



Our Firm Foundation

SOUND AN ALARM IN MY HOLY MOUNTAIN

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The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary



To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice

“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” 1 Samuel 15:22-23.

The story of king Saul is a very tragic episode in the history of the ancient church. Israel had asked for a king. They wanted to be like the nations around them.

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.” 1 Samuel 8:4-8.

God granted their request. In their determination to be like the other nations around them, they

lost their protection of the theocracy—God’s rule. Saul’s disobedience, his rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy by the prophet Samuel, and his rejection of God’s way, His Word, and doing his own way is recorded for us today.

Today, many members and leaders of the remnant church are rejecting God’s way—His Word—and doing their own way. What a tragedy!

Why has the church today been unable to finish the great commission of the gospel—to preach the third angel’s message in verity, which is victory over all temptation by the power of the Holy Spirit?—See *Evangelism*, 190.

Why has the latter rain been delayed more than 100 years?—See *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 194. We have been told that God was ready to pour out His great power in the latter rain soon after 1888:

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 363 (1892).

Four years after the Minneapolis Conference, the latter rain experience was still offered to the church, but again leaders rejected the experience of justification by faith that was necessary for the completion of the gospel’s mission.

Just as assuredly as Saul’s rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy—

God’s words, His orders, His directions—brought a terrible apostasy into Israel, so in this final generation we have delayed the latter rain, the completion of the gospel’s commission. This is apostasy at its worst, for we—the church’s leaders, pastors, and laity—continue to follow our own ways and refuse to follow the direction of the Lord. If we continue in this path, we will receive the curse given in Jeremiah 17:5: “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.”

Let us remember that God slew 50,070 men for their disobedience—looking into the ark—in Samuel’s day. See 1 Samuel 6:19.

For the same reason—disobedience to the commands of God—the majority of leaders, pastors, and laity will be lost. Let us remember, “There is no such thing as following Christ unless you refuse to gratify inclination and determine to obey God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 515.

The condition of salvation is the very same today as it was in the days of king Saul and the church in the Old and New Testaments—obedience to all known truth without a single compromise.

Let each of us determine with all of our heart to obey all that God says, relying upon His divine power, that Christ might say to you and me, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Matthew 25:21. ✨



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

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SOUND AN ALARM IN MY HOLY MOUNTAIN

Russell Standish

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.” Joel 2:1-2.

In the beautiful poetic form of the ancient Hebrew language, God commands His servants to undertake a most distasteful task. The initial line of this poem states, “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion.”

Zion is God’s church. The term “blow the trumpet” indicates the presentation of a message of dire warning. Here God’s words apply to the last days of earth’s history—the days in which we are now living. His command is to sound a warning in His church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The second line of the poem states, “And sound an alarm in my holy mountain.” Here we see the repetition of the precise command in alternate words, as befitted ancient Hebrew poetry. The alarm is the trumpet of warning, and the holy mountain, of course, is Zion, God’s church. The next two lines are also poetic in form: “For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.”

Here is evidence that this is a message for the time just prior to the close of probation. We are now in the day of salvation—the day of probation. Very soon, probation will close and the awesome day of the Lord will commence. Its significance may be judged by two further poetic lines found in verse two, “A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.”

God’s church has been established to take the three angels’ messages and the loud cry message to every corner of the earth. This message is to be presented to those who know not the truth, whether they belong to the churches of Babylon or whether they have no Christian profession whatsoever. Why, we may well ask, does God command also the presentation of a message of great urgency within His beloved church?

Why an Alarm in the Church?

The reasons that God commands us to sound an alarm in His holy mountain are: firstly, because our church exists in alarming times; and secondly, our church is experiencing alarming conditions within it. Apostasy has become accepted as normative. Blasphemous celebration services are widespread. Institutions within God’s church are closing at an alarming rate.

Destruction of the Spirit of Prophecy is fulfilling Sister White’s statement, “The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48. Ministers and laity now dare to denigrate the Spirit of Prophecy. Others claim to believe it, and yet, never read it. Still others, while claiming to espouse a sacred view of the Testimonies, refuse to accept any writings of Sister White after 1884. Others, although their numbers are yet few, claim that although the Spirit of Prophecy is reliable, only those messages presented after 1898 are relevant for Seventh-day Adventists in the twenty-first century. Is it any wonder that God urges upon His servants their duty to sound an alarm in His holy mountain?

This is an unpleasant duty. Never in the history of God’s church have such warnings been received with popular gratitude. It is popular to preach about the apostasy that was in God’s church just prior to the destruction of Babylon. No ire is aroused for those who refer to the gross apostasy at the time of the First Advent. However, speak about contemporary apostasy and contemporary sins, and then the ire of the class who refuse to follow the path of sanctification is greatly aroused. Satan ensures this. Any servant of

God accepting this commission to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain may expect to receive stern condemnation and to be largely banned from the pulpits of the church. Yet, no true servant of God should, on such grounds, cease to fulfill this solemn divine command.

There is a Laodicean message to be given within God's church because the work will never be completed until every Seventh-day Adventist has been afforded the opportunity to hear the precious truths of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many today are denied such privileges by preachers who have "betrayed their trust." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 211. Nevertheless, it is the fearful nature of the day of the Lord that urges the conscience of true servants to sound the alarm in God's holy mountain.

"And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" Verse 11.

Lest ministers, elders, deacons and others commissioned by God to His service do not notice the import of verse 1, God repeats His command:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet." Verses 15-16.

What a command! The whole purpose of camp meetings is to fulfill this command. Holy convocations should be eagerly sought by faithful people on every continent. The camp meetings of Hope International, Hartland Institute, Remnant Herald, and many other faithful self-supporting organizations are specifically designed to fulfill the command of verse 16 above.

There is a word of warning associated with God's command. Some who are unsanctified in heart

point out the sins of the church almost with an exultant air — "We've caught them again!" Such an attitude bespeaks nothing of love for God or His church. God sets forth the spirit in which these holy convocations will be held:

"Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" Verse 17.

It is with love for the Lord in the hearts of faithful workers that this alarm must be set forth. True presenters of this message of alarm and warning will empathize with the sense of earnestness and despair in the heart of the prophet Jeremiah 2,500 years ago. They,

none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Verse 22.

This is God's assessment of His church today. How He must grieve over those whom He has especially privileged to receive the highest and holiest calling of mankind, the commission to undertake completing the task on earth.

Eternally Lost!

That which is alarming goes far beyond the fearful desecration of God's standards, His law, His holy precepts, His saving grace. That which now motivates the servants of God to sound an alarm in His holy mountain is the knowledge of the unspeakable remorse that will soon be felt by many Seventh-day Adventists who will realize too late that they are lost — and lost eternally.

It is the fearful nature of the day of the Lord that urges the conscience of true servants to sound the alarm in God's holy mountain.

too, will cry out, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?" Jeremiah 4:19-21.

How long will we see the standard raised — the banner of Prince Emmanuel? — That banner is being cast down into the dust as standard after standard is ridiculed and breached within God's precious church. It is time to hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, for scripture states:

"For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have

Sister White set forth that which will be the depth upon the mind and upon the emotions, of the knowledge that one is lost, and lost without hope of salvation. The frenzy of these people is described in the words, "Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead

for them, and cry, 'Spare, spare the sinner a little longer.'" *Early Writings*, 281.

Imagine the utter despair of Seventh-day Adventists who have had a knowledge of the truth and who now realize that they are lost. The Holy Spirit has been removed from the earth except for the lives of the 144,000. Lost Seventh-day Adventists will then be totally under the control of Satan whose only motivation is hate. There will

raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. As a parent, I have great pity for God's people who are struggling with this problem. At least when I was a lad, ours was a home where the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the highest principles of the faith were uplifted. This, too, was true in the Sabbath School, in the Junior Missionary Volunteer (Pathfinder) meetings, in the church services, in the church school, in the afternoon

parents. There is growing within God's church the view that if we are too strict in adherence to our principles of faith and standards that our children will be lost to the church. That may happen; however, on the other hand, if heaven is to be the home of our families, then we must uphold those principles and uphold them without deviation—not in a belligerent spirit, but in an understanding one with our arms around our children and with a tone of deep love in our voices. We must sit down with them and explain to them the dire consequences of breaching God's holy standards.

Today, many parents cannot withstand the pressure. "Oh Dad, all the other children in the church school are watching these television programs; their parents think it is all right, why can't we?" Eventually, some parents capitulate to that type of pressure, in the misguided hope that their acquiescence will help the child to remain in the church. He may; yet, will he be a child of God? These will be the parents, who in hate, turn on their children with words like "It's all your fault that we are lost. If you had not continued to pester me, we may have all been saved now." The hate in the voices of the parents in their distress at their lost condition will be beyond anything that we experience today.

The same children will retort to their parents, "It's all your fault that we are lost. If only you had put your foot down, we might be in the kingdom now!" What a tragedy! What an alarming prospect! Oh, young people reading this article, do not put such pressure upon your moms and dads. Thank your parents for upholding the standards because they want you in the kingdom of Heaven. Recognize this as the measure of their love for you.

False Shepherds

Again, we see in the following words the terrifying plight of those who will realize after probation closes that they are lost:

Imagine the utter despair of Seventh-day Adventists who have had a knowledge of the truth and who now realize that they are lost.

be no mother who tenderly loves her little baby, no son or daughter who loves his or her parents. Hate will be universal. No wonder we are informed that it is "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation"! Daniel 12:1.

Those who have spurned faithful preachers of truth and presenters of God's warning messages given during the day of salvation will then seek such men and women in a futile effort to hear the messages which these lost Seventh-day Adventists formerly spurned. Those they despised, those they denounced as critical, those they assessed as fanatical are sought out in the futile hope that they will now point to the Source of salvation. But it will be forever too late.

Lost Families

The interaction that occurs between families is clearly exposed:

"Many of the wicked were greatly enraged as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of fearful agony. Parents were bitterly reproaching their children, and children their parents, brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers." *Ibid.*, 282.

Why will parents bitterly reproach their children?—We live in an age when it is so difficult to

Missionary Volunteer programs, in the *Sabbath School Quarterlies*, in the youth magazines, and in other denominationally published periodicals and books. But such former sources of truth are now, in many cases, the enemies of truth, taking our young people away from their eternal salvation.

The lowered standards countenanced in many local churches and promoted by many conference youth leaders encourage the young people to believe that their parents are depriving them of something good and worthwhile when they uphold the high and holy standards set forth in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Churches today promote watching movies; attending sporting events; listening to rock music; reading novels; and participating in dramas, puppetry, and clowning.

Think of the pressure upon godly parents as they strive to raise children in purity. In many instances, the standards of many of our churches and institutions are now lower than those permitted in society at large 50 years ago.

The Peril of Indulgence

What is happening today is that young people are much more apt to put very severe pressure upon their

“Loud, wailing cries were heard in every direction, ‘It was you who kept me from receiving the truth which would have saved me from this awful hour.’ 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.” Ibid.

Today, many church members flatter and fawn over pastors who never reprove sin. They love to trust in such ministers thinking that their salvation is assured if they are “loyal” to their minister. Such would do well to read the words of Inspiration:

“He who trusts in man not only leans upon a broken reed, and gives Satan an opportunity to introduce himself, but he hurts the one in whom the trust is placed; he becomes lifted up in his estimation of himself, and loses the sense of his dependence upon God. Just as soon as man is placed where God should be, he loses his purity, his vigor, his confidence in God’s power. Moral confusion results, because his powers become unsanctified and perverted. He feels competent to judge his fellowmen, and he strives unlawfully to be a god over them.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 376.

