



Our Firm Foundation

The Cowardice of the Laity

Volume 17, Number 12

December 2002

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary



Why the Delay?

In my 50 years of preaching, I have heard many Seventh-day Adventists inquire, “Why is the church so impotent? Why has there been such a long delay in the coming of the latter rain and the return of Jesus?” These are questions that demand answers. We will look at some inspired Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy statements that will answer these important questions.

Does God have requirements—conditions—in the fulfillment of His most gracious promises? He has promised the early and the latter rain to complete the great controversy. The latter rain must fall—and then the loud cry will begin. What does God require of His remnant people in this important crisis hour of the world and the church?—Here is God’s answer:

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48.

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:16.

“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 69.

“Those who receive the seal of the living God . . . must reflect the image of Jesus fully.” *Early Writings*, 71.

“The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. . . . All who receive the seal must be without spot before God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 216.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to

cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” *Ibid.*, 214.

How many Seventh-day Adventists are now willing to accept these conditions—requirements—for translation? *It is time long overdue to think seriously.* The latter rain will not come to any leader, pastor, or layman until the heart is clean and every defect of character has been changed by the help of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Should not, then, the work of overcoming sin, lust, anger, and resentments be the first work of every Seventh-day Adventist? Let us remember, Jesus is our Example in overcoming. We must reflect His character to the world. Again, we turn to Inspiration:

“Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.” *The Great Controversy*, 623.

“God requires perfection of His children.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 315.

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.” *Early Writings*, 71.

Nothing small about this program! Is the church meeting this condition?—No; and that is why we have not received, as yet, the latter rain. After God purges out the tares—those who will not prepare for the latter rain—then, upon the prepared ones, it will come in its fullness. May God help you and me to be among that holy company!

“As was Enoch’s must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord’s second coming.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 331.

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.” *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 187.

We believe there is nothing in this universe that God and Jesus desire more than to see their remnant people reflect the character of Jesus, who came to show us the Father. They have waited more than 100 years for our obedience. This is our test—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. See *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1752.

Joshua and the Israelites were commanded by God to march around the city of Jericho 13 times and then blow the trumpets. If they had only gone around 12 times and blown the trumpets, the walls of Jericho would not have fallen. Joshua obeyed; the walls fell.

May God’s faithful, loyal, and obedient pastors, leaders, and laity now be willing to be made willing to obey in every detail, without a single compromise. The walls of Satan’s stronghold will fall, the latter rain will come, the loud cry will be given, and the obedient Seventh-day Adventists will be ready and waiting for the return of their Saviour.

Let us settle it then; God will not, *cannot* take sin into heaven. One sinner—without the character of Christ—would start another revolution. Lucifer began with 10 percent rebellion and started the war in heaven. God requires 100 percent—a perfect character. ✪



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.

—Editors

Executive Editor: Ron Spear
 Administrative Editor: Bill Humeniuk
 Managing Editor: Harvey Steck
 Layout & Design: Kevin H. Patterson

Our Firm Foundation is a monthly publication of:



Hope International
 P.O. Box 940
 Eatonville, WA 98328 USA

Phone: (360) 832-6602
 Mon–Thurs: 8:30am–5:30pm
 Fri: 8:30am–12:30pm Pacific Time

Fax: (360) 832-3720
Email: office@hopeint.org
Web: <http://www.hopeint.org>

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4

The Cowardice of the Laity

Colin Standish

Will we blindly follow wherever we are led, or will we stand for principle though the heavens fall?

9

Satan's Final Effort to Defeat the Advent Movement

Ron Spear

What lessons can we learn from Israel's apostasy at the Jordan?

13

Simple Means

Bill Humeniuk

What methods will God use to finish proclaiming the gospel?

16

Lamps Without Oil

Ellen G. White

"Are you laborers together with God? or do you place your own interpretation upon the Word?"

20

Remembering Y2K

Ralph Larson

Some warning messages are not accurate or true; others must be taken very seriously.

24

Wait No Longer

John Korponay

Now is the day to prepare for Satan's overwhelming delusion that is about to unfold before us.

28

The Christian's Privilege

Ellen G. White

Are you building your house upon the eternal Rock?

departments

Newswatch	18
Defending the Faith	23
2002 Index of Articles	30
Letters to the Editor	31



The Cowardice of the Laity

Colin Standish

I have recently returned from ministering in Brazil. The story there parallels the story that I have heard in so many countries of the world—especially those in Latin America. Earlier in the year, my brother Russell, Elder Perozo, another Hispanic pastor, and I ministered in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. In each of these three countries, we met very dedicated, truth-believing, earnest, witnessing Seventh-day Adventists who have been cast out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for righteousness' sake. We have found similar situations in the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and El Salvador.

Two Phenomena

Our church is facing a most inexplicable situation where church discipline is meted out to some of the most faithful and dedicated church members. I know that to many this will seem to be impossible; however, it is not!

A second phenomenon is also taking place: Men and women who have committed serious sins—and crimes, in many instances—are not being disfellowshipped. I am personally familiar with situations where adulterers and thieves among the Seventh-day Adventist Church's ministers have been retained in the ministry by being transferred to new church responsi-

bilities. In one case of attempted embezzlement, a pastor was transferred to a new conference and given the largest church in the conference. Later, he became the secretary of two conferences, and later still, a conference president. He had been found guilty by a court of law—as was another minister and his wife who were indicted for stealing VCRs from a large department store. This second pastor was also moved to another conference.

More than 25 years ago a Union president told me that in his Union were 17 “recovered” adulterers. These men did not lose their membership or their ordination, and they retained their active credentials to

minister elsewhere. This situation becomes very alarming in the light of the scandals that are raging through the United States and Australia where clerics of the Roman Catholic Church in America and clerics of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in Australia and Great Britain are being exposed for protecting priests who have sexually violated children in their parishes. This present scandal does not include priests who have been guilty of adultery with consenting adults. The cases in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are, likewise, not isolated cases, nor are they limited to the First-World countries.

Such allegations were rarely heard 30 or 40 years ago; however, now they are becoming increasingly common. Yet, just as there seems to be a turning away from disciplining those who have brought shame and reproach upon God's remnant church so that there is no significant discipline taken in many cases, at the same time, those who, in love for God, stand up for truth and righteousness are being disfellowshipped. How can this be in God's remnant church? How can it be that pastors and leaders and elders can be so blind to the real issues that are confronting our church?

We should not be surprised, for Jesus warned that the very sanctuaries established to glorify His name, and to be places of worship and praise to Him, are places where many faithful will be cast out and persecuted:

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

Paul also stated, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12.

Now, I am not suggesting that it has come to the place where faithful people have been killed. However, church history attests to the fact that the deeper the apostasy in a church organization becomes, the more persecution will fall upon faithful people. In our church these righteous souls cannot be silent when they see

their beloved church—the church chosen of God to take the everlasting gospel to the world—sinking deeply into the practices of the fallen churches of Christianity. Disfellowshippment of the righteous is the result, above everything else, of the laity not playing their God-given role in the church. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. We believe that the laity are alone the ones who should be leading the local church congregations while the pastors go to the regions beyond to establish new companies of believers.

Some months ago an article appeared in *Our Firm Foundation* in which I quoted many of the statements of the Lord, urging that pastors stop hovering over our churches so that they could evangelize new communities that do not know the truth.¹ The lay people

them; diminish not a word." Jeremiah 26:2.

Knowing that this would be such a difficult message to give, the Lord commanded Jeremiah not to soften down the message even in the slightest extent. When Jeremiah preached this message, here was the response:

"Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die." Verse 8.

It will be noted that, led by the priests and the false prophets, all the people sided against this faithful, righteous prophet, shouting that he was worthy to die. Immediately the ecclesiastical

Church history attests to the fact that the deeper the apostasy in a church organization becomes, the more persecution will fall upon faithful people.

were encouraged to lead out in the business and services of the church and be responsible for the witness of God's truth in the communities surrounding the local church.

The Influence of Leadership

Throughout history the laity have been subjected to the thoughts and controlling influence of priests, pastors, and church leaders. It is often the leaders and pastors today who incite the people against God's faithful. This situation is vividly described in the experience of the faithful prophet Jeremiah. God gave a very stern and urgent message through Jeremiah to the leaders and people of his day. Here is God's command:

"Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto

leaders called for the secular leaders, the princes of Israel, for it would be their responsibility to carry out the death decree. Once again, with great courage, Jeremiah repeated to the princes what he had said to the people knowing that his life could be forfeited within moments. Note his words:

"Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and

upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears." Verses 12–15.

Almost miraculously the princes decided to spare the life of this faithful prophet: "Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God." Verse 16.

One of the most amazing turnarounds came in the response of the people, the ordinary laymen

people with these words: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." 1 Kings 18:21.

It will be noted that not one of these cowardly lay people had the courage to declare that he was standing with the prophet. They all surrendered to the power of the leaders of that day. Only when God had in a miraculous way answered the prayer of the prophet—and the mighty flame from heaven ignited

the dreaded curse upon their own flesh and blood:

"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." Verse 25.

Evidence of Backsliding

As a student of history, especially church history, I have noted the repetitious nature of the history of churches. Pure churches do not contemplate the persecution of their members. Such a thought is anathema to a people who know that only God can make such ultimate decisions, for His decisions are righteous and unerring. They follow the statements of Jesus, such as:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." John 18:36.

Whenever churches engage in discipline and persecution against those who seek to warn and enlighten the people who have left their first love, it is indisputable evidence that they have wandered away from truth and have increasingly engaged in worldliness. It can be assured that those leaders who are responsible for these actions have lost the Spirit of Christ. They have forsaken the warning and example of Jesus in dealing with those over whom they have assumed leadership. The counsel of Christ is binding on all faithful leaders.

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25–28.

Once earnest Christians are disciplined for their faithful

Under false loyalty to wicked leaders, the people called for the cruel crucifixion of Jesus. It was the lay people who brought the dreaded curse upon their own flesh and blood.

of Judah. When the highest authorities present—the priests and the false prophets—declared that Jeremiah was worthy to die, they shouted with them. However, when the higher authority of the princes said he was not worthy to die, the people immediately changed sides and supported the princes. This was but one of many demonstrations where the people were afraid to speak out against the words of the leaders. Tragically, humanity is little different today. Most laity have so yielded their minds and decision-making responsibilities to men in authority that they readily support such pastors and leaders no matter how right or wrong are the issues. It will be this fear of leadership that will lead to devastating consequences for God's people at the hands of unconsecrated leaders and people.

A similar experience happened in the time of Elijah. Once again we have a courageous prophet who knew that his life could be forfeited at any moment. When the people were gathered on Mt. Carmel they dared not speak against the king nor the false prophets. Elijah gave them every opportunity, challenging this large company of lay

the water-saturated sacrifice and altar—only then did they have the "courage" to declare themselves for the prophet:

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." Verse 39.

