are we, like Aaron—seeking the approbation of men, or like Moses—seeking the approbation of God? May all of us fully commit ourselves to shun the popular, smooth message. Let us accept and preach the pointed message that will help prepare a people for Christ's soon coming. ✨



Enclosed is my check to cover my renewal to your journal *Our Firm Foundation*, which is a wonderful blessing to me. Please use the remaining funds for a second subscription for a needy person.

HL, North Carolina

My husband found a job, and he is enjoying working for a regular company, which is not at all like the one before. Thank you so very much for your prayers and your words of encouragement.

CC, Texas

I have read the books that you sent to me. Thank you so much.

The truths and history are so fascinating and things I have always wondered about. *The Great Controversy, Final Conflict, Finding Peace Within*—I'm so glad for the truths they contain.

I would like to know more about Mrs. Ellen G. White, the author of these books. Who is this lady, who has brought forth such tremendous history and truths? I would appreciate if you could send me all you can about this lady. She must be really something else, to author these books.

KW, Utah

I praise God for your ministry—and others as well—and encourage you to continue to take your stand on the side of truth, because in the end truth is the only thing that will stand even if it has to stand alone. It warms my heart to know that every SDA has not bowed their knees to Baal. I sit every Sabbath at home and watch 3ABN broadcast because I just cannot bring myself into harmony with this “new image” that the SDA church has adopted in casual dress, watering down of the

gospel, turning to the world for the health message, making humor of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the confusion and lack of reverence. I live in — — — and have visited from church to church in the area, and it seems all are infected to some degree. I love our church and have been a member since 1980, thus have seen the plunge it has undertaken, and my heart aches. I've tried talking to some of the members about the 1888 message and *Our Firm Foundation*, and the need for returning to the old paths, but only make enemies in doing so. When I go to church, I am alienated. I feel more alone in church than I do at home alone watching 3ABN each Sabbath.

Anyway, I believe in what your ministry is about—“The Truth” according to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Keep up the good work and may God continue to bless you and keep you until the end of all things is come.

SS, North Carolina

## From Overseas

I am 24 years old, a full-time missionary to our Muslim brothers and to the church.

In 1997, I was taking theology at Mountain View College. But hearing the calling of God, I gave up my study and accepted the challenge.

Thinking to be used by God to revive the church, I spend almost all my night and spare time to scrutinize the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the 1888 message.

A friend shared some of your books with me. I'm totally convicted with the truth you have presented, which so related to my personal study. I believe you have greater light about the truth for this time.

Currently, I'm handling revival meetings from church to church during mid-week, vesper and AY programs while preparing for “revival and reformation” seminars and lectures. I really need your publications

and your support to realize my independent ministry.

AC, Philippines

I am a new interest of the Sabbathkeeping church. I have read several articles about the Sabbath and found out that it is not authorized by the Bible for us to keep Sunday instead of the real Sabbath authorized by the Bible itself.

As an interest to your Sabbathkeeping church, I am being driven by the Bible to study more about the truth after reading the book *Sunday Is Coming!* Many of my friends and myself are convinced that “Sunday is coming”!

Please help my friends and myself with more books to read. The books could include pamphlets, leaflets, and many more that you think will help in my Christian walk.

LY, New Guinea

On behalf of the — — church, I request you kindly send to us reading materials. We have set up a library under the church. Because most of our congregation are disabled and destitute, they cannot afford to buy their own books. Without Adventist books and complete Bibles our church is incomplete because Holy Bibles and other religious books are the working tools of a Christian. We need assistance in our desire to proclaim God's Word to people in this area.

JJ, Ghana

I wish to acknowledge receipt of assorted literature which you sent to me recently. The literature was widely distributed in two districts here in Zambia.

This time I wish to increase my outreach circulation to two other districts from the current two, and therefore request for supply of more literature to enable me to do this. There is no one else in this province who distributes truth-filled literature. All literature is distributed free, and there is overwhelming demand for them.

EM, Zambia

# Feeling Sick?

[ sick and tired ]

# No Energy?

[ maybe just a little wasted ]

# Taking those Pills just to keep on Going?

[ no, to cover up the side effects of my *other prescriptions* ]

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The Cleansing Way Lifestyle Missionary Institute is located in the beautiful countryside of Western Washington, not far from Eatonville, about one hour south of SeaTac International Airport.

With over 25 years of experience, our live-in, lifestyle-change seminar can help you or someone you know combat disease or illness, make positive lifestyle changes, and reap lasting, long-term health benefits.

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