Here we see the folly of this course. Many ministers today believe that they are the masters rather than the servants of the church because many of the members put their utmost dependence and trust upon their pastor. Dare we so hurt our ministers?

We need to have a very sincere love for them, these ministers, for their fate is beyond our present comprehension. We who are ministers and elders of the church should in no wise feel complacent

in the message that we have just read. It is time that we should stand for the truths of God and for His righteousness.

Why Have We Not Seen More Terrorism?

Many Seventh-day Adventists have little understanding how near we are to the end of this earth’s history. The urgency of preparing our lives in holiness and sanctification is well nigh ignored – if not openly opposed. How our people need to have their vision enlarged to see the mighty standards of God’s law! Each one of us must recognize our great need. The events of September 11, 2001, opened the eyes of some, but as

every possible opportunity for salvation, for “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9.

I have often wondered about the next two verses in Revelation 7:

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Verses 2–3.

The great question, as we see how near we are to the close of probation, is “Why did such terrorism not happen decades ago?”

time has passed, those impressions have faded.

Some Seventh-day Adventists even joined the chorus of those who cried, “Why did God let it happen?” This question is most improper. It imputes upon God the terrible tragedy of that day. The great question, as we see how near we are to the close of probation, is “Why did such terrorism not happen decades ago?” For along with New York, the cities of the world are vile.

There can be only one reason why that which transpired in New York City has not occurred in numerous cities around the world. And that reason is to be found in Revelation 7:1: “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”

Angels which excel in strength are holding back the winds of strife so that God can give mankind

My question has been, Why did God need to send a fifth angel in order to instruct the four powerful angels as to their duty? – The answer to this question is found in a vision that Sister White was given on January 5, 1849 during prayer with Brother Belden’s family at Rocky Hill, Connecticut. The details of that vision are recorded below:

“I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, ‘My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!’ Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, ‘Hold!’

Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.' " *Early Writings*, 38. (Emphasis in the original.)

As I have read the account of this vision my mind has been struck with the wonderful pity God has for the remnant: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:13-14.

The passage from *Early Writings* quoted above depicts a scene transpiring just before the close of probation. We know it is prior to the close of probation because Christ is still clothed in priestly garments. Notice the anguish in His voice as He pleads before the

pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads." Ibid.

Often we forget that just as God gives us discretionary power, so He gives it also to the angels. Apparently, the angels judged that the cup of God's iniquity had been filled and were about to let the winds of strife loose with the consequent pouring of the plagues upon the earth. Christ looked down in pity upon His remnant, you, and me. What a God! Many of us were not ready, and He wanted us in His kingdom.

with the ancient men, those who have stood as the spiritual guardians of the people! See *ibid.*, vol. 5, 210-211. What a sobering thought—that Christ looked down upon His people and saw that we were not yet ready, and in great pity He gave to us another little sliver of probationary time!

Since that time my prayer has been that I will not fritter away this last opportunity to be ready. I desire heaven with all my heart. How I love Him because at that time He had pity on Russell Roland Standish.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is why we must sound an alarm in God's holy mountain. There is an urgency in the times in which we live. If ever there was a time when there were wars and rumors of wars, it is now. If ever there was a time for each of us to put everything right between himself and the Lord, *today is that time.*

It is my urgent prayer with God's people around the world, that we make our calling and election sure. We need to humble our hearts. We need to follow Christ in the beauty of holiness. We need to serve Him with unfeigned hearts. We need to be ready to become a part of the 144,000. Probation surely is about to close for the living. We remember that the judgment of the living commences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for we have had the light. Furthermore, let us do all in our power to arouse our dear brothers and sisters in darkness within our own beloved church and to enlighten the ministry and the leadership to the ominous moment in which we are living. May God bless each reader and give you grace to serve Him with your entire heart. This is my prayer for God's people today, for I want heaven more than anything else, and I want to share it with God's wonderful people. Thank God for His great mercy, His unfathomable pity toward us.

This must ever be our motive, to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain. ❀

Could it be that the signal for the commencement of the last crisis upon this old earth was the destruction of the twin towers?

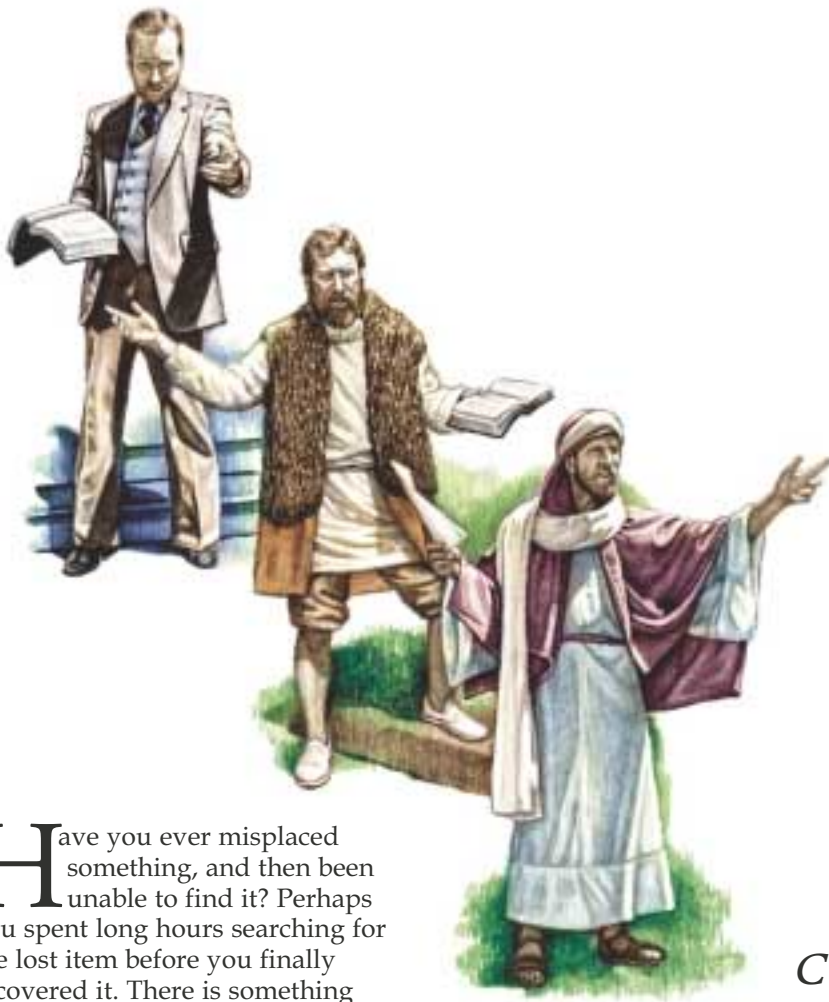
Father, "My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!" God wants to make atonement for each one of us. Only in eternity will we know how vital was the message sent by the fifth angel crying with the loud voice, "*Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold!* until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads." Like us, Sister White was not absolutely certain of the meaning of this vision, but that meaning was conveyed to her:

"I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and

The Last Crisis

Could it be that September 11, 2001, was the very time when this event transpired? You will remember that, while visiting New York City, Sister White received a vision of the fiery destruction of lofty buildings. It was recorded in *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 11-17, and was entitled "The Last Crisis." Could it be that the signal for the commencement of the last crisis upon this old earth was the destruction of the twin towers? Certainly, in view of this possibility, the events of September 11, 2001, should indicate to every one of us that the close of probation may be very close.

If the restraining angels thought that the time had come, how much more significant should this be for us whose eternal destinies will be determined at that time! How much more significant for we pastors who will be the first to be judged, for judgment commences



Where Are the Elijahs?

Cody Francis

Have you ever misplaced something, and then been unable to find it? Perhaps you spent long hours searching for the lost item before you finally recovered it. There is something that the God of heaven is missing—not something that He has misplaced, but something that today He is seeking for diligently. He is searching our earth, desiring to find what He needs before Christ can return to take His faithful people home.

We are living in the most exciting time possible—a time which the prophets, the righteous men, and the patriarchs desired to see. What a privilege and an awesome responsibility it is to live in the last days of this world’s history and to have such a vital message to give to the entire world! In His mercy God has given us different illustrations in His Word to help us comprehend what is about to break upon us—to help us be prepared for the days ahead. The stories, history, and illustrations in the Bible were recorded specifically for us. The Apostle Paul wrote, “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.” 1 Corinthians 10:11.

I often marvel at God’s Word. We can study the lessons in it again and again, and each time the Lord gives us new insights and a new depth of understanding. We will never exhaust them. What a wonderful proof of the Bible’s inspiration. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24:35.

In this article, we will discover what God is missing by looking at a familiar incident in Old Testament history that holds many important lessons for us today. In 1 Kings, chapter 16, we read of how the kingdom of Israel had fallen into a desperate condition. After Jeroboam broke away from David’s kingdom, the apostasy among the ten tribes grew deeper and deeper until the moral state of the nation was at an all-time low. In verses 30–31, it is recorded, “And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him

to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.”

Ahab did not just follow in the wicked course of Jeroboam, he went to the priest of Baal, Ethbaal which means “with Baal,” and took to wife the daughter of this pagan high priest. The result of this unholy union was that Jezebel led almost the entire nation into Baal worship. Almost all of Israel was seduced into compromising with heathen sun worship; and they quickly became so debased that the vilest of pagan rites were commonplace.

The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, elaborates upon this sad part of Israel’s history pointing out its broader application. In the message given to the church at Thyatira, Christ says, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth

herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." Revelation 2:20. This prophecy directly parallels the time of the Dark Ages when the Roman Catholic Church and the corrupt government she controlled seduced God's people to once again compromise with sun worship. There are also striking parallels for our day:

"Through the long centuries that have passed since Elijah's time, the record of his lifework has brought inspiration and courage to those who have been called to stand for the right in the midst of apostasy. And for us, 'upon whom the ends of the world are come' (1 Corinthians 10:11), it has special significance. History is being repeated. The world today has its Ahabs and its Jezebels." *Prophets and Kings*, 177. The apostate churches of today, like Jezebel of

Jezebel and the priests of Baal whom she had brought to power.

Who are the Jezebels and Ahabs in our world today?—The apostate churches are acting out the part of Jezebel as they seduce the people to follow the beast power. Through their work behind the scenes, they are forcing governments to prepare to enforce their dogmas:

"The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected." *The Great Controversy*, 592.

the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

Think for a moment about Elijah, dwelling in the mountains of Gilead—unknown to society, nonetheless, known and loved of God. From his mountain home he sees the gross apostasy of Israel, and he pleads with the Lord to do something to check its awful progression. In his anguish, he asks the Lord to send judgments if that is what is necessary to wake Israel from her deep, carnal slumber. During his prayer, a message comes to him, Your prayer has been answered; go tell Ahab the judgment that is to come because he has led My people into apostasy. Would that have been an easy thing to do?—Elijah could have thought of many excuses: How am I going to get an audience with Ahab? Will he listen to me? Will it do any good? Yet, without question or hesitation, Elijah obeyed the command of God and marched in before the monarch of the land to give his fearful message.

Does a stern and startling message need to be given today?—Inspiration tells us, "In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 321. The message for today is to be more pointed than that borne by Elijah to vacillating Ahab or by John the Baptist to the corrupt religious leaders of his day. The message must be more pointed because the darkness of apostasy is even deeper now than in those times.

