

Our Firm Foundation

The 7th Day Sabbath

Immutable Law of God

The Everlasting Gospel

Non-Immortality of the Soul

Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Vol. 1, No. 6

April, 1986

The Secret
Of Self-control

The Flesh
Versus The Spirit

Teach Us
To Pray

Is It Well
With Your Soul?

Diagnosing
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Firm Unto
The End



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



With the exception of Ellen White's writings, I have not so thoroughly enjoyed reading anything more than the Introductory issue of your publication. I hear the trumpet being given a certain sound. Praise the Lord.

Mrs. G. Everett Stirk
Lawrenceburg, Kentucky

Hallelujah! Amen! Oh, what a rejoicing of my heart in reading the latest of *Our Firm Foundation*. I know that Jesus is rejoicing to see His children proclaiming His truth. Jesus and His Spirit are or have taken charge of the work. . . . It is hard to pinpoint which article I enjoyed most. The Lord blessed each one. I will single out Brother Priebe's article "Two Gospels Beneath The Surface." His thoughts really reinforced in my mind the beautiful truths of righteous living.

Our subscription to your magazine is the best investment that we have made in a long time.

Thank you for allowing Jesus to use you at this time.

Louise Champen
Ardmore, Tennessee

We have been receiving *Our Firm Foundation* magazine since it began, and we love it! It teaches our wonderful messages in a straight, positive way. There is a power behind these articles—for there is power in the truth. And it's so positive! No criticism! Thank you—we are being fed. I so hope that every SDA receives this—we gave your address and a good recommendation to all of our Adventist friends soon after we got the first issue. And I want to tell you that my husband, who doesn't read magazines (they seem a waste of time for him—he'd rather read the Bible or a book) reads every word of this one! (I've often wondered why our other publications don't print EGW's articles!)

Steve and Anne Sacora
Sedalia, Kentucky

My deepest appreciation goes to God for inspiring you to print a magazine of this quality.

Thank you, to all involved in the making of this paper, *Our Firm Foundation*. You may add my name to your mailing list.

I am stirred to the bottom of my heart with the messages in the *Firm Foundation*. I know God is working through it to call others attention to the coming of Him who we love and serve. Oh that I had a voice loud enough that everyone for miles and miles around would hear the call to return to God, but I am just a little dot on the face of this world. Pray that my light may shine bright and steady to all I come in contact with.

I can use 50 copies or more a month. I am giving one day a week to God's work, plus every opportunity in between times.

Clarence Kelley
Louisa, Kentucky

We as a people of this Church, God's true Church, need a light such as this magazine is, to help us find and hang on to truth. My prayers are with you.

Darrell Jewkes
College Heights, Alberta, Canada

A Change In Staff

For those readers who give special attention to the listing of personnel inside the front cover, a short note of explanation is in order. Vince Christensen and Charles Lawson believe the Lord has called them to work with United Prison Ministry. Limits of time and location make it impossible for them to carry on this endeavor while continuing to function as Managing Editor and Design Director for *Our Firm Foundation*.

The Lord has blessed their efforts here at Hope International, and we are thankful for the good groundwork they helped to lay in the early days of the paper. We pray that He will give them grace and wisdom in their new work.—EDITORS.

I have recently read Dave Fiedler's article in the January, 1986, issue of *Our Firm Foundation*, "Peace Or Pieces." It was well written, but the pieces do not all fit together.

God called His people out of denominationalism to be His Remnant People—never to become another denomination. Denominationalism is not of Christ, nor is it of the Reformation. It is of the devil, another of his devices to cause division among God's people.

[EDITORS COMMENT: The writer of the above letter is poorly represented in the short section we have reprinted—therefore we have chosen to withhold his name. The letter, as a whole, shows concern and compassion for God's people. These are sentiments with which we can heartily concur. However we must go on record as strongly disagreeing with the above thoughts.]

Though we believe it obvious that having one's name on the "church books" is no guarantee of salvation, we must confess our belief that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was especially ordained and denominated of God for the finishing of His work.

"As a people, we are looked upon as peculiar. Our position and faith distinguish us from every other denomination." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 138

"We receive into our [medical] institutions people of all denominations. But as for ourselves we are strictly denominational." *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 109 (emphasis ours)

We believe that error lies on both sides. While we cannot accept the growing trend to erase the "peculiar" features of our faith which distinguish us as a people, neither can we neglect our proper relationship to God's denominated remnant. Simply put, we support every aspect of the church except apostasy.]

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to give the straight testimony and to present Christ and Him crucified. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the truths that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—THE EDITORS

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Invitation To Writers

We are accepting manuscripts for possible publication in future editions of *Our Firm Foundation*. Acceptance or rejection will be communicated only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided. Address all editorial correspondence to Managing Editor, *Our Firm Foundation*, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328

Editorial

We have reached the most important hour in the history of the world and of the Church. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:11, 12, 13

The Gospel writers foretold that one of the great signs of the end would be false prophets, who would deceive many. In every generation of the history of the Church some have arisen claiming the gift of prophecy. But as we see the fulfilling of Matthew 24 in end-time events within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there will be many false prophets. Today, without question, this prophecy is being fulfilled.

From recent tapes and printed material we understand there are about 20 Seventh-day Adventists that are claiming this gift. They are all acquainted with one another and are all involved in a "deliverance ministry." After listening to one of the tapes and reading some of the material that accompanied it, we were convinced that the language and the phraseology were not from divine inspiration.

The predictions made of the destruction of cities, mainly in California, are the predictions of Ellen G. White, from her published and unpublished visions. But the devil is the master of playing both ends against the middle. When these predictions are eventually fulfilled, which they will be, these self-proclaimed prophets will claim them as proof of their prophetic gifts. But be not deceived; a movement is in the making that will carry many into apostasy and destruction.

God gives this warning through genuine inspiration: "The light given me has been very forcible that many would go out from us, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The Lord desires that every soul who claims to believe the truth shall have an intelligent knowledge of what is truth. False prophets will arise and will deceive many. Every-

thing is to be shaken that can be shaken. Then does it not become everyone to understand the reasons of our faith?" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 392

"Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. If we keep these things before the people, they will produce an evil effect, an unhealthful emotion. The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give efficiency through the Word. Christ has declared the Word to be spirit and life. 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.' Habakkuk 2:14, ARV

"Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the ingrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation. This is the meaning of the words of Christ in regard to eating His flesh and drinking His blood. And He says, 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' (John 17:3)

"We shall encounter false claims; false prophets will arise; there will be false dreams and false visions; but preach the Word, be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind. The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this.

"Christ has given warning, so that none need accept falsehood for truth. The only channel through which the Spirit operates is that of the truth. . . . Our faith and hope are founded, not

in feeling, but in God." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 48, 49

Ellen White had to meet false prophets in her day. Some individuals believed a young girl named Anna Garmire was receiving visions. Her thoughts were gathered up and published as though they accurately reflected the mind of the Lord. But God used the real gift of prophecy to reveal the error in this.

Anna Phillips followed in this same track. She too was reproved, whereupon she repented and became a faithful follower of the truth.

"As a denomination we need to look more continually to God for guidance. We are living in an evil age. The perils of the last days are upon us. Because iniquity abounds, Satan presumes to bring in all kinds of delusive theories upon those who have tried to walk humbly with God, and who are distrustful of self. Shall self-confident, fanatical men come to these humble souls assuring them that they are possessed of evil spirits, and after praying with them, affirm that the devil is cast out? Such are not the manifestations of the Spirit of God, but of another spirit." *ibid.*, 47

"Then how can these manifestations of great power, and these wonderful impressions, be accounted for, except on the ground that they are given through the influence of that miracle-working spirit that has gone forth to deceive the whole world, and infatuate them with strong delusion that they shall believe a lie?" *ibid.*, 49 (See also *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 378)

The arch deceiver is now preparing a wave of fanaticism to sweep over churches, and many will be swept away. We cannot depend on impressions or emotions in this crisis hour. We must be taught moment by moment by the Holy Spirit. I advise all to consider well these things which are now coming upon the Church. Ponder the lessons of the article entitled "The Great Controversy," and give heed to your ways that the angels may record you as one of the Lord's faithful and wise.

—RON SPEAR, EDITOR

The Secret Of Self-control



She was young and pretty. She had just been through divorce proceedings, and was frightened. The shock and stress of divorce, which had temporarily benumbed her natural feelings, was wearing away, and she was now being troubled by sexual tensions.

She was astonished and dismayed by their intensity. The bleak prospect of single life that stretched before her offered no relief. She was feeling increasingly vulnerable, well aware of the dangers that surrounded her in a pagan society filled with predatory, conscienceless males.

"Elder Larson," she said, with tear-filled eyes, "I'm afraid I can't make it living alone. I'm afraid that temptation will come and I will fall."

I hastened to assure her that there was no cause for such concern, and explained to her how to use my secret weapon for coping with sexual tension. She listened carefully and left, promising to give the weapon a test.

About two weeks later she returned, smiling radiantly. "Elder Larson, this works!" she exclaimed. "It really works! I'm not afraid anymore. Now I know I can live alone successfully as long as I need to."

She had learned one of life's most urgently needed lessons, how to cope with sexual tensions.

All of us humans, as we pass from childhood to maturity, begin to experience sexual tensions. Learning to cope with them successfully, and direct the sexual energies into desirable channels, is one of the great victories of life. A failure to cope with them successfully is one of the major failures of life, bringing extremely negative results. There is something profoundly depressing about the thought that we do not even have mastery over our own body, but are at the mercy of feelings

Ralph Larson

and tensions from which we cannot escape.

For some, this struggle becomes an index to the power of the Christian faith. If faith doesn't give me a victory here, they reason, how can it give me a victory anywhere? And how can religion be real? They are thus led from discouragement to despair about Christianity itself.

These conclusions are not necessary. Christianity *is* real, and victory *is* possible. Here is a method of coping with sexual tensions that I can recommend without reservation. This method has been thoroughly tested and proven in my own experience, and I have taught it to countless others, none of whom has reported a failure.

The apostle Paul tells us that the word of God is *powerful*. (Hebrews 4:12) Ellen White writes, "The life of Christ, that gives life to the world, is in His word." (*The Desire of Ages*, 390) And David writes, "Thy word

have I hid *in mine heart*, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:11 (emphasis supplied)

We can hardly refer to anything as being *hidden in our hearts* if we have to read it out of a book, even the Bible. And unfortunately, we find that we are capable of reading words out of a book while our minds are far away. Remember that Jesus, under temptation, *quoted* the word of God to the tempter. He did not read it. It was in His *heart*. Therefore do this:

1. Choose a rather long chapter of the Bible that appeals to you, one containing fifteen to twenty verses. The subject matter is not important, because the same life and power of Christ are in every chapter. I have long used

the little book of Jude for this very purpose, because I especially like the verses with which it closes.

2. Commit this chapter to *memory*. Know it so well that you can recite it without hesitation at any time or in any circumstances. This may mean that you will need to practice it at times when you don't really need it, just to keep it fresh in your memory.

3. When troubled with sexual tensions, *simply recite this chapter from your memory*. If you are alone, recite it aloud. If you are not alone, recite it silently, in your own mind.

Your tensions will disappear. The struggle will be over. Your soul will be filled with peace, sweet peace. (I have sometimes found it necessary to repeat the chapter a second time, but never a third.) *It works*.

And if any of you who read this article find that your practice has gone beyond habit to *compulsion*, feel free to write to me in care of this magazine. There are some compulsion-breaking methods that I believe will help you, but there is not space to present them here. ■



The Great Controversy

We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history, and what is now done for God is accomplished under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Satan has great skill and wonderful ability. God entrusted him with power and wisdom; but he became filled with self-exaltation and thought that he should be first in heaven. Through this self-seeking, this striving for the supremacy, sin entered into the world.

Satan resolved to make an effort to overthrow the government of God, and set up a kingdom of his own. He began this work by doing just as men who ought to know better are doing today. He complained of the supposed defects in the management of heavenly things, and sought to fill the minds of the angels with his disaffection. Because he was not supreme, he sowed seeds of doubt and unbelief. Because he was not as God, he strove to instill into the minds of the angels his own envy and dissatisfaction. Thus the seeds of alienation were planted, afterward to be drawn out and presented before the heavenly courts as originating, not with Satan, but with the angels. So the deceiver would show that the angels thought as he did.

It was most difficult to make the deceiving power of Satan apparent. His power to deceive increased with practice. If he could not defend himself, he must accuse, in order to appear just and righteous, and to make God appear arbitrary and exacting. In secret he whispered his disaffection to the angels. There was at first no pronounced feeling against

God; but the seed had been sown, and the love and confidence of the angels was marred. The sweet communion between them and their God was broken. Every move was watched; every action was viewed in the light in which Satan had made them see things.

That which Satan had instilled into the minds of the angels—a word here and a word there—opened the way for a long list of suppositions. In his artful way he drew expressions of doubt from them. Then, when he was interviewed, he accused those whom he had educated. He laid all the disaffection on the ones he had led. As one in holy office, he manifested an overbearing desire for justice, but it was a counterfeit of justice, which was entirely contrary to God's love and compassion and mercy.

Just such transactions are taking place today. Many place such confidence in their own ideas that they present their theories as if they could make no mistake. Once their words are spoken, they never go back, never repent, never feel that they need forgiveness. They feel that they are infallible. Thus it has been in past history; thus it will be again. False religious confidence becomes supposed infallibility. How can these deluded ones think that they are the only ones led and taught of God? When this spirit is manifested, what can be done?

You cannot convince them, because they say, "God has led me." They will not acknowledge that they have acted on wrong principles. They maintain that they have moved

rightly. The only course that can be pursued is to leave them to develop their principles. They may never see their error, but others may be convinced and saved. To attempt to unmask them would be to call sympathy to their side.

