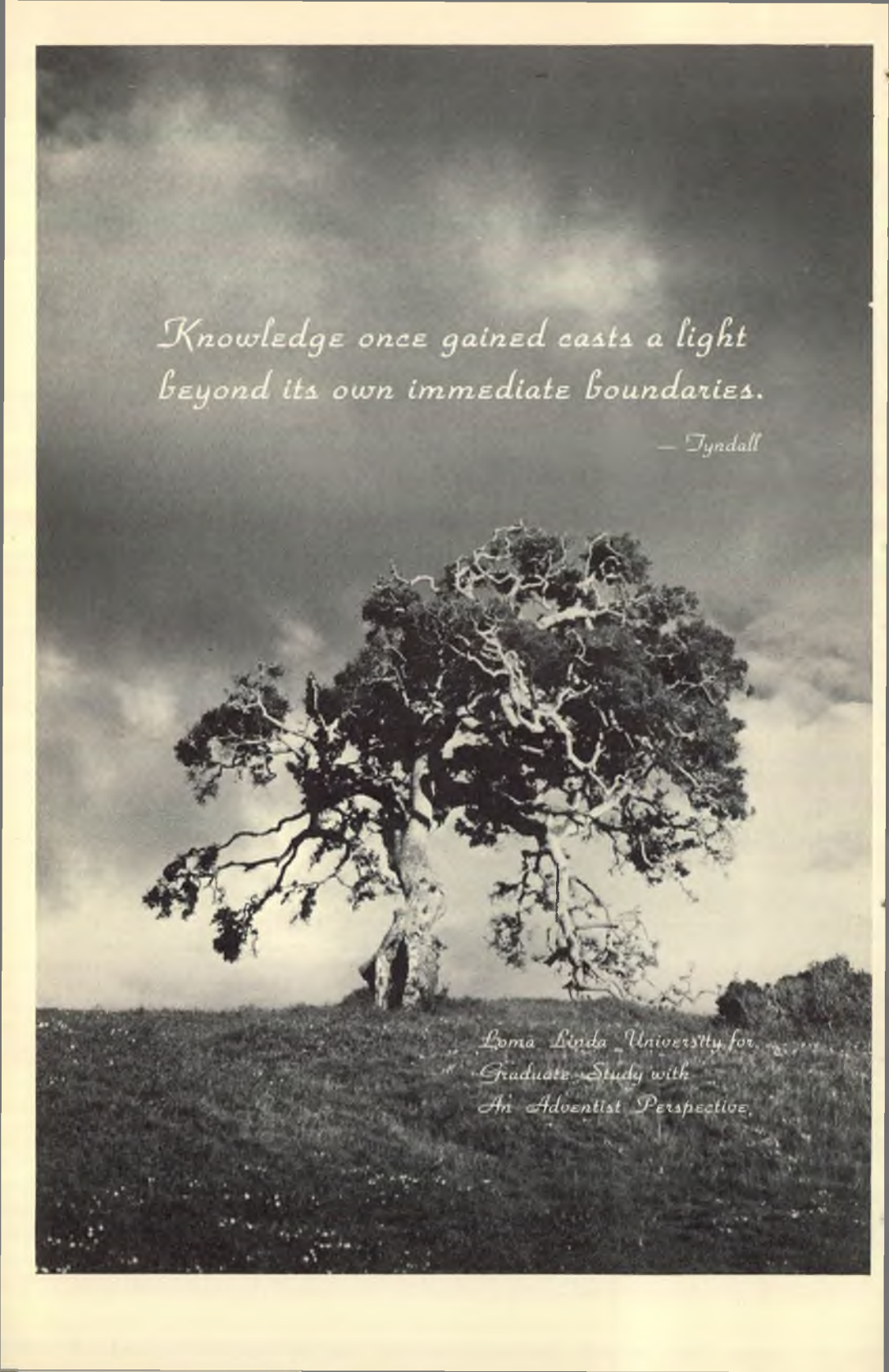


REVELATION



Collegiate Quarterly
April-June 1980



*Knowledge once gained casts a light
beyond its own immediate boundaries.*

— Tyndall

*Loma Linda University for
Graduate Study with
An Adventist Perspective.*

UNION COLLEGE

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CAMPUS MINISTRY

For a number of years, whales and dolphins—members of the cetacean family—have interested me. Gliding effortlessly through the icy blue waters of the northern Atlantic or through the tropical trackless fluid of the southern seas, these mammals embody grace and beauty and a kinship among their kind which endears them to the soul of man.