Even though Elijah bore God's message with unswerving fidelity, the people scoffed at and ridiculed him. The religious leaders urged them not to worry about the message from this "fanatic"—to have confidence in Baal. As the judgments continued for one year, two years, then three years, rather than repenting, the people blamed Elijah for the disaster. The whole

Like compromising King Ahab of old, the rulers and legislators of today will yield to popular demand—even at the sacrifice of justice and liberty.

old, are influencing nearly the entire world to worship the beast power and reverence the day of the sun instead of God's holy Sabbath day.

A Cowardly King and a Faithful Messenger

Consider the parallels we see between the man Ahab and the civil rulers of our day. The Bible says that this king did more wickedly than all the wicked kings before him. The biblical record shows a struggling man who at times tried to do right and even repented occasionally for his wicked ways; however, he never found the moral courage to step out from his cowardly, vacillating course. As the head of state, he was constantly influenced, if not directed by the wicked counsel of

Like compromising King Ahab of old, the rulers and legislators of today will yield to popular demand—even at the sacrifice of justice and liberty. Our government will yield, as did weak Ahab, in order to please the Jezebels of today, which will result in the deepest apostasy ever known and will be followed by the swift judgments of God—just as happened in Israel millennia ago.

A Startling Message

In the days of ancient Ahab and Jezebel, however, a bright spot appeared on the scene. A man dared to take a stand, dared to proclaim an uncompromising message from God. He is described in 1 Kings 17:1, "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As

nation echoed Ahab's accusation, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 1 Kings 18:17. Not seeing their sinful condition and not realizing that God had sent judgments to punish them for their wicked course, they blamed the messenger whom God had chosen.

The time is coming in our land, as the judgments increase and calamities become more and more frequent, that the world will blame all of the disasters upon the Sabbathkeepers:

"The great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity. Thus the accusation urged of old against the servant of God will be repeated and upon grounds equally well established: 'And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.' Verses 17-18. As the wrath of the people shall be excited by false charges, they will pursue a course toward God's ambassadors very similar to that which apostate Israel pursued toward Elijah." *The Great Controversy*, 590.

Are we ready to have a similar course pursued against us as was pursued against Elijah? He was hunted from coast to coast. Even the king joined in the search. The nations around Israel were required to give their oath that Elijah

was not in their territory; such was the hatred that was shown toward God's messenger. Many other prophets of the Lord were slain during that time. Yet, when the time appointed by God was fulfilled, Elijah came again without hesitation before the king and all the people to demand that they make a decision either for Baal or for the true God. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Verse 21.

The time is soon to come when everyone in our world will be brought to make a decision between the mark of the beast or the seal of God, between following the God of heaven—the Creator of heaven and earth—or following the beast. As God's faithful servants proclaim the third angel's message,

Where are the Elijahs? Where are those who are willing to give the message of stern rebuke regardless of the consequences?

all will have the opportunity to choose which side they will be on during the last final conflict—just as the inhabitants of Israel were brought to take a stand upon Mt. Carmel.

More Parallels From Elijah's Day

After God unmistakably revealed His power on Mt. Carmel and the people were constrained to confess His sovereignty, all 850 of the prophets and priests of Baal were destroyed. Have you ever tried to think of what it will be like for the false ministers, just before Christ's second coming, who have led thousands and millions astray when it becomes clear to all what they have done?—"The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemna-

tion upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. 'We are lost!' they cry, 'and you are the cause of our ruin;' and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies." *Ibid.*, 655-656. What a solemn warning this is for all who profess to be shepherds of God's people!

The parallels in the history of Elijah do not end here. After Elijah's faithful life of unwavering service for God, he was translated to heaven without tasting death. Those today who are faithful in giving the final message to this world are admonished to seek to follow in Elijah's steps. We must strive with all of our powers to be a part of the 144,000.

The history of Elijah in connection with Ahab and Jezebel is a fascinating illustration of our day. Now, let us see, what is the God of heaven missing today?

The Greatest Want of the World

It is not difficult to recognize the Ahabs (cowardly leaders afraid to take a stand for justice and equity) and the Jezebels (apostate church leaders who confuse the people with false doctrines until they are

drunk with Babylon's wine).
However, *where are the Elijahs?*
Where are those who are willing to give the message of stern rebuke regardless of the consequences?

"Elijah, amid the general apostasy, did not seek to hide the fact that he served the God of heaven. Baal's prophets numbered four hundred and fifty, his priests, four hundred, and his worshipers were thousands; yet Elijah did not try to make it appear that he was on the popular side. He grandly stood alone. . . . The result was that the Lord God, who ruleth in the heavens, was vindicated, and the Baal worshipers were slain. Where are the Elijahs of today?" *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 526-527.

"God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist—men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have." *Prophets and Kings*, 142.

What is the greatest want in the world and in the church today?—It is not finances, for God owns everything. It is not institutions or learning. No, the greatest want in our world today is men—"Men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." *Education*, 57.

Where are the Elijahs today?
The stage is set; all the players are ready, except for God's people. What God is missing is not power; it is not resources; it is not means. He is missing men and women who are willing to stand up like Elijah and give a message like Elijah gave. Are we doing all in our power to give that warning message? God is waiting upon you and me. He is waiting upon us; and He does not wait alone. The world is dying for the lack of our message, waiting for someone to bring them a message of hope. The angels, that innumerable host of Heaven, are waiting with earnestness and eagerness to come to our aid and finally to accompany our Lord and King in triumphant return. Sadly, they wait on—waiting for you and me.

"Why has the Lord so long delayed His coming? The whole host of Heaven is waiting to fulfill the last work for this lost world, and yet the work waits. It is because the few, who profess to have the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps, have not become burning and shining lights in the world. It is because missionaries are few. Many voices are saying, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' Matthew 24:48. Have we no incentive to work? Does not death enter the doors of your neighbors and friends, telling you that your probation is fast hastening to its close?" *Review and Herald*, March 27, 1894.

It is not time for us to look around and count what we are doing, but to look around and ask, What more can I do? Each of us has a work to do; and, like Daniel, each of us is to stand in our lot and give an Elijah message in the way which God calls us to give it. We shall have to answer before the judgment bar of God if we neglect to take up this Heaven-ordained work and continue to keep all of Heaven waiting for the Elijahs to take the scene.

"Remember that those who know the truth for this time and yet confine their efforts to their own churches, refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 35. What is it that the God of heaven is missing?—It is the Elijahs who will give the message of God regardless of the consequences.

As we look around us and see heartache, suffering, and death, do we realize that all of it would come to an end very soon if we would do the work that God commands us to do? Have we lost sight of heaven and the reward prepared for the faithful? Where are the Elijahs who will obey God without hesitation? Our Father in heaven is waiting. Jesus is waiting, pleading His blood yet a little while longer. The angels of Heaven are waiting to cooperate with human instrumentalities to give power to the work. The world is waiting, languishing in sin and misery. Will you answer His call to be an Elijah, today? ✠

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Blessed Is He That Considereth the Poor

Ellen G. White

The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7. There never was a time when there was greater need for the exercise of mercy than today. The poor are all around us, the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowing, and those who are ready to perish. Those who have acquired riches have acquired them through the exercise of the talents that were given them of God; but these talents for the acquiring of property were given to them that they might relieve those who are in poverty. These gifts were bestowed upon men by Him who maketh His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, that by the fruitfulness of the earth men might have abundant supplies for all their need. The fields have been blessed of God, and of His goodness He hath prepared for the poor. See Psalm 68:10.

In the providence of God events have been so ordered that the poor are always with us, in order that there may be a constant exercise in the human heart of the attributes of mercy and love. Man is to cultivate the tenderness and compassion of

Christ; he is not to separate himself from the sorrowing, the afflicted, the needy, and the distressed. Job declares: "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Job 29:11-13.

How many there are who claim to be followers of Christ, yet who do not follow Him in truth. They do not manifest the sympathy and love of Christ by being merciful and compassionate. They do not make the widow's heart sing for joy; they treat the fatherless with coldness, indifference, or contempt. Said Job: "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out." Verses 14-16. This was an evidence that Job had righteousness that was after Christ's order.

Through Jesus men may possess a spirit of tender pity toward the

needy and distressed. They may have the mind of Christ. He was the Son of God, rich in heavenly treasures, yet for our sake He became poor, He descended to the lowest humiliation and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that He might exalt us to be joint heirs with Himself. The whole world was in need of that which Christ alone could give them. He did not withdraw Himself from those who called upon Him for help. He did not do as many now do, say, "I wish they would not trouble me with their affairs, I want to hoard up my means, to invest it in houses and lands." Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, turned from the splendor of His heavenly home, and in the gracious purpose of His heart He demonstrated the character of God to men throughout the world. The requirement of God from those who claim to be His children is that they be doers of His Word, that they follow His example, represent the life of Christ in tender, pitying love to the world; that they reflect His image.

Jesus says, Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful. See Luke 6:36. To pursue the course that Jesus did,

to follow in His divine footsteps, is not in harmony with the feelings of the natural heart; but if we are Christians, we shall practice the words and works of Christ, who gave Himself in order to ransom an apostate race. The root of selfishness has a firm growth in many hearts, and worldliness and pride spring from this root; but selfishness is not a Christian characteristic; it is an attribute of the great apostate. No one can live for himself and at the same time be united with Christ. Conformity to the world, attachment to the world, manifests a decided denial of Christ.

sympathies will be withered, mercy will not be exercised, and the rich man will be in imminent danger of losing his soul.

Christ says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Mark 10:23. Unless the grace of Christ controls the heart, the tendency of the rich man is to grow more proud, more self-sufficient, more self-righteous. He acts as if he were made of better flesh and more costly blood than his poorer brother. But Christ looks on, and says, "All ye are brethren." Matthew 23:8. There is no respect of persons with God. The rich man has plenty, and makes no effort to

that his goods are entrusted of the Lord, that he may relieve the needy, comfort the distressed, feed the fatherless, and make the widow's heart sing for joy.

But instead of using their means for the Master, how many embezzle it, invest it for themselves, furnishing their homes with rich carpets, fine furniture, and multiplying lands and houses to glorify themselves in the earth, while the needy call upon them in vain. If they do anything for the poor, they call them paupers, and look upon them with contempt. They do not consider from whence comes their entrusted capital and that they are all the time receiving unnumbered blessings from God. If He should withhold His beneficence, they would be numbered with the poor. We are all dependent upon the benevolence of a gracious God. The day will come when those who have cherished selfishness and covetousness, who have defrauded the poor, who have withdrawn mercy and love from them, will be made manifest.

The important question is not, "Is a man rich?" But the important question is, "What use does he make of his riches?"

The Value of a Man

The rich are not to be favored above the poor. How inconsistent is it to make favorites of men because the Lord has entrusted His goods to them to be wisely dispensed to those who are needy. Unless the rich manifest the spirit that moved Christ to come to our world to seek and to save that which was lost, they are none of His. They are training under another general. The important question is not, "Is a man rich?" But the important question is, "What use does he make of his riches?"

The value and character of a man is determined by the use to which he puts his entrusted talents. Does he do good in this life? Does he seek to bless humanity, to build up the kingdom of Christ in the world? Shut away the rich from the poor in large and costly dwellings, make churches too splendid for the entrance of the poor, so that the rich man may not be brought in contact with the distressing needs of the fatherless and the widow, and the result will be that his

put himself in the poor man's place; but because he does not consider the poor, he becomes unfeeling, indifferent, and hard-hearted. He does not try to understand the conflicts, temptations, and struggles of his poor brethren, and mercy dries up in his heart.