Great efforts will be made by those who suppose their own wisdom to be supreme, in exactly the same lines on which Satan worked, and which caused so much mischief in the paradise of God. The very same principles are revealed and upheld today. When a man is elected to a position of trust, to preside over important interests, large and broad, or over interests of less extent, but still important, Satan stirs up the minds of those who are selfish, who are not consecrated to God's service, who have not an eye single to his glory. He fills their hearts with the spirit of criticizing and accusing. If they think that they are not especially favored, they will talk of the mistakes and errors of the one against whom they are working. This step taken, Satan, whose special business it is to create alienation and strife, will place the matter before these persons in a most deceiving way, and they will bring against those in positions of trust the most unjust charges, in order to discourage and destroy God's servants.

Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by doing so he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work in this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.

The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. These principles were goodness, mercy, and love. Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied positions of trust and power. They must accept God's principles, and, through the presentation of truth and righteousness, convince all who were in His service. This was the only power to be used. Force must

Ellen G. White

never come in. All who thought that their position gave them power to command their fellow human beings, and control conscience, must be deprived of their position; for this is not God's plan.

These principles are to be the foundation of education in God's church today. The rules given by Him are to be observed and respected. God has enjoined this. His government is moral. Nothing is to be done by compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power. All service is to be done willingly, and for the love of God. All who are honored with positions of influence are to represent God; for when officiating, they are in the place of God. In everything their actions must correspond to the importance of their position. The higher the position the more distinctly will self-sacrifice be revealed if they are fit for the office. Every heart that is controlled by these principles will be loyal. But when those who profess to be in God's service resort to accusation, they are adopting Satan's principles to cast out Satan; and this never will work.

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan's power; for it was God's purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared were superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal.

The Lord saw the use Satan was making of his powers, and he set

before him truth in contrast with falsehood. Time and time again during the controversy, Satan was ready to be convinced, ready to admit he was wrong. But those he had deceived were also ready to accuse him of leaving them. What should he do?—submit to God, or continue in a course of deception? He chose to deny truth, to take refuge in misstatements and fraud.

God does not force anyone.
He leaves all free to choose.
But He says, "By their fruits
ye shall know them."
The Lord will not
write as wise those
who cannot distinguish between
a tree that bears thorn-berries
and a tree that bears olives

The Lord allowed Satan to go on, and demonstrate his principles. God did reveal that His principles were right, and He carried the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe with Him; but it was at a terrible cost. His only begotten Son was given up as Satan's victim. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed a character entirely opposite to that of Satan. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous, pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of a common priest, so Christ emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant, and offered the sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim.

By causing the death of the Sovereign of heaven, Satan defeated his own purpose. The death of the Son of God made the death of Satan unavoidable. He was allowed to go on until his administration was laid open before the worlds unfallen and before

the heavenly universe. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he uprooted himself from the affections of the unfallen beings. He was seen by all to be a liar, a thief, and a murderer.

God sees that the same course of action is being pursued the world over. Men and women come to the place where the road diverges; it is either right or wrong. Thousands upon thousands clothe themselves in what they suppose to be an impenetrable disguise, and choose the wrong. An attempt to make their course plain to others by abrupt disclosures would only cause a larger number to choose the side of wrong. Thus the wrongdoers would be sustained, and many souls would be ruined.

Today Satan is working upon human minds by his crooked principles. These will be adopted and acted upon by some who claim to be loyal and true to God's government. How shall we know that they are disloyal and untrue? "By their fruits ye shall know them." God does not force anyone. He leaves all free to choose. But He says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn berries and a tree that bears olives.

Individually, we are deciding our eternal destiny, whether we shall enjoy the highest honor that can be given to man, even an eternal weight of glory, or to be ranked with Satan by possessing his character, by dishonoring God because we profess to be Christians while misrepresenting Christ. Those who choose to reveal the character of the arch-deceiver identify themselves with him beyond the possibility of a change, because they choose not to see themselves as wrong. This was the course that Satan pursued.

Review and Herald, September 7, 1897

Is Obedience Possible?

Russell Standish, M.D.
Colin Standish, Ph.D



"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4

Satan's consistent promise has always been, "You can sin and still have eternal life." His motto is "Sin and live." On the other hand, the plain word of God informs us in terms too clear to be misunderstood, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezekiel 18:4, 20

Yet many Christians, not always aware that by deception Satan is suggesting that they can be saved in their sins rather than from their sins, have consistently accepted this word in preference to the truth of our loving heavenly Father.

Even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church we sometimes hear those who assert that King David was a saved man at the moment of his sin with Bathsheba. Others assert that if the tenor of a man's life is good, he can die with a curse upon his lips and still be saved eternally. It is distressing that such unscriptural teaching is permitted to encourage those weak in faith to anticipate that they have salvation while breaking the law of the Most High. While the basis of salvation is the merits of Christ alone, the condition is the keeping of God's commandments. The belief that obedience to God's law is not a condi-

tion of salvation is rapidly gaining acceptance within Adventism, while inspiration declares that obedience is the condition of our salvation. Notice: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21

"The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 972

"From Genesis to Revelation the conditions upon which eternal life is promised, are made plain. . . . Keep My commandments and live, is the requirement of God." *Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901

One is entitled to inquire, what more does a man need to do than murder and commit adultery in order to lose life eternal? This must not be confused to mean that there is not salvation for every repentant sinner irrespective of the depth to which he has fallen. Confession and repentance are conditions of salvation. Certainly David believed he had lost salvation prior to his prayer of deep repentance. He cried out from the depths of his heart, "Restore unto me the joy

of Thy salvation." Psalm 51:12

He recognized that it is only as "we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

To promote the concept that man can have salvation while being guilty of cherished sin is a dangerous concept indeed. Further, absolutely no scriptural verification exists for this false doctrine.

Seventh-day Adventists do not serve a God who is fickle in His dealings with man, striking him down at the moment of a sin, when time would have produced repentance. We serve a beneficent Father who is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

Thus, while eternity is lost by one unrepented sin, nevertheless, an omniscient God does not permit a single soul to perish while there is the least hope of true repentance. We can surely trust Him to do all in His power to give us the opportunity to meet His condition of repentance.

It is the cry of the devil that obedience is not possible. It ill behooves God's people to preach from hallowed pulpits the despicable lies of Satan. It is the earnest plea of the writers that fellow workers for the

cause of truth will perceive the danger of preaching such errors. Sister White, under inspiration, specifically pointed out over and over that the claim that obedience to the law under the power of the Holy Spirit is impossible, emanates from the arch-enemy himself. Let us examine a few instances of this warning.

"The holy life of Abel testified against Satan's claim that it is impossible for man to keep God's law." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 77

"Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed." *The Desire of Ages*, 117

"Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 314

No Spirit of Prophecy-believing Seventh-day Adventist could surely repeat Satan's claim as truth. It is true that the new Adventism postulates a view of sin to which neither the angels nor unfallen Adam could achieve. However, a faulty definition leads many to have confidence that the plan of salvation does not provide for complete victory over sin.

Let it be properly understood that nowhere does Scripture verify this claim of Satan. Eternal life, God's grace and His mercy, are only promised contingent upon our Spirit-powered obedience.

In the Psalms this condition is set forth.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." Psalm 103: 17, 18

We hear men speak words which find responses in our carnal hearts, disdaining to seek to verify the words of men by scriptural search. We believe a man and doubt God. There are some believers who have so elevated a fallible being that one word from him is worth more to them than ten from God. We are told that

some men live exemplary lives and this is used to validate their statements. The Bible never invites us to accept such "proofs." Had it done so, we would have been left to follow Satan, for he will come "transformed into an angel of light." 2 Corinthians 11:14

Indeed, Sister White commenting on this fact, states that "Disguised as an angel of light, he [Satan] will walk the earth as a wonder-worker. In beautiful language he will present lofty sentiments. Good words will be spoken by him, and good deeds performed. Christ will be personified, but on one point there will be a marked distinction. Satan will turn the people from the law of God." *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 471, 472

While the fruits of the life are evidence of the power of God, we must beware that such evidence is not allowed to overrule the evidence of the law and the testimony. Satan does simulate the "lofty" concepts and the "good" life of Christ. It is now time to look for the one and only point of distinction—Satan turns man's hearts from the law of God. Is it a coincidence that those proclaiming the new Adventism present lofty sentiments, do good works, are "Christ-centered" in their approach, while turning God's treasured people away from the law of God? Thus the new Adventism has all the identifying marks of a Satanic delusion.

As these highly respected theologians repeat Satan's despicable attack upon our Redeemer and His law, we must flee their teachings which, if followed, will lead us to eternal perdition. The matter is so simple.

"If it were not possible for human beings under the Abrahamic covenant to keep the commandments of God, every soul of us is lost. The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace. 'By grace ye are saved.' (John 1:11, 12) Disobedient children? No, obedient to all His commandments. If it were not possible for us to be commandment-keepers, then why does He make the obedience to His commandments the proof that we love Him?" *Letter 16*, 1892, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1092

Sister White's simple logic stands

as a stark rebuke to those who would promote or accept Satan's persistent lie that obedience to the law is not possible.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them." Psalm 103:17, 18

"The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son." *The Desire of Ages*, 790

"Under the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may

It was impossible for the sinner to keep the law of God; but...

be gained are the same as under the old—perfect obedience." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 931

When many times the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy urge obedience as a condition for salvation and never once does either inspired source state that the Spirit-filled man cannot obey God's law, one marvels at the pomposity of man to declare true that which God denies, and to oppose that which God reveals.

Listen to the irrefutable voice of inspiration once more:

"It was impossible for the sinner to keep the law of God, which was holy, just, and good; but this impossibility was removed by the impartation of the righteousness of Christ to the repenting, believing soul. . . . Therefore he [Satan] has originated the falsehood that the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross was for the purpose of freeing man from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God. . . . Having suffered the full penalty for a guilty world, Jesus became the mediator between God and man, to restore the repenting soul to favor with God by giving him grace to keep the law of the Most High." *Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1895

Can anyone truly accept God's servant as a messenger of truth, and conscientiously read this statement and still believe the views of the new Adventism? Thank God the pillars of our faith are firmly based. Whatever claims are made and whatever use is made of the Spirit of Prophecy by the proponents of the new Adventism, daily men and women are turned to doubt its utterances. Many today who once believed the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy now refer to its claimed inspiration as cultism.

Sister White, writing from Australia to our young people, gave them solid grounds to look to Christ to empower them to obey. How much the youth of today would benefit from the quality of articles which appeared in those *Youth's Instructors!*

"He [Christ] was to bear the penalty of transgression of the law of God, not to give men liberty to continue in sin but to take away their inclination to sin, that they might not desire to transgress. Those who receive Christ are obedient to His commands, for His mind is given to them. He embues them with His Spirit of obedience, and they return to Him their loyalty." *Youth's Instructor*, April 6, 1899

The apostle Paul's letters are replete with exhortations to obedience under God's power. To deny the possibility of the born-again Christian being obedient is to

If, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found to be sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid
—Galatians 2:17

destroy the very fabric of the New Testament and to make Christ's death impotent.

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail." *The Desire of Ages*, 671

Paul admonishes us as follows:

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

In the same letter to the Corinthian believers Paul encouraged them in a similar manner.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1

Paul made it clear that a person

Let us cleanse ourselves
from all filthiness of the
flesh and spirit
—2 Corinthians 10:5

cannot be justified while he disobeys. This, of course, is the consistent teaching of all sources of inspiration. Why men propose that which God does not, can only be known to the individual and his Maker.

"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Galatians 2:17, 18

This passage of Scripture should be read and studied by all Seventh-day Adventists, for it settles the question once and for all as to whether a man can disobey and still retain justification.

Paul believed that "the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work." (2 Timothy 4:18) He was able to offer thanks "unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." (2 Corinthians 2:14) It was no doubt this conviction and the knowledge that "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13) which formed the basis for Paul's admonition to "awake to righteousness, and sin not." 1 Corinthians 15:34

Either God's promises are sure or they are worthless. Not one reader

will support the second of these two propositions. Yet we surely cast aspersions upon the veracity of our Lord when we claim to believe His promises and then proclaim the precise reverse of that which God declares. Do we truly believe that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"? 1 Corinthians 10:13

What a sublime promise! Why should we doubt God's power to give us victory over sin? Let us not so desire to be saved in our sins rather than from them that we will ignore such positive promises.

In reality the possibilities are three-fold:

1. God has the power to give us victory over sin [obedience] and He uses this power on behalf of every penitent sinner whose will is subject to the Spirit-interpreted Word.

2. God has the power to give obedience, but He chooses not to do so for reasons known only to Himself.

3. God does not possess the power to give a Spirit-filled man total victory.

Since every trace of evidence in Scripture supports proposition (1) above, there are no grounds other than our own perversity or ignorance to imply that either of the other two propositions is true.

It is always an easier matter to present one side of an argument than to fairly, also, present the alternate position. Before concluding this article, it is only proper to present the "evidence" proposed by those who believe that fallen man cannot fully obey. This is quoted from the writings of one of the most prominent expositors of the new Adventism.

"Human sinlessness in this life is indeed a chimera. (See James 3:2; 1 John 1:8; Matthew 6:12; Romans 14:23; James 4:17, etc.) Only when the Christian receives a glorified immortal body at the coming of Christ will he be able to function without lapse or error." D. Ford, *Signs of the Times*, Australasian edition, February 1978

In this statement we have set out the position supporting the inability to obey, concepts so central to the

new Adventism. There is also proof texting provided. Each of these texts is quoted so that the reader can compare them with the positive, unequivocal statements of inspiration cited previously to support the Bible-based Seventh-day Adventist position. Four of these five texts are quoted below; the fifth will be discussed a little more fully.

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James 3:2

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Matthew 6:12

It is surely a misapplication of Scripture to use a text from a book, the whole theme of which is the call to obedience, to attempt to support the reverse

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 13:23

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17

It is not proposed to discuss these four "proof" texts. Their mere listing should indicate to the reader their lack of support for this pivotal error of the new Adventism. This instance does indicate the urgent need for much greater care in the editorial work of some of our publications, particularly those being sent to non-believers. If proof texts are provided, it is preferable to quote the text and not simply the reference, and to ensure that the texts really do support the proposition advanced. This surely illustrates the all too often used technique of quoting irrelevant references to support erroneous doctrines.

