

Our Firm Foundation

A close-up photograph of a hand in a dark sleeve pouring a golden, viscous liquid from a large glass pitcher into a smaller glass. The liquid is captured mid-pour, creating a dynamic sense of movement. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

Spiritual Inhibitors

Volume 18, Number 12

December 2003

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

The Remnant, Purified

There has developed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church a great confusion regarding our fundamental beliefs in the last 30 years. Insidiously, gradually, yet systematically, the pillars—the landmarks—which have been our trademark as the remnant church have eroded to such a degree that the majority of our pastors, leaders, and laity do not understand the importance of the Spirit of Prophecy and our prophet Ellen White. Neither do they appreciate the important messages that separate us from the churches of Babylon.

Sadly, thousands of precious souls who do not know present truth have been admitted into Seventh-day Adventist Church membership. They feel safe because they go to church on Saturday, but they have never experienced what it is to be born again in the love of Jesus, to surrender their will completely to God, and have an understanding of the great truths which were given to us by God through Inspiration and which were supported by our pioneers. We have been filling the church up with tares who do not know the conditions of salvation, for we have not given them God's answer to their question, "How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?" See *Steps to Christ*, 47.

"The young man came to Jesus with the question, 'Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?' And Christ saith unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' He saith unto Him, 'Which?' Jesus quoted several, and the young man said unto Him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack

I yet?' Jesus said unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.' See Matthew 19:16–21. Here are conditions, and the Bible is full of conditions." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 378.

"Only when the church is composed of pure, unselfish members, can it fulfill God's purpose. Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, We will first get them into the church, and then reform them. But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray with them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God's people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts." *Review and Herald*, May 21, 1901.

"The sin of these last days is upon the professed people of God. Through selfishness, love of pleasure, and love of dress, they deny the Christ that their church membership says that they are following. I thank God that Jesus Christ knows every impulse in the heart of the believer. Many profess to be children of God who do not follow Christ. Their frivolity, their cheap conversation, their want of high-toned piety, their low aims, mislead others who would pursue a different course were it not for the example of these deceptive characters, those who do not love Christ or do His will but simply follow their own imaginations." *Testimonies to Ministers*, 129.

The present spiritual condition of our beloved church is an abomination to God. I urge each reader to

carefully study the vision recorded by Ezekiel, chapters 7–9.

How many Seventh-day Adventist leaders, pastors, and laity will be saved?—Only a very small remnant. "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah 1:9.

There will soon be a cleansing of the church. God will have a people pure and holy without spot or wrinkle to give the loud cry in the latter-rain experience, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:27.

"The days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 80.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. . . . In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat." *Ibid.*, 81.

May each of us cooperate with God in His work of cleansing our hearts of sin, lest we be cleansed out of the church when all that can be shaken will be shaken.



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

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Spiritual Inhibitors

Cody Francis

In a chemical reaction there are two types of substances (or stimuli), which work in opposite ways. One is called a catalyst; it accelerates a chemical reaction. The second is an inhibitor; it slows down or stops a chemical reaction. In the Christian walk there are also *spiritual* inhibitors and *spiritual* catalysts. In this article, we will look at the spiritual inhibitors which interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and keep us from fulfilling our mission in this world.

In the last recorded words of Jesus in the gospel of Luke, instruction is given to His disciples and their future work is outlined. "And [He] said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:46–49.

Christ commissioned His disciples that they were to preach His name to all nations. What an enormous task! They did not have the advantages of printing presses, satellites, telephones, or even e-mail, but Jesus said the message must go to all nations! Although the task was mammoth, they were not to begin immediately. Before they could

do this all-important work, Jesus told them to wait for the necessary preparation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8, He said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Do you think that we need that power today? Consider this inspired counsel, "Those who today believe in Christ, need more than Pentecostal power." *1888 Materials*, 1793. We need *more* than Pentecostal power today. Once again there is an entire world to be warned and hearts are more hardened in sin than ever before. More than at any previous time, we need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to give us boldness and wisdom to present the everlasting gospel.

A Neglected Work

The work before us is not an easy one, and because of our neglect, it becomes increasingly more difficult with every passing day. Inspiration warns us, "The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis, under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 463. In another statement, Sister White said that soon the work would be "more difficult than we can imagine." *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 22.

Year after year it becomes more difficult to evangelize. It seems as

though we spend more and more money for fewer and fewer results. Our condition is much like that recorded in Haggai 1:6, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." Because of our neglect, the world is becoming hardened to the presentation of the gospel message.

However, we do need to be careful to make a distinction between results—or numbers—and power. At Pentecost the results in numbers were very large but what was much more significant was the power with which the apostles were able to present the message.

Some of the most powerful discourses recorded in the Bible were given to just a few people. Think of Jesus' appeal to the woman at the well, and His midnight talk with Nicodemus. Those powerful appeals were made to just one individual. The Lord sent Phillip from a successful effort in Samaria to the desert where he witnessed with power to a single Ethiopian eunuch.

Numbers are not power. While we know that in the closing work great numbers will join the ranks of the faithful, we are not told that they will come in through massive meetings.

In *The Great Controversy*, 612, we have been told, "By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warn-

ing will be given." I pray that my voice will be one of those proclaiming the great truths of God's Word when this work ends with more power than it began.

Why Do We Lack Power?

God wants each one of us to take an active part in this great work. So, why do we lack power, and why is the Holy Spirit not poured out in greater measure in our work today? I believe it is because we are allowing spiritual inhibitors to separate us from God. Let us consider what Inspiration tells us about some of these inhibitors:

The Absence of the Spirit—"The promise of the Spirit is not appreciated as it should be. Its fulfillment is not realized as it might be. *It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless.* Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner be won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 328. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

We can present the message in Bible studies or through evangelistic efforts, but without the work of the Holy Spirit, not one soul will be convicted and converted to the truth.

Notice what Paul said: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Corinthians 1:21. How does our message appear to the worldly-minded?—Foolishness. It does not make sense from their point of view. Our preaching and our evangelistic endeavors are all foolishness without the Holy

Spirit's power to change hearts and minds and bring about true conversion.

"The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit." *Evangelism*, 631.

Failing to Persist in Prayer—"I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said: 'Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.'" *Early Writings*, 73.

In vision, Sister White asked her attending angel why there is no more faith or power in our work.

We can present the message in Bible studies or through evangelistic efforts, but without the work of the Holy Spirit, not one soul will be convicted and converted to the truth.

The angel's reply goes directly to the root of our problem today. We lack faith and power because we let go of the arm of God. We do not persist in prayer, and because we do not persist in prayer, we do not have as much of the Holy Spirit as God wants to give us. Persistent prayer is the key to receiving power from on high.

In this vision, Sister White was then pointed to the example of Elijah when he prevailed by persistent prayer. "He was subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly. His faith endured the trial. Seven times he prayed before the Lord, and at last the cloud was seen. I saw that we had doubted the sure promises, and wounded the Savior by our lack of faith." *Ibid.*

The last prayer recorded in the Bible is found in Revelation 22:20. The Lord promises, "Surely I come quickly," and with earnest longing John prayed, "Even so, come, Lord

Jesus." Is that the prayer of our hearts day by day? Are we pleading for it? Do we desire it more than anything else?

We have been told why we need to persist in prayer. "We must show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Often He delays to answer us in order to try our faith or test the genuineness of our desire. Having asked according to His Word, we should believe His promise and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied.

"God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude,

and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks." *Christ Object Lessons*, 145.

Does the Lord ask us to persist in prayer because He really does not want to give us what we need?—Certainly not! There are times when we must pray persistently for things we know it is God's will for us to receive, because, as we seek the Lord earnestly, He works upon our hearts to show us the things in our lives that need to be changed in order for Him to answer our prayers for guidance or wisdom or victory over an overmastering temptation.

Consider this inspired counsel, "But how shall this victory over the world be obtained?—Go to your closet, dear reader, and there plead with God: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Psalm 51:10. Be in earnest; be sincere; Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Do not leave your

closet until you feel strong in God. Remain until unutterable longings for salvation are awakened in your heart, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin. Then when you leave your closet, watch; and so long as you watch and pray, the grace of God will appear in your life." *Signs of the Times*, November 18, 1886.

Would we have more power if we would follow this counsel?—Jesus longs to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He wants to give us power in our work, more power than was given at Pentecost. "The only reason for our lack of power with God is to be found in ourselves. If the inner life of many who profess the truth were pre-

earnest, more zealous, and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the Spirit of Christ, and we should not rest until we receive it." *Ibid.*

God wants to give us the power of the midnight cry. He longs to pour out His Spirit upon faithful men and women who will follow His direction. We ought to be even more earnest and more zealous than those early believers. We need to pray individually and not leave our closet until we feel strong in God, and we also need to come apart as families and churches and together claim the promises of the Lord.

"When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the barn, in the orchard, or the grove."

sented before them, they would not claim to be Christians. They are not growing in grace. A hurried prayer is offered now and then, but there is no real communion with God." *My Life Today*, 17.

Consider the life of Christ. He spent entire nights in prayer, and His heart was constantly in communion with God moment by moment. Think of the experience of the early leaders of the Advent movement. Sister White wrote, "When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the barn, in the orchard, or the grove. Frequently we spent hours in earnest prayer, two or three together claiming the promise; often the sound of weeping was heard and then the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more

Lack of Faith—"It is because of a lack of faith that God's people have no more of His power. Earnest, living faith is needed—faith that will take firm hold of the promises made to the followers of Christ." *Review and Herald*, June 2, 1903.

We need more than a nominal, formal faith. We need earnest, living faith that takes *firm hold of the promises of God*. It is impossible for the human mind to exhaust one truth or even one promise of the Bible. See *Education*, 171. There is infinite power in the promises of God, and it is through these exceeding great and precious promises that we are to be partakers of the divine nature. See 2 Peter 1:4. We should open our Bibles, and putting our finger on the promise, earnestly claim that promise, trusting that God will do what He has promised. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 322–323.

This lack of earnest, living faith produces another problem that is so

common today. "We are not to hold ourselves in our own hands. We are to drop self into the hands of God. . . . Our lack of faith is the reason that we have not seen more of the power of God. We exercise more faith in our own working than in God's working for us. God designs that everything possible shall be done to enable us to stand heart to heart, mind to mind, shoulder to shoulder. This lack of love and confidence in one another weakens our faith in God." *Upward Look*, 346.