Recently I have become interested in whale songs—high-pitched chirps and shrills of a definite and repeating pattern. I learned that these songs travel through the ocean waters for hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of miles. These whale songs—very closely resembling the songs of birds when played at a speed fourteen times that at which they were recorded—are vocalized at rates as low as 20 cycles and as high as 256,000 cycles per second. Because the human ear is not sensitive to sounds over 20,000 cycles, carefully tuned instruments pick up the high frequency songs, thus making them available for human listening and study.

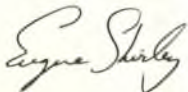
So the Lord is, as it were, gliding through trackless seas of the starry heavens giving commands and signals to His people—at a frequency beyond the sensitivity of their understanding. And like the finely tuned instruments scientists use to record and study the songs of the whale, Christians have been given revelation from God as an instrument to decipher the “songs” from on high.

And so God sent “The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” The book of Revelation—like all of God’s special revelations—is the gift of God with which man may better understand himself, his relationship to this world, and his Creator. It is that divine instrument with which he can translate the uninterpreted, appreciate the unperceived, and foretell what is yet to be.

The Revelation. It is a revelation of the actions between a tender-hearted Sovereign and His suspicious, emaciated world. It is a revelation which is given “unto his servants” for the saving of mankind. It is a revelation—not of objects or of events—but of a Person, our Jesus, the Christ.

That the Spirit of God will attend you as you study the Revelation this quarter is the heaven-sent prayer of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY authors and staff.

Yours in Christ,



Eugene B. Shirley, Jr.
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY Editor



General Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists

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Sabbath School Members
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Dear Members:

I am pleased to bring you greetings from the 451,329 Sabbath School members in North America. We, your brothers and sisters, feel very close to you in the work of the gospel as we approach the day of His coming.

Some do not think of North America as having any special needs, but there is on this continent a great variety of challenging situations.

For instance, there is the Northeastern Academy, an inner city institution serving the needs of a large number of black youth. The great need here is for additional vocational training classrooms.

Then there is the great challenge of Quebec, one of the largest French-speaking communities in the world. We must train indigenous talent to work for their own people in this difficult area of endeavor. To establish a French-speaking academy of Montreal is the priority item for the church in Quebec.

The American Indian has been strangely neglected. We have done some work among these true native Americans but not nearly enough. Your Thirteenth Sabbath offering will help to expand the outpatient clinic at Monument Valley Hospital in the Nevada-Utah Conference and assist in the financing and equipping of the Pine Ridge School vocational arts building in South Dakota.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support of the North American Thirteenth Sabbath projects in the past. It is the liberal soul that is blessed and enriched. Heaven's law of reciprocity wills it so.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Bradford

Collegiate Quarterly

A Kaleidoscope
of Christian Thought
April-June 1980

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The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is written by faculty, students and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities throughout North America. This is an experimental publication, organized under the Union College board of trustees and published with the approval of the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

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Revelation

Inside:

	page
Jesus, the Faithful and True Witness	6
The Testimony of Jesus Dr. Robert W. Olson of the Ellen G. White Estate shares significant insights on Ellen White's use of un- inspired sources in this week's lesson	16
The Churches of the Catacombs — Ephesus and Smyrna	28
The Churches of the Cathedrals — Pergamum and Thyatira	36
The Churches of Reformation and Revival — Sardis and Philadelphia	44
The Church of the Last Days — Laodicea	54
"You Know What Hour It Is" Was the great Dark Day of 1780 a supernatural phenomenon? Is the frequency of earthquakes in- creasing? Why did the "stars fall from heaven" in 1833? Merton Sprengel reveals some interesting—and to some, perhaps unsettling—evidence regarding these events in this week's lesson	62
"The Hour of Judgment is Come"	76
A Message for Our Time	84
Come Out of Babylon, My People	96
The Third Angel's Message	104
Repairers of the Breach	114
"Behold, He Cometh with Clouds"	124