Thus, it should not be surprising that, when the high priest and the rulers of Judah shouted for the crucifixion of our precious Lord, the masses of people shouted with them that He should be crucified.

When Pilate offered the choice between Christ and Barabbas, "the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified." Matthew 27:20–22.

If the priests and leaders had said, "Release Jesus," they would have also cried, "Release Jesus." However, under false loyalty to wicked leaders, the people called for the cruel crucifixion of Jesus. It was the lay people who brought

testimony, their witness, and their earnest burden for the souls of those who are steeped in ignorance and sin, inevitably, persecution will follow. When the opportunity arises that church leaders can utilize the arm of civil government, persecution—even to the point of imprisonment and death—will ultimately result. Whether we review the history of paganism, or of the Jewish church, or of the Roman Catholic Church, we will see that once serious breaches have led away from truth and Christian practice to false doctrines and practices, there will always be a minority who, in righteous earnestness, will seek to redress those things in the church that bring carnal security to the uninformed and unconverted members.

The True Basis of Unity

When the church has proceeded far enough in doctrinal apostasy and worldliness, then no longer can it call for the only basis of unity—that is, sanctification, which is established upon truth:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. . . . And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” John 17:17–19.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:14–15.

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” 1 Peter 1:22–23.

“There is no sanctification aside from the truth—the Word.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 432.

“Unity is the sure result of Christian perfection.” *The Sanctified Life*, 85.

When Truth Stands Against Error

The leaders of the church, as in every generation, have a God-given responsibility to be guardians of the truth and of the salvational principles of justification and sanctification. When in the course of time there is devaluation of truth and righteousness, then division is inevitable. The division does not come because righteous people are pointing out the error, worldliness, and wickedness in the church; it comes because of the angered response of those who are determined to remain content in their carnal activities. They desire to love the world and the things of the

seeing this today in our beloved church—a sure sign of spiritual decay.

As a lad and youth, I frequently heard the earnest entreaties of public evangelists urging the claims of the Seventh-day Adventist faith upon their listeners, declaring that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has “no creed but the Bible” and that “the Bible and the Bible alone is our foundation of faith and practice.” Just as the Roman Church declared that “loyalty to the church automatically makes one loyal to Christ,” so we are, by precept and example, today, urging that the most important principle of salvation is faithfulness and loyalty to God’s

Sin is excused on the false basis of so-called love, whereby fornication, adultery, theft, and many other sins, are treated with less concern. Thus, the power of God is withdrawn from the church.

world while professing to be faithful to God’s church. They will tolerate no one whom they see as intruding into their comfort zone. Inevitably, in all generations this has led to the following consequences:

1. Those who love Christ, who have a burden for the honor of God and for the souls who are being led astray by false preachers and teachers, are blamed for the divisions that arise in the church when, indeed, the division lays at the feet of those who have forsaken the commandments of God and the counsel of the Lord.

2. Soon, the Word is no longer held to be the foundation of unity. Unfaithful leaders do not recourse to Scripture to reestablish unity on the platform of truth and sanctification, because they, themselves, have rejected the only foundation which will result in authentic unity. Rather, the cry is for loyalty to the church, which translates into “loyalty to the leaders of the church.” In a marked way, we are

church with the inference that any form of dissent, reproof, or rebuke is a violation of the God-called principles. That the faithful sentinels are to go to the world to prepare a people for the Second Coming is of no consequence to unfaithful leaders; and, indeed, the sentinels are treated with disdain. Gone are the days when Seventh-day Adventist leaders, for the most part, urged the Protestant principle of the Reformation that “loyalty to God automatically makes one loyal to the church.” This is a devastating change in thinking—one which is beset by fearful and tragic consequences.

3. Decreasingly are those who openly and persistently violate God’s law brought under reproof and discipline. Sin is excused on the false basis of so-called love, whereby fornication, adultery, theft, and many other sins, are treated with less concern. Thus, the power of God is withdrawn from the church, which becomes increasingly impotent.

“We profess to be governed by the same principles [as the first Christian church], to be influenced by the same spirit. But instead of giving all for Christ many have taken the golden wedge and a goodly Babylonish garment and hid them in the camp. If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan?” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 157.

5. The perpetrators of doctrinal apostasy, worldliness, and unholy practices are often exalted, while the humble, earnest, burdened, true, and faithful are disfellowshipped and vilified by leaders who no longer know and preach the transcendent truths of the three angels’ messages and the everlasting gospel. These pastors are no longer raising their voice to warn the wicked of the perils of their course and to call them back to the principles of righteousness. God greatly condemns such leaders

ship in many parts of the world who are repeating the same errors of the Jewish leaders who ultimately crucified the Son of God. Like the Jews of old, who declared that they would not have persecuted the prophets, so modern leaders today claim the same. However, in the persecution of Christ’s faithful ones of this present generation, some modern leaders are proving the hollowness of their claims.

I have witnessed faithful, dedicated, earnest, soul-seeking Christians in countries such as Great Britain, Germany, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Chili, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Australia who have been cast out for righteousness’ sake. The brothers and sisters to whom I am referring are not wild-eyed fanatics or revolutionaries. They are earnest, faithful people who love the Lord and love their fellow men. They love to witness God’s truth and to call men out of darkness into the light of His glory. They seek to work for the “purifying of the church and the warning of the world.” *Ibid.*, 187.

It is heartbreaking and, if it were not for the sustaining power of Christ, it would be wholly discouraging to see God’s beloved church, His precious end-time truth, the holiness to which He calls and empowers His people, all trampled in the dust. Sin, worldliness, and error are condoned, and in many cases promoted, by leadership in God’s remnant church. I am not casting all leaders or pastors into the one mold, for I know there are faithful leaders and pastors who are the modern-day counterpart of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea. However, the actions of many, and the silence of many more, bear testimony of leaders who have betrayed their trust. These are the so-called “ancient men” spoken of in Ezekiel, chapter 9.

continued on page 19...

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.”

4. While increasingly overlooking the sins of the professed people of God in the church, discipline becomes heavy-handed upon those who point out sin and who call for revival and reformation. James Cardinal Gibbons, in his book *The Faith of Our Fathers*²—a book designed to attract Protestants to Roman Catholicism—defends this practice in the Roman Catholic Church with a most appealing, but fallacious, set of arguments:

“The Church, walking in the footsteps of her Divine Spouse, never repudiates sinners nor cuts them off from her fold, no matter how grievous or notorious may be their moral delinquencies; not because she connives at their sin, but because she wishes to reclaim them. She bids them never to despair, and tries, at least, to weaken their passions, if she cannot altogether reform their lives. . . . We know, on the other hand, that sinners who are guilty of gross crimes which shock public decency are virtually excommunicated from Protestant Communion.” *Ibid.*, 24.


However, in the same book Cardinal Gibbons strongly defends excommunication of heretics.

and pastors and specifically details their ultimate fate—along with the innocent souls they have led away from the kingdom of Heaven.

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.” Ezekiel 33:6.

“It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence from those [ministers] who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the Word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 212.

More than two decades ago one Seventh-day Adventist prepared a set of tapes entitled, “The Circle of Apostasy.” Sadly, he has recanted from what he said. Yet, those tapes articulated the terrible state of our church at that time. Today, we have moved much more deeply into apostasy; and thus, we see a repressive, heavy-handed leader-



Satan's Final Effort to Defeat the Advent Movement

Ron Spear

In my articles in the preceding four issues of *Our Firm Foundation*, regarding the Exodus and Seventh-day Adventist movements, I have attempted to carefully show how our experience has paralleled that of Israel in the long delays, our wilderness wandering, and our rebellion against God's plans and orders for His beloved remnant Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our rejection of the 1888 message of righteousness by faith has sent us wandering into a wilderness (Laodicean) experience.

Let us remember, at the beginning of the Exodus movement Satan did everything he could to defeat the purposes of God in the deliverance of His people from bondage and slavery. He triumphed at Kadesh because of Israel's unbelief. They could not enter in because they had not yet overcome the influence of the heathen Egyptians, which had robbed them of their faith and

beliefs during their 430-year sojourn in Egypt.

God knew it would take 40 years and another generation to prepare them for the Promised Land. The Exodus movement had to be shaken and cleansed before they could be trusted to enter into the Promised Land.

Satan's Final Attempt

The story of Satan's final attempt to destroy the Exodus movement before they entered the Promised Land is recorded in the book of Numbers:

"And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son

of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time." Numbers 22:2-4.

Ellen White records in greater detail the tragic history of Balaam and the apostasy at the Jordan in chapters 40 and 41 of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. It would be well for all of us to prayerfully search these chapters for the practical lessons that apply to the Advent movement. Let us review some of the key points of the story in the words of Sister White:

Balak calls Balaam to curse Israel: "Returning to the Jordan from the conquest of Bashan, the Israelites, in preparation for the immediate invasion of Canaan, encamped beside the river, above its entrance into the Dead Sea, and just opposite the plain of Jericho. They were upon the very borders of Moab, and the Moabites were filled with terror at the close proximity of the invaders. . . .

"Balaam was once a good man and a prophet of God; but he had

apostatized, and had given himself up to covetousness; yet he still professed to be a servant of the Most High. . . . Balaam knew that his curse could not harm Israel. God was on their side, and so long as they were true to Him no adverse power of earth or hell could prevail against them. But his pride was flattered by the words of the ambassadors, 'He whom thou blestest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.' Verse 6. The bribe of costly gifts and prospective exaltation excited his covetousness. He greedily accepted the offered treasures, and then, while professing strict obedience to the will of God, he tried to comply with the desires of Balak." Ibid., 438–439.

displeasure of God, Balaam returned from his self-chosen mission. . . . Balaam knew that the prosperity of Israel depended upon their obedience to God, and that there was no way to cause their overthrow but by seducing them into sin. He now decided to secure Balak's favor by advising the Moabites of the course to be pursued to bring a curse upon Israel. . . .

"The plan proposed by Balaam was to separate them from God by enticing them into idolatry. If they could be led to engage in the licentious worship of Baal and Ashtaroth, their omnipotent Protector would become their enemy, and they would soon fall a

persuaded to bow down to idols. They offered sacrifice upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites." Ibid., 454.

Israel joined themselves to Baalpeor: "The rulers and the leading men were among the first to transgress, and so many of the people were guilty that the apostasy became national. 'Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor.' Numbers 25:3. . . .

"Their iniquitous practices did that for Israel which all the enchantments of Balaam could not do—they separated them from God. By swift-coming judgments the people were awakened to the enormity of their sin. A terrible pestilence broke out in the camp, to which tens of thousands speedily fell a prey. God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God's abhorrence of their sin and the terror of His wrath against them.

"All felt that the punishment was just, and the people hastened to the tabernacle, and with tears and deep humiliation confessed their sin." Ibid., 454–455.