A major spiritual inhibitor for us today, is our decreased faith, which has been eaten away by our lack of love and confidence in one another. We might think that holding ourselves aloof from one another will not affect us greatly and might even "help the work go forward," but this will inevitably result in destroying our faith in God and our power to work for Him. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:15–16, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The Holy Spirit will only be sent to those who are striving to keep the commandments. What commandment had Jesus just reiterated to His disciples?—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:34–35.

We are commanded in 1 John 4: 11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." The original Greek literally reads, We are obliged or indebted to love one another. If we realize what Jesus has done for us, we will want to show the same love to one another. As we become more closely united we will see more and more of God's power in our lives personally and in our work for the Lord because our faith will not be weakened through a lack of love and confidence in one another.

A Spirit of Pride—"Just as long as you allow pride to dwell in your

hearts, so long will you lack power in your work. For years a wrong spirit has been cherished, a spirit of pride, a desire for preeminence. In this Satan is served, and God is dishonored. . . . As long as pride and envy and evil-surmising predominate in the life, Christ does not rule in the heart." *Lift Him Up*, 301. What a solemn statement! If we allow pride, envy, and evilsurmising to make their home in our hearts, we are no longer under the control of Christ. We have chosen another master.

In Philippians 2:3–5 we are shown God's ideal for His people: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

In order for pride and selfishness to be cast from our lives, we have to learn to esteem others better than ourselves. Does that come naturally?—No, it cuts through the very grain of human nature. It requires that we surrender all to Christ and allow Him to create us into a new creature with thoughts and desires like His own.

Pride can be exhibited in so many different ways. We might disguise it by saying, "Look how the Lord blessed *us* in *our* witnessing effort." We must constantly ask ourselves, "What is my motive for saying this or doing this?" This will be difficult, but as long as pride is alive, God's Spirit cannot be poured out in the fullness God desires.

Leaving Our First Love—
"Thou hast left thy first love." Revelation 2:4. This is the secret of the lack of power in our churches. If those who have received such great truth would live this truth, they would have no time to quarrel, no time to do that which bears the testimony, 'I know not the Man.' Matthew 26:74." *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1903.

How wonderful it is to see someone newly come into the faith,

on fire to share with all the precious message they have received! How tragic it is when that first love dies out and formality takes the place of a heart on fire for the Lord! This slow change from the blazing flame to a few dying embers in the church is a spiritual inhibitor.

Idolatry in the Church—
"Anything that diverts the mind from God assumes the form of an idol, and that is why there is so little power in the church today." *Sons and Daughters of God*, 57.

Idolatry can take as many varied forms as there are people in the world. The devil knows just what to get our hearts attached to and thereby separate us from God. There are several spiritual inhibi-

worldly honor, or some favorite possession. Where are our thoughts and our affections? These are the indicators of where our heart is. If we are going to receive the power of God, greater than that given at Pentecost, we must be willing ask ourselves if we are unknowingly serving idols and be willing to give up our idols and serve God alone.

There are many spiritual inhibitors that are draining the power from our work today, but the Bible tells us that someday there will be a people who will be willing to let the Lord remove these inhibitors from their lives and who will stand firmly for the right in the final conflict.

"The reason why there is not more spiritual strength and power with the little companies of believers . . . is because the business cares of life are made their first and highest object."

tors mentioned that I have classified under the category of idolatry in the church. For example, business cares and improper conversation. "The reason why there is not more spiritual strength and power with the little companies of believers that compose our churches in different places, is because the business cares of life are made their first and highest object, and absorb their time and their thoughts." *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1887. "The sin of foolish talk is common among those who claim to believe the most solemn truths ever given to our world. Because of this commonplace, frivolous talk, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved away. Improper conversation is the reason of such a lack of faith and power among the people of God." *Voice in Speech and Song*, 126.

Is there anything in our lives that diverts our minds from God? It might be business, or pleasure,

"I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1. The message that goes forth under the latter rain and the loud cry is not weak like we see today. The message goes forward with great power because the inhibitors have been taken away and God's Spirit can be poured out in the fullest sense. Greater power will accompany the work than ever before.

This time is coming; Bible prophecy predicts it. The question is, Will you and I be a part of it? Will we allow the Lord to remove the inhibitors in our lives that are making it impossible for Him to pour His Spirit upon us? It will take effort on our part. It might even be very painful. Are we willing to count the cost? God is able and willing if we will surrender fully to Him and His leading. Let us pray that He will make us willing. ❀

Forgetfulness



Ellen G. White

Why did ancient Israel so easily forget God's dealings? The people did not retain in their memory His works of greatness and power or His words of warning. Had they remembered His wondrous dealings with them, they would not have received the reproof, "And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isaiah 51:13. But the children of Israel forgot God, Whose they were by creation and by redemption. After seeing all His wonderful works, they tempted Him.

I would call the attention of all who claim to be children of God, to the one hundred and fifth, one hundred and sixth, and one hundred and seventh Psalms. Please read these Psalms carefully. From them we may gather the necessity of appreciating the goodness, mercy, and love of our God.

The warning comes sounding down along the line to our time:

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; while it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." Hebrews 3:12-16. To the ancient people of God were committed the sacred oracles. But God's revealed Word was misinterpreted and misapplied. The people despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify

the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 25:20-24. Please read Psalms, chapters 91, 92, 95, and 96.

"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. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Psalm 103:13-17. This testifies of the influence a father and mother may have over their children. "To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens;

and his kingdom ruleth over all." Verses 18–19.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep they statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:1–11.

"Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellors. My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes." Verses 17–26.

"Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from

beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness." Verses 34–40.

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from

an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God"?

I have a message for our people in America. We are a people whom the Lord has made the repository of sacred truth. To us He has opened the living oracles, that we may arise and shine; because our light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

Christ came to our world, but the world could not endure His purity. He has gone to His Father, but He has sent His Holy Spirit to represent Him in the world till He shall come again. This is the message we are to bear, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye

We are a people whom the Lord has made the repository of sacred truth. To us He has opened the living oracles, that we may arise and shine.

every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." Verses 97–104.

"I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me." Verses 174–175.

Take Heed, Brethren

Christ prayed for His disciples, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:1–3.

Can we not see the necessity of the apostle's words, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you

shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Revelation 1:7.

Are We Sounding the Third Angel's Message?

What are we doing? Are we voicing the message of the third angel? "The third angel followed them [the first and second angels], saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are

they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:9–12.

This is the message given by God to be sounded forth in the loud cry of the third angel. The sign or seal of God is the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Lord's memorial of His work of creation. "The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you." Exodus 31: 12–13. Here the Sabbath is clearly defined as a sign between God and His people.

a determination to cherish hatred against those who proclaim these commandments, leads to the most determined war on the part of the dragon, whose whole energies are brought to bear against the commandment-keeping people of God. "He causeth all, both small and great . . . to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads." Revelation 13:16. Not only are men not to work with their hands on Sunday, but with their minds are they to acknowledge Sunday as the Sabbath. "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Verse 17.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from

in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." Revelation 18:1–6.

Are You a Subject of Christ's Kingdom?

The Lord has been greatly dishonored by His people catching up the issues that arise in this time of test and trial. His people are to keep free from politics. They are to stand as a separate and peculiar people; the name of God our Ruler is to be in their foreheads, showing to all that He is their Sovereign.

If those who know the truth will have faith and zeal corresponding to their knowledge, if they desire to manifest their piety, and reveal what the truth has done for them, showing that the salt has not lost its savor, they will communicate the saving and sanctifying power of the truth to all with whom they associate. There will then be less controversy and a deeper interest in the things of God.

The man in whose heart the truth is cherished will bring from his treasure-house things new and old. In his words and deportment he will reveal the likeness of Christ. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. Christ is uplifted by the right use of the faculty of speech. Thus the Holy Spirit makes an impression upon minds. The righteousness of Christ is the salvation of all who accept Him as their personal Saviour. Why did Christ die?—To bring life and immortality to light. Through the merits of Christ men are invited to repent, believe, and obey the commandments of God. Christ died on the cross that He might pardon all transgression and sin, and bring man back to his loyalty to the commandments of God. By His death He showed the immutability of the law of God. He illustrated this truth by laying the foundation in His own death, erecting a cross as its center and glory. In His redemptive plan He embraces man, placing him once more on vantage ground with God, that his moral capacity might

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The mark of the beast is the opposite of this, the observance of the first day of the week. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority, seen in the man of sin thinking to change times and laws, and those who acknowledge the authority of God: The worshipers of the beast are those that receive his mark in their foreheads and in their hands.

The faith of Jesus and the testimony of Jesus are blended. They are to be clearly presented to the world. But in God's Word we are shown the consequences of proclaiming this message. "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. A refusal to obey the commandments of God, and

heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works:

be recognized as amenable to God, who is the Supreme Ruler.

Men are to become the subjects of Christ's kingdom. Through the divine power imputed to them, they are to return to their allegiance. By laws and resources God has ordained a heavenly communication with man's spiritual life that in its action is as mysterious as the science and operation of the wind. See John 3:7-8. Christ declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. While it imprints its influence upon earthly governments, it cannot take the slightest imprint from them without marring the divine similitude. So spiritual is the character of God's work upon the human heart that receives it, that it makes every one a new creature, without destroying or weakening any capability God has given to man. It purifies every attribute fit for connection with the divine nature. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and when man is born from above, a heavenly peace pervades the soul.

Christ's subjects are those who keep His commandments. These only are counted as His subjects. If after the light has come, the disobedient continue in transgression, they are subjects of the kingdom of the prince of this world. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Converted to the World

But the heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed people of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. People are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is becoming

converted to the world. Professing Christians are slaves of mammon. Their indulgence of appetite, and extravagant expenditure of money for selfish gratification, greatly dishonors God.

Contrary to worldly kingdoms, Christ does not find His subjects—He makes them. Those who stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel are the subjects of a kingdom not recognized by worldly kingdoms, whose subjects have wandered from their allegiance to God, from their obedience to the law of His kingdom. These are accounted as dead in trespasses and sins. They are destitute of the

unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Verses 21-23.

On Which Side Are You Standing?

God's commandment-keeping people stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence; the commandment-breakers, under the ensign of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws. But he could not do this; he only claimed to do it, opening his mouth

The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed people of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people.

Spirit of God, which worketh in the children of obedience.

I am come, Christ said, to set up a new kingdom. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot be enrolled as a subject of my kingdom. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:15-17.

"He that hath [the light on] my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself

"in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Revelation 13:6.

On which side are we ranging ourselves? On the side of the dragon, who was wroth with the woman, and who went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ? "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs," John writes, "come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13-14.