A big "Thank you" to the chaplains and college editors of the North American Adventist colleges and universities, the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY staff, the Collegiate Quarterly Committee, the Reading Committee, The College Press at Collegedale, Tennessee, and the Union College administration and faculty—especially the Religion Department—for the untiring efforts that they have put into this project to make it a success.

Special thanks to Larry McGill, chaplain at Union College, for his drive, advice and promotion for this project, and to Eugene and Marilyn Shirley of Oklahoma City, for their financial and enthusiastic support.

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In the 89 years since Union's founding, the college has graduated more than 5,500 students. Never having had more than 1,300 students for a single academic year, the college has consistently had a small, friendly campus. Union believes that its small size is an asset because of the closeness and the personal services that are offered.

Union has many traditions: the rock pile, the golden cords, and the clock tower. But none is so important as its personable Christian campus.

Union College
The Un-University

Union College was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.



Photo by HAROLD M. LAMBERT

Jesus, the Faithful And True Witness

by Maylan Schurch

I dreamed I was in London on a sunny day, walking under a cobbled archway into a mews. This particular mews was small—a dead end street, only a block long, with half its gray brick pavement in shadow from the buildings towering above it on either side, and at its far end, boxing it completely in, was a dusty, domed cathedral.

People were there, hurrying across the pavement from one building to another, flitting in and out from the yellow sunlight to the dark shadows, their feet slapping and shuffling on the stones. Most of them wore black or maroon robes and mortarboards, but a few were nervously clad in thin white laboratory coats.

One of the latter jarred shoulders with me.

"Excuse me," he said vaguely, and stood still for an instant, looking perplexed and apologetic, as if he should say more. Then he turned away and was about to resume his quick strides.

"Could you—" I began, and his head swerved petulantly around. "Could you show me where Science is?"

"Science? There." He motioned toward the turreted building to which he'd been walking.

"Thanks," I said. "Do you suppose . . ." but I was wasting my breath. He was striding away, almost loping toward the entrance. I gritted my teeth in annoyance: I needed a guide. I glanced around.

Three or four people were gathered listening to a tour guide dressed in a white coat with gold buttons, and white pants with a thin red stripe down the side; there was no one else who looked as though he had time or desire to help me. So I turned, walked up to the building myself, read the word SCIENCE cut into the stone lintel, and pulled open one of the thick glass doors.

Cool, sweet air bathed my face, and I felt reassured. The building's gothic exterior had worried me, but

within I saw low ceilings frosted with banks of white fluorescence and I heard the *shhh* of air conditioning. A receptionist pointed toward the stairs (there was, unfortunately, no elevator) and I ascended.

I won't describe much of my journey to the top, except to say that it took rather longer than I'd thought it would. I visited many white, windowed rooms, where steel balls ran down calibrated inclines, and scales in glass cases weighed little heaps of powder. In rooms still higher, men in white coats showed me strange blue lights, and I watched as a white laser made a delicate hole in an iron bar. In another chillier room I spoke carefully into a microphone and watched my words appear on a video screen. Then other words appeared, and I knew that I was talking with a computer. Then I myself was given a white coat to wear, a stool on which to sit, and five bottles of liquid to analyze.

How long I tested the solutions I don't remember; time telescopes and expands in strange ways. It may have been an hour and a half, it may have been several years. I lived for nothing else except the charts I made and the numbers I copied, and it was only when my back was sore and my chest aching from my stooped position that I straightened myself, got up from my stool, and walked to one of the tall, thin windows in my lab. I suddenly desired air—not chilled, conditioned air but warm, humid air, fruited with the scent of the earth.