The poor are robbed daily of the education and training they should have concerning the tender mercies with which the Lord would have them regarded; for he has made ample provision that they should be comforted with the necessities of life. They are compelled to feel the poverty that narrows life, and they are often tempted to become envious, jealous, and full of evil surmisings. Their sympathies are alienated from their more prosperous neighbors; but when men are born again, when they are truly converted, old things pass away, and behold, all things become new. A new moral taste is created, and he that was exalted because God had entrusted him with means will seek to aid and exalt others. His responsibilities will seem weighty upon him and will humble his heart before God; for he will realize

Considering the Needs of the Poor and the Cause of God

God has placed property in the hands of men in order that they may learn to be merciful, to be His almoners¹ to relieve the suffering of His fallen creatures. Further than this, they are to consider the wants of the cause of God, and keep His treasury supplied according to the gifts bestowed upon them. Satan has had power to make men haughty and like himself in character, so that the money given them of God has been used for the gratification of self, and the cry of the poor has reached unto God against them; for they have been unmerciful in their conduct toward the needy. Whatever we spend for that which is not necessary for health and godliness will be charged as robbery against God; because all that was spent for the gratification of self someone needed to obtain necessary food and clothing.

Those who have the Spirit of Christ will see all men through the

eyes of divine compassion. No matter what may be the social position, no matter what his wealth or how high his education, if a man is in Christ, he will not be unkind, unmerciful, hard-hearted, and merciless. Since every soul is entirely dependent upon God for every blessing he enjoys, how patient, how merciful, we should be to every creature.

God looked upon man in his lost condition, in his degradation and guilt, and paid the same price for the ransom of the poor and the outcast that he paid to ransom the rich with all his entrusted talents. There is no respect of persons with God. All are candidates for heaven or hell. All need to be taught every hour of God, to be diligent students, that in their time they may make a wise use of their entrusted ability, that they may be living agencies to cooperate with the heavenly intelligences for the saving of men's souls, that with tender hearts, overflowing with mercy and true goodness, they may work as Christ worked.

The apostle says, "We are labourers together with God." 1 Corinthians 3:9. You are to look after the poor; you are to look after the fatherless ones, who need your wisdom, your care, your love, and help. You are to look after the widow. You are to look after those who go in want, in hunger, in rags, who are deprived in principle; for Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost.

God cares for the outcast, and do you think yourself too good, too honorable, to bear the yoke with Christ, in seeking to save the perishing? Will you despise your fellowmen? Will you become an offense to God by slighting and despising His image in man? In distinct lines Christ has revealed the relation of man to his fellowman. Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, has settled that question forever in the example He has set to the world. Ask yourself: Am I my brother's keeper? And who is my neighbor?

There is in society an increasing tendency to separate the rich from

the poor, to set them apart in distinct, definite classes; but this is not at all after God's order, but after the policy of Satan. Heaven looks with pain and amazement upon the scenes that are daily enacted among those who are called Christians. Many cannot read the meaning of the great plan of redemption because Satan has cast his shadow upon their pathway. Many who could be as lights in the world, as the salt of the earth, who command great resources for doing good to their fellowmen, are not in union and sympathy with Christ, that they may be laborers together with God. They have felt that a high value

in is too aristocratic for Jesus to make one in its assembly. This narrow exclusiveness that shuts man away from his brother is an abomination in the sight of God. When men are converted, they will have an abiding sense of the fact that they have been bought with a price. Whatever may be the sum of our talents—whether one, two, or five—not a farthing of our money is to be squandered upon vanity, pride or selfishness.

Every dollar of our accumulation is stamped with the image and superscription of God. As long as there are hungry ones in God's world to be fed, naked ones to be clothed, souls perishing for the

God cares for the outcast, and do you think yourself too good, too honorable, to bear the yoke with Christ, in seeking to save the perishing?

was set upon them, that they were placed above their brethren, and even above their own flesh and blood. They have expended their Lord's goods in lifting up their souls unto vanity, in cultivating pride, envy, self-exaltation. They have surrounded themselves with costly luxuries, and placed themselves in a position which it was impossible for their brethren to reach, and they have left the poor in their poverty to get along as they could without sympathy and love. God looks down from heaven, and hates all these pretensions. He calls for men who have intellect, men who have property, men who have moral worth, to change this order of things.

Let every leader of the people associate with the people; for they really need his help, so that sympathy shall not congeal in the human breast.

No church should become so lifted up that its members shall feel above the poor, and the poor feel that they cannot enter freely into the house of God. A church that is too rich for the poor to feel at home

bread and water of salvation, every unnecessary indulgence, every overplus of capital, pleads for the poor and the naked. It is no light thing to be entrusted with riches, although men treat their position and property as though they were not accountable to anyone, as though it was by their own virtue that they had these things. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

Those who consecrate themselves to God, with their riches, becoming laborers together with him, are the only ones to whom the King of glory will give the benediction: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Verse 21. ✠

Note:

¹ One who distributes alms.

Signs of the Times, June 13 and 20, 1892.



Ellen White's Writings: Their Role and Function

Dennis Priebe

Many questions have been raised in recent years relating to the proper function of Ellen White's writings. What relation do her writings bear to the Bible? Was everything she wrote inspired? Does she have doctrinal authority? What is proper and what is improper in using her writings? It is crucial that we understand the proper place of Ellen G. White's ministry to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that God gave divine inspiration to Ellen G. White. We do not mean occasional prophetic utterances by this assertion, for she claimed that her entire life was guided by Inspiration. A person who claims to be a prophet or to receive prophetic messages and visions must be judged by a different standard from Christians who try to interpret the Scriptures. We must be fair and evaluate the claims made by the claimant to a prophetic office. If a person claims to have received visions or direct guidance from

God, either this person is under divine inspiration or he is not. In Sister White's writings we do not perceive the gray areas that we find in other speakers for God.

A prophet who lies or is misguided misleads a whole people. God does not speak some truth and some error through the same messenger, or we would have no way of knowing which parts of the messages have been given by God and which parts come from the prophet's own ideas. I believe that God exercises very strict control over the content He reveals to His messengers. Either all that the messenger speaks is truth, or the prophet is impelled by Satan or his own ideas.

In the case of Ellen White, the last option—her own ideas—is ruled out by the physical phenomena which could not have been self-induced. Thus her visions had to come either from God or from Satan. Either her visions are genuine or they are a masterpiece of deception, and should be shunned as coming from Satan. No

other option is open for one who claims the prophetic gift and has experienced the physical phenomena which Ellen White did. In fact, she herself stated that her visions came either from God or from Satan. Thus we must accept or reject the messenger as a whole.

All From God?

We must begin with some statements by Ellen White herself, because it is only fair to evaluate the claims made by the person who supposedly received messages from God. We must not make up our own claims for the work of a prophet, but we must evaluate the prophet's own claims. Just what did Ellen White claim for herself?

"I speak that which I have seen, and which I know to be true."
Selected Messages, book 3, 49.

She claimed that she was told, "In all your communications, speak as one to whom the Lord has spoken. He is your authority."
Manuscript Releases, vol. 17, 63.

"Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the

instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world." *Selected Messages*, book 3, 50.

"I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 67.

"Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me." *Ibid.*

I conclude, after reading these statements, that she claimed not to be the source of the messages contained in her articles and her letters. That does not mean that she could not use words from other authors in writing out the messages God had given to her. Because we as a people do not believe in "verbal inspiration," we are concerned here about the source of the *ideas*, the originating point of her messages. Did they come from God, or did they come from her own opinions or the ideas of others?—She expressly said that her messages came from God, that the originating point is God. So, let us remember that her claim is that the messages she wrote are God's messages, not her messages.

Of the Spirit of God, or of the Devil

However, her claim becomes clear and specific. "God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy.

There is no halfway work in the matter. The *Testimonies* are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil." *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 230.

I am very thankful that she was honest with us. She was willing to say that we have to make up our own minds about her writings. She laid out a specific principle to guide our decision. She said that this work was either God's work or it was Satan's work, because if Satan were operative in the prophet, God would cease speaking. God does nothing in partnership with Satan—that is the principle. This statement means her writings either came from God or they came from Satan. They cannot

between the testimonies, defining what is Sister White's human judgment, and what is the Word of the Lord. Everything that sustains their cherished ideas is divine, and the testimonies to correct their errors are human—Sister White's opinions." *Selected Messages*, book 3, 68.

This crucial statement expresses again the principle she asks us to take seriously. If we say that her messages did come from God, but that mixed in with these messages are Ellen White's personal opinions and judgments, that means we become the final arbiter of what is inspired and what is not inspired in her writings. We define what is her

Her writings either came from God or they came from Satan. They cannot be partly from God and partly from Satan, or even partly her own opinions.

be partly from God and partly from Satan, or even partly her own opinions. She was either controlled by God or by Satan. Let us be sure that we are evaluating her own claims. We must not put another claim in the place of the one she has made herself. She has asked us to judge her work and then attribute it to either God or Satan, and I believe that we must accept her challenge.

"Many times in my experience I have been called upon to meet the attitude of a certain class, who acknowledged that the testimonies were from God, but took the position that this matter and that matter were Sister White's opinion and judgment. This suits those who do not love reproof and correction, and who, if their ideas were crossed, have occasion to explain the difference between the human and the divine.

"If the preconceived opinions or particular ideas of some are crossed in being reproved by testimonies, they have a burden at once to make plain their position to discriminate

human judgment and what is the Word of the Lord. Whether we decide on an emotional or an intellectual basis, *we* are determining which parts of Ellen White's writings are authoritative because they are messages from God, and which parts of Ellen White's writings are not authoritative because they are simply her own opinions.

After Ellen White said that some make their own decisions about what was her human judgment and what was the Word of the Lord, she concluded her statement with this crucial sentence. "They [the ones making these distinctions] make of none effect the counsel of God by their tradition." *Ibid.*

Remember, these are the ones who acknowledge that the testimonies are from God. They say, "Yes, Ellen White was an inspired messenger from God. I believe in the inspiration of Ellen White." But when it comes to a specific point that Ellen White made, many people say, "Well, that was just her opinion. That was her own idea."

Ellen White said that this attitude makes of none effect the counsel of God. Do you remember that she also said, "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God"? Ibid., book 1, 48.

Not to *deny*, please notice, but to make of *none effect*. Perhaps the greatest danger we face is not from those who deny the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy, but from those who profess to believe in the inspiration of Ellen White. When it comes to specific points, they take great pains to declare that these were her judgments and opinions. This attitude is the last deception of Satan—making God's testimony of none effect by attributing parts of it to her personal opinion and accepting only those parts which square with our opinions.

No Human Opinions

As a messenger speaking for God, a prophet claims a higher author than an interpreter trying to understand the Word of God. A prophet claims to have direct revelation from God, direct communication from God, regarding God's will for our lives. Thus, we must decide whether a prophet's writings come from God or from Satan. We cannot credit part of the writings to God and part of the writings to human opinion. "In the testimonies sent to — I have given you the light God has given to me. In no case have I given my own judgment or opinion. I have enough to write of what has been shown me, without falling back on my own opinions." *Selected Messages*, book 3, 70. Please notice, "In

listeners will assume that his opinion is the Word of the Lord on that subject. So, if the Lord has not spoken, the prophet must not speak.

In writing to a person wanting guidance, she said, "I am not at liberty to write to our brethren concerning your future work. . . . I have received no instruction regarding the place where you should locate. . . . If the Lord gives me definite instruction concerning you, I will give it you; but I cannot take upon myself responsibilities that the Lord does not give me to bear." Ibid.