Satan Redoubles His Efforts Today

"The Israelites, who could not be overcome by the arms or by the enchantments of Midian, fell a prey to her harlots. Such is the power that woman, enlisted in the service of Satan, has exerted to entrap and destroy souls. . . .

" 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' 1 Corinthians 10:11–12. . . . *As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble*

"Their iniquitous practices did that for Israel which all the enchantments of Balaam could not do—they separated them from God."

"All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people—that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel was to be *an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages*. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, *this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God.*" Ibid., 449. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

After Balaam's plan to curse Israel failed, he called a grand festival: "Disappointed in his hopes of wealth and promotion, in disfavor with the king, and conscious that he had incurred the

prey to the fierce, warlike nations around them. This plan was readily accepted by the king, and Balaam himself remained to assist in carrying it into effect." Ibid., 451.

"At Balaam's suggestion, a grand festival in honor of their gods was appointed by the king of Moab, and it was secretly arranged that Balaam should induce the Israelites to attend. He was regarded by them as a prophet of God, and hence had little difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Great numbers of the people joined him in witnessing the festivities. They ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, and allured by the beauty of heathen vestals, they cast off their fealty to Jehovah. As they united in mirth and feasting, indulgence in wine beclouded their senses and broke down the barriers of self-control. Passion had full sway; and having defiled their consciences by lewdness, they were

his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul. . . . By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment.

"It is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' 2 Corinthians 6:17. . . . The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God. While we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation' (Matthew 6:13), we are to shun temptation, so far as possible.

"It was when the Israelites were in a condition of outward ease and security that they were led into sin. They failed to keep God ever before them, they neglected prayer and cherished a spirit of self-confidence. Ease and self-indulgence left the citadel of the soul unguarded, and debasing thoughts found entrance. It was the traitors within the walls that overthrew the strongholds of principle and betrayed Israel into the power of Satan. It is thus that Satan still seeks to compass the ruin of the soul. . . .

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to

sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul." Ibid., 457-460.

Many Balaams Among Us

The last-day Seventh-day Adventist Church will soon fully experience the antitype of Satan's effort to stop the Exodus movement by the attempted curses of Balaam, the false prophet. Today, many false prophets attempt to proclaim Balaam's curses from the pulpits of our beloved church.

"Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. They are praising Christ and the god of this world in the same breath. . . . Satan has made his boast of what he can do. He thinks to dissolve the unity which Christ prayed might exist in His church.

"Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God's people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them."

He says, 'I will go forth and be a lying spirit to deceive those that I can, to criticize, and condemn, and falsify.' Let the son of deceit and false witness be entertained by a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. *Satan laughs at their folly, for he knows what truth is.*

"Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 409-410.

Satan has had much success in his attempt to stop the progress of the Advent movement with the false prophets who no longer believe in the inspired writings of our prophet Ellen White. These false prophets will no longer warn our people and the world with the three angels' messages.

These modern-day Balaams do not comprehend or preach the sanctuary message and have stepped over the line into fellowship with the Babylonian and Evangelical doctrines—the gospel of Satan. They have also involved their congregations in the irreverent, sacrilegious celebration worship.

"There will be messages of accusation against the people of God, similar to the work done by Satan in accusing God's people, and these messages will be sounding at the very time when God is saying to His people, 'Arise, shine;

for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.' Isaiah 60:1-2." Ibid., 42.

The Laodicean Message Must Now Be Given

"According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God's people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God's people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them. The straight testimony must be revived,

and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him and wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 324.

The message to Laodicea – the message of righteousness by faith – came to the church in 1888. Our rejection of that message has

deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified." *Early Writings*, 270.

"I was pointed to the providence of God among His people and was shown that every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with

cowardice, and loyalty from their treason." *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 136.

The Saints Reflect Christ's Righteousness

"Worldly policy and the undeviating principles of righteousness do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. Between the two a broad, clear line is drawn by the eternal God. The likeness of Christ stands out as distinct from that of Satan as midday in contrast with midnight. And only those who live the life of Christ are His coworkers. If one sin is cherished in the soul, or one wrong practice retained in the life, the whole being is contaminated. The man becomes an instrument of unrighteousness." *The Desire of Ages*, 313.

"God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matthew 5:48. This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning." *Ibid.*, 311.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

Let us not be seduced by the allurements of modern-day Balaams. Instead, let us prepare to receive the soon-coming latter rain, which will prepare us to take that final step into the heavenly Canaan. Only the seekers for truth, those who are obedient and loyal to the commandments of God by the Holy Spirit's power, will receive this mighty power which will sustain God's people through the end of the great controversy. ❀

Let us not be seduced by the allurements of modern-day Balaams. Instead, let us prepare to receive the soon-coming latter rain.

sent us wandering in the wilderness for more than 100 years.

The Shaking of Adventism

The very same message is coming again to God's remnant people:

"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 truth. 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.

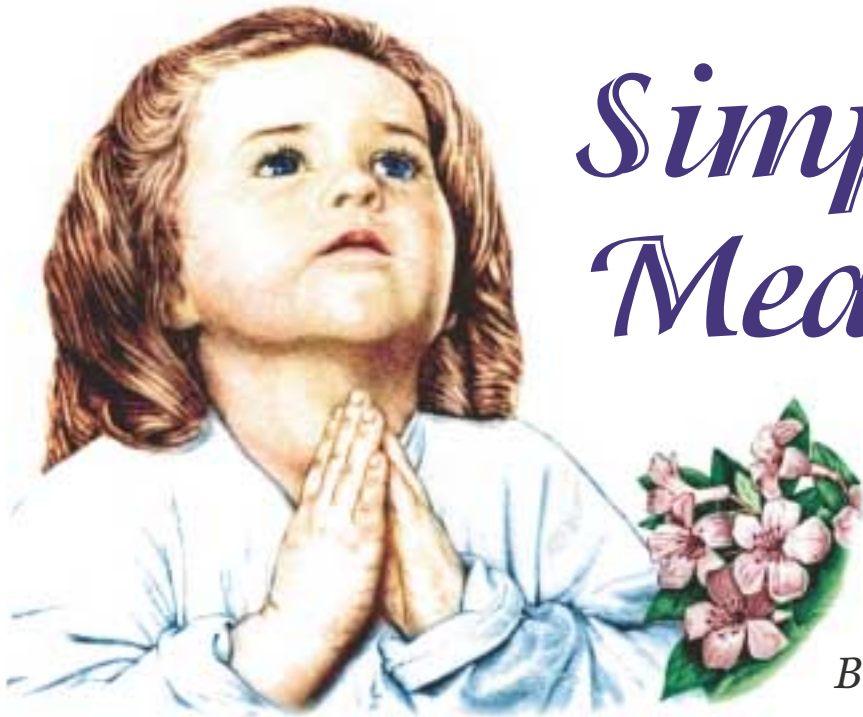
"I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work

God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, many are offended." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 89.

The test will surely come to all Seventh-day Adventists.

"God's work of refining and purifying must go on until His servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that, when called into active service, their eye will be single to His glory. He will then accept their efforts; they will not move rashly, from impulse; they will not rush on and imperil the Lord's cause, being slaves to temptations and passions and followers of their own carnal minds set on fire by Satan." *Ibid.*, 86.

"When God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? . . . *To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few – this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their*



Simple Means

Bill Humeniuk

Since my wife and I went on our most recent trip to Africa, our hearts, lives, goals, plans, and desires are no longer the same. The needs there for basics were so great, the lack of Bibles so predominant, and the hungering for truth so deep and profound that we began to pray and search our hearts saying, "Oh Lord, what can we do? How dare we live a life of ease! How can we hasten Thy coming in this crisis hour—both in our beloved church and in the world?"

The following statements must become our prayer and deepest burden:

"The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a *fitness* to meet men and in their daily intercourse to *speak words* that would lead sinners to Christ. . . .

"They were *weighted* with the *burden* of the salvation of souls." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 37. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

"Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection." *Ibid.*, 49.

Do we pray and entreat the Lord to reveal to us what we need to remove from our lives that is hindering our prayers from being answered? Do we seek for more grace to rise higher and still higher

to perfection? Do we desire to meet every condition of being Christlike, so that when we meet people in America, Europe, Africa, or anywhere else in the world, we will reveal the glory of God in our characters?

Will This Work Ever Be Finished?

At times perplexity gripped my heart. I wondered, with so many needs, so many difficulties, so much apostasy in the church, and the constant flow of heresies and errors, How will this work ever be finished so that Jesus may return and take all of His people home?—Then the Holy Spirit revealed to me a few words that lifted my heart: "Under the showers of the latter rain the inventions of man, the human machinery, will at times be swept away, the boundary of man's authority will be as broken reeds, and the Holy Spirit will speak through the living, human agent, with convincing power. No one then will watch to see if the sentences are well rounded off, if the grammar is faultless. The *living water will flow in God's own channels.*" *Selected Messages*, book 2, 58–59.

"Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. *Children* are impelled by

the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, *casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods*, they will declare the truth with the *might of the Spirit's power.*" *Evangelism*, 700.

"To souls that are earnestly seeking for light and that accept with gladness every ray of divine illumination from His holy Word, to such alone light will be given. It is through these souls that God will reveal that light and power which will lighten the whole earth with His glory." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 729.

"Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work *few great men will be engaged*. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. . . .

"Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness." *Ibid.*, 80–81.

"In this closing work of the gospel there is a vast field to be occupied; and, more than ever before, the work is to enlist helpers from the *common people.*" *Education*, 269.

"The *common people* are to take their place as workers." *Gospel Workers*, 38.

“Men will be called from the plow and from the more common commercial business vocations that largely occupy the mind, and will be educated in connection with men of experience. As they learn to labor effectively they will proclaim the truth with power.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 96.

The above quotations were very striking. Few great men would be employed in the last days. God would call consecrated men, women and children. See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 984. Their grammar might not be that great, but the *truth* would be the *truth*,

tors, and many other kinds of sophisticated equipment to advance the three angels’ messages; yet, we barely scratch the surface of a finished work!

God’s Simple Methods

Let us look at a few simple means God has used in the past to achieve His goals and plans for His people. Realizing how simple God’s methods are will help us develop *trust* in His ways. Once every hindrance in our lives is removed, and we come up higher and higher toward the perfection of the saints, *then* God will move mightily and employ “simple

So, Moses lifted up his hand and the sea parted for Israel to walk over on dry land. However, when the Egyptians tried to cross, their chariots sank; and they cried, “Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” Verses 25–26. Verse 28 tells us that not one of the Egyptians escaped, while Israel simply obeyed the word of the Lord and crossed over on dry land! God employed *simple means* because the battle was His.

Jericho—Another method God used was so simple that great fear came upon the people of Jericho when God fought for Israel. In Joshua, chapter 6, we see that God instructed Israel to march around Jericho once-a-day for six days; then on the seventh day to march around the city seven times. The priests were to blow their trumpets, and the people were to shout; and when they did, God made the walls of Jericho fall down.