After some difficulty I managed to turn a lever at the window's lower edge, and I swung the glass backward into the room. I stepped out onto a metal balcony, put my hands on the black railings and looked down.

The mews was so far below! Tiny people still crossed and recrossed the street, jostling and maneuvering around each other like ants, and the tour guide (whose white hat was a

perfect circle when seen from above) was the only one standing still.

I looked around me, beyond the tops of the other buildings, and shuddered, partly from the height and partly from a dreadful feeling I could not describe. The gray city spread itself all around me, and onward and outward to the horizon, and now the sky was as gray and as old as the city—a low, leaden sheet of clouds which seemed to press me down and suffocate me. There was no color anywhere, and no joy.

I heard a cry, and looked down at the mews again. Then I saw that I was not alone. Standing on the tops of buildings around me and on little balconies thrust out from their sides were other men and women. The cry had come from a walkway high on the side of the church, just at the base of its huge dome. A girl was standing with both hands to her face, rocking back and forth, keening in grief and despair, and others from their balconies took up her cry. Some clutched the railings as if they would throw themselves down to the narrow street below, and many (including the girl) turned slowly and disappeared back through the doors and windows from which they had come.

I too felt this despair—a dreadful claustrophobia which pushed at me from all sides, a fearful feeling of suffocation. I decided I would turn back to my laboratory—but the thought of the cold little bottles and the pages of symbols sickened me. No longer could they be my only

preoccupation.

I looked downward again to the street. It would not take me long to fall. I gripped the rails, preparing to fling myself down.

But then I saw the tour guide. He was looking up, shading his eyes and turning slowly, looking at the windows and balconies and rooftops. When he finally looked at me, he did so for a long time. Then he took his hand from his eyes and beckoned to me, and then I saw his face . . . oh, what a wonderful face he had! Even from this height I could tell that it was a humorous face, a mature, confident, loving face, a face which could only belong to one who knew reasons for many things. He beckoned again, and my feet wanted to move, but my hands gripped the railing. He beckoned a third time, and my fingers loosened, and I scrambled back through the window. I ran through my lab and reached the hall, found the stairs, and dashed down them two and three at a time, making people cling to the walls as I descended.

Finally I reached the bottom, my lungs aching and my legs trembling, and I staggered out through the thick glass doors and down the white stone steps toward the guide. My knees were so weak that I had to crawl the last few steps. He met me, and smiled tenderly and confidently upon me. He took my hand and helped me up, and together we walked back toward the Science building, talking of the truth and meaning of many things.

by Beatrice S. Neall

Notes

The word *witness* is a legal term, associated with a lawsuit, courtroom, accuser, defender and judge. In early Israel, legal disputes were settled at the gate of the city, where the accuser and the accused gathered their witnesses and disputed before the elders (Deut. 25:7-10; Ruth 4:1-11). These elders sat on thrones as they judged the cases presented to them (Psalm 122:3-5; Daniel 7:9-10; Luke 22:30; Rev. 4:4). In these trials, the chief method of proof was the testimony of witnesses, whose role was similar to counsel for the defense and counsel for the prosecution.¹

Lawsuit language is found throughout the Bible: witness, testimony, judge, Satan (accuser), "your adversary the devil (slanderer)" (I Peter 5:8), throne, books, confess, deny, avenge, vindicate, "faithful and true." *Amen*, in fact, was the response to the oath that the testimony was true (Deut. 27:15-16; Neh. 5:13; I Chron. 16:36).²

In the Bible we frequently see God and man coming to law against each other. The lengthiest lawsuit is the book of Job, where Job brings charges against God. The main theme of the Gospel of John is a legal controversy between Jesus and the Jews. And Jesus Himself calls upon witnesses to attest the truthfulness of His words: John the Baptist, His works, the Father, Scripture (John 5:30-47). He affirms the truth of His own statements by the frequent use of the double *amen* ("verily, verily").