Once again, she had to remain silent when the Lord had not spoken. She could speak only when the Lord had spoken. If a prophet speaks with prophetic authority when the Lord has not spoken, then the prophet must be rejected as a false prophet. "This morning I attended a meeting where a select few were called together to consider some questions that were presented to them by a letter soliciting consideration and advice on these subjects. Of some of these subjects I could speak, because at sundry times and in diverse places many things have been presented to me. . . . As my brethren read the selections from letters, I knew what to say to them; for this matter has been presented to me again and again. . . . I have not felt at liberty to write out the matter until now." Ibid., 55–56. Notice her words, "Of some of these subjects I could speak." She could only speak when the Lord had spoken.

The bottom line of this discussion is that we cannot pick and choose what we think is inspired out of her writings and leave the rest alone. The same principle applies to her that applies to Bible writers. If John and Paul were inspired then their writings were totally inspired and they brought us messages directly from God. There are no degrees either of inspiration or revelation. If Ellen G. White was inspired, then her writings are totally inspired, and her messages came directly from God.

A prophet cannot suggest what he thinks is true, because his listeners will assume that his opinion is the Word of the Lord on that subject. So, if the Lord has not spoken, the prophet must not speak.

Once again she warned us, "Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the *Testimonies*. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from Heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the *Testimonies* speak not according to the Word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 691.

We dare not make distinctions between messages from Heaven and her opinions. But if her opinions are mixed into these writings, if in fact she did present her own ideas as the Word of God, then her counsel to us is very clear. We are to reject the *Testimonies*, not just those parts which we feel were her own opinions, but *all* of the *Testimonies*, because Christ and Satan cannot be united.

no case have I given my own judgment or opinion." (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

"Permit me to express my mind, and yet not my mind, but the Word of the Lord." Ibid.

This statement means that part of a prophet's responsibility is to *not* speak when the Lord has not spoken. In one instance, Ellen White said, "I have no light on the subject [as to just who would constitute the 144,000]. . . . Please tell my brethren that I have nothing presented before me regarding the circumstances concerning which they write, and I can set before them only that which has been presented to me." Quoted in a letter by C. C. Crisler to E. E. Andross, December 8, 1914. Ibid., 51.

It is a major responsibility for a prophet not to give his own opinion. A prophet cannot suggest what he *thinks* is true, because his

There is one more point we must address. If Ellen White included her own messages among God's messages and thus confused God's people as to when God is speaking and when He is not, then the movement she guided—the Seventh-day Adventist Church—is also suspect because of her tremendous impact upon this movement. If that were the case, this movement might not be the remnant church at all.

Tested by the Scriptures

If you find anything in her writings which contradicts the Bible, it is your responsibility to reject her as a messenger of God. In light of her dramatic claims, it is impossible to accept her as a good woman while believing that certain things she wrote are contrary to the teachings of the Bible. I recently came across the opinion that Ellen White could be a prophet and yet be in error on doctrinal matters of some consequence. *Then* how would we make our judgments as to what is error and what is truth?

If we determine that Ellen White, or any other claimant to the gift of prophecy, is teaching error on any significant Bible doctrine, then we must follow the biblical counsel that there is no light in that messenger. Ellen White's writings must stand or fall on the basis of her agreement with Scripture, which means total harmony with previous revelation. If she is in error on one biblical doctrine, then it is unsafe to follow her on any doctrine. If her messages are not from God, then we must reject her work, and it is imperative that we take a second look at the movement she was so prominent in guiding.

The Danger of Doubt

However, if her messages were from God, then it is extremely dangerous to reject her work. "It does not become anyone to drop a word of doubt here and there that shall work like poison in other minds, shaking their confidence in the messages which God has given, which have aided in laying the

foundation of this work, and have attended it to the present day, in reproofs, warnings, corrections, and encouragements. To all who have stood in the way of the Testimonies, I would say, God has given a message to His people, and His voice will be heard, whether you hear or forbear. Your opposition has not injured me; but you must give an account to the God of heaven, who has sent these warnings and instructions to keep His people in the right way. You will have to answer to Him for your blindness, for being a stumbling block in the way of sinners." *Ibid.*, book 1, 43.

"I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions—the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against

wisdom? In the judgment what can you who have done this offer to God as an excuse for turning from the evidences He has given you that God was in the work?" *Testimonies to Ministers*, 465–466.

I believe that we must take Ellen White's challenges seriously. If her messages did not come from God, then we must reject her claim to be a messenger of the Lord. However, if her messages were from God, then we must listen very, very carefully to what God says, because to reject her message is to reject God's message.

What Does Lesser Light Mean?

If we believe that these writings were inspired by God, what is the proper relationship of these writings to the Bible? We must remember she said that her messages were given because God's people were not faithful students of the Bible, so

If God is speaking, and we slight God's words, we are not really slighting the prophet; we are rejecting God.

the worm—the feeble instrument that God spake through—but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God. I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God through visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find it out too late." *Ibid.*, 40.

If God is speaking, and we slight God's words, we are not really slighting the prophet; we are rejecting God. "What reserve power has the Lord with which to reach those who have cast aside His warnings and reproofs, and have accredited the testimonies of the Spirit of God to no higher source than human

God sent these messages to lead them back to the Bible. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 665. Thus her function was not to write another Bible—another part of the Canon. Her writings are to lead us to the Bible, so that we may better understand the messages contained in Scripture. She characterized her work as a lesser light to lead people to the greater light—the Bible. See *Colporteur Ministry*, 125. Her function was to direct attention to the Bible, to help us understand the Bible, and to apply Bible principles to our lives.

It is crucial that we understand exactly what she meant when she used the term lesser light to explain her relationship to the Bible. "The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's

duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's Word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given, and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 665.

She understood her role to be that of bringing out more clearly the truths already contained in the Bible, and to simplify the great truths already given. Her purpose was to lead to the Bible as the basis of all truth.

the messages that came through Isaiah or Ezekiel; yet, Ellen White's purpose was different.

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal the plan of salvation to man. God is trying to reveal Himself to mankind, and He is trying to reveal the way of salvation, which is God's plan of restoration. The purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy was to reveal more clearly the plan of salvation which is already contained in the Bible. Ellen White has not given us a new plan of salvation. She did not intend to show us another way to heaven. God's plan is outlined for all men in all times in Scripture. Ellen White simply revealed more clearly

you a pilot, who will meet you, and give you such directions as the surrounding circumstances and dangers may require; and to him you must give heed.' With these directions we reach the perilous time specified, and the pilot, according to promise, appears. But some of the crew, as he offers his services, rise up against him. 'We have the original book of directions,' say they, 'and that is enough for us. We stand upon that, and that alone; we want nothing of you.' Who now heed the original book of directions? Those who reject the pilot, or those who receive him, as that book instructs them? Judge ye. . . .

"What we do say is distinctly this: that the gifts of the Spirit are given for our pilot through these perilous times, and wherever and in whomsoever we find genuine manifestations of these, we are bound to respect them, nor can we do otherwise without insofar rejecting the Word of God, which directs us to receive them. Who now stands upon the Bible, and the Bible alone?" It is the one who "will receive the pilot according to its directions. We do not, then, discard, but obey, the Bible by endorsing the visions; while we should just so far reject and disobey it, as we should refuse to receive the provisions it has made for our comfort, edification, and perfection." Uriah Smith, "Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions?" *The Review and Herald*, January 13, 1863; reprinted in *Our Firm Foundation*, May 2002.

Perhaps this is a good way to understand the difference between lesser light and greater light. Lesser does not refer to authority, for the authority of the book describing the ocean voyage and the authority of the pilot come from the same Source. Lesser refers to function, for the pilot comes on board later, at the end of the journey, to give specific guidance for God's people. ❖

Next month we will conclude our discussion of the "lesser light," and we will consider the question, Does Ellen White have doctrinal authority?

"There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue."

However, she also wrote, "In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue." *Ibid.*, 661.

So lesser light does *not* mean less important light. God is not less serious today when He speaks through a prophet. This fact means that we must carefully define lesser light and greater light so that we will understand what the words mean and what they do not mean.

Lesser light is not God being less serious in communicating with His people. Lesser light is not God speaking less clearly. Lesser light does not mean dimmer light, unreliable light, unimportant light, or untrustworthy light. Lesser light does not refer to an inferior quality of inspiration. The messages that came through Ellen White were just as much the Word of God as

those areas of Scripture which pertain to our time and our needs. Thus her light is lesser in that it shines back upon the greater light.

One of the most helpful illustrations that I have found comes from the pen of Uriah Smith, a long-time leader in Seventh-day Adventist thought:

"Suppose we are about to start upon a voyage. The owner of the vessel gives us a book of directions, telling us that it contains instructions sufficient for our whole journey, and that if we will heed them, we shall reach in safety our port of destination. Setting sail we open our book to learn its contents. We find that its author lays down general principles to govern us in our voyage, and instructs us as far as practicable, touching the various contingencies that may arise, till the end; but he also tells us that the latter part of our journey will be especially perilous; that the features of the coast are ever changing by reasons of quicksands and tempests; 'but for this part of the journey,' says he, 'I have provided



Salvation

By Manipulation

Ralph Larson

Let us start with a definition: “Manipulate—to treat or operate with the hands or in a mechanical manner.”—Webster.

Given the title of “New Theology” by many Seventh-day Adventists, a belief system has been introduced into the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has now been accepted as truth by many of our members. This system of beliefs includes a teaching that we shall refer to as “Manipulation Theology.”

Seventh-day Adventists are first told that God does not expect them to stop sinning in this earthly life, because He knows that it is impossible. Then they are assured that He will miraculously and instantaneously “fix” them, when Christ returns, so that they will never sin again. This “quick fix” could not be called either justification or sanctification. The proper word for it would be *manipulation*—something done in a mechanical manner.

We are called upon to imagine the Lord taking from His heavenly tool chest a celestial screwdriver, inserting it into the ear of the believer, giving it a half turn, and saying, “There, my beloved. I have

fixed you. You will never sin again.”

Question: If God could solve the problem of sin by such a mechanical means, why did He not turn that screw in Adam’s head six thousand years ago? Think of the sorrow and suffering that would have spared us!

Another question: Was Adam’s problem simply that he had a screw loose? If so, whose fault was that? Who left that screw loose? Does not the finger of blame point to God, Adam’s Creator?

Let us pause here while I invite you to challenge me in regard to this “Manipulation Theology.” Just how, in your opinion, could God take a person who has been sinning throughout life and *instantaneously* “fix” that person so that he would never sin again?

Is it not apparent that God would have to remove that person’s freedom—his power of choice—and make him a simple machine, a robot? Or a programmed computer? Remember that the bottom line on this subject is that computers, machines, and robots have a common failing, *they do not and cannot think, dream,*

choose, or love. Is that what God will do to His people? Is that what we want?

Again the question: If God could solve the problem of sin by such a mechanical method, *manipulation*, why did He not do it ages ago? Why did He let sin get started with Lucifer and the rebellious angels?

Where Did It Come From?

Surely this new theology, this “Manipulation Theology,” is a faulty and false theology. Where did it come from?

To begin with, it is not new. It is more than 400 years old. It comes to us from Reformation times. It is part of an elaborate theological system called Calvinism, developed by Calvin’s followers, which we need to understand to some degree if we are to properly evaluate it. Here is a brief summary. Please prepare yourself for a series of shocks.