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How the Greeks Destroyed the Jewish Church

“The Greeks seek after wisdom.” *1 Corinthians 1:22.*

Hal Mayer

The educational system God gave the Jews was simple, practical, natural, and designed to create love and loyalty to God and an understanding of His law in their hearts. If Israel had remained loyal, God would have blessed them so much that they would have been the admiration of the world and consulted regularly. God’s educational plan would have prepared Israel to announce the Messiah’s salvation to the world.

However, God’s chosen people stoned the prophets, went whoring after idols, languished in Babylon, and ultimately rejected Christ the Messiah. After returning from captivity, being fearful of idolatry and its consequences of captivity, they hedged themselves with rules and regulations to prevent apostasy. Satan knew it would be extremely difficult to entice Israel into rank idolatry again, so he tried another angle.

At the end of the Medo-Persian Empire, Alexander the Great conquered the civilized world, but his sudden death left the empire divided among his four generals. The Greek empire championed worldly masters of wisdom. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato laid the foundation of Western culture. They tried to

solve the moral dilemmas of society using worldly, pagan philosophy. Though Greek civilization flourished economically, their system of philosophy and education failed to produce the moral system that could change the heart and make it truly noble. It had no divine system of evaluating right and wrong.

Sophisticated Greek culture required highly developed colonization and city life. The city-state was the only social concept of mature Greek culture. Yet, it was not a city with walls and fortifications. They were more interested in the usefulness of the city in which to engage Greek culture and ideas. Grecian kings were known for establishing large cities, colonizing, and mixing cultures together under Greek principles.¹ Colonizing large cities removed people from the natural simple influences of the country and engaged them in the complex, the man-made, and the artificial.

Previous empires forcefully imposed their culture and religion on those nations they conquered, but it was always difficult. Alexander was the first emperor to leave national culture and religion alone from a military standpoint.² Nevertheless, Hellenistic philosophy, economics, lifestyle, language, and the arts sank

in very deeply. By popularizing their culture and their educational system, they could integrate it into other cultures, resulting in one vast “Greekdom” under their intellectual masters.³ This strategy was very effective, not by creating an empire controlled by military power, but by creating a cultural empire built on ideas and a way of thinking that would influence nations throughout all time.⁴ What Babylon and Medo-Persia had failed to do by force of arms, the Greeks did by force of intellect. Though their military power was relatively short-lived, the power of Greek intellectualism is still with us today in every aspect of our lives.

Devastating Effect on the Jewish Church

The effect of Hellenistic culture on God’s church during the 400 years between the last Old Testament prophet and the time of Christ is instructive to His church today. There were no prophets to speak to God’s church, and the Bible is otherwise silent concerning the history and condition of the church during this period. Interestingly, many of the same principles the Greeks used on the Jewish church—which led to its terrible rejection of Christ—are be-

ing used on God's church today to prevent it from receiving the latter rain. We will mention some specific parallels at the end of this article.

The friendly relationship between the Jews and the Greeks caused large Jewish communities to arise in Alexandria, Egypt, because Alexander and Ptolemy I offered them equal rights, benefits, and protections with all other citizens.⁵ The Ptolemy strategy to integrate Greek culture into Jewish life was a multi-pronged approach through their educational system, economy, entertainment, and the arts. The Jews were intrigued by the intellectualism of the Greeks, and eventually became enthralled with it.

The Ptolemy dynasty controlled Egypt in the south, and Judea, Phoenicia, and the surrounding regions. One of the Ptolemy kings strategically commissioned a large number of rabbi scholars to come to Alexandria and translate the Old Testament (their sacred oracles) into the Greek language.⁶ This would no doubt open opportunities for the Jews to become more familiar with the culture of the Greeks by exchanging ideas with the Greek master philosophers. The Jews would have vainly seen it as an opportunity to influence the Greeks with their own sacred texts.

Promising and talented Jewish youth were, no doubt, invited to Alexandria's schools and then, with their degrees, came back to teach in Jewish schools. Because Greek culture was becoming quite popular, the Jews thought this a good way to bring fresh thinking and new perspectives into Jewish life. The average Jew was enamored with Greek lifestyle and materialism. The prospect of wealth strengthened the Jewish fascination with Greek thinking and culture. Meanwhile, Hellenic intellectualism crept into Palestine.

Economic Influence

The Jewish priests had made themselves singularly wealthy from the offerings of the people and had become corrupted. Their chief aim

it seemed was to gain money.⁷ Since the priests were essentially the national leaders, they guided the course of their country according to their ambitions and became easy prey to Hellenic influences, which improved their chances of increasing their wealth even further.

However, a broader economic principle was to come into play in Judea, which would affect everybody, not just the priests. The Ptolemy king made a certain Jew the head of tax collection from Phoenicia to the borders of Egypt. He in turn appointed his own countrymen to help him. These enriched themselves and in turn invested in Judea, showering it with money

indulged in wine, music, drama, theater, and other entertainments. They placed more importance on making money than on spiritual values.¹⁰ Greek fashions became customary in Judea. Youth would exercise under Greek hats,¹¹ and flaunted the popular Greek country dress through the streets of Jerusalem.¹² As the new educational system advanced within Jewish society, so did the corresponding love of worldliness and monetary gain. These enchantments greatly appealed to the youth who were quickly drawn into dissipation and unchastity.¹³

The Greeks loved their festivals which consumed a large share of public life.¹⁴ Some important Jews,

As the new educational system advanced within Jewish society, so did the corresponding love of worldliness and monetary gain.

and wealth and improving economic conditions. This investment in Palestine raised the people from poverty to prosperity and changed the course of Judean history.⁸

The newfound wealth helped turn admiration for the Greeks into emulation. Jewish tastes became more refined. They became interested in less practical arts, especially painting. Their homes became more beautiful. They copied the clothing fashions of the Greeks. As a result, the Jews lost the simple habits and customs that were designed to keep them loyal to God and separate from pagan idolaters.⁹ Though they no longer bowed down to idols, they were guilty of a new idolatry to the gods of reason, materialism, and fashion.

It was the Jewish leaders who led the "yuppies" of that day to adopt extravagant habits and frivolous customs. They copied the Greeks in everything from eating and drinking to fashion and finances. They

familiar with Ptolemy's court, witnessed, and even participated in the corrupt orgies connected with the numerous Greek festivals. These leading Jews brazenly introduced them at Jerusalem, including the wine, dancing women, and pagan music.¹⁵

Greek Education

Some of the leading Jews knew that in order to Hellenize the Jewish church, they would have to control the education of the young so the Jews could become as much like the Greeks as possible. Some of the most influential Jews shamelessly conspired to systematically Hellenize the Jews through education and eventually abolish the faith of their fathers. The goal of these "liberals" was the complete incorporation of worldly Greek culture into Jewish life and customs.¹⁶

Greek education put a high priority on sports. The Jewish revisionists introduced games, races, wrestling

matches, and contests of all sorts in Jewish schools, even though Jewish law sternly opposed these innovations. One of the high priests named Jason introduced the Olympic games into Judea and built a gymnasium for this purpose in the heart of the city close to the temple.¹⁷ Jewish youth flocked to this Olympic shrine within their own borders. Greek sports masters were hired to teach their games. The Jews crowded the stadium. Even the priests neglected their temple duties so they could participate in the games.¹⁸

There was one embarrassment to the Jews. The participants in the Olympic games were required to compete naked. One of the distinc-

their very identity, became open for discussion. Even conservative Jews began to question their old traditional beliefs. They wondered if the teachings of Judaism were actually correct. They could see that their old teachings were in conflict with Greek reasoning. Yet, the Greeks were so “successful”; could it not be the blessing of God that they were so beneficial to the Jewish economy? They gradually replaced God’s definition of success with Greek ideas. They even began to wonder if God really required self-denial, and whether God was really concerned about man at all.²²

The rabbinical schools of the Jews continued to operate. But as

the Bible, at ten the Mishna, and at fifteen the Gemara.”²³ As a student advanced in years and increased in mental ability, he studied God’s Word less and man’s writings more.

The Peril of Prosperity

Liberal compromises rarely bring peace and unity. By the second century B.C., the degeneration of the Jewish faith led to severe internal conflicts creating a reaction. Those who opposed this liberalization banded together and formed the Chasidim or “The Pious.” The conflict between the liberals and the conservatives pushed both parties to opposite extremes so that eventually they could not comprehend each other. The conservatives accused the liberals of backsliding, “breaking the law,” and of “fearful sin.” The liberals accused the conservatives of folly in retaining the old landmarks and of undermining national progress, prosperity, and stability.²⁴

Arguments arose on all fronts. Disagreements about sports, food, worldliness, and philosophical problems created general discord. Both parties struggled for political influence. The liberal Hellenizers wanted one of their number to replace the conservative high priest and soon the burning question was whether it was really necessary that the high priest be a descendant of Aaron, leading to fears that the liberals would desecrate the high office.²⁵

The people generally took the middle course. They enjoyed the luxuries; refinements; entertainments, such as drama and theater; and the ever-present sports; but disapproved of the extreme liberal excesses, because they did not want to break their connection with the past. Some, no doubt, even began to rationalize that since the Jews were the special objects of God’s affection, these changes to society, buttressed by economic strength, were actually blessings from God and should be accommodated.²⁶

The conflict and strife in Jerusalem with its political intrigues drew the attention of Antiochus Epiphanies, a Syrian Hellenistic

The Greeks were so “successful”; could it not be the blessing of God that they were so beneficial to the Jewish economy?

tive marks of Jewish singleness to God was circumcision. Yet, this became a mark of shame under the influence of the Greeks. To prevent derision, Jewish Olympians undertook a special operation to disguise this.¹⁹ And little wonder. Competitive sports are contrary to God’s system of education, and this symbol of their singleness to God was a constant reminder of their new idolatry.

Loss of Distinctive Doctrines

The decline in standards fostered by the liberal leaders led to a general disregard and even denial of the fundamental truths of the Jewish faith.²⁰ “By the act of its own people, Jerusalem had renounced its age-long isolation and come into line with the great Hellenic world.”²¹ The increasing fascination with Hellenic culture led to less interest in the old Jewish laws and ways. Little by little the things that made the Jews distinct;

Alexandria-trained rabbis held sway over the curriculum, the training in these schools became greatly compromised. Increasingly, they were less practical, less biblical, and more theoretical. Sports, games, wealth, and luxury were glorified. Worldly motivation replaced service in God’s cause.