Let us examine the fifth reference which at least does have the virtue of relevance.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8

It must never be overlooked that the emphasis here is on an individual's claim about himself. As it will be demonstrated later, there is a decided difference between a perfect man's assessment of his own unworthiness and God's analysis of the man's condition. However, several powerful reasons can be advanced to demonstrate that John in no wise made this statement on the basis that obedience was impossible in this life.

Indeed it is incredible that any passage from the first epistle of John should be used for this purpose. No book of the Bible exhorts to sinlessness more than this brief epistle. It is surely a misapplication of Scripture to use a text from a book, the whole theme of which is the call to obedience, to attempt to support the reverse. This should act as a further warning to those within our midst who would leave Bible exposition to theologians. All too frequently we are hearing, even from some church leaders, the cry, why doesn't he stick to his own field of expertise and leave the exposition of Scripture to the theologians?

It is almost unbelievable that such sentiments should appear within God's church. They reflect no credit upon those who utter them, for it was this very same thing which led to the darkest era of Christendom.

Let us look at some of the numerous calls to total obedience in this epistle.

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3

"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 2:4

"But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." 2:5

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 2:6

"If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." 2:29

"And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 3:3

"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." 3:5

"Whosoever abideth in Him sin-

neth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 3:6

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." 3:7

"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." 3:8

"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." 3:9

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous
-1 John 3:7

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 3:10

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 3:22

"And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." 3:24

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." 5:2

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 5:3

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." 5:18

This quantum of Scripture has been cited, not simply to demonstrate the misuse of 1 John 1:8, but to illustrate the almost unending Scriptural opposition to the thesis of the new Adventism which fosters the belief that God does not offer sinlessness to His believers here.

What then does 1 John 1:8 mean? The entire passage of 1 John 1:7-10

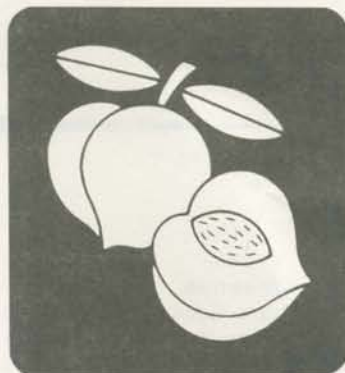
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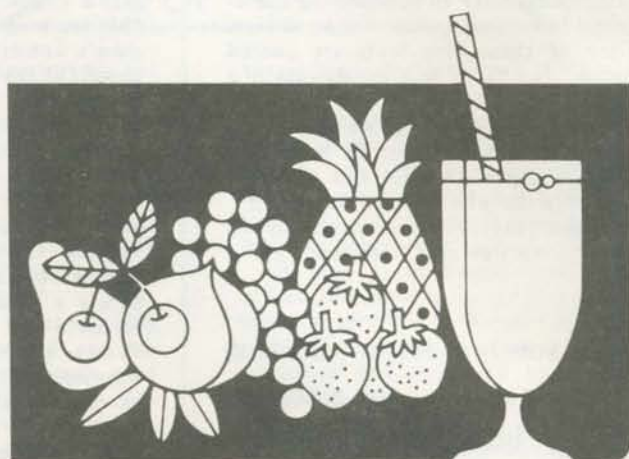
The Flesh

VERSUS

The Spirit



Ellen G. White



A REFORM NEEDED

If Seventh-day Adventists practiced what they profess to believe, if they were sincere health reformers, they would indeed be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. And they would show a far greater zeal for the salvation of those who are ignorant of the truth.

Greater reforms should be seen among the people who claim to be looking for the soon appearing of Christ. Health reform is to do among our people a work which it has not yet done. There are those who ought to be awake to the danger of meat eating, who are still eating the flesh of animals, thus endangering the physical, mental, and spiritual health. Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God's people, to walk no more with them.

In all our work we must obey the laws which God has given, that the physical and spiritual energies may work in harmony. Men may have a form of godliness, they may even preach the gospel, and yet be unpurified and unsanctified. Ministers should be strictly temperate in their eating and drinking, lest they make

crooked paths for their feet, turning the lame—those weak in the faith—out of the way. If while proclaiming the most solemn and important message God has ever given, men war against the truth by indulging wrong habits of eating and drinking, they take all the force from the message they bear.

Those who indulge in meat eating, tea drinking, and gluttony are sowing seeds for a harvest of pain and death. The unhealthful food placed in the stomach strengthens the appetites that war against the soul, developing the lower propensities. A diet of flesh meat tends to develop animalism. A development of animalism lessens spirituality, rendering the mind incapable of understanding truth.

The Word of God plainly warns us that unless we abstain from fleshly lusts, the physical nature will be brought into conflict with the spiritual nature. Lustful eating wars against health and peace. Thus a warfare is instituted between the higher and the lower attributes of the man. The lower propensities, strong and active, oppress the soul. The highest interests of the being are imperiled by the indulgence of appetites unsanctioned by Heaven.

Great care should be taken to form

right habits of eating and drinking. The food eaten should be that which will make the best blood. The delicate organs of digestion should be respected. God requires us, by being temperate in all things, to act our part toward keeping ourselves in health. He cannot enlighten the mind of a man who makes a cesspool of his stomach. He does not hear the prayers of those who are walking in the light of the sparks of their own kindling.



COMMON ERRORS IN DIET

Intemperance is seen in the quantity as well as in the quality of food eaten. The Lord has instructed me that as a general rule we place too much food in the stomach. Many make themselves uncomfortable by overeating, and sickness is often the result. The Lord did not bring this punishment on them. They brought it on themselves, and God desires them to realize that pain is the result of transgression.

Daily abused, the digestive organs cannot do their work well. A poor quality of blood is made, and thus, through improper eating, the whole machinery is crippled. Give the stomach less to do. It will recover if

proper care is shown in regard to the quality and quantity of food eaten.

Many eat too rapidly. Others eat at one meal varieties of food that do not agree. If men and women would only remember how greatly they afflict the soul when they afflict the stomach, and how deeply Christ is dishonored when the stomach is abused, they would deny the appetite, and thus give the stomach opportunity to recover its healthy action. While sitting at the table, we may do medical missionary work by eating and drinking to the glory of God.

To eat on the Sabbath the same amount of food eaten on a working day, is entirely out of place. The Sabbath is the day set apart for the worship of God, and on it we are to be specially careful in regard to our diet. A clogged stomach means a clogged brain. Too often so large an amount of food is eaten on the Sabbath that the mind is rendered dull and stupid, incapable of appreciating spiritual things. The habits of eating have much to do with the many dull religious exercises of the Sabbath. The diet for the Sabbath should be selected with reference to the duties of the day on which the purest, holiest service is to be offered to God.

God's people should
place themselves
where they will
grow in grace,
being sanctified,
body, soul, and spirit,
by the truth



Eating has much to do with religion. The spiritual experience is greatly affected by the way in which the stomach is treated. Eating and drinking in accordance with the laws of health promote virtuous actions. But if the stomach is abused by habits that have no foundation in nature, Satan takes advantage of the wrong that has been done, and uses the stomach as an enemy of righteousness, creating a disturbance which affects the entire being. Sacred things are not appreciated. Spiritual zeal diminishes. Peace of mind is lost. There is dissension, strife, and discord. Impatient words are spoken, and unkind deeds are done; dishonest practices are followed, and anger is manifested,—and all because the nerves of the brain are disturbed by the abuse heaped on the stomach.

What a pity it is that often, when the greatest self-denial should be exercised, the stomach is crowded with a mass of unhealthful food, which lies there to decompose. The affliction of the stomach afflicts the brain. The imprudent eater does not realize that he is disqualifying himself for giving wise counsel, disqualifying himself for laying plans for the best advancement of the work of God. But this is so. He cannot discern spiritual things, and in council meetings, when he should say Yea, he says Nay. He makes propositions that are wide of the mark, because the food he has eaten has benumbed his brain power.

RELATION OF HEALTH PRINCIPLES TO SPIRITUALITY



The failure to follow sound principles has marred the history of God's people. There has been a continual backsliding in health reform, and as a result God is dishonored by a great lack of spirituality. Barriers have been erected which would never have been seen had God's people walked in the light.

Shall we who have had such great opportunities allow the people of the world to go in advance of us in health reform? Shall we cheapen our minds and abuse our talents by wrong eating? Shall we transgress God's holy law by following selfish practices? Shall our inconsistency become a byword? Shall we live such unchristianlike lives that the Saviour will be ashamed to call us brethren? Shall we not rather do that medical missionary work which is the gospel in practice, living in such a way that the peace of God can rule in our hearts? Shall we not remove every stumblingblock from the feet of unbelievers, ever remembering what is due to a profession of Christianity? Far better give up the name of Christian than make a profession and at the same time indulge appetites which strengthen unholy passions.

Eating and drinking in
accordance with the laws
of health promote
virtuous actions



God calls upon every church member to dedicate his life unreservedly to the Lord's service. He calls for decided reformation. All creation is

Shall we who have had
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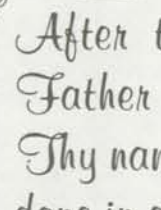
groaning under the curse. God's people should place themselves where they will grow in grace, being sanctified, body, soul, and spirit, by the truth. When they break away from all health-destroying indulgences, they will have a clearer perception of what constitutes true godliness. A wonderful change will be seen in the religious experience.

The apostle plainly states that those who reach a high standard of righteousness must be temperate in all things. The Lord sends this message to His people: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." [1 Corinthians 9:27]

"It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." [Romans 13:11-14] *Review and Herald*, May 27, 1902

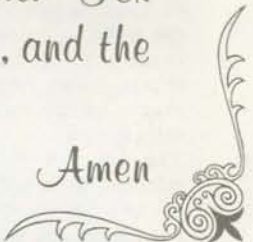
Teach Us To Pray

Ron Spear



After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen



Many who have been Christians for many years have never learned to pray. Prayer is to them no more than a form that they feel obligated to go through. They are afraid that if they do not bow their knees for a few minutes in the morning that some calamity may befall them. When they see that nothing happens to a particular request, they decide that God is not going to answer that prayer and begin to pray for something else. Sometimes they become discouraged and cease praying.

Other Christians are bowing to a God they do not know. They have been caught up in the habit of praying, but in their hearts do not really believe that their prayers will be answered. They are just saying words as the devotees of the non-Christian religions do, speaking to walls and to space.

How many prayers are vague and pointless! Some cry for mercy but do not know what mercy should do for them. Others ask to be delivered, but only from an ill-defined something. Still others pray for God's blessing to fall on them and their loved ones, but never expect to see the answer. To all these the Lord says, "And what is it you really want Me to do for you?"

If we expect God to answer our prayers we must fulfill certain conditions. There are five conditions that I follow in my prayer life. There are other conditions, but to me these five are basic. The first is that we must learn to depend upon Jesus for everything. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend. . . and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:17-19) "Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7) There is a great amount of wealth in those last 11 words. We must learn to rest in His arms as a little child rests in his father's arms. We are inclined to use our human knowledge and ingenuity to solve life's problems, instead of depending upon Jesus and Jesus only. When self is removed, God can guide our lives.

The second condition to answered prayer is the will for the removal of all sin from our lives. When we come to this second condition, many of us begin to falter because we love some of our sins and we do not want to let them go. Many of these may be secret

sins, the ones our wives, our husbands, and our preachers do not know about. But God knows all of them. The Bible is clear on this point: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:1

Believe He Will Answer

The third condition to answered prayer is to have faith that God will answer our prayer. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Hebrews 11:6) Again, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7) Let us also remember that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

The fourth condition to answered prayer is to pray according to God's will. Many times we pray for things that in His great love for us God could not give us. To such requests God gives a negative answer. It takes spiritual maturity to understand when God says No. For this reason we must always pray that His will be done. "And this is the confidence that

we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John 5:14) This is one of the most thrilling texts in all the Bible, and I claim the promise given here many times each day. When we ask according to His will, we can be assured that He will give us His answer. God answers every sincere prayer.

The fifth condition to answered prayer is willingness to wait for God to answer. This is sometimes the most difficult condition to fulfill. We want our prayers answered immediately. I remember one man who prayed faithfully every day for 52 years for two of his friends before his prayer was answered. He had entered into an agreement with God. He knew that his prayer was in accordance with God's will and he would not stop praying until God had given His answer. Hebrews 10:35, 36 says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

These are the five conditions to prayer that I apply in my life. They have given me power in prayer, and I am sure that they will give others a firm hold upon the arm of prayer.

But after I followed these five steps to answered prayer, the Lord made it plain that there were certain things I must pray for in my own life daily. It is most important that we pray for ourselves first so that we can have power when we pray for others. The first request is that God will cleanse me from all sin and make me a pure and holy vessel for Him each day. I confess my weaknesses and mistakes and present them before the Lord. And He wonderfully pardons and cleanses me. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Second, I pray that God will make me humble and keep me humble (see James 4:6) Grace is the door to God's power through the Holy Spirit, and humility is the key to that door. When self is dead, God can turn on the power in our lives. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Galatians 2:20) Christ can dwell only

in a humble heart. To have a humble heart, we must ask the great Heart Surgeon to cut out the old heart and give us a new heart, a humble heart. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19) Humility that comes from within ourselves is Pharisaism. Humility that comes from heart transplant is genuine. It is a miracle of God.

Love for the Bible

The third request is that God will fill me with love for the Word of God. Many of our church members find it difficult to spend much time reading the Word of God. They find it hard to concentrate on biblical thoughts. One reason for this is given in 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When the carnal life is dominant in us we cannot find contentment or joy in studying spiritual themes. And so we must pray that God will give us great love for His Word, that we might have great joy and peace from feasting upon the living Word. "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Psalm 119:165

My fourth daily request is that God will give me great love for all people in the world, even my enemies. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44) I am sure that this is the best test we can give ourselves to see whether the carnal man is really dead. It takes a miracle of God to love someone who hates us. Many people are carrying grudges in their hearts that are eating them up like a cancer. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4:20

There is another dimension to loving our fellow men that is seldom talked about. We must want to see every person we meet saved for the kingdom of God. As we look into the eyes of strangers we should see a soul

that is a candidate for heaven. We must have a longing to reach them with the word of salvation. This desire must possess us as it did Paul. He was willing to become all things to all men that he might, by God's grace, save some. We must pray—yes, plead—that God will give us the love for all mankind that Jesus had.