Before we adopt one part of a certain system of theology, we should take the time to see whether it harmonizes with the rest of our understanding of Bible truth—or whether it harmonizes with one of

Satan's counterfeit theologies. As you read these passages, your first reaction might be to say, "I don't know of anyone in our church who believes *this!*" Perhaps you are correct. However, remember, "Manipulation Theology" is just one piece of a bigger picture, and we need to step back and see the whole picture to which it belongs.

[Note: All quotations hereafter are from a book by a Calvinist

extending to *all events both great and small.*" – B16.

"God is seen as the great and mighty King who . . . directs the course of history *even down to its minutest details.*" – B13.

". . . a divine ordering of the whole course of history to *the veriest detail . . .*" – B14.

"History in all its details, *even the most minute*, is but the unfolding of the eternal purposes of God." – B25.

at liberty to choose between good and evil." – B62.

"He at the same time, and by the same means, or ordination, *withholds from them the opportunity and power of believing and being saved.*" – Cunningham, B91.

These shocking statements create a question. If all sinning is done by the deliberate foreordaining manipulation of God, which cannot be resisted by sinners, are they not freed from responsibility? – The Calvinist answers with a thunderous "No!"

Observe:

"Eternal life is foreordained for some and *eternal death for others.*" – Calvin, B15.

"It was foreordained . . . *who should be condemned.*" – Luther, *ibid.*

"The Reformed Faith has held to the existence of an eternal, divine decree which . . . separates the human race into two portions and ordains one to everlasting life and *the other to everlasting death.*" – B83.

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and *others are foreordained to everlasting death.*" – B84.

"The doctrine of absolute Predestination of course logically holds that *some are foreordained to death* as truly as some are foreordained to life." – B104.

"We believe that *from all eternity God has intended to leave some of Adam's posterity in their sins.*" – *Ibid.*

As shocking and bloodcurdling as this is, it is not the end. Another question must be asked. What is this "everlasting death" to which the unregenerate, the "non-elect" are inescapably doomed? Are you ready for this?

The "Manipulation God" tortures the non-elect forever.

"[Predestination] brings us into contact, on the one side, with a subject so awful and overwhelming as *THE EVERLASTING MISERY of an innumerable multitude of our fellow men.*" – Cunningham, B7.

"[His decree] extends . . . from the creation to the judgment, and includes all the activities of saints

Remember, "Manipulation Theology" is just one piece of a bigger picture, and we need to step back and see the whole picture to which it belongs.

theologian named Loraine Boettner entitled, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. His own words are indicated by the letter B and a page number (for example: B17). His quotations from other Calvinist theologians are indicated by that theologian's name and then B with a page number (for example: Calvin, B21).]

God's manipulation makes all things happen:

"God from all eternity did . . . ordain *whatsoever comes to pass.*" *Westminster Confession*, B13. (All emphasis supplied by the author unless otherwise noted.)

"He hath foreordained *whatsoever comes to pass.*" *The Shorter Catechism*, B17.

"*Nothing can come to pass* apart from His sovereign will." – B30.

"*Nothing can come to pass* contrary to what He expressly decrees." – B14.

"God has an eternal plan in which is predetermined *every event that comes to pass.*" – B23.

"His decree . . . extends . . . *to every event in human history.*" – B13.

"All things *without exception*, indeed, are disposed by Him." – B31.

God's manipulation includes the smallest details of life.

"The divine administration rests on the foreordination of God

"God's providential control extends to *all events, even the most minute.*" – B21.

God manipulates everyone's thoughts, impulses, and feelings.

"Not only the works we do outwardly, but even *the thoughts we think inwardly.* . . . There is no such thing as chance, or fortune." – Melancthon, B15.

"God is the Sovereign Ruler who governs even *the intimate thoughts and feelings and impulses of men.*" – B342.

"It is He that . . . *CREATES the very thoughts and intents of the soul.*" – B31–32.

God manipulates all evil as well as all good.

"Plainly the *fall of Adam and all other sins* . . . were in [His] plan." – B24.

"Even the fall of Adam, and through him the fall of the race, was not by chance or accident, *but was SO ORDAINED in the secret counsels of God.*" – B234.

"Even *the sinful acts of men* are included in [His] plan." – B24.

"That *the sinful acts of men have their place and a necessary place in [His] plan* is plainly seen in the course of history." – B252.

God's manipulation gives no opportunity of repentance.

"In matters pertaining to his salvation, *the unregenerate man is not*

and angels in heaven *and of reprobates and demons in hell.*" – B13.

"The final torments of the wicked . . . are INDESCRIBABLY AWFUL. . . In the next world the wicked, with all restraint removed, will go headlong into sin, blaspheming and cursing God, growing worse and worse as they sink deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit." – B79.

This Is Calvinism

This is Calvinism with its "Manipulation Theology"! It is not an ancient relic from a bygone age. The book from which I have quoted was published in 1932 by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. This is hard to believe, but it is true. People are actually believing and teaching these monstrous misrepresentations about God, which, as Wesley said, make Him worse than the devil. Just add it up and see whether you agree with Wesley.

This monster god of Calvinism creates some people, predestines them to be lost, forces them to sin, does not permit them to repent, *then tortures them throughout all eternity as punishment for the sins that he forced them to commit.*

This fiendish god clearly delights in torture. After his helpless victims have screamed and agonized their way through a million years of torture, he will happily apportion to them another million years, and another, and another, and another. *It will never stop.*

And as an utter outrage to our reason and a final insult to our intelligence, Boettner tells us: "No injustice is done to the non-elect." – B113.

Now, why are we studying these monstrous misrepresentations about the character of God?

Because, as we pointed out earlier, some Seventh-day Adventist Church members, and even some ministers, are presently trying to take a page out of the textbook of Calvinist "Manipulation Theology" and introduce it into the theology of our church. It

is the page that teaches that there is no need for us to stop sinning, because God will miraculously "fix us" at Christ's second coming so that we will never sin again.

It is my purpose to demonstrate that this concept can be combined with Calvinistic "Manipulation Theology," but it can never be logically joined with the faith and free-will theology of Seventh-day Adventism.

This is because theological systems are like chainlink fences. Doctrines do not stand alone. They are connected with other doctrines. To lay hold of a single doctrine and remove it from its system without getting others with it is seldom possible. Thus, those Seventh-day

Arminius and brought his free-will views into Methodism. Thus the two views are now commonly known as Arminianism and Calvinism.

We may choose one or the other of these two views, but we cannot intermingle them. To do so is to set up ludicrous self-contradictions that are an outrage to reason and an insult to the reader's intelligence. For example: Boettner, the Calvinist theologian whom we have quoted in this paper, tells us that although the will of man is under the control of the will of God down to the minutest details of life, nevertheless the will of man remains totally free. He also insists that although God forces the "non-

Theological systems are like chainlink fences. Doctrines do not stand alone. They are connected with other doctrines.

Adventists who are attracted by the idea that God does not expect them to stop sinning, but that He will "fix" them and make them sinless at the second coming of Christ, are immediately confronted with the question, "How?"

The only answer that can be given is, By manipulation. And once this door is opened, an entire group of horrible Calvinistic doctrines will come in with it. Let us remember that Calvinists worship a god who forces people to sin and then punishes them with everlasting torture for the sins that he forces them to commit.

As noted above, this conflict between two incompatible theologies has come down to us from Reformation times. John Calvin is now thought of as the leading advocate of predestination, although Luther was also strong in his support of that doctrine. Over against their position were Erasmus and Arminius, who both championed the doctrine of free-will. The Wesleys agreed with

elect" to sin, not permitting them to repent, then tortures them throughout all eternity as punishment for the sins that he forces them to commit, that this is no injustice to the non-elect. We can only gasp and marvel. What happens to the human mind?

How grateful we should be to those humble but dedicated Christians who studied out our beautiful Seventh-day Adventist message in which there are no such self-contradictions. Neither are there any illogical conundrums such as many Christians have to struggle with when they go to a funeral and hear that the departed is now in heaven, yet will be resurrected from the grave when Christ returns. Or when they hear that a god who will torture sinners throughout all eternity is a god of love. Our theological system contains no such problems. Neither does it contain any "Salvation by Manipulation" theology. Let us keep it that way. ❀



“As Much as Lieth in You, Live Peaceably With All Men”

Ellen G. White

The plan of redemption was formed to bring unity and peace to men. The world was at war with the law of Jehovah; sinners were at enmity with their Maker; Jesus came to make overtures of peace. At the appointed time angels were commissioned to announce His birth, and give expression to their joy in the salvation of the one lost sheep, the fallen world. To the watching shepherds the message came, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:10-14.

Shortly before his crucifixion, Christ bequeathed to his disciples a legacy of peace. “Peace I leave with you,” he said; “my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27. This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity with the world. It is an internal rather than an external peace. Without will be wars and fightings, through the opposition of

avowed enemies, and the coldness and suspicion of those who claim to be friends. The peace of Christ is not to banish division, but it is to remain amid strife and division.

Though he bore the title of Prince of Peace, Christ said of Himself, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34. By these words He did not mean that His coming was to produce discord and contention among His followers. He desired to show the effect His teaching would have on different minds. One portion of the human family would receive Him; the other portion would take sides with Satan, and would oppose Christ and all His followers. The Prince of Peace, He was yet the cause of division. He Who came to proclaim glad tidings and create hope and joy in the hearts of the children of men, opened a controversy that burns deep, and arouses intense passion in the human heart. And He warned His followers: “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” John 16:33. “They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake.” Luke 21:12. “Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.” Verse 16.

This prophecy has been fulfilled in a marked manner. Every indignity, reproach, and cruelty that Satan can instigate human hearts to devise, has been visited upon the followers of Jesus. And it will be fulfilled in a yet more marked manner; for the carnal mind is still at enmity with the law of God, and will not be subject to its commands. We have been highly favored in living under a government where we can worship God according to the dictates of our conscience. But human nature is no more in harmony with the principles of Christ today than it has been in ages past. The world is still in opposition to Jesus. The same hatred that prompted the cry, “Crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:21), still works in the children of disobedience. The same satanic spirit that in the Dark Ages consigned men and women to prison, to exile, and to the stake, that conceived the exquisite torture of the Inquisition, produced the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and kindled the fires of Smithfield, is still at work with malignant energy in unregenerate hearts.

We are required to be Christlike toward those who are our enemies; but we must not, in order to have peace, cover up the faults of those we see in error. The world’s Redeemer never purchased peace by covering iniquity, or by anything like compromise. Though His

heart was constantly overflowing with love for the human race, He was never indulgent to their sins. He was the Friend of sinners, and He would not remain silent while they were pursuing a course that would ruin their souls—the souls that He had purchased with His own blood. He was a stern reprover of all vice. He labored that man should be true to himself in being all that God would have him, and true to his higher and eternal interest. Living in a world marred and seared with the curse brought upon it by disobedience, He could not be at peace with it if He left it unwarned, uninstructed, unrebuked. This would be to purchase peace at the neglect of duty. His peace was the consciousness of having done the will of His Father, rather than a condition of things that existed as the result of not having done His duty.

Those who love Jesus and the souls for whom He had died will follow after the things which make for peace. But they must take care lest in their efforts to prevent discord, they surrender truth; lest in warding off division, they sacrifice principle. True brotherhood can never be maintained by compromising principle. As Christians approach the Christlike model, and become pure in spirit and action, they will feel the venom of the serpent. The opposition of the children of disobedience is excited by a Christianity that is spiritual. At this crisis is the time to decide who are God's faithful servants, who will be true to principle, who will bear in mind that truth is too dearly purchased for its least principle to be surrendered. That peace and harmony which are secured by mutual concessions to avoid all differences of opinion are not worthy of the name. On points of feeling between man and man, concessions should sometimes be made; but never should one iota of principle be sacrificed to obtain harmony. All our words and actions pass in review before God; and if we wish to stand in the judgment as having done all

that we could do to exert a correct influence over our fellow men, we must return kind acts for acts of mischief and malice. Christ is our pattern; we must follow Him.