It is amazing the simple means that God uses to complete the work for His glory and honor! But notice that it takes man’s cooperation, for the Israelites had to march around the city, blow the trumpets, and shout; it was *simple*, but absolutely necessary.

Gideon—When Israel was suffering under the hand of the Midianites, they cried to the Lord and He heard them. We find recorded that the Lord told Gideon: “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” Judges 6:14. “Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.” Verse 16.

Then, Gideon realized that the angel of the Lord was actually the LORD Himself. See verse 22. What a God we serve!

Gideon assembled 32,000 men; however, God said his army was too large. Then, 22,000 soldiers went home, leaving Gideon with

“The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.”

and it would set hearts on fire. They would “manifest the *final and full* display of the *love of God* to the world that is to be lightened with its glory.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 50.

“Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a *manner very much out of the common order of things*, and in a way that will be *contrary to any human planning*. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the *angel who joins the third angel* in the message to be given to the world. God *will use ways and means* by which it will be seen that *He is taking the reins in His own hands*. The workers will be surprised by the *simple means that He will use* to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” *Ibid.*, 300.

I was astounded when I read that “the workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use” as He takes the reins in His own hands. Today we use radio, TV, satellites, computers, projec-

means” to complete the three angels’ messages. This must be our burden, our zeal, and our determination, by the grace of God.

The Red Sea—When Pharaoh finally let Israel go after God sent 10 plagues upon Egypt, Israel came to the Red Sea, and at the direction of the Lord they camped there. When Pharaoh’s army pursued them, Israel seemed to be trapped between his army and the Red Sea. So, they cried out to the Lord and began to complain about Moses:

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” Exodus 14:13–16.

10,000 men; yet, God said that was still too many! He instructed Gideon how to test these soldiers, and after the test only 300 remained.

These 300 soldiers, with trumpets, empty pitchers, and lamps, stood around the Midianite camp, and at the appointed time, blew their trumpets and broke the pitchers so the lamps would shine. They cried, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20. "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled." Verse 21. Verse 22 tells us that the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow. What a simple method was employed! With God there is victory!

God commands us, "Go ye into all the world." Mark 16:15. Are we willing to obey and follow His simple instructions? If our characters are not Christlike now, we will be unprepared to accept the call and be part of the simple means God will soon use to finish the work.

King Jehoshaphat and the Choir—Let us look at yet another example of the simple means the Lord can use in a crisis. The Moabites and Ammonites attacked Israel with an army vastly outnumbering theirs. So, King "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD." 2 Chronicles 20:3-4.

And the Lord replied, "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To-morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against

them: for the LORD will be with you." Verses 15-17.

Then verse 22 tells us, "When they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." What simple means God employed to destroy the enemy!

Are we listening and obeying implicitly what God says? Notice what Jehoshaphat said: "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Verse 20. Do we believe in God and His prophets? Do we "praise the beauty of holiness" and "praise the LORD; for

ing Nebuchadnezzar a full display of the love of God through His servants—the three Hebrews! And God is about to do that same thing now with His people.

There are many other examples in God's Word that reveal the simple means God uses to show that He is in control of the affairs of men and that no one can gain victory over Him, His people, or His work. In all cases, the final analysis is: "God is victorious." He is to be obeyed, honored, and worshiped. Do we truly obey Him by faith in Christ Jesus? Do we truly worship God in spirit, in truth, and in humility? These are the conditions laid out. When God's people

God commands us, "Go ye into all the world." Are we willing to obey and follow His simple instructions?

his mercy endureth for ever"? Verse 21.

God has given us His Word so that we can believe in Him. He has also given us a prophet. Do we believe the Spirit of Prophecy—which is to prepare us for the simple means that He will employ and make prosper?

The Fiery Furnace—One final example we will look at in the use of simple means is found in Daniel, chapter 3—dealing with the issue of the golden image. The three Hebrews chose to worship only God, and as a result they were thrown into the fiery furnace. See verses 12-23. So, what did God do?—He simply protected them from getting burned—and he actually walked with them in the fire! See verses 24-25. By this simple means He also showed Himself to Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful monarch on earth at that time. Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, and he worshipped God.

What obedience, what fear, what deliverance, what victory through simple means God employed, show-

fear, worship, and give glory to Him, these are the kinds of simple means God will use when He takes the reins of the work into His own hands—to finish it and take us home.

"When divine power is combined with human effort, the work will spread like fire in the stubble. God will employ agencies whose origin man will be unable to discern; angels will do a work which men might have had the blessing of accomplishing, had they not neglected to answer the claims of God. The work is now presented to man. Will he take it?" *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885.

Is your character ready for you to join the final generation? Are you prepared to participate in the simple means that God will employ very, very soon? Do not wait. Let us follow the example of the apostles in Acts, chapter 2, and the Holy Spirit will soon be poured out upon us; then we also shall see 3,000 people in one day join with us in readiness to meet our King! ✠



Lamps Without Oil

Ellen G. White



The necessities of the times demand that most earnest efforts be put forth for the advancement of the third angel's message. Evil angels are endeavoring by every ingenious method to counterwork the work of God. Heavenly agencies are laboring to make effective the message of light and truth. Yet at such a time a lack of consecration and faith is manifest among God's people that is grieving the Holy Spirit. Many of our workers seem to be sleeping.

To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because the knowledge of the Word is turned into channels of speculation that bring misunderstanding and confusion to minds. This has been done by some to such a degree as to give occasion for those who are watching us to make of none effect the message of truth. I am instructed to ask our leading men and ministers, Are you laborers together with God? or do you place your own interpretation upon the Word? It is the duty of every worker to ask himself the question, Whom am I serving? Beware, brethren, lest self be interwoven with your exposition of the Word. Beware lest you lead any soul to a misunderstanding of the Word. The Lord now calls for the truth to be presented in its simplicity, that all, even the most ignorant, may understand its requirements.

The psalmist writes: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity:

they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." Psalm 119:1-16.

Let the young men and women study these words, and encourage a spirit that will desire to heed the way of the Lord.

David continues: "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. . . . Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy

commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness." Verses 17-18; 33-40.

Such prayers as this the Lord's servants should be continually offering to Him. This prayer reveals a consecration to God of heart and mind; it is the consecration that God is asking us to make.

The Word of God brings plainly to view two classes of people, the wise and the foolish. Let those who profess to know the truth for these last days take heed that they be not found among the foolish, whose lamps are going out because they have failed to supply themselves with the holy oil, the spirit and grace of Christ. Through the agency of the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth, provision has been made that every soul may be abundantly supplied.

Unless there is a connection with heavenly agencies, the strong, pure influence which should be exerted by every worker in the field will be lacking. They will be no more prepared to do the work which the Lord expects them to do than were the foolish virgins prepared to answer the call, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Matthew

25:6. The Holy Spirit will not be represented in their labors. They have the form of the truth; they have the lamp, but they have no oil in their vessels. The power of a godly example is lacking. There is no living experience to give power to the truth presented.

If the influence of heavenly agencies is not combined with human effort, the Word of truth presented will be ineffective. Great zeal may be manifested, but if the daily example is not a living, powerful influence for good, the zeal will be worthless. Unless the Spirit of God accompanies the worker to correct every unsanctified way, his work will be superficial and weak.

Spiritual things, the apostle Paul declares, are spiritually discerned. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Corinthians 4:1-7.

I am instructed to say to many professed believers, Unless you look upon your religious experience in an altogether different light than you have, you are going to meet with keen disappointment. The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; that is,

from your present faith to an increased understanding of the faith which works by love and purifies the soul. Those who endure trial for the truth's sake, who make sacrifices to help those in need, do so because of the presence of the love of God in the soul. When men and women give themselves unreservedly to the exercise of unselfish works, it is because the grace of Christ is in the

our own lives that we are Christians. On the part of some, evidence has been given of an unchristian spirit. They have revealed that they need a reconversion if they would not be disappointed in the great day of final award.

There are troublous times before us, when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. For this conflict with the powers of evil we are bidden to arm ourselves with

Unless there is a connection with heavenly agencies, the strong, pure influence which should be exerted by every worker in the field will be lacking. . . . They have the form of the truth; they have the lamp, but they have no oil in their vessels.

heart, molding the life to His example. But if the heart is destitute of the Spirit of God, if it does not possess the rich grace of God, there is no oil in the vessel with the lamp, there is no treasure in the earthen vessel.

Those who are genuinely converted will not act like the worldling, but their experience will answer to the words of the apostle Paul when he declared: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17. When Christ imparts to any the blessings of His grace, He lays the recipients under special obligation to place their capabilities and powers at the service of God. They are called so to relate themselves to the work of the Master, that they will reveal in all their actions that they are converted. In their reverence and homage for the character of Christ, they will reproduce that character in their own, thus testifying to the attributes of the Father.

There is need that we study carefully the evidence we give in

all the armor of God, "above all," the apostle exhorts, "taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:16-17.

We have reason for great thankfulness that we have the perfect example of the life of Christ. As He did, so day-by-day we are to obey the Word of the Lord. Let us cultivate a grateful spirit. Let us make sure work for eternity. The humility and benevolence of Christ's life revealed in ours is the testimony we give to the world that we are His disciples. Through a life of obedience and self-sacrifice we are to reveal the love of God for fallen man.

Those who would have the life that measures with the life of God, must be workers in this life. They must watch unto prayer. They must not fail nor be discouraged. By faith they must work out their own salvation. By faith and complete submission to the will of God, they must become partakers of God's love and doers of His will. ✠

Review and Herald, September 17, 1908.



A Fat Nation

News Item: “When Katie started day camp in June, she discovered a snack bar where she could buy pizza, hot dogs, candy, ice cream, chips, soft drinks, and more. ‘Katie went nuts,’ says her mother, Judy Young. In the first two weeks of camp, Katie stole nearly \$40 from her mother’s purse for snack foods. ‘I bought a lot of pizza,’ Katie says. ‘It’s good, of course, because it’s from Pizza Hut. And I bought candy and everything. I didn’t feel good seeing the other kids eat those things. I wanted them too.’

“Of course she did. Katie was acting on a basic driving force of human biology: Eat whenever food is available and eat as much of it as possible. Throughout most of human history, food was scarce, and getting ahold of it required a great deal of physical energy. Those who ate as many calories as they could were protected against famine and had the energy to reproduce. ‘As a result, humans are hard-wired to prefer rich diets, high in fat, sugar, and variety,’ says Kelly Brownell, director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders. The problem today, Brownell adds, is that there’s ‘a complete mismatch’ between biology and the environment. Or as University of Colorado nutrition researcher James Hill puts it, ‘Our physiology tells us to eat whenever food is available. And now, food is *always* available.’ . . . [Emphasis in the original.]