The fifth request that we must ask for is faith—faith that will move mountains in our own experience that we might move mountains in the experience of others. One of the familiar sayings of Jesus was, "O ye of little faith." The divine Man, as He walked the dusty roads of this world, was continually amazed that there was so little faith in the world. And I am sure that as He looks upon His most cherished possession, His church, He is still amazed that there is so little faith. We are told that the devil has stolen the march on us. Why? Because there is so little faith. We must feel it, and touch it, and have it in our possession before we are ready to work for God. The Word tells us that we are saved by faith. "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17) Our power with God is in direct proportion to our faith in God. Little faith, little power; no faith, no power; great faith, great power.

The last request is that Jesus will baptize us each day with His Holy Spirit. Most of us have been baptized. But there may be something we have forgotten—the pastor can baptize with water, but only Jesus can baptize with the Holy Spirit. The words of John are most clear. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11) Let us plead daily with our Lord for the baptism of the Spirit. The reason we do not see a finished work is that we see little evidence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The end is just before us now. Jesus will return much sooner than most of us suspect. The end will come suddenly, as it did in Noah's and Lot's day. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Let us make sure of salvation today. Let us ask the Lord Jesus today, and every day, "Teach us to pray." ■

Faith And Good Works

Ellen G. White

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do [through the grace and power of Christ]; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." [John 14:12-15] This promise was spoken by lips that never deceived, and we must take the pledged Word of God and believe it, and act upon it. We must receive His Word as spoken to us; and if we regard it thus, we shall come to the throne of grace with full assurance of faith.

Many who profess to be children of God have lost their simplicity; there is no genuine faith in their prayers, no confidence in the promise that if we believe we shall receive the thing we ask of Him. But if we have this faith, we shall not be disappointed; for God will honor His Word. The Lord would have us tell Him all our perplexities, and ask Him for those things that we need. His promise is, "Ask, and ye shall receive." [John 16:24] God will give us the very things we need. It is our privilege to ask; it is God's prerogative to know what is for our good, that receiving them we may glorify His name by giving of them to others.

We need to have more of Jesus, and far less of self. We need a childlike simplicity that will lead us to tell the Lord all our wants, and believe that according to His riches and goodness and love He will satisfy our needs. "If ye shall ask anything in My name," He says, "I will do it." If you love Me, you will show that love by keeping My commandments. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth." [John 14:14, 16]

The Comforter is promised only as the Spirit of truth. There is no com-

fort in a lie. The work of the Comforter is to define and maintain the truth; and there should be no worry lest the comfort will not follow. The Holy Spirit first dwells in the heart as the truth, and this He does through the truth. "The world," said Christ, cannot receive the Spirit of truth, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." [vs. 17]

"He that hath 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." [vs. 21] This is the only true test of character. In doing the will of God we give the best evidence that we love God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The oft-repeated words of love for God are of no value unless that love is made manifest in the life practice. Love for God is not a mere sentiment; it is a living, working power. The man who does the will of his Father who is in heaven shows to the world that he loves God. The fruit of his love is seen in good works.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." [Romans 10:9, 10] This means more than an assent to the truth that Christ came into the world and died for the salvation of the race. The understanding may be convinced, but the text means more than this. It means entire sincerity. It means faith, intelligent faith, that will cling to the Saviour as the only hope of a fallen world. It means a faith that will grasp the wonderful provision made, and will engage the affections and control the life, resting upon the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour. It means a faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

The apostle James saw that dangers would arise in presenting the subject of justification by faith, and he labored to show that genuine faith cannot exist without corresponding works. The experience of Abraham is presented. "Seest thou," he says, "how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" [James 2:22] Thus genuine faith does a genuine work in the believer. Faith and obedience bring a solid, valuable experience.

There is a belief that is not a saving faith. The word declares that the devils believe and tremble. The so-called faith that does not work by love and purify the soul will not justify any man. "Ye see," says the apostle, "how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." [vs. 24] Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

We need the faith of Abraham in our day, to lighten the darkness that gathers around us, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God's love, and dwarfing spiritual growth. Our faith should be prolific of good works; for faith without works is dead. Every duty performed, every sacrifice made in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives His blessing.

"Being justified freely by His grace," the apostle Paul says, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." [Romans 3:24-26]

Here the truth is laid out in plain lines. This mercy and goodness are

wholly undeserved. The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.

There is nothing in faith that makes it our saviour. Faith cannot remove our guilt. Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. The justification comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has paid the price for the sinner's redemption. Yet it is only through faith in His blood that Jesus can justify the believer.

The sinner cannot depend upon his own good works as a means of justification. He must come to the point where he will renounce all his sin, and embrace one degree of light after another, as it shines upon his pathway. He simply grasps by faith the free and ample provision made in the blood of Christ. He believes the promises of God which through

Christ are made unto him sanctification and righteousness and redemption. And if he follows Jesus, he will walk humbly in the light rejoicing in the light, and diffusing that light to others. Being justified by faith he carries cheerfulness with him in his obedience in all his life. Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him. The souls who are in subordination to God, who honor Him, and are doers of His Word, will receive divine enlightenment. In the precious Word of God, there is purity and loftiness as well as beauty that, unless assisted by God, the highest powers of man can not attain to.

Faith earns nothing for us; it is the gift of God, which we may receive and cherish by making Christ our personal Saviour. We may refuse the gift, and talk doubts, and become unhappy by cherishing unbelief. But this will grow into an impassable barrier, shutting us away from the Spirit of God, and closing our hearts to His light and His love. Thus we dishonor God, and make of none effect to us the priceless sacrifice. We

give Satan an opportunity to triumph over us, when we might triumph over him.

We are none of us excusable, under any form of trial, for letting our hold upon God become loosened. Although the compassion of man may fail, still God loves and pities, and reaches out His helping hand. God's everlasting arms encircle the soul that turns to Him for aid. He is our source of strength, our stronghold in every trial. When we cry unto Him for help, His hand will be stretched forth mightily to save. In earnest resolution and prayer to God for the help we need, we shall find strength. God loves to have His children ask Him, and trust Him to do for them those things which they cannot do for themselves. Then let us heed the voice of Him who spoke as never man spake: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." [John 14:13-15]

The Signs of the Times, May 19, 1898 ■

BULLETIN BOARD

Next Month's Paper

Next month's paper will be yet another special emphasis issue. This time we invite you to turn your attention to the subject of health.

Public interest in physical well-being is on the rise. Unfortunately, as in every area of human activity, we find a mixture of right and wrong, the true and the spurious.

As always, the old adage "let the buyer beware" stands in good stead. On every hand we find new fads and gimmicks to attract the consumer dollar. Much of this is prompted by a trendy egotism which has become a hallmark of American society. Yet there are those who can be reached with the gospel of Christ through this avenue and no other.

As the nations of the world have demonstrated man's inability "by wisdom to find out God," so the conflicting claims and changing theories of the medical field are showing the danger of trusting in the skill and knowledge of man. Many are searching anxiously for a better way. Often this search leads to erroneous practices, but some few are turning their attention to the truth of God.

The Lord's health message is just as dramatic as any theory of man. Who, even among the least reputable

of "quacks," would make such claims as these?

"Sin brings physical and spiritual disease and weakness. Christ has made it possible for us to free ourselves from this curse. . . . [The Holy Spirit] will renew every organ of the body, that God's servants may work acceptably and successfully." *Review and Herald*, January 14, 1902

"Today [Christ] is the same compassionate physician that He was while on this earth. We should let the afflicted understand that in Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity." *ibid.*, June 9, 1904

Dramatics, though, do not impress those who are searching. Such claims have proven false before, and human logic says they will fail again. But this is the greatest difference between the Seventh-day Adventist health message and all others. The Lord's principles are sure. They do not falter, and we are privileged to trust implicitly in His counsel.

This is the element which will do the most to reach those searching for truth. Certainty—how rare it is in the field of health. In next month's paper you will find the certainty of the "right arm" of the message. You will see Ellen White's unique role in the development of the "health message,"

and see it vindicated time and again by the later work of science.

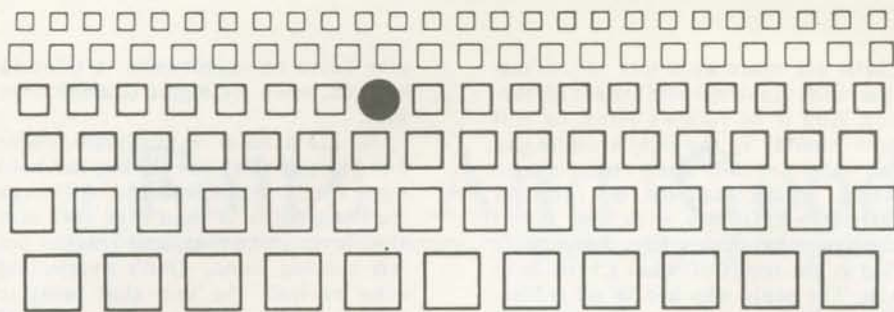
We believe it will be a blessing to you, and encourage you to consider using it as the "entering wedge" to reach someone for Christ. Extra copies will be available, of course.

Hope International Campmeeting

The dates of July 23-27 have been set for this summer's Campmeeting here at Hope International. We expect a full slate of speakers covering the whole range of doctrine, practice, and inspiration. We won't promise anything "new" or flamboyant. But if you get a blessing from the messages in *Our Firm Foundation*, then you would certainly gain a blessing from Campmeeting.

We should have no lack of camping room, water, preaching, and fellowship. We must ask, however, that those who attend make provision for their own meals.

To assist us in planning for the occasion, we would appreciate hearing from you if you plan to attend. Please send a postcard or make a phone call to let us know how many will be in your party. Watch for more detailed announcements in the June issue of the paper.



Intelligent, Constructive

Nonconformity

Patrick Hogan

"Conform!" Government leaders, prominent social figures, and religious leaders will shout this to the people as the national law to observe Sunday goes into effect. Sadly, the majority will choose to conform to this law. Even the majority of present members of the Adventist Church will go along, if we believe Mrs. White's statements. But why?

Economic pressure forbidding a person to buy or sell will be one reason. The desire for food will be another. But equally important will be the social pressures exerted to bring would-be dissenters into line.

Government leaders will promote obedience to Sunday law as the patriotic thing to do. Social reformers will no doubt extol the benefits of Sunday rest for the individual as well as for society. Even religious leaders will support Sunday observance as a spiritual obligation to God. And because the majority will be used to unthinking conformity, they will accept these leader's arguments for Sunday observance and will persecute those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

Conformity. It's all pervasive in our society. Let a fashion designer come out with a new style and thousands will rush out to purchase it. Let a new rock star arise and see how many people bow down before him (or her). Let someone point a finger at someone and say "he's different" or "she acts strange" and then note the subtle yet unmistakable change in most people's attitude toward the person being singled out.

Where are the Noahs, the Elijahs, the Esthers, or the Martin Luthers of our day? Where are those who will dare to step apart from the masses? To borrow George Vandeman's well put question, "Have we no higher destiny than to become a reasonable facsimile of everybody else?" *A Day to Remember*, 98

So if conformity to the crowd will be a significant factor in the majority's acceptance of a Sunday law, is there anything we can do

beforehand to prepare ourselves to resist successfully this pressure to conform? Is there any course of action we can take that will make it easier to make the right choice when the Sabbath-Sunday issue confronts us?

Yes, I believe we can prepare ourselves to overcome the pressures of conformity through a process of constructive and intelligent nonconformity to the world. Since conformity, along with economic pressures, will cause most people to accept the Sunday law, the answer is to break away from a pattern of conformity to the world and its standards. Now is the time to begin turning away from the thought-patterns, philosophies, practices, idols, and status symbols the world worships.

Here are nine ways to practice constructive and intelligent nonconformity. Perhaps they will also help you reassess your walk with the Lord and your Christian witness.

1. Worship the Lord with all your heart. If you've not completely surrendered to Him, do so immediately. It will be quite difficult to be a victorious Christian if you're trying to keep one foot in heaven and one foot in the world. "The surrender of all our powers to God greatly simplifies the problems of life." (*My Life Today*, 6) If you've completely surrendered to God, you can claim with the Psalmist, "He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust." Psalm 91:2

2. Have personal Bible study at least once and, if possible, twice a day. It's not so much the amount of time you spend or the quantity of verses you cover as it is the importance of understanding the verses' meaning and trying (with the help of the Spirit) to relate them to your life and its circumstances and problems.

If it's been awhile since you've studied your Bible, turn to the gospel of John and get reacquainted with Jesus (John 3, 14, 15, and 16 are four wonderful chapters).

3. Pray at least twice a day. Pray about everything. Successes, failures, hopes, desires, and wishes. Ask for an infilling of the Spirit. Praise the Lord for His greatness, for the plan of salvation, and for His past and present mercies toward you. Make a list of things for which you're thankful and then thank the Lord. You could start with physical blessings like health, eyesight, or hearing.

If you have carried out each of these steps sincerely and conscientiously, you are already in a nonconforming minority, even among "born again" Christians.

4. Take the individual doctrines of the Adventist Church and study them, one at a time, using a Bible and a concordance. Know where to find the texts in both the Old and the New Testaments dealing with the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the second coming, the ten commandments, and diet and health counsels and keep a list of Scriptures on each topic in the back of your Bible.

This study of doctrines will help you to explain the Church's beliefs in an intelligent way to other Christians and also to non-Christians. In addition, it will help you prepare for possible cross-examination by the authorities when Sabbath-keepers have to testify in court about their faith.

5. Love people in tangible ways. If it's within your power, try to meet their needs and relieve their suffering. Remember the second chapter of James, especially verses 14 through 17, about the need for a proper balance between faith and works. Let people see your faith by your actions and deeds (see vs. 18). Most non-Christians tend to ignore the kind of professed "faith" which either has no actions to back it up or worse, has worldly or un-Christlike actions. Relieving suffering is a powerful door opener for the presentation of the gospel.