In the cosmic lawsuit described in the Bible, God condescends to put Himself on trial before the world to answer its charges of tyranny and injustice. In order to defend Himself, He sends Jesus to earth as His "faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5) that He might open up the Father's heart to men (John 1:18) and show the love that is there (John 3:16). **"Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead . . . To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades'"** (Rev. 1:5-6, 17-18; RSV).

While He was upon this earth, Jesus bore witness to the character of God in both His life and words. Upon His ascension, however, He entrusted His testimony—His message of truth concerning God—to His people. This is the "testimony of Jesus," which believers transmit to the world at the cost of persecution and death (Rev. 1:9; 2:13; 12:11). Indeed, not only their words, but their very lives become a testimony to Jesus. **"He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself,"** (I John 5:10; RSV; emphasis supplied).

The true believer internalizes the testimony of Jesus so that it becomes a part of himself. His words, his life, and perhaps even his death demonstrate the beauty of the character of God lived out in man.

When Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness, is joined by a multitude of other faithful and true witnesses, God will win His case against a hostile world.

Jesus—
the faithful
Witness

Jesus
entrusted His
testimony to
His people—
hence, "the
testimony of
Jesus"

¹ Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 20-21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

by Denise Shultz

Notes

Jesus, the Faithful and True Witness, became incarnate that He might reveal His Father's character to men and thereby enable them to be freed from the power of sin.

Jesus revealed a God who is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). A God who "waits with unwearied love to hear the confessions of the wayward and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us. He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness. Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him. 'They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.' Psalm 34:5."¹

As we come to know the One whom the True Witness has revealed, we will be given the ability to do His service. For "As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled for the heavenly kingdom. The sure result of our intercourse and fellowship with our Lord will be to increase piety, purity, and fervor. There will be a growing intelligence in prayer. We are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of diligence and zeal.

"The soul that turns to God for its help, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances."²

Though Jesus has revealed the Father's power-providing character, it is up to us, individually, to discover the revelations which He has made. It is our responsibility to "Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven. Jesus declares, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' And He explains Himself by saying, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' John 6:53, 63. Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink; and as in the natural economy, so in the spiritual economy: it is what we meditate upon that will give tone and strength to our spiritual nature."³

"As we meditate upon the perfections of the Saviour, we shall desire to be wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of Him to others and represent Him to the world."⁴

"He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us"

"By maintaining . . . we shall be enabled . . ."

"Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink"

¹ *The Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84-85.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

³ *Steps to Christ*, pp. 88.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

by Eric Graham

Notes

It was hot and crowded in the upstairs courtroom. The open windows let in only more hot air. The tension was high. The defense in the trial was summing up. I was observing a decision about the defendant's life.

There in that crowded small-town courtroom the attorney for the defense told the jury, "The defendant's life depends on your awareness of his character. You have seen that character in the evidence of his lifestyle and values presented by the character witnesses in this court . . ."

A man's life depending on what people saw in his character as evidenced by the things he did every day! That was precisely what was going on before my eyes in that stuffy California courtroom.

That is the way it works. God tells us that if we have a real relationship with Him the results will speak for themselves. God doesn't have to look to the evidence to know whether or not we're in love with Him. He knows. But He tells us that we can look to that evidence for our own indicator if we need to. He's not talking about church activities, but the kind of spiritual fruit that is produced when we are in *love* with Christ. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4).

"If we have a real relationship with Him the results will speak for themselves"

Too many Christians try to "produce results" by their own efforts instead of abiding in Christ and allowing the relationship with Him to produce the fruit.

If I attempt to "produce results" with someone I love very much it will eventually fail. If I try to make it look like I love someone very much in order to "produce results" that too is doomed.

The reality of a final judgment exists. However, a knowledge of that judgment cannot produce success in my Christian life. I must accept Jesus. And, I must fall in love with Him. That love will produce evidence that will be undeniable.

He is waiting in Truth.

He is waiting in Joy.

He is waiting, in love with you and me, for a response, in Love.

by JoAn Shultz

Notes

In this week's lesson we have been studying Jesus as the Faithful and True Witness of the Father. As the incarnate Witness of God, He revealed the equity, concern and fidelity with which God governs His creation. When Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came in great power to continue to bear witness to the character of God. God once again was to become an incarnate witness—this time through the Spirit dwelling in the hearts of believers.