The apostle Paul exhorts us, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:18. Care should be taken by Christians to give no offense, that the truth may not be evil spoken of. But the text suggests that no amount of diligence and care will preserve this harmony in all cases. Dissensions will arise even between church members, because they are not Christlike in

Shall he acknowledge himself in the wrong for the sake of making peace?—No. If he has tried to do his duty, and has been patient under abuse, he is not to humble himself to acknowledge that he is guilty. He does the offenders great wrong thus to take the guilt upon his soul, admitting that he has given them occasion for their course of action. This is very pleasing to those who have done the work of the enemy; but Heaven's books record the facts just as they are. Concessions that are not true from the one who has been wrongfully treated gratify the

We are required to be Christlike toward those who are our enemies; but we must not, in order to have peace, cover up the faults of those we see in error.

character. In the home they are oppressive and a reproach to the cause of Christ. Their practices are inconsistent with truth and religion, and to retain them in church fellowship would be unfaithfulness to the Master. The church as a body is to do all in its power to promote union and prevent schisms. If unsound doctrine is introduced, the safety of the flock of Christ will be endangered; and it is the duty of those in authority, who are jealous for the truth as it is in Jesus, to make a firm, decided protest.

To those who have been injured without cause these words of scripture apply, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Their failure to live at peace with all men is not due to the course they themselves have pursued, but to the envy, jealousy, and evil surmising of those who have been in the wrong. A division is caused. How shall it be healed? Shall the man that has been sinned against, misjudged, and maligned, be called to give an account? Shall he seek for something in his past course by which he can humiliate himself?

feelings of the carnal heart. The wrongdoers interpret their position as zeal for God, when in truth it is zeal to do the work of the adversary of souls. They do not dig out of their hearts the root of bitterness, but leave the fibers to spring up when Satan shall stir them again to active growth.

There is a work for us to do. We must begin here to cultivate the meekness of Christ. There are stern battles for us to fight against our traits of character that lead us to decisions that make it hard and unfavorable for others. We are not commended by God for a zeal that savors of Pharisaism; for this is not of Christ. We are not to go to an extreme in false charity, neither are we to follow a course of unbending severity in cases where kindness and mercy and love would have a telling power. The ax must be laid at the root of the tree. True conversion is needed. Heart work is essential. The nature must be renewed after the divine Image, until the work of grace is completed in the soul. ✿

Review and Herald, January 16, 1900.



“Without This Ring . . .”

News Item: “J.B. Silvers and his wife Barbara stood before a minister at the Nottingham United Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, for one of the biggest moments of their lives. A dozen friends and family members stood by as they exchanged vows, promising to respect each other and asking the support of those watching. But the vows were a lot different from the ones they had taken 34 years earlier, at their wedding. ‘We are here to witness an end and a beginning and to share the making of new commitments,’ said the pastor. ‘Barbara and J.B. have decided, after much effort, pain, and anger that they will no longer be wife and husband.’ They were severing their marriage just as it had begun, with a ritual.

“Most divorcing couples are hardly in the mood to stand up together in church and make new vows. But a growing number are finding that a divorce ceremony can bring closure and even comfort at the end of a marriage. Barbara and Phil Penningroth divorced in 1997 after 25 years of marriage and held a divorce ceremony featuring filmed highlights of their life together and poems by Robert Browning. The Penningroths found the ritual so meaningful that they co-wrote *A Healing Divorce: Transforming the End of Your Relationship with Ritual and Ceremony* (1st Books). Phil believes that in this post-Sept. 11 era, people may feel more compelled than ever to attempt a harmonious end to their marriage. ‘In a time when we’re all dealing with so much grief and pain, a ceremony that facilitates a healthy grieving process is of

benefit to everyone,’ he says.” *Time*, March 4, 2002.

End-Time Perspective: We must be very careful that in our rush to sympathize and seek to alleviate hurt we do not lend legitimacy to situations that God frowns upon. Convictions from the Holy Spirit about sin and righteousness are largely muted by these types of actions. See Isaiah 5:20–21.

Bible Translations

News Item: “Eugene A. Nida is not a household name, but the 84-year-old resident of Belgium has influenced the Bibles read by most Christians around the world. The ‘premier linguist and translation consultant,’ as the *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* styles him, writes mostly about technical topics: descriptive linguistics, cross-cultural communications, translation theory, and semantics. However, the translations he helped shape in over 200 languages make it easier for many millions of lay Christians and nonbelievers to grasp the meaning of the Bible.

“He taught at the Summer Institute of Linguistics (now SIL), the educational alter ego of Wycliffe Bible Translators, and eventually became executive secretary for translations at the American Bible Society.

“He coined the term *dynamic equivalence translation* to describe a ‘meaning-based’ approach to translation—one that looks for *functional equivalence* rather than *formal resemblance* in translation. The American Bible Society’s 1976 *Good News Bible* and its 1995 *Contemporary English Version* show his influence, as do other prominent translations, such as the *New Living Translation*.” *Christianity Today*, October 7, 2002.

End-Time Perspective: The important terms to notice here are “dynamic equivalence translation”

and “‘meaning-based’ approach to translation.” With the warning from Jesus that if possible, even the very elect would be deceived in the very last days (see Matthew 24:24), we individually need to know as accurately as possible what the Word of the Lord is. With a “literal” or “formal resemblance in translation,” we have as close as possible the first-hand words of Inspiration. The same Spirit who inspired them will inspire us to understand what the will of God is for us today. Let us pray for and seek His Spirit for understanding and wisdom with all our hearts. “One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man’s ideas or arguments.” *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 71.

“Own a Bible, Pay a Fine”

News Item: “Leaders of a Protestant ministry in the Central Asian state Uzbekistan were raided by police on Aug. 9, according to Keston News Service, and informed that Bibles are illegal.

“Some 13 members of that evangelical group were saddled with fines and saw their pamphlets and at least one Bible seized. Later, government spokesmen backtracked, saying the Bibles are legal, but that the church group was not, since it had not complied with the country’s rigorous policy of registering and monitoring religious sects.

“According to the news service, which monitors religious freedom in communist and post-communist countries: ‘It is all but impossible for communities to register, and many Protestant leaders have been subjected to fines.’

“Uzbekistan is a majority Muslim country and former Soviet republic that is still ruled autocratically by former communist officials. However, it is cooperating with the U.S. war on terror.” *National Catholic Register*, September 8–14, 2002. ✠



Bible Marking

As you mark this study in your Bible, we hope that it will be a blessing to you and that you will be better equipped to give an answer for your faith. See 1 Peter 3:15. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to give us opportunities to share His truth with others while it is still day.

“Church members are to do evangelistic work in the homes of their neighbors who have not yet received full evidence of the truth for this time. . . . The presentation of the truth, in love and simplicity, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave His disciples.” *Ye Shall Receive Power*, 147.

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:

The Beast,

TB1: Revelation 14:9-10.

- 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 TB.**”

- Go through the study to check for broken links.

- Share the study with others!

Last month we stated that the beast of Revelation 13 is the Papacy. How do we know that?—This short study clearly shows the identity of the beast.

The Beast

Code:TB

TB1: Revelation 14:9-10.

God warns against worshiping a certain beast.

TB2: Revelation 13:1, 5-7.

This beast is a power that is at war with God and His people.

TB3: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8.

The beast exalts himself above God.

TB4: Daniel 7:7-8.

This beast is the same power as the little horn.

TB5: Daniel 7:25.

The little horn exalts himself by thinking he can change God’s “times and laws.”

TB6: Daniel 2:31-45; 8:2-9, 19-25.

God reveals the sequence of kingdoms to His prophet.

TB7: Daniel 2:40-41.

The fourth kingdom following Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece was the Roman Empire—“strong as iron,” yet “broken without a hand.”

TB8: Daniel 7:24.

Ten kingdoms followed; however, three were “subdued” by the “different” one—the one that was not only political but also religious.

TB9: Daniel 7:25.

Speaking “great words” against God, wearing out “the saints,” and thinking to change God’s “times and laws” were all done by the Holy Roman Empire during the Dark Ages.

TB10: Revelation 13:3.

The deadly wound—the papacy’s political power taken away in 1798—began to heal in 1929. Today “all the world” is in awe of the pope.

TB11: Revelation 18:4.

Many true and sincere believers have not yet heard God’s call to “come out” of the Catholic system—and all the ecumenical churches. Will you tell them? Time is running out! ✠



Boredom at Canaan's Border

Patricia Temple

There they were, spread out in the valley of Shittim, Israel's tents camped near the borders of the Promised Land. See Numbers, chapter 25. Forty long years Israel had wandered in the wilderness because of their rebellion and insubordination. Now, at last, it seemed they were on the way to their new home.

The camp showed perfect order and was relatively quiet. The people were weary, and, outside of caring for the basic needs of daily life, they were resting in their tents. They were not too worried about the conquest of Canaan; their leadership was responsible for that, and they would figure it out. However, even now they were failing God.

God had given them a respite, during which time He had wanted them to search their hearts earnestly and put away all sin. It was

to be a time of reconsecration, of seeking the Lord with their whole minds, hearts, and souls. Instead, they relied on the leadership to do all that; they were not that interested in humbling their hearts before God. After all, they were God's chosen people, so it did not really matter; God loved them anyway.

Soon the weariness of the journey left them, and restlessness took its place. They were in a hurry to be on their way to Canaan. Yet, the pillar over the tabernacle remained quiet. God wanted them to realize that trials lay ahead of them. Wars would have to be fought; some of them would die in these wars. Were these people ready for their probation to close?—His eyes saw that while there was at least some outward obedience among them, few had any real heart relationship to Him.

What was even sadder, few were interested in becoming any more holy than they thought they already were.

Thoughts of the pleasures and peace of the Promised Land filled their minds, and the desire for sensual indulgence ran high in their priorities. Soon something cropped up that should never be found in the mind of any true follower of God; they became bored. Rather than earnestly preparing in heart and mind for what lay ahead—and there was little enough time for that vital work—they became bored!

Satan was watching closely, and he knew just when the time had come to offer them some exciting diversions. Soon attractive women began strolling into the camp from the temples of heathen idolatry not far from where they rested. Pleasant conversation ensued, and

invitations were pressed to the Israelites to come and enjoy the holiday cheer that was soon to be celebrated in the temples of Midian and Moab.

The children of Israel knew that God had forbidden them at this time to conquer the lands of these two peoples. Perhaps this was misinterpreted by some to mean that their worship was not entirely displeasing to God—just as many among us today feel that, because we have been told that God has children in the fallen churches of Babylon, these churches are really all right, and we can feel free to join with them in “innocent” folly.

Many among the Israelites decided to go and have some fun. “After all, we have to relax sometimes; we can’t be religious all the time. Some entertainment will take our minds off our problems. We are supposed to be a happy people, and God wants us to have fun in this life. God wants us to live vibrant lives; we need to show others that being a child of God does not make us unable to have fun. Besides, how can we expect people from other churches to want to come to our church if we don’t go to theirs? After all, we are all children of the same heavenly Father, and God loves each of us equally.”