6. Exhibit biblical integrity. Joseph refused to have illicit relations with his master's wife (Genesis 39). Paul counsels us to provide for "honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (2 Corinthians 8:21) Give an honest day's work for a day's pay. Don't overcharge for either goods or services. Speak the truth, but always tempered with love. Ephesians 4:15

If you've followed all these steps so far, you're in a select minority, even among Seventh-day Adventists.

7. Don't conform to worldly philosophies and practices. The decade of the 70s was called the "Me Decade." Hardly a week goes by that an article doesn't appear in the

newspapers about the greediness and self-centeredness of individuals, executives, corporations, and even high government officials.

The Christian is called to reject thoroughly and to live in opposition to such worldly philosophies as "look out for Number One," and "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

A lifestyle which is a living illustration of Christian ethics can't help but be noticed even by confirmed skeptics and unbelievers.

8. Following the counsel of Philippians 4:8 (whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, . . .), replace banal TV comedies, rock music, sex-and violence-filled movies with higher, more challenging forms of recreation. Try your hand at a new craft or hobby. Learn another language. Expand your mind.

9. Since the Sabbath is going to be the center of controversy at time's end, prepare now by keeping the Sabbath in a manner which shows clearly that you respect and reverence it. In other words, "keep the Sabbath day holy."

It makes a considerable difference whether you regard the Sabbath as a "holy day" or a "holiday." If your observance of the Sabbath has degenerated to the point where it is much like the average Sunday keeper's observance of Sunday, check the Bible to find out how Jesus and the apostles kept the Sabbath. Also, look for suggestions in Mrs. White's writings for constructive, spiritually uplifting things to do on the Sabbath. Meditate on the glories of the world to come. Try to help relieve someone's emotional or physical suffering. In short, try to improve your spiritual condition by worship, healthful rest, and holy deeds.

Let's be honest: such a course of constructive and intelligent nonconformity is not for everyone. It is not for the indifferent, the lazy, or for weaklings. Such a course is so radical it will shock many, not just those in the world, but probably the majority in the Adventist Church. It's even possible a person who adopts this course of action may be verbally abused and shunned, not only by non-religious associates, but probably by many Adventists as well.

Yes, by taking the course of constructive and intelligent nonconformity you will set yourself apart from the world. But really, isn't that what the entire Sabbath/Sunday issue is all about? ■

LOOKING BACK

In the early days of the Advent Movement, many believers' only contact with their brethren was through the pages of the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald. As a result, the "Letters" page of the paper was one of its most appreciated features. In the Review of March 31, 1853, we find the beginning of an interesting exchange of correspondence.

Dear Brother White:

I thank God that I have this opportunity of enclosing in this, five dollars for you. I felt bad when I heard of your wants, and had nothing to help you. But I cannot always do as I would like to, from the fact that I am poor in this world's goods. I have no home here, but I seek one to come. I live in a little shanty in the woods, where the snow and rain come in, whenever it comes. I have a family of five to maintain, and I have no cow to help supply our wants. Yet I speak not this as murmuring, but that others may have courage. For God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs to the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him. "And this is the love of God that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3

I am all alone here, in the cause of truth, and surrounded with the spirit rappings. They are doing great wonders. I have to contend with them on every side, and in so doing am losing the friendship of all. But I will stand for the word of God, if I lose every friend.

When I hear through the *Review*, of the little flocks around, that can meet together, and sing, and pray, and converse with each other, it makes me feel very lonesome here all alone, as I have not seen any of the brethren since early last fall. Brethren Case, Waggoner and Phelps were then to our house. How true were the following lines on parting with them.

Your presence, sweet, our union's dear,
What joys we feel together here!
But when I see that we must part,
You draw like cords around my heart.

Yours in love,
William H. Rapp.
Markesan, Wisconsin, February 25,
1853

Dear Brother:

We return to you a part of the money you sent us. This we think is our duty, considering your circumstances. We should have sent the paper to you just as freely, had you sent nothing, only a statement of your circumstances. You have shown your willingness to sacrifice for the truth's sake, and God will bless you for it. But you will please receive the \$3.00 we return.

Though poor in this world's goods, yet if you are an heir of God, you are rich. And if faithful, you will soon have a share in Abraham's great farm. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Abraham, also, "looked for a City which hath foundations." Those who are of faith, will be blest with faithful Abraham, and have a share in Abraham's great house, the New Jerusalem.—ED.

Six months passed without further comment. Finally, in the September 27 edition, attentive readers found the sequel to the story.

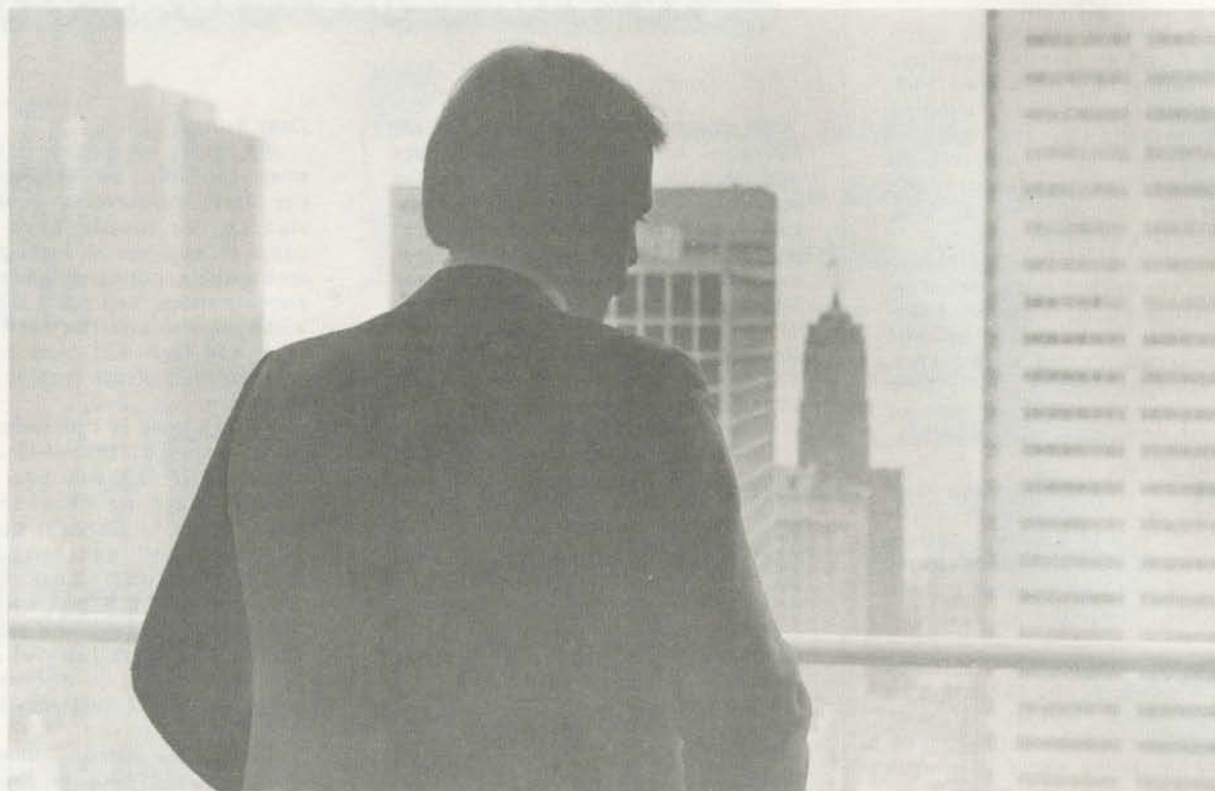
Dear Brother White:

I received the three dollars which you returned to me, also, the tracts. I could have got along without the money, though it came quite acceptable; but I gave, hoping for nothing in return. Had you been for this world's goods, you would have kept all, whether in need or not. I thank Christ for His word, that by their fruits ye shall know them.

By means of the tracts you sent, two have resolved to keep the commandments, the fourth not excepted. They wish for the *Review*. They meet with some opposition, but are determined to persevere.

Another brother and his wife have come into the faith, and are living it out. Others are investigating. They have had no preaching here yet, only what the tracts and myself have done.

Yours in love,
William H. Rapp
Markesan, Wisconsin, September 20,
1853



Is It Well With Your Soul?

Ellen G. White

We have a most decided work to do to prepare for the judgment. The great question is, "How is it with my soul? Have I followed the light that God has given me?" If you have faith now to grasp the promises of God, you will have faith when greater trials come. The present time is the all-important time to us. Now is the time to know that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. We must abide in Christ. Says the Saviour: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." [John 15:5, 6] But if we abide in Him, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done.

I have a twin sister who seems unable to understand the simplicity of faith. She is afflicted with disease; but she might be a stronger woman, if she would lay hold of God in simple faith. I wrote to her, saying, "Ask

anything you will, that is within my power to obtain, to make you comfortable, and you shall have it." She believed that I meant what I said. She wrote to me about a wheel-chair of which she had heard, that she thought would be a great blessing to her. One had been selected for her, and she wrote with the greatest confidence that I would purchase it. How is it that she could believe in my word, and yet could not believe in the promises of Jesus? When I write to her, I mean to present the matter in this very light.

A sister came to me in Oakland, and said, "Don't you remember that you promised to give me 'Vol. IV' when it was revised and enlarged?" "Did I?" said I, "and did you really believe I meant to do it?" "Certainly," she replied. "Why did you think so?" I asked, "Is it not strange that you should think I would do that, simply because I promised you?" She looked at me in astonishment. She had been complaining to me of her lack of faith in God. "Now," I said,

"How is it that you can trust in a promise of mine, but cannot trust your Heavenly Father's word? How is it that you can have faith in a poor, fallible mortal, and cannot rely upon the unchangeable God? I had forgotten my promise; but God never forgets. Why can't you take Him at His word, as you take me at my word?" We honor God when we take Him at His word, and walk out by faith, believing that He means just what He says. He has not withheld His best gift. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" [Romans 8:32] All heaven was poured out to man in that one gift; and how can we doubt our Heavenly Father?

The promises of God are rich and abundant; and why is it that there is so little power and success with the messengers of God?—There is a lack of that faith that claims the promises of His word. Let the ministers go before God, and say, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

[Genesis 32:26] Let them never rise from their knees until the work is accomplished. There is too much preaching done without the ministering that God desires you to do. The minister should not think that his work is done when he leaves the desk. He should go to individual souls, and labor with them in the Spirit of Christ. Oh, if you would go to the lost, and let your heart break before them, we should see a work similar to that which was done in 1844. Then you might have seen three or four in the orchard, two or three in a barn, five or six in a chamber, pleading with God for souls. When they came to meeting, their faces were lighted up with the glory of God.

We talk altogether too much about the power of Satan. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but I thank God for a mighty Saviour, who cast the evil one from heaven. We talk of our adversary, we pray about him, we think of him; and he looms up greater and greater in our imagination. Now why not talk of Jesus? Why not think of His power and His love? Satan is pleased to have us magnify his power. Hold up Jesus, meditate upon Him, and by beholding, you will become changed into His image.

John saw a Lamb on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. They bore the signet of heaven. They reflected the image of God. They were full of the light and the glory of the Holy One. If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ. While we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God will work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. While you must do your part, yet it is God that must give you aid, and sanctify you. Christ makes us penitent that He may forgive us. We have an idea that we must do some part of the work alone. We have thought that there are two or three steps that we must take without any help or support. But this is not so. The Spirit of God is continually wooing and drawing the soul to right purposes, and into harmony with the law of God. The invitation is given to the helpless, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." [Isaiah 55:1] As soon as we separate ourselves from evil, and choose to serve God, we shall respond to this invitation.

Not one of us should take the first step in the way of transgression. We must not follow our selfish inclinations. We are to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. We are to do our very best to sever ourselves from everything that is an offense to God. How can you lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting, if you commit iniquity? When you open the Bible, if you are transgressing the law of God, it will seem that all the threatenings of wrath are for your case. When you rise in meeting to bear your testimony, it will be full of unbelief and darkness. Your testimony will misrepresent your Heavenly Father. It will represent Him as unwilling to forgive when you want to return to Him, and you will dishonor your Redeemer before the congregation. The Lord has promised, "Ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." [Jeremiah 29:13] Why can you not take the Lord at His word? Why can you not come with an eye single to the glory of God, and appropriate the rich promises He has made?

When I was in Europe, a sister wrote to me in the deepest distress. She was in despair, and she wrote, "Can't you say a word of encouragement to me? Can't you tell me of anything I could do to be relieved of my burden?" The night after I had read her letter, I dreamed that I was in a garden, and a stately personage was conducting me through its paths. I was picking the flowers and enjoying the fragrance, when this sister, who was walking by my side, called my attention to some unsightly thistles that were impeding her way. There she was, mourning and grieving. She was not walking in the pathway, following the guide, but was walking among the briars and thorns. "Oh," she mourned, "is it not a pity that this beautiful garden is spoiled with thorns?" Then the guide turned, and said, "Let the thistles alone, for they will only wound you. Gather the roses, and the lilies, and the pinks;" and now she is doing this. Why not have something pleasant to think about? "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." [Philippians 4:8]

Suppose you had a family of children to whom you gave many pleasant and useful things, and they should pick out something that did not seem without objection to them, and should talk of its defects, and

mourn and fret because this one thing did not quite meet their approval; how would you think they were repaying your goodness and kindness to them? Would you feel that your efforts were rewarded as they should be? Would it not grieve your heart to find your children so ungrateful, and so unappreciative of your love toward them?

The precious Bible is the garden of God, and His promises are the lilies, and the roses, and the pinks. Why do you not gather the fragrant flowers, and leave the thistles alone? Why do you not dwell on the love of Jesus? Why do you not bring gratitude into your life for all the benefits you have received from your Heavenly Father? The more thankfulness you express, the more you will have to express. The whole universe is looking upon us; and see what efforts God has made for our salvation. He has given His only begotten Son to die for us. He was willing to come to our world, to leave the royal throne, that He might save the fallen race of men. Says the prophet, "He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." [Isaiah 53:3-5] He died to pardon our sins, and to become our righteousness. When Satan comes to tell you that you are a sinner, tell him that you know you are, but that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that makes Him your Saviour. I love Him; I believe in Him today.