“Obesity has been linked to everything from the decline of the family dinner to the popularity of computers and video games to supersize portions of fast food. But it all comes down to a simple

calculation, says Colorado’s Hill: ‘The primary reason America is fat is that we eat too much compared to our activity level.’

“Over the past 50 years, as technology has reduced movement in daily life, the American diet has also changed, paralleling a revolution in food production. ‘The energy intensity of the human diet is going up,’ says Barry Popkin, a professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Human beings are eating more calories per bite than their ancestors ate. ‘The most common changes,’ Popkin explains, ‘are the added sugar in processed food and the added fat.’ ” *U. S. News & World Report*, August 19, 2002.

End-Time Perspective: “The history of Daniel and his companions has been recorded on the pages of the inspired Word for the benefit of the youth of all succeeding ages. What men have done, men may do. Did those youthful Hebrews stand firm amid great temptations and bear a noble testimony in favor of true temperance? – The youth of today may bear a similar testimony.

“The lesson here presented is one which we would do well to ponder. Our danger is not from scarcity but from abundance. We are constantly tempted to excess. Those who would preserve their powers unimpaired for the service of God must observe strict temperance in the use of His bounties, as well as total abstinence from every injurious or debasing indulgence.

“The rising generation are surrounded with allurements calculated to tempt the appetite. Especially in our large cities, every

form of indulgence is made easy and inviting. Those who, like Daniel, refuse to defile themselves, will reap the reward of their temperate habits. With their greater physical stamina and increased power of endurance, they have a bank of deposit upon which to draw in case of emergency.” *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 27–28.

False Revival Still Growing

News Item: “Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) is America’s largest and fastest-growing religious broadcaster.

“Based in Orange County, Calif., TBN features Pentecostal ministers who speak in tongues and promise deliverance from financial as well as spiritual crises. Now Associated Press [September 13, 2002] reports that TBN has launched a Spanish-language network aimed at winning Hispanic converts.

“After debuting in Miami on Sept. 1, the network ‘Enlace’ will probably reach 10 of the largest Hispanic markets in the United States within a year. Competing with it is EWTN Espanol, which was launched in 1999 and features Catholic programming, liturgy and entertainment.” *National Catholic Register*, September 29–October 5, 2002.

End-Time Perspective: This is another reminder that Satan is still pouring out his spirit of power and light to promote the false revival he started in the “broad road” churches. Let us watch and pray that we not be among those who are being deceived and sucked into the vortex of darkness. ✠

continued from page 8...

Note what Sister White says concerning them:

“Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus ‘Peace and safety’ is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together.” *Ibid.*, 211.

I have a tremendous burden for leaders, pastors and teachers who are leading the precious flock astray, because I know that unfaithful men and women who are in leadership roles will face a fearful punishment in the judgment.

“The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, ‘You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us.’ But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people.” *Early Writings*, 282.

This article is not presented with personal anger—although I am outraged when unfaithful men and women lead youth and older members alike, not to the kingdom of Heaven, but rather to the king-

dom of eternal destruction. I pray earnestly that each of our leaders and pastors will regain their moral fortitude—that they will rather suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy popularity and praise of men for a season while dishonoring our God. *Too much is at stake.* No other church in history has had the light that has been entrusted to this people. No other people have been given such a sacred mission—to take the pure, everlasting gospel to every inhabitant of the planet.

Dear leaders, pastors, and laity, may we all regain our moral and spiritual rectitude and lead God’s people heavenward and homeward. ✽

References:

- ¹ The article entitled “Hovering Over the Churches” appeared in the March 2002 issue of *Our Firm Foundation*, which may be ordered from Hope International for \$2.00, including postage and handling.
- ² James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, New York: John Murphy Company, 1904.

The Faith I Live By
Ellen G. White

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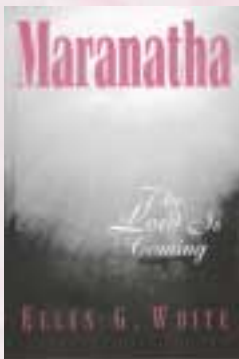


My Life Today
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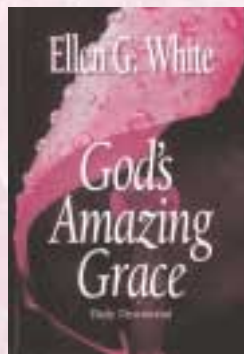
Maranatha
Ellen G. White



This excellent devotional book, compiled from the inspired writings of Ellen White, urges us to prepare for the imminent return of our Lord. It is in our time of communion with God that the heart preparation will be made. Strengthen your character with daily devotional readings focused on the very culmination of the Adventist hope, the second coming of Christ!

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God’s Amazing Grace
Ellen G. White



Mrs. White wrote often about God’s grace. She said it is “an attribute of God shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it, but it was sent in search of us.” *God’s Amazing Grace*, 10.

This daily devotional contains many of her significant statements on God’s grace drawn from the Spirit of Prophecy books and periodicals.

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Remembering Y2K

Ralph Larson

Can you remember Y2K? Are there any items on your shelves, or in your closets or your storage rooms that remind you of that great non-event?

Recently, I opened a little-used cupboard door in my garage and saw on a shelf a large cardboard box that had never been opened. I was puzzled until I turned the box around and read its label. It was something that I had purchased for Y2K and never used. This reminded me that just outside the rear door of my garage there are two 50-gallon barrels of water waiting for the Y2K that did not happen.

Y2K was enormously over-hyped. We were told that banks would close, that service stations would quickly run out of gasoline, and that the food market shelves would be empty. Planes would stop flying, trains would stop running, and electrical power companies would close down for lack of fuel. Fear-mongers had a field day. Merchants made large profits from the unprecedented sale

of everything from electric generators to pinto beans.

However, the crisis did not come; the predicted crash of computers did not happen. We were left to reflect with embarrassment about the problems created by warning messages that are not accurate and true. These unfulfilled warnings can cause a great deal of skepticism and unbelief regarding all warning messages – which can be dangerous!

There are other warning messages that are accurate and true, and to ignore them can be disastrous. *They need to be carefully considered and acted upon.* From the famous, heeded, midnight ride of Paul Revere, to the tragically unheeded warnings about Pearl Harbor and September 11, 2001, history is full of examples of this principle.

Definitely in this class are the biblical warnings about the “time of trouble, such as never was.” Daniel 12:1. Since all signs indicate that it is about to burst upon us, it is certainly time for us to give it some careful attention. These

warnings are not like Y2K. They are not over-hyped. They are accurate and true.

It will not be the purpose of this article to present in detail all of the events and conditions of the time of trouble. That has been admirably done by the White Estate in a book called *Last Day Events* – a “must read” for all of us today. It should be studied and restudied, over and over and over again.

Ellen White draws our attention to the fact that although Christ gave His disciples plenty of advance warning about His betrayal and crucifixion, they were as shocked and dismayed by it as if they had never been warned.

“The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them.” *The Great Controversy*, 594.

Now, notice the lesson for us: “So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as

plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with *the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble*, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed." Ibid. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

Let us not let it happen to us. We must get the outline of conditions and events so clearly in mind that we will promptly recognize them when they appear, and be neither dismayed by their awfulness, nor deceived by their falsities. Both will be phenomenal. When we consider how terrible some times of trouble have been and then read that the coming time of trouble will surpass them all, we realize that we must prepare for the worst.

God's messenger describes the coming time of trouble as having four phases or dimensions. They are the "preparatory" phase, where we are now; the "little" time of trouble just before probation closes; the "great" time of trouble after probation closes, and the time of "Jacob's" trouble, which follows the death decree. Each phase has certain determining characteristics, which we will now examine:

The Preparatory Phase

The distinctive characteristics of the present "preparatory" phase are not so much the introduction of new events and conditions as they are the increasing frequency and destructive severity of those events listed by Christ in Matthew, chapter 24. We refer, of course, to the wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, tidal waves, immorality, etc. All of these are on a steadily ascending scale of frequency and severity, as our news media abundantly testify. Just look at Africa, where some countries estimate that nearly half of their people are infected with AIDS, or look at our own country, where evildoers often threaten and bully decent people and cow them into silence and submission.

And we can expect no improvement. The apostle Paul warns us that in the last days "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3:13. Jesus gave no hint in Matthew, chapter 24, that there would be any lessening of disasters as we near the end. Yet, as evils multiply all around us, we may take courage from the

- Their places will be taken by new converts coming in. The ranks will not be diminished.
- Congress will yield to pressure and enact a national Sunday law. This will be followed by national ruin.
- The righteous will move out of the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller cities and villages.

*As evils multiply all around us,
we may take courage from the realization that
none of these things have taken our Lord by surprise.*

realization that none of these things have taken our Lord by surprise. He knows all about them, and we can be sure that if He knows all about them, He knows what to do about them. He is still in control.

The Short Time of Trouble

Phase two is often called the "little" time of trouble, but we must not let that term mislead us. Incidentally, I have not found that term in Ellen White's writings. She uses the word "short" instead and refers to this time of trouble as a short time just before the close of probation. See *Early Writings*, 85. And the things that happen in this short time are anything but little. Some of them are stupendous. Consider this partial list:

- The work of salvation will be closing.
- The people of God will experience a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit—the latter rain. This will bring great power to the preaching of the third angel's message—the loud cry.
- The large response to this preaching will infuriate the Sundaykeeping churches, who will agitate for a national Sunday law.
- Some Seventh-day Adventists, as they see the storm approaching, will give up their faith and unite with our enemies.

- Satan will personate Christ and work miracles in different parts of the world. Some of God's people will be laid to rest, to spare them the ordeal.
- The nations of the world will follow the lead of the United States, and there will be a world Sunday law.
- The fury of the wicked against the righteous will culminate in a death decree against those who honor God's Sabbath.

• The righteous will flee from the smaller cities and villages.

You can now understand why it was pointed out that the events that happen, during this short time of trouble just before probation ends, are far from "little." Some are, indeed, stupendous. It will be a time of final choices and final decisions. The whole world will make its final decision and receive either *the seal of God* or *the mark of the beast*. The forces that will rage in attempts to influence those decisions will be enormous. It will indeed be a time of trouble such as never was. Ellen White comments that unless this time were short there would be few survivors. See *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 203–204.

The Great and Final Time of Trouble

The "Great" time of trouble will be ushered in by the outpouring of the seven last plagues. The restrain-

ing influence of God's Spirit will be fully withdrawn, and the world will be in chaos, as Satan takes almost full control. Since the individual plagues are not universal (worldwide), we are not laying them out in perfect chronological order as they are listed in Revelation, chapter 16. Two or more plagues might be occurring in different places at the same time. The falling of the plagues will indicate that probation has closed.