Year after year, the Word of God was studied less as the educational curriculum moved toward intellectualism and rationalism. Year after year, man was exalted and God was less thought of. The degreed rabbi was extolled and the unlearned depreciated. Ceremony increased as piety diminished. More emphasis was placed on the Mishna—a commentary on the Bible which added many laws and ceremonies—and the Gemara—a commentary on the Mishna which again added more regulations and rules. There was a saying in *The Ethics of the Fathers* which went something like this: “A child of five years should study

king who marched on Jerusalem. In 169 B.C. Antiochus desecrated the temple, and made the keeping of the Sabbath and circumcision capital crimes, while forcing the Jews to keep the pagan festival to Dionysius.²⁷ The very distinctives of Jewish faith, once desecrated and neglected, became the target of the oppression of their conquerors. The revolt of the Maccabees and subsequent wars eventually restored the temple and Jewish nationality under the control of conservatives. However, the infiltration of Greek principles was never eradicated.

The Jews had departed from God again, and to supply the lack of spirit, the conservative rabbis made the Jewish religion much more legalistic in order to restrict Hellenism's progress. See *The Desire of Ages*, 29. Yet, the religious leaders had lost sight of the true object of their religion. They multiplied ceremonies without understanding their real purpose. Meanwhile, the Jewish church had become so compromised that full reform was essentially impossible.

"As the Jews had departed from God, faith had grown dim, and hope had well-nigh ceased to illuminate the future. The words of the prophets were uncomprehended." *Ibid.*, 32. The influences of pagan culture, philosophy, and lifestyle had so gutted the religious life of the Jews that when Jesus came to them, only a few humble souls recognized and welcomed Him. Even the masses who followed Him daily looked for a temporal kingdom, and when threatened by the religious leaders, they deserted Him.

Application to Modern Israel

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced a similar degeneration of its core principles and the parallels are phenomenal. To meet accreditation standards, teachers attend evangelical and secular seminaries for advanced degrees and bring evangelical teachings back into our seminaries, compromising the training of younger pastors.

Adventist liberals knew that the only way to change the church was to control the educational system. This they have done successfully. Our schools have replaced agriculture with the Greek pagan concept of games and sports and have tried to become as much like secular schools as possible. Many churches have gymnasiums built across the parking lot. The distinctive features of God's educational system that was to set our educational system apart have been largely eliminated, and academic curriculums now emphasize less Bible and more evangelical theology and ecumenical teachings.

Like the Jews, Adventist people have developed an entertainment mentality which includes celebration-style worship services, mimes

and clowns, movies and theater, amusement parks, computer games, and the ever-present sports. Many Adventists live in city environments where they can access these entertainments more easily. Similar to the Jews, affluence consumes our time and energies, providing little time for God and family. Many Adventists are more concerned about making money than about their spiritual life; and many among us try to become as much like the worldlings around us as possible.

Like the Jews, many now question the distinctive features of our faith. Many progressive leaders (as liberals like to be called) are determined to incorporate evangelical religious culture into our Adventist lifestyle and do away with the faith of our fathers. Many of us have become ashamed of the distinctives of our faith, and, like those Jewish athletes of old, want to hide or

minimize them. Jewish distinctives, such as the Sabbath and circumcision, once compromised, eventually became a target of repression under Antiochus. Will similar behavior lead us into corresponding persecution of those who uphold the distinctives God has entrusted to us? Conflicts between the liberals and conservatives of today have gotten to the point where they often cannot understand each other.

God's plan of true education, designed to strengthen the loyalties of God's people to the law of God is almost wholly extinct today, as it was in New Testament times. God then specifically directed that John the Baptist and Jesus should be homeschooled rather than attend the schools saturated with what

God's plan of true education, designed to strengthen the loyalties of God's people to the law of God is almost wholly extinct today, as it was in New Testament times.

God calls foolish Greek principles. See 1 Corinthians 1:18. Today many parents are again turning to homeschooling. And a few self-supporting schools are also trying to provide true education as best as they can understand it.

The very distinctives of our faith—such as the Sabbath, the Sanctuary message, and other key doctrines—having been neglected and forgotten, will one day become the identifying marks of those targeted for persecution under the coming oppressive Sunday laws.

The Messiah and the Holy Spirit Unrecognized

The Jews were so steeped in Greek education and lifestyle that they could not discern that in their midst was the Promised One. They viewed Him as unlearned and lower class because He had not studied in their schools. They hated His pointed

public accounting of their infidelity to the law of God. They despised His simple teaching about how to be saved. But most of all they were angry that He refused to recognize their authority and follow their rules. The Greek system of education and philosophy had destroyed their capability to comprehend Jesus' mission and they ended by crucifying Him.

Is it possible that Adventists are so steeped in worldly (Greek) principles that we will treat the genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a similar manner as the Jews treated Christ? Is it possible that many will miss the latter rain while it is falling all around them because they have refused to follow God's simple plan of education? How many Adventists will miss the last opportunity to cooperate with heaven in the final warning message to the world because they have frittered away their

preparation time in sports, entertainment, internet games, or other worldly pursuits?

Perhaps we need to rethink our relationship to the world around us, and evaluate where we have personally compromised spiritually, and do all in our power to recover the distinctives of our faith in our homes, schools, and churches. ❀

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- ²⁴ Graetz, 435–436.
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- ²⁷ Schürer, 206–207.

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On which side are you standing? On the side of those that worship the beast and his image? Are you connected with those who have lost the spiritual principles that distinguish them as men, and allied them to God, and who have become secondary subordinates, united with the great apostate? Christ died to make it possible for you to be allied with angels, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If you are obedient to all His commandments, you will reign as kings and priests unto God. Will you choose the degrading captivity of disobedience and transgression? Will you link yourselves with those who make void God's law?

The law that controls God's kingdom gives no encouragement to those who continue in transgression and sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath

not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." 1 John 3:4–8.

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right . . . and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 18:4–9.

Old Testament history agrees perfectly with the New. After light has come to us through the

Scripture, we are inexcusable if we do not walk in the light; for an unseen influence is drawing the soul to obedience, that it may bear witness to the truth. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:8–9.

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Verses 22–24. ❀

Pamphlet 86, "Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church" (1898), 1–13.

A Stone of Witness

Ellen G. White

Joshua's farewell address to Israel produced a deep impression upon them. They knew that they were listening to his dying testimony, and that no feeling of pride, ambition, or self-interest could influence him. By long experience, the aged leader had learned how to most effectually reach the hearts of the people. He realized the importance of the present opportunity, and improved it to the utmost.

His earnest appeals called forth the response: "God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; for the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: and the LORD drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God." Joshua 24:16-18.

Still Joshua warned the people to make no rash promises which they would be unwilling to fulfill, but to carefully consider the matter, and decide upon their future course. "If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." Verse 20. Thus faithfully he sought to arouse them to a higher sense of God's claims upon them, and a deeper conviction that their only safety was in obedience to His law.

The congregation answered with one accord, "We will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Verses 21-24.

This solemn covenant was recorded in the book of the law, to be sacredly preserved. Joshua then set up a great stone under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." Verse 27. Here Joshua plainly declares that his instructions and warnings to the people were not his own words, but the words of God. This great stone would stand to testify to succeeding generations of the event which it was set up to commemorate, and would be a witness against the people, should they ever again degenerate into idolatry.

God's Words to Israel Were Spoken for Us Also

Israel was the Lord's peculiar treasure. The high estimation in which He held them is shown by the mighty miracles wrought in

their behalf. As a father would deal with a beloved son, so had the Lord succored, disciplined, and chastened Israel. He sought to inspire in their hearts that love for His character and requirements which would lead to willing obedience.

Through His people Israel, God designed to give to the world a knowledge of His will. His promises and threatenings, His instructions and reproofs, the wonderful manifestations of His power among them, in blessings for obedience, and judgment for transgression and apostasy—all were designed for the education and development of religious principle among the people of God until the close of time. Therefore it is important that we acquaint ourselves with the history of the Hebrew host, and ponder with care the dealings of God with them.

The words which God spoke to Israel by His Son were spoken for us also in these last days. The same Jesus who, upon the mount, taught His disciples the far-reaching principles of the law of God, instructed ancient Israel from the cloudy pillar and from the tabernacle, by the mouth of Moses and Joshua. The lessons were the same—that love for God would lead to purity of heart, and would be manifested in good works.

Those who place in contrast the teachings of Christ when He was upon the earth, and the principles of true religion as taught in the days of Moses, know not

what they assert. Christ cannot be arrayed against Himself. When He was upon earth, our Saviour made sinners feel that they could not trample upon the law of God with impunity. The same lesson was taught to ancient Israel. In the days of Moses sin could be pardoned only through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Jesus taught the same when He walked as a man among the children of men.

Religion in the days of Moses and Joshua was the same as religion today. When Christ dwells in the heart, His spirit will be manifested in the life. It will be calm, patient, noble, and unselfish. The marked contrast which exists between the lives of those who serve God

His dealings with Israel would not appear uninteresting or repulsive, but attractive and entertaining.

The people of Israel were required to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and their children's children. It was to be chanted by the congregation when assembled for worship, and to be repeated by the people as they went in and out about their daily duties. This song was not only historical, but prophetic. It recounted the wonderful dealings of God with His people in the past, and also foreshadowed the great events of the future, the final victory of the faithful when Christ shall appear the second time in power and glory.

When Christ dwells in the heart, His spirit will be manifested in the life. It will be calm, patient, noble, and unselfish.

and those who serve Him not is a constant rebuke to the sinner. The world rejected Christ because His life was in such marked contrast to their own. In every generation, those who are seeking to follow His example will be distinct from the world.

Remembering God's Dealings

By various means the Lord has sought to preserve the knowledge of His dealings with the children of men. Moses, just prior to his death, not only rehearsed to Israel the important events in their history, but at the command of God he embodied them in sacred verse. Deuteronomy 32:1–43. Thus the glorious and thrilling scenes of Israel's triumph, the sublime and awful manifestations of infinite majesty and power, the divine requirements, promises, and threatenings, clothed with all the beauty of poetic genius, were to be present for all the generations to come. Thus the record of God's requirements and

It was the imperative duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children, that they might never be forgotten. "Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear." Deuteronomy 31:19–21.

In after generations, this prophetic song would explain the dealings of God with His people, and

reveal the cause of their dispersed and scattered condition. Thus would it vindicate the justice of God, and establish the divine inspiration of Moses. It would condemn the wickedness of Israel, and would ever be a convicting power to call them back to their allegiance to God as the only hope of deliverance.