Let the soul be uplifted from the lowlands of sin to contemplate the God of all goodness, mercy and love, but who will in no wise clear the guilty. Meet goodness with goodness. Cleanse the soul temple from all defilement, and open it to the blessed Spirit of God. We may be bright and shining lights in the world. Let us search our Bibles, digging into its mines for the precious jewels of truth; and all the time we may bear a brighter and brighter testimony to the glory of God. We may have a little heaven in our hearts as we journey on toward the heaven above. We may learn the song of victory that is to be sung on Mount Zion. I praise God for His matchless love to us.

Review and Herald, March 19, 1889 ■

Diagnosing Doctrinal Doubts

Joe Crews

Have you ever wondered why there is so much discussion of doctrinal doubts within the remnant church today? Why have so many pastors abandoned the faith after struggling with theological questions concerning the sanctuary, the law, and the Spirit of Prophecy? A few congregations have been decimated by large groups withdrawing to organize independent "fellowship churches" with liberalized standards and modified beliefs. Others have joined large, popular Sunday-keeping church bodies where doctrine and standards are almost totally ignored.

The arguments that these "neo-Adventists" present against the great, historic pillars of Adventism are the same as those which were being used when I graduated from the Seminary in 1947. Repeatedly I had to meet the same stereotyped objections from evangelical opponents who fiercely resisted my public crusade meetings. I was often challenged openly by Church of Christ pastors to engage in a public debate over the issues of the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and Ellen White. Sometimes in my own tent auditorium they would stand up and try to expound their opposing views. Yet I never knew one Seventh-day Adventist, not even the weakest in the congregation, to become confused by the attacks of those enemies of our faith.

There were few apostasies in those days, and almost never because of doubting the message. For years I never met an ex-Seventh-day Adventist who had joined any other church. If members left the remnant church, it was because of the pull of flesh, world, or devil, and not because they had lost faith in the doctrines.

The great puzzling question is this: Why is there such a stirring today among our people over the same tired arguments which upset no one forty years ago? I have discovered the answer to that question in an amazing chain of texts. The Bible clearly describes the reasons for doctrinal

doubt, and it is confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. The beloved John summarized the issue perfectly: "They are of the *world*: therefore speak they of the *world*, and the *world* heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*" 1 John 4:5, 6

These words assure us that those who conform to the world are not able to discern between truth and error. The delicate ability to discriminate between counterfeit and true depends upon staying apart from the world.

Paul affirms the same principle in Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this *world*: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*" The NIV translation says, "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is." Please take note that there is a sound rule of Scripture which requires separation from the world in order to understand God's will and counsel.

To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the *world*, but the spirit which is of God; *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*" 1 Corinthians 2:12

Do you follow the beautiful thread of truth in all those texts? We cannot know the things of God while receiving the spirit of the world. The two are incompatible. Jesus added the capstone to this divine principle: "If any man will do his will, *he shall know of the doctrine*, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17

Here the Master insisted that one must "do His will" in order to recognize that His doctrine was true. What does it mean to "do His will"? John wrote, "Love not the *world*, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . *And the world passeth away, and the lust*

thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15-17

No one can miss the fact that John identifies the one who does God's will as the one who does not love the world. And Jesus said this is the only kind who can know of the doctrine, whether it is true or not.

Is this tremendous cause-and-effect relationship supported by the writings of Ellen G. White? She wrote:

"The minds of many have been so darkened and confused by worldly customs, worldly practices, and worldly influences that all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error, seems destroyed." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 62

These statements take on new significance in the light of current theological developments within the church. According to the Bible, two things will always exist together—worldly compromise and doctrinal uncertainty. This fact leads us to some very interesting questions. Have these two factors been observed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the recent past? Is there reason to believe that a gradual leavening process of worldly conformity throughout our ranks might have precipitated the present "new theology" crisis in our midst?

No one can deny that there has been a weakening of our traditional posture against worldliness. Under the deadly influence of television, the Adventist lifestyle has been seriously breached and compromised. Practices which were once shunned as unacceptable and intolerable within the framework of Adventism are no longer made issues of loyalty to the faith. In most cases the church has offered no official change in its position, but the standards have been lowered and lost by default. They have remained in the annals of official beliefs, but the percentage of pastors, administrators, and evangelists who preach on them and hold them before the congregations has steadily declined year by year. In

dress, diet, tithing, movies, coffee drinking, Sabbathkeeping, and divorce there has been an obvious slacking of conviction.

I know the arguments very well which are used to defend the bending and shifting toward the world. "Society is changing," they tell us, "and we must make adjustments in our own lifestyle in order to reach the people around us." It is very clear that tremendous changes have been made in our surrounding culture, and we do need to adapt our methods of presenting the message. Yet, I know deep inside that some things should never change. I have an uneasy fear that in the name of progress we are yielding up something called truth—something God never intended that we should ever modify or surrender.

When I see Adventist young people crowd the theaters, and their parents watching risqué television by the hour; when I see the display of artificial adornment and immodest dress in the church; when I hear the beat of Babylon's music from the pulpit; when I see the divorce rate of Seventh-day Adventists equal that of the world—call it what you will, but please don't call it progress.

The sad truth is that we, as a church, have been complacently tolerant of forces within the organization which have literally sabotaged the Adventist principles we have defended for years. By a failure to monitor the material in our official publications we have sown some of the seeds of this present doctrinal dilemma.

The growing influence of articles and sermons which subtly undermine historic truth and present variant beliefs has accelerated creeping compromise into a galloping problem within the church. Unfortunately, the youth, who are already under considerable pressure to compromise (and who need special encouragement to be firm), have been the target of much of the new libertarian influence. But wherever and however it started, it has now permeated every level of church life. And what has been the predicted result in the congregation? Cause has been followed quickly by the effect. We have sowed the wind and are now reaping the whirlwind. By an incredible lack of courage to draw lines and hold firm standards, we have watered down the beautiful principles which once constituted our uniqueness and strength. But the most serious consequence of this love affair with the world has been the dulling of our spiritual perceptions. It is now reaping time, and the whirlwind harvest has cut a swath through our beloved church more destructive than

we dare to admit. And the end is not yet. Unless we can muster the courage and the strength to pull back to where God has drawn the line, the devastation will continue.

Inspiration has told us that worldly conformity will bring a corresponding inability to recognize truth. This conformity opens the door to doctrinal doubt and uncertainty of faith.

Has it happened? We know it has. Some of our churches are just as riddled with the "new theology" as they are with worldliness.

By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light

No one should be surprised to find these two conditions existing side by side in the church right now. And it is going to continue until the shaking takes care of the situation. Over and over again Sister White gave graphic descriptions of the incredible falling away after the crunch of persecution develops. If you want to review her assessment of the problem and what produces it, consider the following startling statements and their context. In every one of these best-known quotations she defines the exodus from the church as the result of "conforming" to the world, or "uniting" with the world.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. *Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death.* At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness." *Prophets and Kings*, 188

"I would say that we are living in a most solemn time. In the last vision given me, I was shown the startling fact that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get above the simplicity of the work. *They will conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead.*" *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 608, 609

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. *By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side.* Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents for Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them." *The Great Controversy*, 608

"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. The warnings that *worldly conformity* has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 216

Here we see the end result of the program of gradualism which is literally eating away the vitals of our church. The words of the prophet indicate that eventually the worldly bent and accompanying loss of faith will lead "a large class" to renounce their faith completely. What we see now as a trickle will turn into a flood-tide of apostasy. Spiritual doubts, doctrinal confusion and apostasy inevitably follow the breaking down of that wall of separation between the church and the world. ■

Food For Thought

There was precious talent in the church at Christiania, but God could not use these brethren until they were converted. There were some who had capabilities to help the church, but who needed first to set their own hearts in order. Some had been bringing in false tests, and had made their own ideas and notions a criterion, magnifying matters of little importance into tests of Christian fellowship, and binding heavy burdens upon others. Thus a spirit of criticism, faultfinding, and dissension had come in, which had been a great injury to the church. And the impression was given to unbelievers that Sabbath-keeping Adventists were a set of fanatics and extremists, and that their peculiar faith rendered them unkind, uncourteous, and really unchristian in character. Thus the course of a few extremists prevented the influence of the truth from reaching the people.

Some were making the matter of dress of first importance, criticizing articles of dress worn by others, and standing ready to condemn every one who did not exactly meet their ideas. A few condemned pictures, urging that they are prohibited by the second commandment, and that everything of this kind should be destroyed.

These one-idea men can see nothing except to press the one thing that presents itself to their minds. Years ago we had to meet this same spirit and work. Men arose claiming to have been sent with a message condemning pictures, and urging that every likeness of anything should be destroyed. They went to such lengths as even to condemn clocks which had figures, or "pictures," upon them. Now we read in the Bible of a good conscience; and there are not only good but bad consciences. There is a conscientiousness that will carry everything to extremes, and make Christian duties as burdensome as the Jews made the observance of the Sabbath. The rebuke which Jesus gave to the scribes and Pharisees applies to this class as well: "Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God." One fanatic, with his strong spirit and radical ideas, who will oppress the conscience of those who want to be right, will do great harm. The church needs to be purified from all such influences.

The second commandment prohibits image worship; but God himself employed pictures and symbols to represent to His prophets lessons which He would have them give to the people, and which could thus be better understood than if given in any other way. He appealed to the understanding through the sense of sight. Prophetic history was presented to Daniel and John in symbols, and these were to be represented plainly upon tables, that he who read might understand.

It is true that altogether too much money is expended upon pictures; not a little means which should flow into the treasury of God is paid to the artist. But the evil that will result to the church from the course of these extremists is far greater than that which they are trying to correct. It is some-

times a difficult matter to tell just where the line is, where the picture making becomes a sin. But those who love God and desire with all their hearts to keep His commandments will be directed by Him. God would not have them depend on any man to be conscience for them. He who accepts all the ideas and impressions of unbalanced minds will become confused and bewildered. It is Satan's object to divert the attention from the third angel's message to side issues, that minds and hearts that should be growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth may be dwarfed and enfeebled, so that God may not be glorified by them.

A few in Christiania had gone so far as to burn all the pictures in their possession, destroying even the likenesses of their friends. While we had no sympathy with these fanatical movements, we advised that those who had burned their pictures should not incur the expense of replacing them. If they had acted conscientiously, they should be satisfied to let the matter rest where it was. But they ought not to require others to do as they had done. They should not endeavor to be conscience for their brethren and sisters.

Historical Sketches, 211, 212

The evil that will result to the church from the course of these extremists is far greater than that which they are trying to correct

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Firm Unto The End

Ellen G. White

For many months I have been troubled as I have seen that some of our brethren whom God has used in His cause are now perplexed over the scientific theology which has come in to lead men away from a true faith in God. Sabbath night, a week ago, after I had been prayerfully studying over these things, I had a vision, in which I was speaking before a large company, where many questions were asked concerning my work and writings.

I was directed by a messenger from heaven not to take the burden of picking up and answering all the sayings and doubts that are being put into many minds. "Stand as the messenger of God anywhere in any place," I was bidden, "and bear the testimony I shall give you. Be free. Bear the testimonies that the Lord has for you to bear in reproof, in rebuke, in the work of encouraging and lifting up the soul; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." [Matthew 28:20]

After the vision I prayed aloud with great fervor and earnestness. My soul was strengthened; for the words had been spoken: "Be strong, yea, be strong. Let none of the misleading words of ministers or physicians distress your mind. Tell them to take the light given them in publications. Truth will always bear away the victory. Go straight forward with your work.

"If the Holy Spirit is rejected, all My words will not help to remove, even for the time being, the false representations that have been made, and

Satan stands ready to invent more. If the evidence already given is rejected, all other evidence will be useless until there is seen the converting power of God upon minds. If the convincing impressions of the Holy Spirit made in the past will not be accepted as trustworthy evidence, nothing that can be presented hereafter will reach them, because the bewitching guile of Satan has perverted their discernment."

To those who have been convinced again and again as the Holy Spirit has borne witness, all the words that can now be said can not be as forcible as the impression made by the Holy Spirit of God.

To my brethren I say, Go forward. Be of good courage. Whenever the Spirit of God is entertained in the place of the underworking of evil influences on mind and heart, those who have been working against God will come to their right bearings. A great work is to be done now in convicting souls. The message must in no case be changed from what it has been. As has been foretold in the Scriptures, there will be seducing spirits and doctrines of devils in the midst of the church, and these evil influences will increase; but hold fast the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end.

Let not souls be drawn into Battle Creek. Warnings are to be given. A message similar to that borne by John the Baptist is to be heard. But beware of men; for they will seek to divert the mind from the necessity of heeding the true issues for this time. Carry on the work now for those who need the truth, and who have not

resisted evidences of the truth for fallacies and scientific imaginations.

The time is at hand when Satan will work miracles to confirm minds in the belief that he is God. All the people of God are now to stand on the platform of truth as it has been given in the third angel's message. All the pleasant pictures, all the miracles wrought, will be presented in order that, if possible, the very elect shall be deceived. The only hope for any one is to hold fast the evidences that have confirmed the truth in righteousness. Let these be proclaimed over and over again, until the close of this earth's history.

The perils of the last days are upon us. Devote not precious time in trying to convince those who would change the truth of God into a lie. Proclaim the third angel's message. Bear a straightforward, clear-cut message.

Thus I was speaking before a perplexed company just before I called them to take their stand on the right side. If some choose another position, let them alone. Labor for those who have never had the evidence of truth. So long as men hold fast to *men*, and believe men in the place of the word of God, you can do little to help them. You are working against principalities and powers, as is represented in Ephesians 6:12.

We are to revive the truth; to stand in the truth. Whoever is determined to depart from the faith can not be helped by you. All your reasoning will be as idle tales.

Take the banner of truth and hold it aloft, higher and still higher. The Lord calls for faithful minutemen.

Go into the cities that need the message of a soon-coming Saviour. Thousands of unbelievers in our cities need to hear the last message of warning.