In their caring, faithfulness and integrity, Christians are powerful witnesses for the Divine. A caring attitude is perhaps the most powerful testimony for God. Dr. Ross Campbell in his book, *How to Really Love Your Child*, lists three important steps towards expressing a concerned and caring attitude:¹

1. Eye contact. This is essential because people perceive their value as individuals by the amount of eye contact they get. This is one of the primary means of conveying love, especially to children.

Look directly into the eyes of those with whom you are sharing the love of Jesus. They will learn as much from your eyes as from your words—perhaps even more. Try being an *eye-witness* for Jesus.

2. Physical contact. Studies have shown that without physical contact an infant will soon lose its will to live . . . and isn't that just what we are . . . infants in Christ?

Just as the human infant needs to be touched, so does the Christian infant. A touch on the shoulder, a gentle poke, a tousle of the hair or a friendly hug can do wonders for our witnessing. Think of all the times Jesus touched people or they touched Him. There is power in literally touching another life for Christ.

3. Focused attention. By this step I mean the giving of our full and undivided attention in such a way that the other person feels completely loved. It requires real sacrifice on the part of the giver, but makes the receiver feel like the most important person in the world—one of a kind.

In order to be our best we must receive focused attention, and in following the pattern Christ gave we must pass it on. We must give our undivided attention to each one to whom we wish to convey Christ's great love.

The difference, as we perceive it, between ourselves and the most unlovable person imaginable is miniscule compared to the difference between ourselves and Christ. Yet, He loves and cares for us. Can we do less towards our fellow man and still be patterned after Him?

¹ Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Child*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, S. P. Publishing, Inc., 1978).

by Myrl Manley

Notes

At eleven o'clock this morning, July 3, 1979, I entered a large city church filled with hundreds of people and was directed to an empty seat near the front. I sat there as a witness, but not in the legal sense as described by Beatrice Neall. I looked about at the filled pews. I was a *seeing* witness but not an *eye-witness* such as JoAn Shultz describes.

My purpose in being there was not to be a character witness for some defendant as related by Eric Graham. Neither was I there to wait in joy, but rather to empathize in grief.

The governor of the state was there, also the president of the city council as well as the editor of the city's largest newspaper. Present were quiet and thoughtful women as well as building contractors, construction foremen and experienced men of business.

A black-gowned man stood up to read—a former college and university president. He spoke with deep conviction about another man who was present. I had looked upon the face of that "other man" for a brief moment just before I entered through the inside door of the church. He, too, was a witness. The man who stood up to read spoke of that other man's integrity, of his determination to help his fellow men, of his varied talents of leadership and of his influence upon his family. Without doubt, the man whom he spoke about had witnessed—established a reputation through evidence.

The man to whom we paid our last respects had finished his course at age 73. A few days ago, his time for active witnessing ended. Nevertheless, his influence (witness)—at least for this morning—still spoke in an active voice to those who crowded the church. The college president who stood up to speak declared him to be a true witness of solid mid-American morality. We, his friends, listened thoughtfully as we scanned the gauges of our own moral and ethical values.

In swaddling clothes Jesus gave a true witness on "day one" to the inquiring Bethlehem shepherds (Luke 2:7-18). A short time later His witness was to the wise men of the East (Matthew 2:1-11). At age 12 His faithful and true witness was to the temple priests (Luke 2:46-49). His witnessing increased until on Calvary He spoke to all mankind as well as to the entire universe (Matthew 27:33-54, Mark 15:22-39, Luke 23, John 19:17-30).

Even on the day when Jesus made His final journey heavenward He was concerned with witnesses. He paused to blanket all believers with His mandate: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Here are three final questions for both of us—you and me. What kinds of witnesses are we in *our* part of the earth? The Faithful and True Witness desired that the disciples "copy in themselves . . . the character of Christ on earth."¹ How well and how carefully do we copy? Do our friends see and perceive us to be faithful and true witnesses for the master Witness?