And so the hollow, vapid excuses and rationalizations were passed from tongue to tongue. While the real cause of these rationalizations—the unsubdued love of sensual pleasure, selfish indulgence, and hearts unconverted to God—went unchecked, they found comfort in assuring themselves that, despite their corrupt ways, they were still all right with God and accepted by Him. After all, they *were* His special people, and nothing could change that, could it?

Some, at first, ventured cautiously to the early festivities of the holiday celebrations. Then, not seeing anything that was “terribly bad,” they became even bolder, deciding to really enjoy themselves. (Familiarity with sin leads to

blindness.) It was fun, and these people were so friendly. After all, they were Israel’s neighbors, and God wants us to be neighborly. It is not right to be disrespectful of someone else’s religious beliefs, is it? We can always find a “good” reason to do what we have already made up our minds to do anyway.

Soon others, seeing the excitement and exhilaration of the first visitors to the festivities as they returned, ventured to go along with it. After all, it was so boring in the camp. We can only do so much praying and stuff like that. We need a break; we are only human after all! God does not expect us to

weeping before the Lord in heart-broken confession, many had become so hardened and blind in their rebellion that they were still open and bold in their indulgence of lust and perversion.

The greatest example of this terrible blindness that rebellious sin lays upon those who choose its flowery paths is Zimri, who was one of the leaders of the tribes of Israel. Even when the displeasure of God was falling upon Israel for their wickedness, he still felt no fear in parading his sin openly before God and His people. Zimri was proud of the fact that he had finally cast off the shackles of the

Sensual indulgence puts the mind to sleep and silences the watchdogs of reason and conscience.

deny ourselves every little pleasure. (Strange how those who do not know God, have never fully surrendered to Him, and find His service to be boring and restrictive seem to be such great authorities on what God expects or does not expect!)

Soon, many in the camp were off to the fun. As they attended the feasting and indulged their appetites, they soon joined in the dancing. Then they continued on in folly after folly until they actually took part in the unholy worship of heathen idols. I am sure most never intended to go as far as they did in these things; however, sensual indulgence puts the mind to sleep and silences the watchdogs of reason and conscience.

The Bible says, “And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor.” Numbers 25:3. What a sad, sad testimony is portrayed in those six words! Perhaps some woke up and repented in sorrow before the Lord as the plague of God’s wrath was destroying among them, and people were dying. Yet, while the repentant ones were on their faces

threats and warnings of that old prophet, Moses, and could live a life of freedom. He would let nothing stand in the way of his plans. After all, he had a close relationship with one of the highest ruling families in Midian. No doubt he reasoned that this would certainly be an advantage to himself—and to Israel, too, for that matter.

The Bible record says that 24,000 died in the plague and scourge of Baalpeor. See verse 9. The faithful of the leaders and the people were commanded to stand up against this wicked apostasy—to slay the apostate leaders and hang their heads up to warn others. And all others who were involved but did not repent also died that day.

That day, 24,000 perished who had truly believed that they were about to go into the Promise Land. Oh, that they would have spent the precious time given them of God for study, heart searching, and cultivating primitive godliness! Pleasure seeking and holiday festivities did not turn out to be so ‘innocent’ after all.

Did being part of the nation of Israel—God’s “chosen people”—help the guilty ones? Did Moses stand up under the influence of God and declare, “Oh, it’s all right, after all, the wheat and the tares have to grow together”? Did God reassure them of His loving them so much that He would accept them anyway?—Think about it! Open sin had to be dealt with openly. The faithful were commanded to slay the ones that had incurred God’s wrath.

God is the same now as He was then. The God who ordered the destruction of the people who were joined to Baalpeor was Jesus—the same Jesus whose mercy and tender love is made manifest in His life and death in the New Testament.

defied the judges to molest him if they dared. The priests were weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, ‘Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach.’ Joel 2:17. . . . The point to be marked is, that Moses’ prayers were not heard, neither his weeping nor the sorrow and prayers of those who had maintained their integrity, until justice was executed upon that demoralized, God-defying prince. . . . Something besides prayers and tears are needed in a time when reproach and peril are hanging over God’s people. The wicked works must be brought to an end.” *Review and Herald*, May 17, 1887.

Friends, so many have said to me, “Well, I have to remain in the official church. I know God will

(see Isaiah 42:7; 56:10) are going to perish in the wilderness!

The “borderland” is a dangerous place to be. We are warned countless times in inspired counsel to be alert and watchful. Satan is working with tenfold more efficiency now than ever before. Those 24,000 in Israel who perished in the vale of Shittim had no idea that they would never set foot in the Promise Land. They felt the assurance that they were saved, on their way to a “heavenly” home, members in good and regular standing, and all the rest.

How many among us today will perish in the “borderland”? How many who are so sure they are all right with God will spend the millennium as rotting bones scattered on this earth instead of walking the golden streets?—Oh, dear ones, the fact is, it will be *most* of us!

What has trapped these people?—Sensual indulgence, entertainment, fun and frivolity, but above all, the subtle snares of spiritualism! Spiritualism—with its changing colors like a chameleon; its shifting, sparkling delusions like a kaleidoscope; its comforting assurances of higher knowledge; its “personally meaningful” sensations; its promises of an easier way than the blood-stained path.

Friends, spiritualism is all around us. The frogs issuing from the mouth of the beast, the dragon and the false prophet (see Revelation 16:13) are swarming in the land; *and* they are swarming among us as well. The deceptions of spiritualism are rank among us. Many are being deceived by what they think are loving, Christian sentiments that really have no higher source for their authority than the prince of darkness himself!

In this series of articles we will take a look at some of these spiritualistic concepts that are crawling around among us.

We are in the “borderland”! May God open the blind eyes, and loose the dumb tongues; this is our prayer! ✨

How many among us today will perish in the “borderland”?

How many who are so sure they are all right with God will spend the millennium as rotting bones scattered on this earth?

Now, before anyone gets the idea that we are to physically kill anybody, remember that these literal examples in ancient Israel are to be reapplied as spiritual lessons for us today. Nevertheless, it is clear that those among us that are joined to Baalpeor—those who are joined to worldly ways and indulgences contrary to the physical and moral laws of the Lord, and those who have made agreements with the churches and organizations of Babylon, whether leaders or laity—should be clearly rebuked. If they are unwilling to repent and obey, they are to have no place within the ranks of the true people of God.

“Moses and the people who had taken no part in this great departure from God’s law, were weeping and lamenting at the door of the tabernacle for the sins of the people, and the plague that had begun. But amid all this demonstration of sorrow, this prince

sort it out some day. I often see things I know are not good; but I go along with it for the sake of my friends who need my love and encouragement.”

“My message to you is: No longer consent to listen without protest to the perversion of truth.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 196.

Maybe your friends would stand for truth if you spoke up and refused to be a part of a wrong course of action. However, we have this conspiracy of silence—this “look the other way” mentality. I am sure many perished in Baalpeor who had just gone along with it for the sake of friends.

I am sure there were many who would have gotten on the ark, except they did not want to be different and leave their friends. After all, who wants to be considered an extremist? I am going to tell you a fact: only extremists for truth are going to make it through! The “blind eyes” and “dumb dogs”



Thank you very much for your magazines. They are very informative. Just what we need to help keep us abreast of the serious times in which we are living and to prepare us for the soon-coming King.

GW, Maryland

Use this extra amount to help someone else to receive this journal. I enjoy mine very much.

ES, Alabama

The way world conditions are one wonders if any day may be our last. The Lord is still at the helm. Although I've been learning on TV that we will see a sudden change in our history and the events to follow.

I am retired (age 91) and have time to take note of events and news as it comes in. I keep up-to-date. They don't always tell us everything on the news, but we can see that the pope is in cahoots with the president - very much so. Much of the hard news comes in the late news. I generally am awake after 2 or 3 a.m. and get the news of importance. Disasters are everywhere! Fires and floods out of control! What's next? Sunday laws can come overnight!

TA, Idaho

Do you have any experience how to share the three angels' messages with others? And have you found an effective way to distribute present truth literature?

We never hear any sermons about the last-day events, three angels' messages, sanctuary message, and so on.

I'm 89 and have never seen a time like this. How long will this go on before Jesus comes? We are living in serious times.

I read and re-read my *Our Firm Foundation*. It's such a help and comfort to me. I share all my papers and tell people of the nearness of Jesus. Most people don't know, but sure listen. God is my Guide. I always ask Him for wisdom. Let's be on the seven-day journey to heaven and at the marriage feast.

AK, Missouri

I am writing to request a Bible study course for beginners because I am a new Christian and want to learn what being saved is all about. That is why I would like a Bible study course for beginners.

ML, New Jersey

Thank you for sending the second renewal notice. I love this magazine and would regret missing even one copy.

JW, Wyoming

Thank you for the article in the September issue entitled "A New Heart." This was an answer to prayer. I had asked God to tell me if I had committed the unpardonable sin of grieving away His Holy Spirit for good - or not. After reading the section of the article about David, God showed me that He will again give me a new heart. That I haven't quenched His Spirit, and there is a difference (grieving and quenching). Praise God for His mercy and longsuffering, His goodness and His great love!

Thank you again for printing the article. Please give this to Leola Rosenvold, I would like her to know. And I thank the Lord for answering my prayer.

JC, Indiana

Enclosed is my check for renewal of my subscription to the blessed publication *Our Firm Foundation*. I praise and thank our Father in heaven for the truth published in that magazine. May each of you hold fast to the Lord as Satan continues his attempts to stop the precious truth that will prepare a people for Christ's soon coming.

EK, Canada

From Overseas

I am a Seventh-day Adventist lay preacher. It is my prayer and desire that the Most High God blesses evangelism ministry in order to spread the message to the whole world.

I am requesting you to send me plenty of health books, magazines, literature, prophecy books, and above all, Bibles. I am praying to God so that He according to His riches may finance your work to meet our needs.

WN, Zimbabwe

This letter serves to acknowledge the receipt of the mailbag which I received in the month of May 2002. I would like to thank you for taking this challenge. Pamphlets have been distributed to different people regardless of his or her faith. For the books, people have turned to my home as a library. Thy word of encouragement is that God loves a cheerful giver and He shall bless you abundantly.

NF, Zambia

I am encouraged after receiving a big carton full of powerful magazines: *Behold He Cometh*, *Earth's Final Warning*, *Future News*, and *Our Firm Foundation* magazines. My friend and I have engaged in lay evangelistic efforts and other activities in many SDA churches for the last eight years. We are encouraged by these present-truth-filled magazines; we cannot be silent. We are going to continue spreading the gospel in our villages and trading centers. Please, we need some more KJV Bibles, Spirit of Prophecy publications, and many more reading materials!

Second, famine is a great sign of Jesus' soon coming. Here in Central Africa, we experienced very bad hunger problems because of drought and floods. About 60 percent of people went to sleep without eating. Our loving God kept us and continues to keep us in such conditions. We continue conducting evangelistic efforts in various areas. People are converted to the Adventist message. Praise the Lord!

MM, Malawi

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APBB-JSSG	Bob Bresnahan	Separating Sheep and Goats (11½" x 12½")	\$2.00	\$0.75
APAJ-RACC	James Arrabito	Raccoons (16" x 21½")	\$5.00	\$0.75
APPC-43a	Otis Nichols, Publisher	1843 Prophetic Chart (25" x 37")	\$5.00	\$0.75
APPC-43b	J.V. Himes, Publisher	1843 Prophetic Chart (17½" x 23")	\$4.00	\$0.75
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APBB-EGW2	Bob Bresnahan	Ellen G. White & Testimonies (9¼" x 15½")	\$2.00	\$0.75
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