"The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old." *The Great Controversy*, 614.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

The time of Jacob's trouble does not follow or succeed the "Great" time of trouble but is part of the same time period. The "Great" time of trouble begins with the close of probation and the falling of the seven last plagues, and it continues until Christ appears in the clouds of heaven. At some time within that period, possibly when the death decree is enacted, the time of Jacob's trouble will begin, and will also continue until Christ comes. The reason these two times of trouble can exist in the same time period is because they involve two different classes of people, the wicked and the righteous.

The wicked will be enduring the horrors brought on the world by Satan and will be listening to his

allegations that the righteous are the cause of these evils because of their refusal to join the rest of the world in obedience to the world Sunday law. This will cause them to determine to kill the righteous; however, God will not permit it.

The righteous will have different concerns. Like Jacob of old, whose life was being threatened by Esau, they will have the death decree to worry about. Again, like Jacob, they will have a keen sense of their own unworthiness, and will be aware that the time for confession and repentance for sin has passed.

"Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." *Ibid.*, 620.

This is a call for self-examination. This is the "work of prepara-

tion" for the time of trouble referred to above. Remember that it must be completed before the plagues begin to fall. Are we excusing our sins—or are we getting the victory over them? Are we remembering that "the righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin"? *Christ's Object Lessons*, 316.

People sometimes ask how they can tell if a sin is cherished. I answer that the best advice I can give them is to deal with any sin as cherished. That is to say that we should address it with full and invincible determination, by the power of God, to get it out of our lives.

The best advice that I can give to all of us about preparing for the times of trouble is to secure a copy of the Ellen White book, *Last Day Events*,¹ and use it as a second "Bible" from now on. It cannot be studied too much. The final movements will be rapid ones. Let us hasten our preparation. ✽

Next month we will look at some of the other events that are part of the steady tread of God's approaching footsteps.

Note:

¹ You may purchase your copy from your local Adventist Book Center or from Hope International (see ad below).



Last Day Events Ellen G. White

Seventh-day Adventists believe they have been especially called of God to proclaim the good news of Christ's soon coming to a confused and dying world. "Great pains," Ellen White wrote, "should be taken to keep this subject before the people."

Ellen White declares that "our little world is the lesson book of the universe," and that the invisible world is watching "with inexpressible interest" the closing scenes of this world's history. May we all endeavor to catch something of the significance of earth's climactic events as we view them in their relation to the great controversy between good and evil. Let us share with others the glorious truth that Jesus is coming soon!

Hardcover
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See page 3 for shipping and sales-tax information.



The Word says, “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.” Psalm 77:13. Jesus is now in the heavenly sanctuary ministering for us. Let us look to where He is and follow Him by faith, so that we may prepare and help others to prepare to follow Him for eternity.

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:

Two Sanctuaries,

TS1: Exodus 25:8.

- 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 TS.**”

- Go through the study to check for broken links.

- Share the study with others!

Two Sanctuaries

Code: TS

TS1: Exodus 25:8.

The Lord commanded Moses to build a sanctuary that would be God’s dwelling place among His people.

TS2: Exodus 26:33.

The sanctuary had two rooms or apartments. The first room was the holy place; the second room was the Most Holy Place.

TS3: Hebrews 9:2; Exodus 30:1, 6.

There was a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense in the holy place. See also Exodus 26:35; 31:8.

TS4: Exodus 26:34; Hebrews 9:3–4.

The ark containing God’s law was in the Most Holy Place.

TS5: Hebrews 9:6.

There were services by the priests every day in the holy place.

TS6: Hebrews 9:7.

The services in the Most Holy Place were only once a year and only by the high priest.

TS7: Hebrews 9:9, 23–24; 8:5.

The earthly sanctuary was a figure, or a type, of the heavenly; it served after the shadow of heavenly things.

TS8: Hebrews 8:1–2; 4:14.

Christ, our High Priest, ministers in the heavenly sanctuary.

TS9: Hebrews 9:11–15.

Jesus mediates with His own blood there to secure eternal redemption for us.

TS10: Hebrews 7:25–27.

He has no need to offer sacrifice for himself; therefore, He is able to save unto the uttermost.

TS11: Hebrews 4:15.

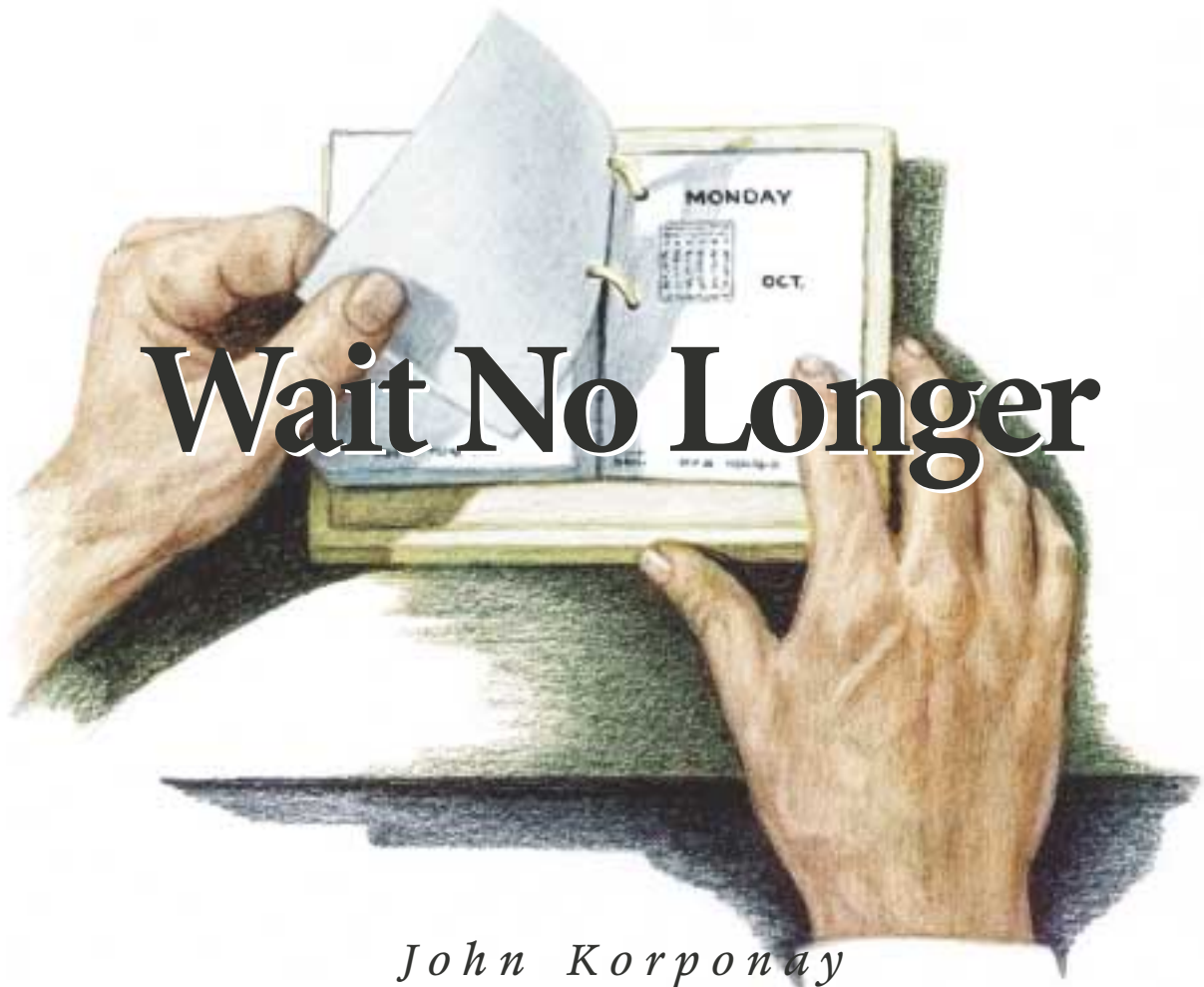
Jesus can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

TS12: Hebrews 4:16.

He invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace.

TS13: 2 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 22:11–12.

Now is the time to secure our salvation — soon it will be too late! ✠



Wait No Longer

John Korponay

The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt with miracles, signs, and wonders; He made a covenant with them that He would make them an example of His truth and grace to all the nations of the world. "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Deuteronomy 4:5-8.

God also told Israel why He chose them instead of others: "The

LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

For God to fulfill His covenant it was necessary that they willingly commit themselves to cooperate with Him to be a special and peculiar people, by trusting and obeying Him. After God proclaimed the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, all Israel said they would hear and obey, which, God said, is what He wanted to hear. However, He also told them that their willingness to obey was not coming from their hearts; it was only outward:

"And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto

me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken." But then He said, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deuteronomy 5:28-29.

Since their hearts were not submitted, they would not be able to continue to obey Him. That is why they kept reverting back to the world. However, the Lord, in His forbearance and love, gave them leaders and teachers to help lead and guide them in the right way. By providing this kind of consecrated leadership He was able to impart to them the benefits of the covenant He made with them; yet, in a short time Israel went their own way, wanting to be like the people around them. In spite of their waywardness and rebellion, God did not let them go; and as

they continued getting into trouble, He sent them prophets, messengers, and judges to point out their disobedience and call them to repentance.

They refused to give up the world and their desire to gain its attention, glory, and honor. Their history is preserved for us as a lesson to learn from, so we will not repeat the same errors and forfeit God's covenantal blessings, and promises:

"But the Israelites fixed their hopes upon worldly greatness. From the time of their entrance to the land of Canaan, they departed from the commandments of God, and followed the ways of the heathen. It was in vain that God sent them warning by His prophets. In vain they suffered the chastisement of heathen oppression. Every reformation was followed by deeper apostasy." *The Desire of Ages*, 28.

Finally, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, He let them be on their own. During the next 400 years, we find no record of prophets, miracles, or direct words from the mouth of God. They were still God's denominated people; however, as we read different accounts of Jewish history, including Josephus, we see that the apostasy went from bad to worse. They did hold on to the law and the ceremonies of worship, but the spiritual meaning of them was almost entirely forgotten. The nation was as political and worldly as any other nation around it. God kept them together so that His plan of redemption could be accomplished—and to give them a final opportunity to see their condition and have a last chance to accept God's plan for them.

Through the writings of the prophets, the hope of the coming deliverer—the Messiah—was kept alive during those 400 years. However, because of their unwillingness to let go of this world, their concept of the Messiah's mission became warped.

One concept that was popular among the religious leaders of

Jesus' day we discovered from the translation of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. It shows just how different was their expectation from what was foretold by the prophets. They were actually expecting the Messiah in two different people: one to sit on the throne of David as a secular, political Messiah, and another to be after the order of Melchizedec, as a priest and religious Messiah. These two Messiahs were expected to cooperate to bring about the earthly glory and heavenly peace that they, Israel, "God's church," were expecting. That is probably why John the Baptist asked Jesus if

lem took place, bringing to an end Israel's national status.