The great stone set up by Joshua was to stand as a constant reminder to Israel of the covenant which they had made with God, and a silent witness of their faithfulness or apostasy. So also the song of Moses was to testify against them, should they depart from God. Many of the Israelites were unacquainted with the books of Moses. But it was the purpose of God that this inspired song should awaken in thoughtful minds a desire to learn more of God's wonderful dealings with His people, and lead to the study of His revealed Word. Thus would they be led to realize the goodness of God toward them, and their duty to love, and obey, and worship Him.

History Is Repeated

If it was necessary for God's ancient people to often call to mind His dealings with them in mercy and judgment, in counsel and reproof, it is equally important that we contemplate the truths delivered to us in His Word—truth which, if heeded, will lead us to humility and submission, and obedience to God. We are to be sanctified through the truth. The Word of God presents special truths for every age. The dealings of God with His people in the past should receive our careful attention. We should learn the lessons which they are designed to teach us. But we are not to rest content with them. God is leading out His people step by step. Truth is progressive. The earnest seeker will be constantly receiving light from Heaven. What is truth? should ever be our inquiry.

The prophetic Word shows clearly that we are living near the close of this world's history, and that we may soon expect the coming of the Son of man in the clouds

of Heaven. As the Israelites journeyed toward the earthly Canaan, so are we pressing onward to reach the heavenly Canaan. The history of their backslidings is repeated among the people of God today. Faith and piety are waning. Many who once loved the appearing of Christ, are setting their affections upon this world, and are conforming to its habits and customs. The fear of God is not kept before the mind, and the natural desires and inclinations gain control.

The apostle presents before us the history of the children of Israel, and states that these things are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. He exhorts us not to lust after evil things as they lusted. The very same enemy that tempted the people of God in ancient times, will tempt His people in these last days. We should be earnest, active, and vigilant, in making ready for the appearing of our Lord. Every device will be employed to lead men away from God. Infidelity is exerting itself to the utmost. The present age is characterized by intense earnestness and activity in worldly pursuits; but zeal and energy in the service of God are sadly deficient.

In the days before the flood, the people were so engrossed in worldly things, and so corrupted by iniquity, that the Spirit of God ceased to strive with men. When God's Word loses its power upon the people, a Satanic infatuation leads them in direct opposition to His revealed will. Christians are absorbed in the questions, What shall we eat, and what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? When the energies are employed in buying and selling, planting and building, to the neglect of eternal interests; when the truth of God addressed to the ear ceases to impress the mind or affect the heart, the preaching is in vain; the hearing is in vain. Then indeed will the condition of the world become as it was in the days of Noah.

Many of the things of this life which are a blessing when temper-

ately enjoyed, become a curse when their use is carried to excess. The dressing mania is a device of Satan. Love of dress is an idolatrous shrine at which the women of this age are worshiping. They are so fully occupied with outward display, that they have no time to pray, no time to become acquainted with the Scriptures, no time to improve the talents which God has given them. They have no time to cleanse the soul-temple from its idolatrous shrines; and at last the Spirit ceases to strive with many, and they go down to the grave unprepared. The temptation to idolatry is even greater today than in the days of Israel.

The dealings of God with His people in the past should receive our careful attention. We should learn the lessons which they are designed to teach us.

Concerning the last days, our Saviour asks the significant question: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. The Scriptures declare that as it was in the days of Noah, before the judgments of God fell upon the corrupt inhabitants, so shall it be in the last days, just prior to the pouring out of God's unmingled wrath upon the earth. Men will be living a godless life, professing to be Christians, but by their acts contradicting their profession. They will be heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Is not this idolatry? and is not the guilt of God's professed people as much greater than was that of ancient Israel, as the light which we enjoy is greater than theirs?

The Need for Instruction in Doctrine

God would have His ministers in this dispensation keep before

the people, not only the mercy and love of Christ, but the doctrines of the Bible. These should be presented in simple language, adapted to the comprehension of children. Let the young be faithfully instructed in the truths of God's Word. The history of the past, the present, and the future, as revealed in the sacred Scriptures, should be taught in a pleasing, yet serious manner. Let the dealings of God with His people be rehearsed again and again, until the youth become familiar with the record.

The lives and teachings of Christian parents should be in marked contrast with those of unbelievers. Worldlings teach their

children to love display, and to bow to the idol of fashion. They sacrifice themselves and their children upon this altar of Moloch. But Christians who profess to be seeking the heavenly Canaan, should obey the instructions of the Bible. We urge modern Israel to lay aside their ornaments, their jewels of silver and gold and precious stones, to put off their costly apparel, and to seek for the inward adorning, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Let children be educated, not to become devotees of fashion, but to be servants of God.

If it was important for Israel to teach their children of the wonderful works of God, His character and requirements, it is important that we put forth at least equal efforts to teach our children the same truths. ✠

Signs of the Times, May 26, 1881.

What Every Church Should Know About Adventist Ministers

Dave Westbrook

What every church should know about Adventist ministers is that the primary calling of ministers is to take the four angels' messages of Revelation to those who do not know them. While ministers are called to visit churches periodically to provide edification and assistance, Seventh-day Adventists must understand that we ministers are *not* called to settle as assigned pastors over church congregations. Sadly, this is exactly what we are doing. In fact, it has actually become a milestone for congregations to have their own pastor, when that is in direct opposition to the clear, inspired counsel of God.

This, I believe, is one of the most serious issues facing the Adventist denomination in North America, primarily because it is not even recognized as a problem. It has paralyzed our work and brought spiritual stagnation to ministers and congregations alike. This idea may be startling to you, as it was to me, but I ask you to prayerfully consider the inspired counsel.

The Biblical Role of the Minister

In order to understand just how far we have come from God's plan

for our ministers and churches, we need to turn to the Scripture and study exactly what it says the role of the minister should be. In Acts 9:15 the Lord spoke to Ananias, a leader in the church at Damascus, and encouraged him that he need not fear Saul who had just had his conversion experience. The Lord described Saul's mission in these words, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Did you notice to whom Saul (soon to be Paul) was to witness?—First, to the Gentiles; then to kings; and finally to the children of Israel.

In Acts, chapter 10, you may read the familiar story of Peter's vision and his subsequent journey to preach to Cornelius and his family. When he arrived at his home, Cornelius gave this testimony: "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea

side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Acts 10:30–33. Here we see Peter fulfilling this primary function of the gospel minister—preaching the truth to those who do not know it.

We find the second role of ministers in Acts, chapter 15: "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. . . . And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." Acts 15:36, 41. Here we find the apostles returning to those established in the faith to provide edification and support. Thus, we would expect ministers to periodically visit established churches to offer such ministry.

This secondary role of ministers includes the work of helping to settle debates or contentions in the church. Notice this passage, "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and

Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." Verses 1–2.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to help settle contentions in that church. He gave a godly example for all gospel ministers, as he fearlessly rebuked and reprov'd sin and error wherever it was found.

In these passages, we can see what the work of the ministers should be, but nowhere in the gospel record do we find that the apostle Paul or any of the apostles were ever assigned as full-time settled ministers over a congregation.

How My Journey Began

This is probably the most disturbing issue that I have ever dealt with in my ministry; and when I discovered this truth it literally shocked me, because I was a settled minister assigned to a congregation. As I studied, I realized that what I was doing was not biblical. I decided that I must look back into the history of the Adventist movement and at the inspired counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy and see what I could find there. I was very disturbed indeed to discover that at one time Seventh-day Adventists were unique in that we did not have assigned pastors over our churches. Let me share with you two reports from newspapers of the day.

In 1908, a Seventh Day Baptist paper printed this about the Adventist work, "All Seventh-day Adventist clergymen are missionaries—not located pastors—and are busy preaching, teaching, and organizing churches the world over." *Sabbath Recorder*, December 28, 1908, [reprinted in the *Review and Herald*, January 14, 1909.]¹

In 1886, an Adventist minister named Elder G. B. Star was interviewed by a secular newspaper

in Indiana. The headline of that periodical read, "The Seventh-day Adventists—Some Facts And Figures Gathered From Elder Star—How They Have Grown In Forty Years—And What They Believe."

If only that were a headline in the newspaper today! Our work was so remarkable at that time that the newspaper came to find out what we were doing and how we were doing it!

The reporter asked this question, "By what means have you carried forward your work so rapidly?" Here is the response. "Well, in the first place," replied the Elder, "we have no settled pastors. Our churches are taught largely to take care of themselves, while nearly all of our ministers work as evangelists

the country and selling our larger works. In addition to this, every church has a missionary society. Last year these numbered 10,500 members. Every one of these members does more or less missionary work, such as selling books, loaning or giving away tracts, obtaining subscriptions to our periodicals, visiting families, looking after the poor, aiding the sick, etc. Last year they made 102,000 visits, wrote 40,000 letters, obtained 38,700 subscriptions to our periodicals, distributed 15,500,000 pages of reading matter, and 1,600,000 periodicals." *Plain Dealer*, October 1, 1886.²

Hovering Over the Churches

As we consider the lack of settled ministers in the early

"Our ministers are not to hover over the churches, regarding the churches in some particular place as their special care. Our churches should not feel jealous and neglected if they do not receive ministerial labor."

in new fields. In the winter they go out into the churches, halls, or schoolhouse and raise up believers. In the summer we use tents, pitching them in the cities and villages where we teach the people these doctrines. This year we shall run about 100 tents in this way. Besides these, we send out large numbers of colporteurs with our tracts and books, who visit the families and teach them the Bible. Last year we employed about 125 in this manner. Bible reading is another class of work. The workers go from house to house holding Bible readings with from one to twenty individuals. Last year they gave 10,000 of such Bible readings. At the same time we had employed about 300 canvassers, constantly canvassing

Adventist movement, some might suggest that this was because the church was young and it lacked the finances to have settled ministers. However, Spirit of Prophecy makes it clear that the rationale for not having settled ministers had nothing to do with finances. Consider carefully these inspired admonitions:

"Our ministers are not to hover over the churches, regarding the churches in some particular place as their special care. And our churches should not feel jealous and neglected if they do not receive ministerial labor." *The Australasian Union Conference Record*, August 1, 1902.

"Will our ministers remember that it is not the particular duty of a minister of the gospel to hover over

the churches." *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, 302.

"God's delegated messengers are not to hover about the people who have been long in the truth. Altogether too much labor is devoted to the churches." *Review and Herald*, December 1, 1896.

"God has no use for those who seek a safe and easy place. By an unreserved consecration we are to prepare ourselves for God's service. Our ministers are not to hover over the churches, regarding the churches in some particular territory as their special care. Believers are

that nothing is so encouraging as doing evangelistic work in new fields." *Evangelism*, 382.