It is Satan's plan to produce these variances, to keep our minds on dissensions and unprofitable problems until the last woe shall come upon the world. Time now is too precious to be lost through confusion. Proclaim to the world that Christ is soon coming.

Gather not at Battle Creek; spoil not the minds of youth, physicians, and ministers. Set at work in the cause of God every soul who has heeded the words of warning given.

I have been instructed that it is not extravagant display which is now required in giving the last message of mercy to our world. We must go forth in the simplicity of true godliness.

Let those who have brought about the present state of confusion by making the division that exists, stop to consider...

Our sanitariums, our schools, our publishing houses, are to be God's instrumentalities to represent the humble manner of Christ's teaching. In a marked manner the Lord will be the strength and power of His people. Maintain simplicity; and pray in faith, constantly. Wherever you are, your only safety is in prayer. Hold fast the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end.

Beware of the leaven of evil. Talk less; criticize less. Let every one remember that he is now on test and trial for life, eternal life.

God now calls for all who choose to serve Him, to stand firmly on the platform of eternal truth. Let those who have brought about the present state of confusion by making the division that exists, stop to consider seriously before going any further. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." [Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21]

Review and Herald, August 9, 1906 ■

Our Words

Ellen G. White

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." [Psalm 15:1-3] "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." [24:5] Speech is the means by which thought is expressed. Rightly used, this gift is a wonderful blessing, whose power for good cannot be estimated; misused, it is a curse to humanity and a dishonor to God. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue"; "and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" [Proverbs 18:21; 15:23]

Every uttered word exerts an influence, every action involves a train of responsibility. No one can live to himself in this world, even if he would. Each one forms a part of the great web of humanity, and through our individual threads of influence, we are linked to the universe. Christ used His influence to draw men to God, and He has left us an example of the way in which we should speak and act. A person who is molded by the Spirit of God will know how to speak a "word in season to him that is weary," and will realize the highest human blessedness,—the joy of imparting to others the precious treasures of the wisdom and grace of Christ. But those who permit themselves to be controlled by the enemy of all good will speak words which should never be uttered.

The great want of the world is hearts in which Christ abides as an honored guest. But the meekness and lowliness of Jesus have been too hard

a lesson for many to learn. The sanctifying power of the truth has not been allowed to influence them for good, bringing the emotions of the heart and the words of the lips into conformity to the will of God; and too often, while Jesus stands knocking at the door of the heart, men are so busily engaged in talking of the faults of others that they fail to grant Him an entrance.

Some who profess to love Christ cherish cruel thoughts against others; and these thoughts, with their baleful influence, flow to the world in their words. All such are more closely allied to the great deceiver than to Him who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Satan rules the tongues of all who give themselves into his keeping, filling the heart with envy and jealousy, and prompting the false whisper which so often causes untold misery. Those who lend themselves to his service do a work which makes him rejoice; but the angels of God weep as they see the evil that is wrought. Could those who thus give themselves up to mischief making see how well pleasing their course of action is to the adversary of souls, they would say with the psalmist: "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper." [Psalm 120:2-4]

There is need to close the door which now stands open in the free, unjust use of the tongue, by which the enemy so often enters. He is constantly at work, adapting himself to the various dispositions and circumstances of those whom he is seeking to entangle. That soul is in the greatest danger which, though blind

Is your neighbor
ignorant? Let your
communication
make him more
intelligent

to its own faults, is all too quick to make known the failings of others. If the tongue were kept as with a bridle, if the eloquence of silence were more often preserved, how many heart-aches would be saved! How many souls kept from entering the dark shadow of despair and discouragement!

It is not God's purpose that His children should isolate themselves, drawing apart from one another. In their intercourse He would have them reveal Him by a patient, long-suffering, forbearing spirit, by words which cheer and encourage those that faint by the way. If we are willing to learn, Christ will teach us to manifest in our daily lives His goodness, mercy, and love. Every soul who will become consecrated to Him will be a channel through which His love can flow,—and will find his happiness increased as he imparts happiness to others.

He who is your neighbor is to be earnestly sought for and labored for. Is he ignorant? let your communication make him more intelligent. Is he downcast and discouraged? let your words speak hope to his soul. Those who are defective in character are the very ones God enjoins us to help. "I am not come to call the righteous," said Christ, "but sinners to repentance." [Matthew 9:13] By the influence of words spoken from a heart full of love, the discouraged ones may become trophies of grace,—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

"Take heed to thyself" was the charge given to Timothy. Today this lesson is fearfully neglected by those who pride themselves upon entering the kingdom of God. Satan works untiringly to thwart the purpose of God, and he tempts the children of God to be severe upon the errors of others, while they themselves are careless in regard to their own course of action, and mingle defects with their work. There will always be something which we can criticize; but when we

view things as God views them, we shall not look at the work of others with a critical eye, eager to find some flaw, but will seek to find something of which we can approve. Let him who makes criticism and faultfinding his first duty, who spends his God-given time in speaking words which sow the seeds of doubt and unbelief, take heed lest defects far more serious be found in his own character.

Be sharp and critical with yourself, for the eternal interests of your soul demand this; but do not place a stumbling-block in the way of sinners by talking of the defects of those around you. Those who love God supremely, and their neighbors as themselves, will see so many imperfections in their own work, so much that needs to be cleansed from defilement, that they will feel no inclination to dwell upon the defects of others.

Nothing is hidden from God. Says the True Witness, "I know thy works." Every word that we speak is heard and recorded by the Majesty of heaven, who has declared, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." [Matthew 12:37] Could our eyes be opened, could we see the heavenly Watcher by our side, listening to the words we utter, we would strive to control our tongues; for we would realize that we were speaking in the hearing of the heavenly universe. If they are left unrepented of, we shall meet once more the bitter spirit, the revengeful feelings, and the angry words; "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." [Ecclesiastes 12:14] O that men instead of making the mistakes of others the subject of their conversation, would turn their critical glances inward, seeking power from on high to guard well their words, that in the judgment they might stand justified in the sight of God!

Christ, the Lamb of God, can take away the desire to speak words which hurt and bruise the souls of others. His power is limitless, and if we shut ourselves in with Him, we shall grow more like Him. Strength will be given us to subdue the inclination to speak and judge harshly; we shall be enabled to make straight paths for our feet, lest the "lame be turned out of the way." If we will yield heart and mind into the keeping of Christ, if we will control our thoughts, bringing them into obedience to His will, our words will be such as the angels love to hear, and will bless all those with whom we come in contact.

All who have the mind of Christ will turn away from everything tend-

ing to deformity of character. If Christ is taken as our pattern in all things, if He is formed within, "the hope of glory," our minds will be filled with thoughts that are pure and lovely. We shall feel no inclination to think or to talk of the failings of others, or to triumph over the knowledge of a brother's error. Mercy and love will be cherished; that charity which "suffereth long and is kind," which "beareth all things" and "thinketh no evil," will appear in word and action.

The most persuasive eloquence is the word that is spoken in love and sympathy. Such words will bring light to confused minds and hope to the discouraged, brightening the prospect before them. The time in which we live calls for vital, sanctified energy; for earnestness, zeal, and the tenderest sympathy and love; for words that will not increase misery, but will inspire faith and hope. We are homeward bound, seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of speaking words which will rankle in the breasts of those that hear, shall we not speak of the love wherewith God hath loved us? Shall we not try to lighten the hearts of those around us by words of Christlike sympathy? Shall we not tell of the prospective rest in store for the people of God? "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." [Proverbs 25:11]

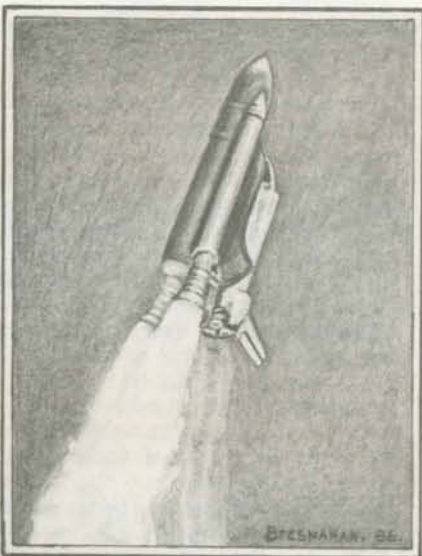
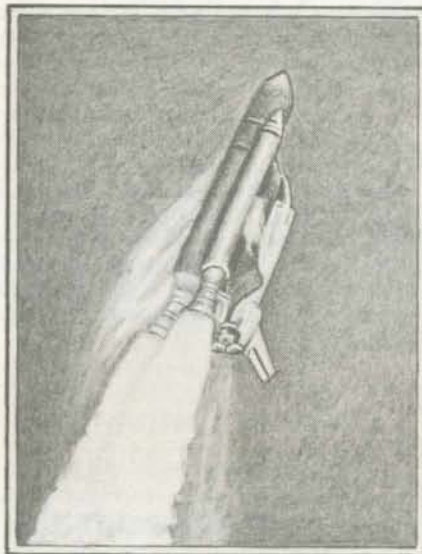
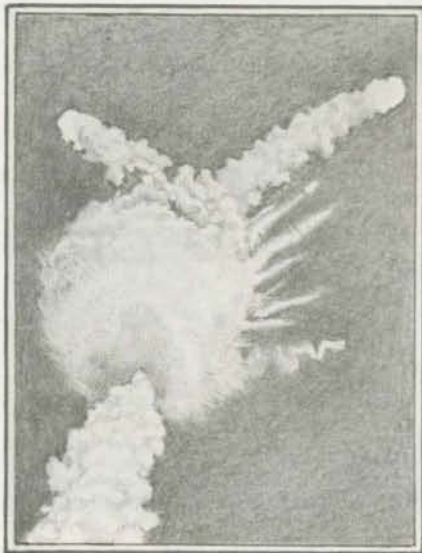
Is he downcast and
discouraged? Let
your words speak
hope to his soul

Day by day we are sowing seed for the future harvest, and we cannot be too careful of the seed which we sow by our words. Often words are carelessly spoken and forgotten, but these words, for good or for ill, are bringing forth a harvest. Sow one unkind, harsh word, and this seed, finding soil in the minds of your hearers, will spring up and bear fruit after its own kind. Sow one seed in loving, gentle, Christlike words, and it will bring you rich returns. Our minds must be carefully guarded, lest words be spoken which are not a blessing, but a curse. If by our words we sow wheat, we shall reap wheat; if we sow tares, we shall reap tares; and the harvest, whether of wheat or of tares, will be sure and abundant.

Review and Herald, February 16, 1897

FLIGHT 25

Vince Christensen



Confident—if there were one word that best described the six astronauts and school teacher Christa McAuliffe aboard the space shuttle *Challenger*, it would have been confident. Earlier this confidence had shown in their faces as they walked past the waiting reporters in their trim blue jump suits and waved good-by to the world.

Back home in Concord, New Hampshire, Christa's high school social studies class, along with the rest of the school, shared her confidence as they gathered in the assembly hall in front of a big-screen TV set to observe the historic event.

After several days' delay, due to turbulent weather and minor mechanical difficulties, the countdown had at last resumed. On the *Challenger's* flightdeck, approximately the size of a Boeing 747, Flight Commander Dick Scobee and Pilot Michael Smith continued to run through their detailed checklists. The main computer on board continuously monitored incoming data from some 2,000 sensors and data points. If the sensors should pick up any unusual readings, the computer would instantly shut down the entire system. Nothing unusual appeared.

From NASA's control center came the announcement, "T minus eight minutes and counting." Thousands of motorists in the area of the launch site heard the message broadcast on their radios and pulled to the side of the road facing the ocean.

"T minus seven minutes and counting." The walkway was pulled clear of the *Challenger*. The seven member flight crew now wait unattached atop the 154-foot-high technological wonder fueled with 500,000 gallons of liquid fuel and 1.1 million pounds of solid fuel.

"T minus six minutes and counting." The last gallon of oxygen was pumped into the external tank.

"T minus four minutes and counting." A reminder came to the flight crew from mission control to close the

airtight visors on their helmets.

"T minus three minutes and 30 seconds." Christa's Concord, New Hampshire, hometown collectively stop what they are doing and fix their attention on the TV screen as the *Challenger* silently waits spewing gases at its base like a locomotive in the station.

"T minus 45 seconds and counting." Water begins to gush onto the launch platform from six pipes seven feet in diameter. The reason: to muffle the blastoff sound levels—otherwise the noise alone could damage the craft.

The countdown continues. "T minus ten . . . nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . we have main engine start. Four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . and lift off. Lift off of the twenty-fifth space shuttle mission. And it has cleared the tower."

Four miles away from Pad 39-B the 1000 spectators watching from the bleachers can feel the unleashed power as the gases ignite, heaving the orbiter toward the stars.

The flight crew sank back into their seats with the force of three "Gs" (three times the pull of gravity). The astronauts' families, most of whom stood clustered in the viewing stand, spontaneously cheered as the spacecraft emerged from the initial blast and streaked toward the wide blue expanse.

At an altitude of 4.3 nautical miles the craft had reached a velocity of 2,257 feet per second [1,538 mph]. After 52 seconds of flight the message came from mission control. "*Challenger*, go with throttle up." The engines had reached full power and all systems were go.

At 70 seconds into *Challenger's* flight, the last communication from Flight Commander Scobee crackled over the radio: "Roger, go with throttle up."

Although imperceptible to the spectators below, the long-range cameras that NASA had trained on the flight

After 24 safe shuttle flights, tragedy struck with a cruel blow

began to pick up an unusual and ominous flame flickering near the center of the orbiter. Then suddenly at 74 seconds into the flight an orange yellow fireball engulfed the craft, exploding it like a fourth of July fireworks sending streamers of debris spiraling in all directions. Emerging from the inferno the booster rockets snaked wildly out of control, leaving an eerie vapor trail in the shape of a cow's horns. The spectators watched in disbelief—some thinking that this must be part of the flight procedure, others knowing that something major had gone wrong, watching for the orbiter to break free from the billowing flames and glide safely home. It would not be so. Scattered over a 6,000 square mile area, tons of jagged debris plummeted into the ocean.