For further insight, read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 2, entitled, "The Chosen People."

Our Example

The New Testament says that these things were written as "ensamples" for us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11.

There is a sobering parallel, which Sister White pointed out, between the histories of Israel and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "We want to understand the time

*To most of the Jews, it was only a few blips
on their prophetic screen—nothing to get excited about.
So, they went back to business as usual.*

He was the one, or if they should expect another, and why it was hard for them to believe Jesus when He identified Himself as the heir of David's throne and, at the same time, their spiritual Leader.

After waiting for centuries, God gave two signs that the long-sought-for and -expected event was about to happen. These signs showed that the "countdown" for the anointing of the Messiah had begun, which they should have known if they had been in tune with God. First, Gabriel announced the conception of John, and, a little later, that of Jesus. This should have been earth-shaking news! But to most of the Jews, it was only a few blips on their prophetic screen—nothing to get excited about. So, they went back to business as usual.

Another 30 years went by until the prophecies reached their total fulfillment. John came and warned them to prepare, for the kingdom of God was at hand. Then Jesus came, set up His kingdom, finished His work, and went back to heaven. About 40 years later the prophesied destruction of Jerusa-

in which we live. We do not half understand it. We do not half take it in. My heart trembles in me when I think of what a foe we have to meet, and how poorly we are prepared to meet him. 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. How the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today, he is seeking to blind the minds of God's servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth." *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

As we look over our church's history, we see our beginnings as humble and impossible, with a few unknown people clinging to present truth, fervently preparing to give the judgment-hour message to the world. However, by about 1856 the believers had lost the urgency of preparation and went back to their worldly pursuits. The Lord through Brother and Sister White counseled, reproved, and

encouraged revival and reformation to bring them back to their first love experience. See *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 222–225. Just as in the history of Israel of old, it helped for a little while; yet, when the excitement wore off, it fizzled out.

The Lord continued to give visions, dreams, and testimonies to help guide His people in the narrow way, while Satan—always anxious to push his agenda and secure the homage of the world to himself and usurp God’s throne—inspired the leadership of the United States to enact laws to enforce the false Sabbath as a way of forcing people to honor himself in the place of the true God. But God was again ready to meet the challenge by sending the message of 1888, preparing the minds and hearts of His people to warn the whole world of Satan’s delusions and of the judgment hour. Once

consequence of their own wrong course of action.” *Maranatha*, 19; see also *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, 277–279.

Less than 20 years after this sad revelation, Ellen White went to sleep; and, as in the days of Israel after their Babylonian captivity, there were no more direct messages from God. Only her writings were left behind for our benefit.

I mentioned above that when Gabriel announced the conceptions of John and Jesus, the final “count-down” for God to deliver His people began, whether they were ready or not. Likewise, we have been given such a sign to let us know that the long-awaited coming of Jesus is soon to arrive. In *The Great Controversy*, 588, we have been told: “The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in [1] stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritual-

eyes in 1982 when the United States and the Papacy pledged full cooperation to work for peace and security in the world. An ambassador with full diplomatic authority was sent to the Vatican to officially seal the union. I believe the “count-down” began at that time for the overwhelming delusion of Satan’s coming as Christ, which will lead to Jesus standing up for His people and delivering them. See Daniel 12:1.

We can also see this event correlating today with the explosion of the electronic entertainment media, and the spread of personal computers and the Internet, bringing the whole world under the same influence, along with the charismatic false revival that is uniting all the churches, preparing them to receive Satan masquerading as Christ.

This false revival also broke into our church in a big way in the 1980s. We can look back and see great changes rapidly taking place, starting with contemporary and Christian rock music gaining popularity, followed by the acceptance of false doctrines from the churches of Babylon, which reduced the peculiarity and force of our message as Seventh-day Adventists. This all was admittedly done so that the churches of Babylon would accept us into their fellowship.

Our Need for the Holy Spirit

Many other signs have followed since 1982, too numerous to mention in this article; however, the point I want to make is that God cannot wait any longer and keep holding the Holy Spirit back. We need the Holy Spirit in greater power than ever just to resist the darkness and overcome the delusions that are increasing around us daily.

Deceptions are building up to unprecedented levels, just as Jesus warned us would happen: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24. But as in the vision of the

Soon, whether we are ready or not, Satan will declare that he is Christ returning to bring peace and happiness to all who will bow and worship him.

again, His church failed to follow His providence wholeheartedly and things did not culminate, as they could have, in the return of Jesus.

Then, in the early 1900s the Lord again intended to bring revival and reformation by pouring out His Spirit in latter-day power to finish the work and take His people home. However, because of their stubborn insubordination—unwillingness to subordinate their wills to His will—His plan did not succeed at that time. Therefore, Sister White told us that because of this failure we would have to spend more time in the wilderness: “We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ’s sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the

ism; they will [2] reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.” (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) The first part of this prophecy was fulfilled when Protestants accepted the charismatic speaking in tongues as though a gift from God’s Holy Spirit. In truth, glossolalia actually is a manifestation of spiritualism in response to the prayers of nominal Christians to Satan—who is trying to imitate the work that Christ did in the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. Sadly, they are unaware that Christ ended His work there in 1844 and is now in the Most Holy Place. See *Early Writings*, 56.

The second part of this prophecy was literally fulfilled before our

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shaking (see *ibid.*, 269–270), God is giving help to those who are actively resisting the darkness that is enshrouding the world and pressing in on them.

Soon, whether we are ready or not, Satan will declare that he is Christ returning to bring peace and happiness to all who will bow and worship him. We will not be able to resist this overwhelming delusion, *unless* we have received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter-day power prophesied in Revelation 18:1. *Now is the time to prepare to receive the latter rain*, for just as Israel did not know exactly how much time would elapse between the announcements of Gabriel and the setting up of the kingdom of God, we do not know exactly how much time is left for us to prepare for Jesus' second coming.

As the darkness deepens around us and apostasy rapidly increases in our church, we need to realize that things are going to culminate with or without us. The time of the Lord waiting for a people to reflect His character is about over. He is preparing those who are willing to be prepared to finish the work. We need to realize more fully our own condition—and deepen our repentance. Whatever the cost, let us sever connections to anything that hinders us from growing in sanctification of heart, soul, and mind. Let us seek after that purity of heart and mind—that holiness “without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” Revelation 16:15.

The true remnant, no matter how many in number, will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and will finish the work after God's own order. Let us encourage one another to this end, “and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25. For “ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” 1 Thessalonians 5:4. ✨

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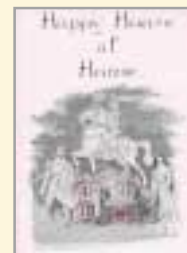
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“**I** bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14–19.

The apostle prayed for the church at Ephesus, that God would grant them “according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” The spiritual strength here spoken of is something that we may each obtain; but how shall we get it?—Perhaps we are in darkness, feeling weak and discouraged and that God does not love us. If so, we are not to give way to feeling; feeling has nothing whatever to do with the matter. We are to take the Word of God as it reads, the words of Christ as He has spoken them.

Hear these words of our Saviour: “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man,

which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” Matthew 7:24–25. It is the privilege of every one of us to build upon the Eternal Rock; then we shall not dishonor God, nor by our words and actions scatter away from Christ. There are some who do this, and Jesus is ashamed to call them brethren.

We may come to our Saviour in the hour of trial, and plead: “I am in poverty and need, and I must have thy blessing. I come to thee; for thou hast told me to come. Thou hast invited all who are weary and heavy laden to come unto thee, and thou hast promised them rest. Thou hast said; ‘Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’” Matthew 11:29. And when He has given you rest, do not grieve His Spirit by talking darkness and unbelief. Talk faith; but, above all things, hold daily communion with Jesus.

Satan will tell you that you do not feel any better than you did before you went to Jesus with your troubles. But here the question arises again, What has feeling to do with it? The Lord says: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be

opened unto you.” Matthew 7:7. Again we read: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will” grudgingly pardon. Is that it?—No, indeed! This is the way it reads: “For he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7. When you have thrown yourself upon the mercy of God, and taken Him at His word, and yet the enemy comes, and suggests your faults and failings, and tells you that you are no better than before you sought the Lord, you can point to Jesus, and repeat His promises, and tell what He has done for you.

The apostle continues: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” While this divine fullness has been placed within our reach, how easily we are satisfied. We have accustomed ourselves to think that it is enough to have a knowledge of the truth without its sanctifying power. Just a little sip at the fountain of life quenches our thirst. We do not come again and

again to drink. But this is not in accordance with the mind of God. Our souls should be continually athirst for the water of life. Our hearts should ever go out after Christ, longing for communion with Him. It is hungering and thirsting after righteousness that will bring us the full measure of His grace.

Enoch “walked with God” (Genesis 5:24); but how did he gain this sweet intimacy?—It was by having thoughts of God continually before him. As he went out and as he came in, his meditations were upon the goodness, the perfection, and the loveliness of the divine character. And as he was thus engaged, he became changed into the glorious image of his Lord; for it is by beholding that we become changed.

We have something more to do than merely to attend church services. Prayers and testimonies in the social meeting will not answer, when we never say a word for Jesus outside the meetinghouse. We are to reflect the character of Jesus. Everywhere, whether in the church, at our homes, or in social intercourse with our neighbors, we should let the lovely image of Jesus appear. This we cannot do unless we are filled with His fullness. If we would become better acquainted with Jesus, we should love Him for His goodness and excellence, and we should desire to become so assimilated to His divine character that all would know that we had been with Jesus, and learned of Him.

It is by carrying out in our lives the pure principles of the gospel of Christ that we honor and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. When we are doing this, we are reflecting Heaven-given light upon the dark world around us. Sinners will be constrained to confess that we are not the children of darkness, but the children of light. How shall they know this?—By the fruits we bear. Men may have their names upon the church book; but that does not make them children of light. They may hold honorable positions and receive the praise of

men; but that does not make them children of light. They may shut themselves in monasteries, and clothe themselves in garments of sanctity, and yet not be the children of light. All this will not help them to shun or to overcome temptation. There must be a deep work of grace—the love of God in the heart, and this love is expressed by obedience.

It is Christ dwelling in the soul that gives us spiritual power, and makes us channels of light. The more light we have, the more we can impart to others around us. The more closely we live to Jesus, the clearer views shall we have of His loveliness. As we behold Him in His purity, we discern more clearly our own faults of character. We yearn after Him, and for that fullness that

reap pride; if we sow stubbornness, we shall reap stubbornness; “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7.

We do not want to be covered over with the mildew and slime of the world. We are to remain in this world but a little while. We are pilgrims and strangers here, and are on our way to a better country, even a heavenly; and we want to become acquainted with that land to which we are going. Our conversation should not be exclusively of the world and worldly things; but our tongues should be trained to talk of the Christian’s reward, and our eyes to discern the glory of that better country. It should be our daily work to gain a fitness for those mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for us.