¹ SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1053.

"A few days ago, his time for active witnessing ended—nevertheless, his influence still spoke in an active voice"

1. The Introduction for this week's lesson is, of course, a parable, and a parable contains many symbols. Can you give meanings to the following elements in the story?
 - a. the mews
 - b. the cathedral
 - c. the mortarboards and robes
 - d. the science building
 - e. the desire for fresh air
 - f. the tour guide
 - g. the weariness of the narrator's legs after the descent
 - h. the return of the science building

Why do you suppose the sky was sunny at first and then changed to gray?

Can you find any significance in the fact that the narrator couldn't use a fire escape or some exterior means of descent?

2. List four types of Christian witness.

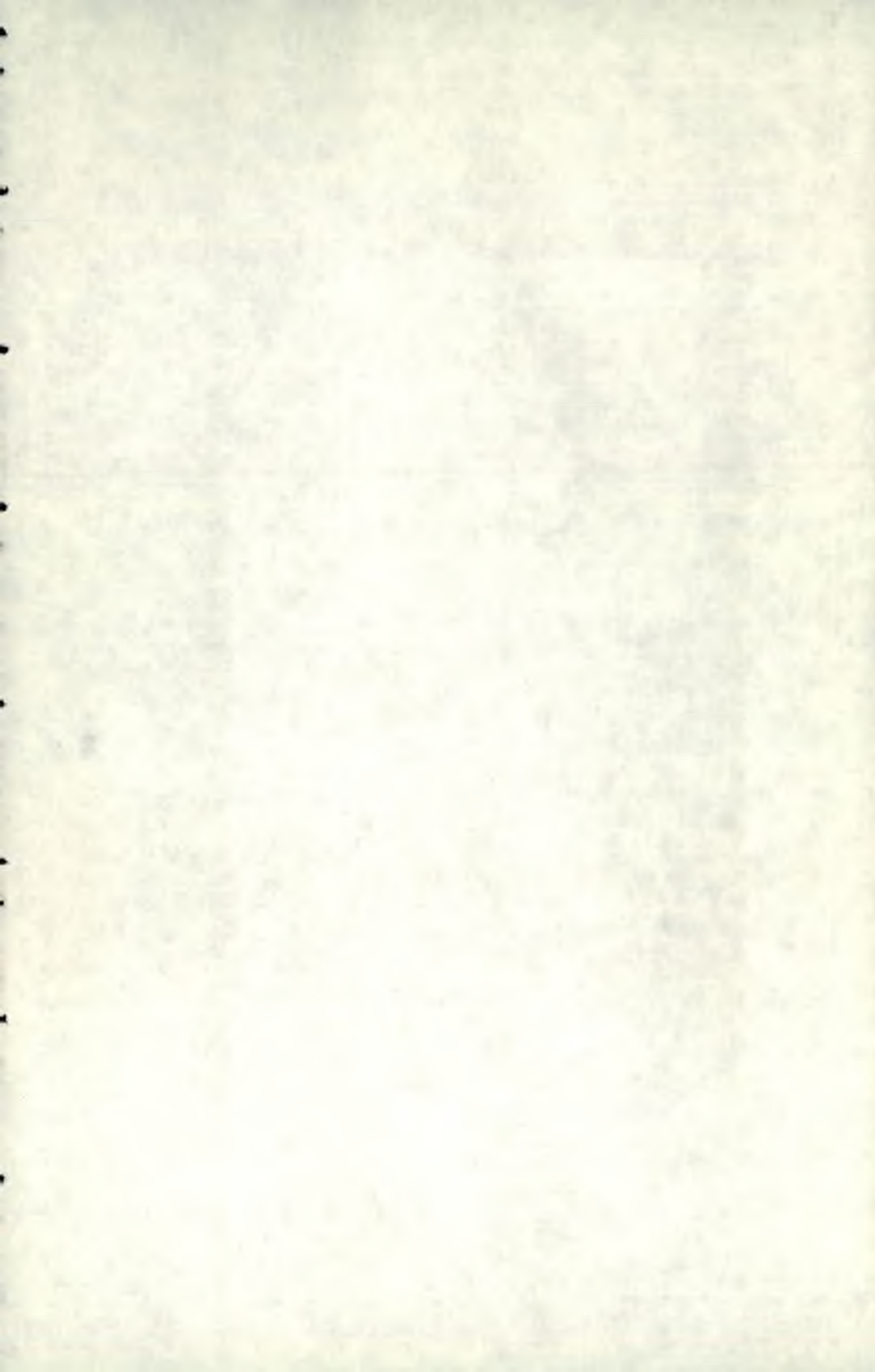
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Does God favor one type of witness over another?