"The words were spoken to me with impelling power: Wake up the watchmen to carry the word of warning to every city in America. Build up the waste places. The righteous judgments of God, with their weight of final decision, are coming upon the land. Do not hover over the churches to repeat over and over again the same truths to the people, while the cities are left in ignorance and sin, unwarned and unlabored for. Soon the way

"They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again."

to have root in themselves, striking firm root in Christ, that they may bear fruit to His glory. As one man, they are to strive to attain one object—the saving of souls." *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 28, 1902.

As I began to read these statements I became more convicted that I had to make a change. I was a settled, assigned minister. I was hovering over a church. And I read that God had "no use" for me. I was shaken—and compelled to continue my study.

Ministers to Be Evangelists

Remember, the first calling and responsibility of a minister is to be an evangelist. "Our ministers should plan wisely, as faithful stewards. They should feel that it is not their duty to hover over the churches already raised up, but that they should be doing aggressive evangelistic work, preaching the Word and doing house-to-house work in places that have not yet heard the truth. . . . They will find

will be hedged up and these cities will be closed to the gospel message." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, 216.

"Our ministers are not to be encouraged to hover about the churches to repeat to the believers week after week the same truths. We have a truth that is saving and precious. The Word of God must be planted in many hearts, the bread of life must be dealt out to many hungry souls. . . . It is a blessed work to lift up Christ before the world." *Ibid.*, 320.

People have said, "Well, some churches are so bad off, they just need a minister. There is just no other way." Consider this shocking counsel: "The churches that have not life in themselves, that have lost their spiritual discernment, call for ministers to come to their help, to bring them the breath of life. But the ministers have other work to do. They must carry the message of truth to those who know it not." *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 65.

Trusting in Man

What I discovered is that the primary reason the early Advent movement did not have settled ministers was not financial; it was spiritual. Furthermore, it has everything to do with an understanding and an experience of righteousness by faith in these last days. When we have a "king" to rule over us, we lean on the arm of flesh. It is a law of human nature.

"We must not feel that we are compelled to hover over churches that have received the truth. We must not encourage the people to depend upon ministerial labor in order to preserve spiritual life. Everyone who has received the truth must go to God for his individual self, and decide to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Those who have embraced the third angel's message must not make man their trust, and depend upon the ministers to make their experience for them." *The Home Missionary*, December 1, 1894.

"The ministers are hovering over churches, which know the truth, while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. . . . They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again." *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901. Rebaptism for those who demand a minister? Conversion—this is what our congregations truly need.

"Do not, my ministering brethren, allow yourselves to be kept at home to serve tables; and do not hover around the churches, preaching to those who are already fully established in the faith. Teach the people to have light in themselves, and not to depend upon the ministers. They should have Christ as their helper, and should educate themselves to help one another, so

that the minister can be free to enter new fields." *Historical Sketches*, 139.

All Church Members Should Be Workers

How is it that settled pastors intercept or interfere with the church member's experience of righteousness by faith? You see, to understand the gospel, it is imperative that we become personally involved in sharing the truth with others—there is no substitute! Settled ministers intercept this work and thus rob the lay members of their experience.

"If the ministers would get out of the way, if they would go forth into new fields, the members would be obliged to bear responsibilities, and their capabilities would increase by use." *Evangelism*, 382.

"We cannot expect that ministers will be permanently located in settled charges, as they are located in other denominations; but each church member must individually learn to bear responsibility, and become a worker, making the advance of the cause of truth the first and highest interest of his life. Each one must devote his God-given power to the work of God; for every one has a part to act if the church is to be successfully established and carried on." *Review and Herald*, October 22, 1889.

Among my first assignments when I entered the ministry is one that I will never forget. The senior pastor instructed me to follow up interests who had returned cards from *It Is Written*, *Voice of Prophecy*, *Faith For Today*, and so on. Being new and excited, I immediately started knocking on doors. It did not take long before I became tired and discouraged. Most of the people were not even at home, and when people did answer the door they were surprised and even frightened. They had called an 800 number and requested something in the mail, and now someone was at their door. Do you know what I started thinking that first

day?—"This is a waste of time." And then, somehow, the Holy Spirit broke through to me. "Dave," He impressed, "this is what I have been doing for you for years—chasing and hunting you down." What a merciful God we serve! Do you see how involvement in personal evangelism is a key to understanding the mercy of God and the true meaning of the gospel?

Teaching Those Who Should Be Teachers

"Our people have had great light, and yet much of our ministerial force is exhausted on the churches, in teaching those who should be teachers; enlightening those who should be 'the light of the world'; watering those from whom should flow springs of living water; enriching those who might be veritable mines of precious truth; repeating the gospel invitation to such as should be scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth, communicating the message of Heaven

those who claim to be members of His church. What is going to give life to the churches?—Nothing can do this like seeing the work advancing in the harvest field. And in this work the members of the churches can all take part. They may not preach, but they can help in many other ways." *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, 156–157.

The Role of Local Elders

As I studied this subject, I came across statements that seemed to indicate some hovering tasks for pastors. In one statement, Sister White instructs that churches should appoint "pastors or elders" to see that the tithe is gathered in. (See *Counsels on Stewardship*, 106.) This made me wonder if she considered the role of the local elder equivalent to a local pastor. Through continued study, I found a booklet written by a church pioneer: *The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline*.³ In that volume, it is clear that the early pioneers, as they studied this

It is clear that the early pioneers, as they studied this issue, saw the role of the local elder and the role of a local pastor to be the same.

to many who have not had the privileges which they have enjoyed; feeding those who should be in the byways and highways heralding the invitation, 'Come; for all things are now ready.' Come to the gospel feast; come to the supper of the Lamb; 'for all things are now ready.'" *Evangelism*, 382–383.

"The idea that our ministers must hover over the churches might just as well be given up now as later. The members of the churches must be taught to keep themselves at work, showing the intelligence and spirituality God requires in

issue, saw the role of the local elder and the role of a local pastor to be the same. The local elders/pastors are to nurture and care for the local congregation.

Letting Go

After much study, I knew that I had to take action. So, a week later I found myself sitting down with my elders. After sharing a number of statements with them, I said, "Brothers, my ministry is going to change." I did not know how long I would be there, but I knew I had

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On Being a Peculiar People

John Pearson

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
1 Peter 2:9.

Even a cursory survey of the habits and activities of sun-day keepers will reveal the low importance that first-day worshipers place on keeping their day of worship holy. Indeed, if you are not observing as your day of worship the day that God has sanctified, it is of little significance what you choose to do or not do on that day, for if God has not blessed the day, man cannot overrule and bless it. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12.

Seventh-day Adventists, above all others who call themselves Christians, should have a clear understanding of the significance of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy. While we clearly understand that imperative, we are not so fanatical as papists who declare it a sin to miss attending a worship service within the parameters outlined by the church. Adventists understand that the Sabbath can be kept holy regardless of whether or not one attends church, though we also understand

the importance of gathering together to encourage and exhort one another in our Christian walk—a battle and a march, as Sister White terms it.

Historically, that gathering together has been an occasion for reverent reflection on the blessings bestowed by our loving Creator and for seeking a closer walk with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who died that we might live. Indeed, the time of that gathering itself is part of what makes us “peculiar.”

Socializing in the Sanctuary

Unfortunately, a worldly informality has found its way into many of our worship services that makes them little more than the social gatherings that sun-day keepers call a worship service.

Periods of time during the sacred hour are devoted to walking about in the sanctuary to greet, shake hands with, and hug one another as though we were at a party. Greeting a brother or sister with a warm embrace after a long absence is certainly to be expected. However, the atmosphere that is created when the entire congregation is bidden to “stand up and greet your neighbor” is the very antithesis of the reverent atmosphere that should prevail during the worship service.

Can we not arrive at church early enough to conduct that activity outside, or at least in the foyer? If not, can we not remain after services long enough to embrace and extend friendship to one another?

When entering the sanctuary proper, our thoughts should turn to our Creator, who has pledged to meet with us when we gather in His name on His holy day. Before the worship service, we should sit and quietly reflect on the blessings God has given us during the week and pray for the Holy Spirit to descend upon both the speaker and the congregation during the service.

As our meditation deepens and the service begins, it is quite unsettling and contrary to the reverence that has been established to be bidden by the congregational leader to get up, walk around the sanctuary, and engender a party-like atmosphere by shaking hands and embracing one another. One can almost sense the Holy Spirit fleeing from such a commotion.

“Those who will honor the Lord in keeping His Sabbath *holy* will be blessed of the Lord. There is not more than one in one hundred who do honor to God in keeping His Sabbath from polluting it. The Word of God is not practiced by thousands who profess to be Christians. The *looseness* of the

habits and practices in observing the Sabbath has become a *customary* thing. God help us to see that great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The human agent cannot afford to lose these blessings by dishonoring God in their *loose habits* and practices. This is a day of meditation and of closely examining our own spiritual condition before God. 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.' 2 Corinthians 13:5. On that day have no loose, cheap, common talk." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 295. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

Uzzah's Example

We are given in Scripture a startling example of the results of allowing laxness to creep into the performance of that for which God has given explicit direction. Consider the fate of Uzzah, who, seeming to perform a helpful and necessary task, was struck dead by God for touching the ark of the covenant as it was being moved from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem:

"The fate of Uzzah was a divine judgment upon the violation of a most explicit command. . . . David and his people had assembled to perform a sacred work, and they had engaged in it with glad and willing hearts; but the Lord could not accept the service, because it was not performed in accordance with His directions. . . . By the judgment upon Uzzah He designed to impress upon all Israel the importance of giving strict heed to His requirements." *Patriarch and Prophets*, 705–706.

Overcoming Self

Another activity that has become increasingly common in the church is that of applauding others. Let us remember that "actions repeated form habits, habits form character, and by the character our destiny for time and for eternity is decided." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 356.

An aspect of the Christian walk that Adventists should understand

more deeply than any others that call themselves by the name of Christ is the necessity of overcoming self, of giving God the glory for our accomplishments, recognizing that all that we have and all that we accomplish are the results of the means and the talents that God has entrusted to us, to be used solely for His glory. This is another aspect of Adventism, along with seventh-day Sabbath observance, that makes us God's "peculiar" people.

However, when we applaud the accomplishments of others, and especially when we are the recipi-

the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.' Ephesians 6:12, margin. It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and *whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow*. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power.

"It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements

"Whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow."

ent of applause, are we not giving or accepting glory that belongs to God alone?