After 24 safe shuttle flights, tragedy struck with a cruel blow. No warning, no time to eject the crew to safety, just a blinding flash. Our confidence and most certainly our complacency have been given a severe jolt. Suddenly we are given a most vivid reminder of our limitations in the face of quantum technological advancements.

As I listened to the news broadcasts explaining the various shuttle delays prior to the disaster, I recall accusing NASA of being overly cautious, if not nit-picky. A single troublesome bolt on a hatch? Come on—and so what if the wind gusted? Certainly that mighty starship could survive a touch of stormy weather.

Then right after learning about the tragic explosion, I recall thinking What? Come on—with all their advanced technology and safety precautions why couldn't they have developed an escape mechanism for just such an emergency? First I judged NASA overly cautious; then I turned 180° and accused them of being negligent. I wonder—do we do this with God?

There are many lessons that can be realized as the vapor trail yet billows in our minds. Lessons that help us to understand the greatest launch delay of all time—the second coming of Christ.

As the shuttle launch was delayed, so has Christ's return been delayed. Many suppose that Christ's delay is prolonged because God is sovereign and He will come when He has pre-determined, no sooner, no later. But I would like to propose that God has other reasons for His delay. God looks down upon His people and upon close examination He sees cracks and flaws that to the casual observer are imperceptible. He knows the severity of pressure that each one of us is to face and out of love and compassion He says, "Hold, hold, hold, hold."

Could it be that Christ is waiting because He knows that if He were to come today we would discover cracks and flaws in our orbiter *Character* that would cause us to explode under pressure?

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 69

How would the families of the *Challenger's* crew feel if they knew that the manufacturer knew about the flaw, but failed to tell anyone about it? Wouldn't they angrily respond, "Why didn't you point it out and fix it? You caused their death!" Let's quit murmuring and thank God that He not only shows us our flaws but He also comes in and repairs them upon request. The flaws in our character must be removed before the pressure is increased. All the world will be thrust into the same scenes of turmoil and destruction, and only those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb will be able to stand. Let us all determine to take full advantage of the probationary time that God has so graciously given. As we daily observe the events that tell us that the countdown has resumed, may we waste no time in making the necessary preparation is my prayer. Let us not be caught like the foolish virgins—overconfident and unprepared. ■

Melange

Bob Van Kannon

Subject: Problems with evolution

Evolutionists believe that the continents have existed for at least one billion years. Over twenty-seven billion tons of sediment, primarily from our rivers, are entering the oceans each year. Obviously, this rate of sediment transport has not been constant and has probably been decreasing as the looser topsoil has been removed. But even if it has been constant, the sediments which are now on the ocean floor would have accumulated in only 30 million years. Furthermore, since at the present rate of erosion the continents would be leveled in a relatively short 14 million years, this figure should be considered an upper bound in any case. (Stuart E. Nevins, *Evolution: The Oceans Say No!*, ICR Impact Series, No. 8)

The rate at which elements such as copper, gold, tin, lead, silicon, mercury, uranium, and nickel are entering the oceans is very rapid when compared with the small quantities of these elements already in the oceans. Therefore, the oceans must be very much younger than one million years.

The rate at which meteoritic dust is accumulating on the earth is such that after 5 billion years there should be the equivalent of a 182-foot layer of this dust on the earth's surface. Because this dust is high in nickel, there should be an exceedingly large amount of nickel in the crustal rocks of the earth. No such concentration has been found, either on land or in the oceans. Consequently, the earth appears to be young. (Henry M. Morris; *Scientific Creationism*, 151-153)

The simplest form of life consists of 600 different protein molecules. The mathematical probability that just one molecule could form by the chance arrangement of the proper amino acids is less than 1 in 10^{527} (a 1 followed by 527 zeros). The magnitude of this number can begin to be grasped by realizing that the visible universe is 10^{28} inches in diameter. (James F. Coopedge, *Evolution: Possible or Impossible*, 71-79)

From page 11

makes this plain. John here is presenting the wonderful promise of cleansing from all sin. His purpose in verses 8 and 10 is to emphasize that every man is in need of this cleansing for each is a sinner. None, he explains, need believe that Christ's cleansing power is unnecessary for him. If it meant that, filled with the Holy Ghost, we must still persist in sin, then the promise of entire cleansing from sin would be empty. Yet in a very real sense, we continue to be sinners. This does not mean that God does not provide power for total obedience. It does mean that we are redeemed sinners, entirely dependent, moment by moment, upon the power of Christ to give us this victory.

Thus the Bible quite rightly often deals in the continuous tense when speaking of us as sinners. Let us illustrate. A few years ago one of the authors visited Pentridge jail in Melbourne to speak to a group of about forty murderers. When this experience was later discussed with friends, none misunderstood when these men were referred to as murderers. None expected that they were continuing to murder. It was perfectly proper to call these men murderers although they had now ceased to murder.

With these comments in mind let us look at the full passage.

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we

have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1:7-10

Lest we still feel doubt on this point, the very next words of this epistle should dispel any misunderstanding as to what God regards as the aim for each Christian.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." 2:1
If obedience were not possible, such words would merely mock us, as would Christ's admonition to the infirm man at the pool by the sheep market.

"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5:14

Jesus' words to the woman caught in adultery would have a similar empty ring if He did not empower obedience.

"Go and sin no more." 8:11

There are some who look at the last part of 1 John 2:1 "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" as proof that we cannot gain victory over sin, but what this passage acknowledges is that we are never beyond returning to sin. The Lord has loving provision for all such repentant ones. In no way does such provision deny victorious living nor lessen the call to victorious living.

Sister White helps us to understand that such gracious provisions are always open to the sincerely repentant believer.

"God requires that we confess our sins, and humble our hearts before Him; but at the same time we should have confidence in Him as a tender Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in Him. . . . God does not give us up because of our

sins. We may make mistakes, and grieve His Spirit; but when we repent, and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away. There are hindrances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience and murmurings. All these separate us from God." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 350

Is obedience possible? The Bible says so. The Spirit of Prophecy quite naturally agrees. Never once does either source of inspiration declare the reverse. In such circumstances it would be perverse of Seventh-day Adventists to infer that the saints are those who cannot keep the commandments of God despite having the faith of Jesus. Yet the present agitation in our Church by the new Adventism adopts a position which makes just such an inference even if cloaked in a false definition of sin.

May God give us grace to look to Him and His sure Word, rather than to the Bible-contradicting pronouncements of mere men.

"The power that is near to deliver from physical harm or distress is also near to save from the greater evil, making it possible for the servant of God to maintain his integrity under all circumstances, and to triumph through divine grace." *Prophets and Kings*, 545

The resolution of the Great Controversy is dependent upon God's demonstration-generation having an untainted knowledge of the truth and by the mighty power of the indwelling Christ living a life consistent with this truth. ■

Line Upon Line Line Upon Line Line Upon Line

"While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1073

"True happiness does not consist in the possession of wealth or position, but in the possession of a pure, clean heart, cleansed by obedience to the truth." *Sons and Daughters of God*, 43

"All knowledge gained in this life of probation which will fit us to be companions of the saints in light is true education." *Sons and Daughters of God*, 125

"When the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ. . . ." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 391

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The work of publishing has been inextricably bound up with the growth and history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its influence, both in the strengthening of church members and as an evangelistic tool to reach those not of our faith, can scarcely be estimated. As this work and influence continues, it is the purpose of Copyright Berea to direct our readers' attention to publications of merit and usefulness.

The Word Was Made Flesh. By Ralph Larson. 400 pages. Available May, 1986.

Evidence is forthcoming that may bring to a conclusion thirty years of confused discussion.

In recent years a strange division of thought has polarized Seventh-day Adventists in regard to the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Did Jesus come to earth in the human nature of the unfallen Adam, or in the human nature of fallen man?

This is not a small matter. One's answer to this question predetermines his concept of such vital doctrines as original sin, justification, sanctification, and righteousness by faith.

In 1957 the book *Questions on Doctrine* alleged that Adventists as a whole had always believed that Christ came to the earth in the human nature of the unfallen Adam. Many individuals challenged this statement, seeing it as a misreading of Seventh-

day Adventist history. From then until now the discussion has continued--but for some reason no one attempted the thorough research in Adventist literature that would provide an unequivocal answer to the question.

That is, not until 1983. In that year Dr. Ralph Larson, chairman of the Church and Ministry Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Far East, undertook the task. He determined to examine all available Seventh-day Adventist literature published in the English language during the one hundred year period 1852-1952 in order to find the answer to the simple question, What have Seventh-day Adventists believed about the human nature of Jesus?

Three years later the results of his research are being prepared for publication, and his 400-page book is expected to come off the presses about May 1.

Here are some of his conclusions:

Approximately 1200 statements about the human nature of Christ were published by Adventist authors during the years 1852-1952.

Approximately 400 of these statements were by Ellen White.

Without exception, all agreed that our Lord came to the earth in the human nature of fallen man, because this was the only way that He could effectively work out man's salvation.

Not a single statement was found supporting the view that Christ came to earth in the human nature of the unfallen Adam.

These writers included General Conference presidents, vice presidents and secretaries, editors of the *Review* and the *Signs*, college presidents and

teachers. They were the church's first line of leadership.

The most extensive discussions of the belief that Christ came to the earth in the human nature of fallen man are found in the writings of Ellen White, W. W. Prescott, A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner. They saw clearly the connection between this doctrine and righteousness by faith.

The division of thought among Adventists did not appear until the 1950s, and was largely created by interpretations placed on Ellen White's writings by *Questions On Doctrine*.

The resulting confusion has troubled many, but now the evidence is available and it speaks for itself. Argument is not necessary. Men may argue about a Bible doctrine, but they cannot argue about the written records of Seventh-day Adventist literature. The published articles and books are there for everyone to see.

Dr. Larson submitted his manuscript to the two major Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses, but found that it did not meet their criteria for publication. He has therefore been required to borrow money and publish it himself. To produce the first edition will cost about \$23,000. Dr. Larson has undertaken this as a work of faith, confident that some will feel impressed to share the financial burden. If the Lord should so impress your heart, you may send your gift, clearly marked "Larson Book," to Hope International and receive a receipt for tax purposes.

Let us pray together that the Lord will use this work to restore unity to His church and among His people.

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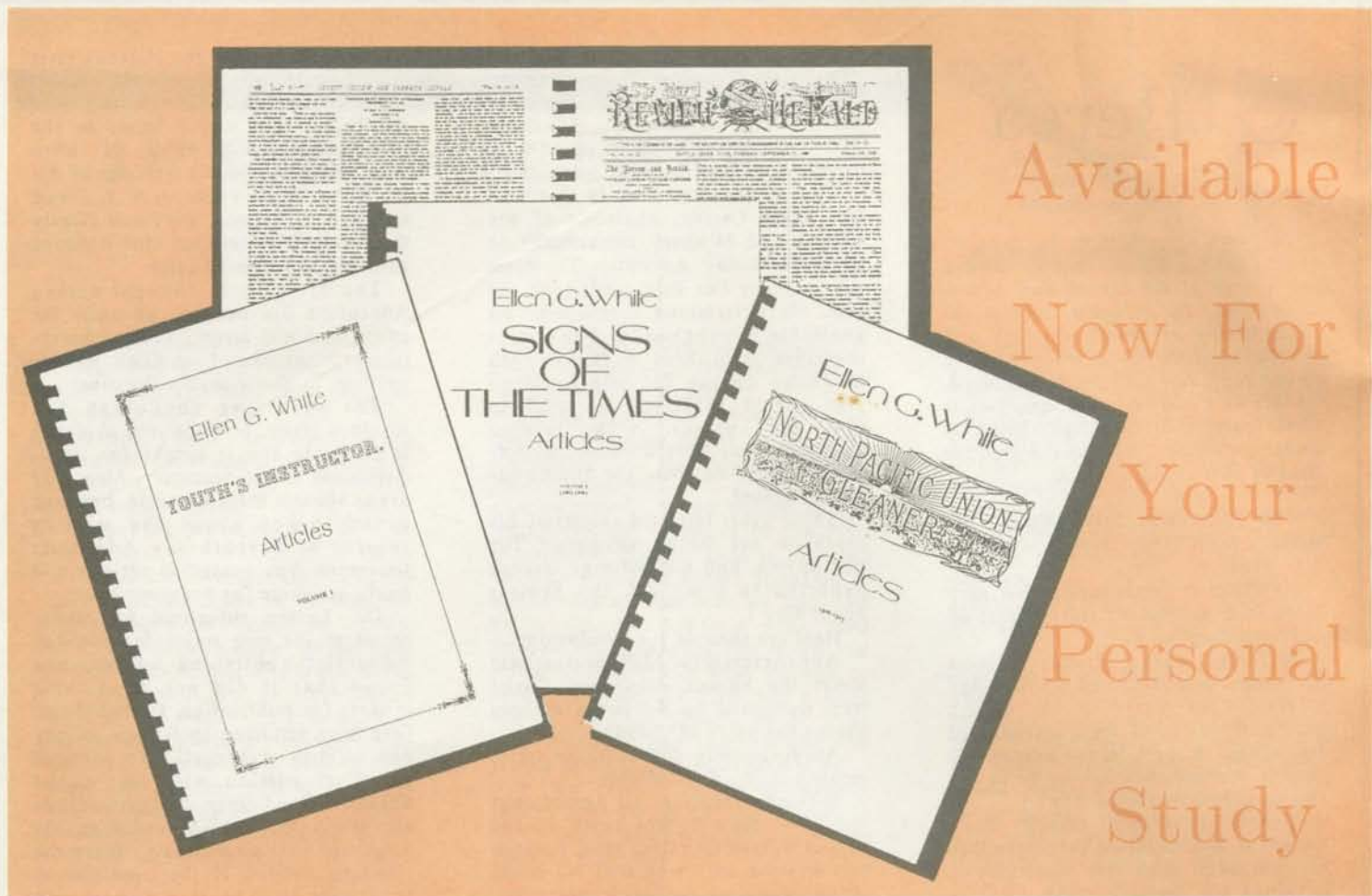
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