Enoch “walked with God”; but how did he gain this sweet intimacy?—It was by having thoughts of God continually before him. . . . His meditations were upon the goodness, the perfection, and the loveliness of the divine character.

is in Him, and that shines out in the perfection of His heavenly character; and by beholding we become changed into His image.

How was it with our Saviour?—He represented His Father in every act of His life, and in like manner the people of God are expected to represent Christ. Are we representing Him in cross bearing, in self-denial, in patience, and in labor for perishing souls? Let us think soberly and candidly about this matter. If we are not really deceiving ourselves, are we not, by our unbelief, daily depriving ourselves of the riches of His grace?

We should not allow the worldliness all about us to control our actions, but should be steadfast in the faith and strong in the Word of God. Every day we are sowing some kind of seed. If we sow the seeds of unbelief, we shall reap unbelief; if we sow pride, we shall

Our hearts may be filled with all the fullness of God; but there is something for us to do. We must not pet our faults and sins, but put them away, and make haste to set our hearts in order. When this is done, let us take the key of faith, and unlock the storehouse of God’s rich blessings. Does He want us to entertain doubt and darkness? Does He want us to be destitute of His Spirit?—No, indeed. There is an infinite fullness to draw from; and we have the promise of our divine Lord, “According to your faith be it unto you.” Matthew 9:29. We may win the crown of life, a place at God’s right hand, and as we enter the pearly gates, hear the words, sweeter than any music, “Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew 25:23. ✠

Signs of the Times, August 18, 1887.

2002 Index of Articles

Anonymous

"Working With the Lord," August

Bond, C. Lester

"Courtship Counsel," February

Covert, William

"Unity," August

Floyd, Clark

"The Sound of Music," April

"These Men Have Been With Jesus," May

Grosboll, Marshall

"Can I Overcome?" June

Humeniuk, Bill

"The Beginning of Sorrows," January

"Holy In Conversation—Or Jesting and Joking?" March

"Ask For the Old Paths," May

"Smooth Things," July

"It Is High Time to Awake!" August

"Great Power and Glory," September

"Baptism of Fire," October

"Simple Means," December

Jennings, Vernon

"God's Love and the Everlasting Gospel," March

Jorgensen, Bob

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Sealing," February

"The Proper Use and Influence of Words," March

"Eradicating Terrorists?" April

Kannenberg, John

"Schools of the Beast," February

Korponay, John

"What Is Happening to Our Young People?" February

"The Sanctuary Truth," April

"The Shaking Caused By the True Witness," July

"Evangelism and the Holy Spirit," November

"Wait No Longer," December

Larson, Ralph

"The Times of Trouble," January

"The Threefold Fall of Babylon," May

"The Christless Religion," August

"Remembering Y2K," December

Loughborough, J. N.

"The Judgment Message," September

Mayer, Hal

"The Danger of Silence," April

"Terrorists and the Demise of Religious Liberty," September

Pierson, Robert

"The Omega of Apostasy," November

Rosenvold, Leola

"A New Heart," September

"'Mickey Mouse' Money," October

Slade, E. J.

"No Place For Sin," June

Smith, Uriah

"Do We Discard the Bible By Endorsing the Visions?" May

Snyder, Michael

"The Test at Capernaum," October

Spear, Ron

"Curse Ye Meroz," January

"Righteousness by Faith and the Three Angels' Messages," June

"The Shut Door," July

"How Soon Shall We Enter?" August

"The Remnant Church: Under Divine Rebuke," September

"The Remnant Church: Not Forsaken," October

"The Exodus and the Latter Rain," November

"Satan's Final Effort to Defeat the Advent Movement," December

Spurgeon, Charles H.

"Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats," November

Standish, Colin

"The First Beast of Revelation 13," January

"Hovering Over the Churches," March

"Justification and Sanctification: Two Inseparables," June

"Witnessing to Roman Catholics," June

"The Praise of Men or the Praise of God," July

"The Cowardice of the Laity," December

Standish, Russell

"That Moment of Terrorism," January

Steck, Harvey

"A Compass, a Pilot, a Lens," May

"The Purification of God's People," July

"The Purification of God's Church," August

"A Protest and Appeal," November

Steed, Ernest H. J.

"Abundant Grace!" June

The Editors

"Romans 3 and Salvation," June

Waldau, Kurt

"Our First Love," March

Waters, Alane

"Rebellion and Restoration," February

"Priorities," October

Waters, Tom

"Surrender—Drudgery or Delight?" March

"Consulting With God," November

Wentland, Judi

"Gospel Gimmicks," November

Westbrook, Dave

"The Cities: To Leave or Not to Leave?" July

White, Ellen G.

"The Laodicean Church," January

"Hold Fast, and Repent," February

"The True Standard of Righteousness," February

"Should Christians Dance?" March

"Tests of Christian Character," March

"Danger of Light Becoming Darkness," April

"The Testing of Character," April

"Lessons From the Apostasy at Sinai," May

"To All Who Love the Blessed Hope," May

"Faith and Good Works," June

"Little Sins," June

"The Meaning of Trials," July

"Consecration and Diligence in Christian Workers," August

"The Need of a Spiritual Awakening," August

"The Responsibilities of Burden Bearers," August

"'I Cannot Come Down,'" September

"Constant Attainment Essential to Christian Life," October

"'God So Loved the World,'" October

"How to Meet Discouragement," November

"The Heavenly Friend," November

"Lamps Without Oil," December

"The Christian's Privilege," December



I truly enjoy your magazine. Here is my check for another year. I send it to a friend after I read it.

NH, Nevada

I work on a cruise ship and one night I went into the garbage room. There in the garbage, I saw a piece of newspaper. I took it out and to my cabin to read. That was when and where I saw the ad about *Final Conflict*. I tried getting to the website, but could not. I wanted to fill out the form, but I guess the devil was stronger than I. After more than two months, I finally conquered him.

I attend church on a regular basis but have been here on the ship for the past ten months, I am at a loss. My girlfriend, on the other hand, does not attend. We are not living together.

I am wondering if these lessons can also be sent to her in Jamaica, West Indies, so she can also study the Word.

DT, Florida

Enclosed please find a small offering to help on your wonderful work. I'm a Seventh-day Adventist for close to a half century and I've seen the deterioration of our church. The leaders are more interested in numbers than quality, but the divine Providence is far more wise and will call everything to judgment. Place me in your roll of donors and every month I will send an offering as I have been doing to other Seventh-day Adventist programs, since I'm on a fixed income. Please keep up the good work, and pray for me also.

AP, New Jersey

I'm currently incarcerated. Nothing serious, just an argument with my neighbor. It has been a blessing in disguise though. I have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. I will be out soon. If you know where I could write to obtain a Bible and other

Christian literature or books to help me in my new life I'd appreciate it. I can't contribute at this time, but it won't be long before I'm back on my feet. If you have a prayer list, please include my name on it.

EW, Tennessee

I am 18 years old. The reason I'm writing to you is to get more information in my Christian walk. A friend gave me *Final Conflict Between Truth and Error*, which is really good. I saw in the back the free Bible studies. I would like if you could help me get closer to Christ.

EL, Indiana

I really like your Bible study guides—and my sister does, too. My friend would like to enroll in it, too.

Please pray for me and my family. I have chronic pancreas, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart problems. I'm only 40 years old. I have to take two hands full of medicine a day. I know God can heal me, but the devil keeps me down with a lot of pain, and I go in and out of the hospital. My sister has pancreas problems too. I love the Lord with all my heart. My family—husband, children, and grandchildren are not saved. Your letter lifted me up a lot. Thank you.

GM, Louisiana

I am a new contributor to Hope International, though I have been reading your magazine *Our Firm Foundation* for over a year now and always find it very spiritual and informative. I am sending you these funds in the hope that you will use them as they were meant to be used—in the spreading forth of the Word of God. After seeing the work that you do, I truly believe you have the right message, and I pray that you keep up the wonderful work of spreading the straight testimony, so that we may soon see the glorious appearing of our Lord.

HW, Canada

From Overseas

I'm a Sundaykeeper since I was born, and from now on, I made up

my decision to follow the Lord Jesus and to keep His holy Sabbath. It is very interesting to read *Our Firm Foundation*. Always my family finds it hard to receive and other Christian books. I am requesting you help me in my missionary work with a gift subscription for the magazine.

WH, Vanuatu

I send greetings from Remnant Evangelistic Ministries to you in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have been our helpers in evangelism since quite a long time with your booklets named *Behold, He Cometh*, *Health For the Nations*, *Earth's Final Warning*, and others. But it seems it has been cut off suddenly for quite a long time. I'm with the team praying for you. If there's any problem, you can tell us and give us reasons. I'm waiting if there's no problem but address change then give us the correct address. Also, if you still publish and distribute them, then please send about 200–500 copies of each booklet and other books if available.

KK, Ghana

I thank you very much. I received the literature you sent me—books and magazines. The magazines you sent me are of great assistance to me in my work of evangelization. Those to whom I have distributed are very much appreciating the messages contained in them. I request you to send more magazines and other material available, if possible.

JW, Kenya

Thanks very much for your efforts of giving provision to the lacking as myself. All that I received has been put into good use, covering all parts expected—that's education and evangelism.

Being an evangelist, I have been meeting a lot of brothers and sisters who are hungering and thirsting to have Bibles, and I am hereby requesting any, either new or old Bibles, to provide to them, and any kind of witnessing material that may be available.

KF, Zambia



New! Learning to Walk With God

Dwight Hall

Dwight Hall was looking for a practical, heart-changing religion. He wanted to walk with God like Enoch, Moses, and Elijah—but He didn't know how. "If the Bible is true," he wondered, "then where are the people that are walking the walk?"

This search is not new, of course. But it was this search—for peace, meaning, and purpose—that impelled a teenage Dwight Hall in and out of two Christian academies, into the Airborne Rangers, and eventually into starting a successful manufacturing company.

Many thought Dwight was living the great "American Dream." He had a beautiful wife, three lovely children, a very nice home, and a successful business. But though the money was good and alcohol helped to soothe his nerves, something was still dreadfully wrong.

Your heart will thrill as you read Dwight's story—and Deb's, too—a story of power and grace. If God hears even the prayer of a drunken soldier, He can solve your problems as well.

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This story is not about a church, denomination, or Bible-thumping theory. It's a journey—a path that leads Dwight, his wife, and their children to a better way of life. It's about learning to walk with God—something you can begin doing right where you are.

Today, Dwight shares his faith through the ministry of Remnant Publications. Since 1985, Remnant publications has printed and distributed millions of books and pieces of literature with the sole purpose of leading people closer to Christ. Dwight has shared his testimony and has given seminars across the United States, as well as South America, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

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