Consider the fall of David, one of God's anointed. In recounting what led to his transgression, Sister White states, "The Bible has little to say in praise of men. Little space is given to recounting the virtues of even the best men who have ever lived. This silence is not without purpose; it is not without a lesson. All the good qualities that men possess are the gift of God; their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ. Since they owe all to God, the glory of whatever they are or do belongs to Him alone; they are but instruments in His hands. More than this—as all the lessons of Bible history teach—it is a perilous thing to praise or exalt men; for if one comes to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, and to trust to his own strength, *he is sure to fall*. Man is contending with foes who are stronger than he. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of

of power and luxury were not without effect upon him. . . . All this tended to lessen David's sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust to his own wisdom and might. As soon as Satan can separate the soul from God, the only Source of strength, he will seek to arouse the unholy desires of man's carnal nature. The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things—the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 717–718.

A thorough search of the writings of God's prophet to His remnant church reveals not one comment in support of applauding or even verbally praising our Christian brethren. Indeed, it is clear that the result of such action is detrimental to both the giver and the receiver.

Sister White states that men of God should be “uncontaminated by applause” (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, 263), and she notes that “no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed” (*Desire of Ages*, 261) in the conduct of Christ, our example in all things, and that He was “never elated by applause” (Ibid., 330).

“Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to

be directed, and their homage to be given.” Ibid., 261.

It is easily understood that if we are seeking to reflect Christ’s character, we will desire, as Christ did, that the minds of people and their homage be directed to God. Praises should be given to Him rather than applause to men. If one who is hid with Christ in God is ever the object of men’s applause, it is incumbent upon that person to immediately redirect the glory to Him who makes

all things possible, even, if necessary, by gently rebuking those who are misdirecting their praise.

Danger of Applause

“I have been shown that great caution should be used, even when it is necessary to lift a burden of oppression from men and women, lest they lean to their own wisdom, and fail to make God their only dependence. It is not safe to speak

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...continued from page 23

to start working according to God’s counsel. Then one of the elders said, “Wait a minute, why can’t we be trained to follow this counsel?”

And so we began the process of training the elders to become the pastors of the local congregation. What a tremendous and blessed experience it has been! The most remarkable things that have ever happened in my ministry have happened as I stepped back. When I am not there, others have to answer the phone and make the visits; and when I return they have wonderful stories to tell of their witnessing experiences.

It is remarkable to me that people have suggested, “Well, if we do not have ministers what will happen in our churches?” Someone told me, “There will be lawsuits. Our people will make blundering decisions.” I was flattered. I did not realize that people thought pastors were so smart. However, what we have witnessed is exactly the opposite. The best things that have happened in the churches I have been involved with have happened when the pastor was filling his proper role—not hovering over the church but evangelizing.

A. G. Daniells, in 1912, made a remarkable statement at a ministerial meeting in Los Angeles, California. Unfortunately, it has proven to be “prophetic”: “We have not settled our ministers over churches as pastors to any large extent. In some of the very large

churches we have elected pastors, but as a rule we have held ourselves ready for field service, evangelistic work, and our brethren and sisters have held themselves ready to maintain their church services and carry forward their church work without settled pastors. And I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken, and to lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized, and our work will be on a retreat.”⁴

Practical Suggestions for Churches

Here are some practical suggestions I would like to share with you if you are convicted that your church is not in harmony with the inspired counsel:

If your church does not have a full-time pastor now, do not get one. The little churches that are scarcely breathing want a settled minister to come in and take over. But when they do, church members lose much of their initiative to work for the Lord, and the church atrophies.

Instead of seeking out a full-time minister, become trained so that your elders and deacons can be the pastors of your local church.

What if you already have a full-time minister?—I do not recom-

mend that you ask him to move elsewhere. Instead, seek training to become a lay-led church and then give the pastor the opportunity to evangelize the community and stop baby-sitting your church. If he refuses, then you should let him go.

If you are in a conference church, and your church has been organized to care for itself, tell the conference that you want to utilize the funds that would have paid a local pastor to do evangelism in your area, that you do not want the funds from your church to go to pay pastors to baby-sit churches in other areas.

Friends, what do you think will happen if we return to God’s plan? As we submit obediently to follow God’s will, He will be able to bless our work with the outpouring of His Spirit and the work will go forward. I pray that you will prayerfully and seriously consider what God would have you do. ✠

Pastor Dave Westbrook, speaker/director of “Back to Enoch Ministries,” lives in Malo, Washington, along with his wife Laura and daughter Allison. You may contact them at P.O. Box 281, Malo, WA 99150.

¹ Quoted in Burrill, Russell, *Revolution in the Church* (Fallbrook, Calif.: Hart Research Center, 1993), p. 41.

² Ibid., p. 39.

³ Loughborough, J. N. (Washington: Review and Herald, 1907).

⁴ Burrill, p. 41.

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How Did Jesus Say It?

Ralph Larson

Jesus spoke Greek.

Have you ever wondered why?

Was He not born to a Hebrew mother?—Yes. Did He not grow up in a Hebrew home?—Yes. Was He not a descendent of Abraham, with Hebrew lineage through King David?—Yes.

Nevertheless, Jesus spoke Greek; taught, and preached in Greek; and He inspired the entire New Testament to be written in Greek. Why?—The answer is in your history books:

About 300 years before Christ was born, King Phillip of Macedonia—a country north of Greece—conquered Greece and added it to his empire. His son Alexander, not content with this, conquered all the lands east of Greece as far as the Indus river in India, and south as far as, and including, Egypt. Alexander strongly promoted Greek language and culture in the conquered countries. Those who came after him in power continued this promotion so effectively that even in our own United States, Greek was once taught in our schools. It was considered a cultural necessity.

Thus, the people of Israel learned Greek, as did the people of

all the other conquered lands. They learned it so well and used it so freely that Hebrew scholars became concerned that the knowledge of Hebrew would be lost, and the ability to read the Hebrew Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) would be lost with it. They, therefore, in the third century before Christ, prepared a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews. Their work was called the Septuagint, and is still available today. (It is commonly called the LXX.)

Note also that this Septuagint was the Bible used by the Jews of Christ's time; and it was apparently the Bible used by Jesus, for He quoted from it in Matthew, chapter 4, verse 10:

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only thou shalt serve." These words are from the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 6:13.

So in Christ's time, the Jewish people understood Greek, regardless of what other languages they used, and Christ kindly spoke to them in the language that they all understood—which brings us again to the question in the title of this article:

When Jesus was speaking to the people in Greek, as recorded in the New Testament, how did He pronounce the name of God, the sacred YHWH?—If you, dear reader, will examine every page of the New Testament, as I have just done, you will be required to draw certain conclusions:

First, in the New Testament there are a great many references to Deity, so many that I despaired of counting them. I would guess that they would be well over a thousand.

Second, *the sacred name, the YHWH, is not found in any of them.* The inspired writers of the New Testament *always* referred to Deity by the Greek word *Theos* (God) or the Greek word *Kurios* (Lord).

Third, even when the New Testament writers quoted an Old Testament passage that contained the sacred name YHWH, they translated it into the Greek *Theos* (God) or the Greek *Kurios* (Lord).

Fourth, *Jesus Himself did the same thing.* In His preaching and teaching, He referred to Deity by the Greek words *Theos* and *Kurios*; and this was true even when He quoted a passage from the Old Testament that contained the sacred name, YHWH. In His quoting, He trans-

lated the sacred name, YHWH, into the Greek words *Theos* and *Kurios*.

Please observe His translations in these verses:

Deuteronomy 8:3 YHWH	Matthew 4:4 <i>Theos</i>
Deuteronomy 6:16 YHWH	Matthew 4:7 <i>Kurios</i>
Deuteronomy 6:13 YHWH	Matthew 4:10 <i>Kurios</i>
Psalms 118:23 YHWH	Matthew 21:42 <i>Kurios</i>
Deuteronomy 6:5 YHWH	Matthew 22:37 <i>Kurios</i>
Isaiah 61:1-2 YHWH	Luke 4:18-19 <i>Kurios</i> (3 times)

The testimony of Jesus is clear and consistent. He did not use the Hebrew YHWH when referring to Deity, even when He was quoting Old Testament passages that contained that term. He uniformly translated it into the more familiar Greek words, *Theos* and *Kurios*.

We pause to explain that the four letters in the term YHWH are an example of the way the Hebrews in Christ's time wrote all of their words. They did not write any vowels (such as our a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y). They wrote only the consonants. They used their equivalent of the letter "Y" only as a consonant, never as a vowel. The reader was expected to know what vowels to use and when to use them. If he did not know, somebody had to tell him. This style of writing made word pronunciation rather uncertain.

Another fact makes the pronunciation of YHWH even more uncertain. At some time in the centuries before Christ, the Hebrew scholars decided that the name of God, the YHWH, was so sacred that it should never be spoken at all. This tradition has continued even to our time. Some Jewish people today will not speak the name of God. When they want to refer to Deity, they say "Ha Shem," which means "The Name."

Some people today pronounce the name of God as YAHWEH, but this is only guesswork. Nobody knows for sure how it was pronounced in Bible times, when there were no vowels between the consonants.

The testimony of the Apostle Paul is no less impressive than the testimony of Jesus. He quoted from the Old Testament like Jesus did, and he translated YHWH into Greek words like Jesus did. I do not want this article to be tedious, but I do want it to contain adequate evidence, because I know

words look like this: LORD, GOD. The capital letters are the key, regardless of their size.)

Let us now summarize the evidence that we have seen:

Jesus taught and preached in Greek. In His teaching and preaching, He used the Greek words for God, *Theos* and *Kurios*. He did this even when He was quoting Old Testament verses which contained the Hebrew word YHWH. He translated YHWH into the Greek words, *Theos* and *Kurios*. The Apostles Paul and Peter did the

The testimony of Jesus is clear and consistent. He did not use the Hebrew YHWH when referring to Deity, even when He was quoting Old Testament passages that contained that term.

that there are some people in our churches who are needing it. So, here are some of Paul's translations:

Psalms 32:2 YHWH	Romans 4:8 <i>Kurios</i>
Deuteronomy 29:4 YHWH	Romans 11:8 <i>Theos</i>
Isaiah 1:9 YHWH	Romans 9:29 <i>Kurios</i>
Isaiah 40:13 YHWH	Romans 11:34 <i>Kurios</i>
Psalms 117:1 YHWH	Romans 15:11 <i>Kurios</i>
Isaiah 8:18 YHWH	Hebrews 2:13 <i>Theos</i>
Jeremiah 31:31-34 YHWH	Hebrews 8:8-11 <i>Kurios</i> (4 times)
Exodus 24:8 YHWH	Hebrews 9:20 <i>Theos</i>
Proverbs 3:11-12 YHWH	Hebrews 12:5-6 <i>Kurios</i> (twice)
Psalms 118:6 YHWH	Hebrews 13:6 <i>Kurios</i>

(Perhaps you are wondering how to recognize the Hebrew YHWH in an English Bible. It is easy. In the King James Bible, when you see the word Lord or the word God spelled in all capital letters like this: LORD, or GOD, that tells you it was translated from the Hebrew YHWH. Do not go by the size of the letters. Sometimes the first letter is larger than the other letters, but they are all capital letters. Then the

same thing. The inspired writers of the New Testament *never* used the word YHWH in referring to Deity.

That word is not found in the New Testament. Jesus did use an Old Testament word for God while He was on the cross, in His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46. However, this word was not the Hebrew YHWH. It was El, another Hebrew word for God.

The careful reader may notice that in the King James New Testament there are three passages that appear to be exceptions. They are Matthew 22:44, Luke 20:42, and Revelation 19:16. In all of these passages the KJV translators put the word Lord in all capital letters,

like this: LORD. That is supposed to mean that the original writers used the word YHWH. Yet, a glance at the Greek New Testament will make it clear that the original writers (Matthew, Luke, and John) did no such thing. They all wrote Lord. Why the KJV translators changed it into LORD we cannot say, but they were clearly departing from the script.

will be taught, the benefits of faith. He has no use for man-made tests. The tests that He has given are sufficient." *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 20, 1904.

"The commandment of God that has been almost universally made void, is the testing truth for this time. . . . The time is coming when all those who worship God will be distinguished by this

work given us of God to prepare a people to stand with the whole equipment of the heavenly armor on, without leaving off one piece." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 91.

"The Lord has said that the Sabbath was a sign between Him and His people forever. The time is coming when all those who worship God will be distinguished by this sign. They will be known as the servants of God, by this mark of their allegiance to Heaven. But all man-made tests will divert the mind from the great and important doctrines that constitute the present truth." *Review and Herald*, May 29, 1888.

Surely it is time to eliminate this "sacred name" concept from our list of concerns. If there are those who want to use the term YHWH (while guessing at its pronunciation), they may certainly exercise their privilege to do so. However, when they try to urge it upon others as a religious duty, they are going much, much too far. The scriptural evidence cannot support any such endeavor.

The spreading of our marvelous message throughout the world calls for our time, our energies, and our dedication. Let us press resolutely forward in the fulfillment of our task, and firmly reject all man-made tests that will divide and weaken us. May the Lord bless us to this end.

Let us remember that one of the words that Jesus most often used in referring to Deity was the word "Father." It is nice to know that. ❀

It would seem that we are being reined up to a test that is altogether man-made. This is something about which the messenger of the Lord has issued extensive warnings.

So, how can it be argued, as is now being done by some people, that God wants us to refer to Him only by the name YHWH? Some are even insisting that we risk incurring His disfavor if we fail to do this. If this be true, surely Jesus, Paul, Peter, and all of the other New Testament writers would be equally disapproved by God.

It would seem that we are being reined up to a test that is altogether man-made. This is something about which the messenger of the Lord has issued extensive warnings.

"God will send us direct and practical tests, to teach us, if we

sign. They will be known as the servants of God, by this mark of their allegiance to Heaven. But all man-made tests will divert the mind from the great and important doctrines that constitute the present truth." *Evangelism*, 212.

"The devisings of men's minds will invent tests that are no tests at all, that when the true test shall be made prominent, it shall be considered on a par with the man-made tests that have been of no value." *Selected Messages*, book 2, 14–15.

"But there will be brought in a vast amount of man-made tests that have not the least bearing upon the

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in praise of persons or to exalt the ability of a minister of Christ. In the day of God, very many will be weighed in the balance and found wanting because of exaltation. I would warn my brethren and sisters never to flatter persons because of their ability, for they cannot bear it. Self is easily exalted, and, in consequence, persons lose their balance. I say again to my brethren and sisters: If you would have your souls clean from the blood of all men, never flatter, never praise the efforts of poor mortals; for it

may prove their ruin. It is unsafe, *by our words and actions*, to exalt a brother or sister, however apparently humble may be his or her deportment. If they really possess the meek and lowly spirit which God so highly esteems, help them to retain it. This will not be done by censuring them nor by neglecting to properly appreciate their true worth. But there are few who can bear praise without being injured." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 185.

"All the worth and greatness of this life is derived from its connection with heaven and the future,

immortal life. God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. The precious things of the hills shall perish; but the soul that lives for God, unmoved by censure, *unperverted by applause*, shall abide forever with Him." *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 328.

As we near the end of time, Satan will employ any and every means possible to lead God's people astray. Let us be keenly diligent not to allow worldliness to creep into our Sabbathkeeping, that we might ever be the peculiar people God would have us to be. ❀



I praise God for your ministry. My prayers are with you. Please pray for my family. I will renew my subscription as soon as funds are available.

LC, Oklahoma

When I see the deepening coldness and apostasy in our church, I praise the Lord for your ministry and the work you are doing to stem the tide of evil encroaching into our church.

LB

Thank you very much for your trial subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. Truly, many are being blessed by your efforts and services to God.

I am requesting six copies of your February 2003 edition, which touched on the issue of whether the Spirit of Prophecy comes from God or the devil. I am doing my humble personal ministry by sharing the Word.

RM, California

I just praise the Lord for ministries such as yours. As I read the articles in *Our Firm Foundation*, I just have to say, Thank you, Lord, that there are still those who speak according to your counsels—not man's ideas or opinions to tell us we must conform to the culture of today. Instead, we are to come to the divine culture, which will lead to unity and perfection.

God bless you all to be humble and faithful, to continue to encourage and strengthen your brethren and sisters, and to spread God's Word to all.

MP, California

Thank you all for answering a lot of questions I have had. The books you have sent as well as *Our Firm Foundation* have taught me a lot that I didn't know. Thank you!

GS, Montana

Your new place looks real nice. May the good Lord bless and guide you in all your endeavors. We wish we could do more to help; we enjoy *Our Firm Foundation* so very much.

DC, Florida

I appreciate your sending Ron Spear's last book, *Rebellion*. I enjoyed reading it, and I plan to read the book again. I also read *Our Firm Foundation* over and over.

We are retired and elderly, but I do want to have a little part in your fine work in spreading God's truths to others. When I am able, I will send a little gift toward this great cause in sharing Jesus with those in darkness.

RC, Indiana

I appreciate very much *Our Firm Foundation*, and I enjoy reading it. I know that the end is near, and we all need to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus.

Keep up the good work you are doing, and may God bless you and give you power to spread the truth.

TS, Idaho

Lately I received one bag of your magazines. Thank you very much, dear brethren, for supplying us such valuable items. Keep up the good work, and continue in the Lord's service. Your magazines are a blessing to us. I enjoy reading them all.

We need your assistance in supplying us more materials to reach those people we have come in contact with and also to be distributed widely in public. The tabloids *Earth's Final Warning*, *Health of the Nations*, and *Behold He Cometh* can be used effectively as they contain the three angels' messages. We are requesting for these materials, please send us as many as possible for us to use in our missionary work.

Evangelism is the life of the church, the only means of growth in the church of God. We need more tracts, inspirational books, and so forth, to rescue many perishing souls. We have no time to lose. We wish Jesus to come soon, but we

have to call others into a right relationship with God in Christ.

Send us more witnessing tools to keep us busy. *Rome's Arraignment of Sabbathbreakers* is a good one. If there is a way of sending these materials in a less expensive way, please try it.

LC, Philippines

I am a 24yr old man, a Seventh-day Adventist Christian from Kenya. It has been two years now since I first encountered or read *Our Firm Foundation* from a friend with whom I was studying. He had acquired the magazine from a certain pastor. He had plenty of the magazines and so it came to happen that he loaned me some. I have never read anything as captivating and enriching as those magazines. I was so excited, and I used the material contained therein in the camp meetings both last year and this year. I intend to take up ministry in life and become a minister, and according to God's great mercy and blessing I intend to go for ministry next year.

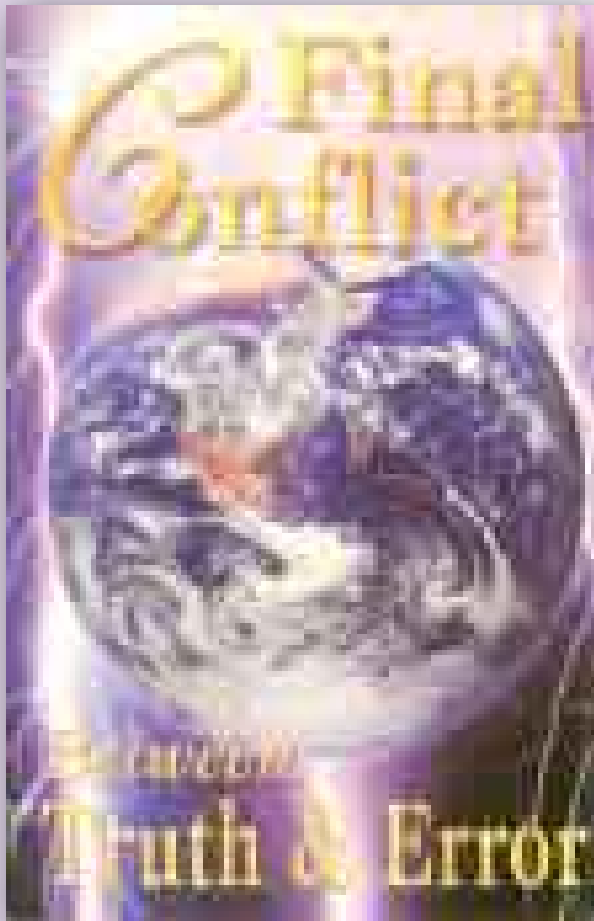
You may never know it, but articles by the likes of Dr. Ralph Larson, Ron Spear, and Dr. Colin and Russel Standish on righteousness by faith of the 1888 message have encouraged me to search the Scriptures. So please, brother, I do not have any other Spirit of Prophecy books, save for the *Great Controversy*, *Desire of Ages* and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. For this reason I humbly request Spirit of Prophecy books (old or new).

I am a literature evangelist and so I would want also some magazines dealing with our beliefs for sharing, for we normally do not have magazines to leave in the homes we visit, and it really hurts me to leave souls thirsting for truth with nothing.

Any other books by the pioneers of our church will be appreciated.

Thank you and God bless you abundantly as you yearn to be as watchmen in Zion lightening the world with His message.

MR, Kenya



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