Does God require all to witness verbally?

3. As living testimonies of what the Lord has done for us, we Christians are to go the "extra mile." Where is the limit to that extra mile? Is it only typical of the fourth and fifth?
4. If I were truly a living witness and testimony to what God has done for me, I would:

always	occasionally	never	
_____	_____	_____	pick up hitchhikers
_____	_____	_____	sell all luxuries and give the proceeds to the poor
_____	_____	_____	live on \$10,000 a year and give any amount over that to charitable causes
_____	_____	_____	give at least three Bible studies each week
_____	_____	_____	put bumper stickers with religious sayings on my car
_____	_____	_____	listen to what some might term "heresy"
_____	_____	_____	have an open, inquisitive, questioning mind, constantly searching for "truth"
_____	_____	_____	build close relationships with those not of my faith





The Testimony Of Jesus



by Shelley Schurch

"I was so frustrated. I told Him, 'God, I don't like these religions—I think they're all phony. I don't like the world, either. I don't like *not* being a Christian.' I was torn, and it was the most horrible feeling.

"I prayed and I prayed and I asked, 'Lord, is there any truth? Does anybody have any light?' And, you know, the most fantastic thing happened—every time I think of it I get goose bumps—within a week, I was studying with Adventists!"

Andy Martin grew up as a strongly dedicated member of another faith. Gradually he became dissatisfied with many of its practices and drifted into a life of on-again, off-again Christianity. He searched for truth in several places, always asking himself if Jesus would act the way he saw various Christian groups acting as they worshipped Him.

His search seemed to lead only down discouraging dead-end streets, and it was in despair that Andy begged God to show him light and truth, if such things did, indeed, exist.

Within the week he met up with some old friends who had committed their lives to Christ since Andy had last seen them. They were as eager to talk as Andy was to listen, "but they didn't pour things out, they didn't push things at me, they just shared with me."

It was only after his baptism that Andy heard the name of Ellen White mentioned. At first he assumed she was just another author of religious books, but her name was mentioned so often that he started asking questions.

"So many people told me to read *The Great Controversy*. Everybody

kept saying it was such a great book. I finally read it, and first it went really slow, but as I neared the second half of the book, I couldn't put it down. After that I began to read her other books, and I was convinced that she had a message."

A fear had sprouted in Andy's mind, however, as he realized the position Ellen White held in his new-found faith. "I'd seen so much phoniness in so many religions, and I'd seen people just looking to man and not to God."

But as he thought more about his reading in *The Great Controversy*, Andy felt that his church wasn't looking at Ellen White and worshipping her, "but they were looking at how God used her; they were looking at the messages God had spoken through her."

After almost four years as a Seventh-day Adventist, and two years in an Adventist college, how does Andy now view Ellen White?

"I respect her. If I knew her personally, I know I'd love just to be around her—and it's not that I would worship her.

"I had an uncle who reminded me more of Jesus than any other person I've known. I've always wanted to be like him. I guess that's how I feel about Mrs. White. I can see how I'd almost want to copy her because I realize she must have been so close to the Lord and so self-denying to have been used of the Lord, to have been given such a great gift. I've always wanted to be like that.

"The true example to follow, of course, is Jesus Christ. *The Desire of Ages* has helped me to see how Jesus walked, and how we should walk."

by H. Ward Hill

Notes

Ringling from Seventh-day Adventist pulpits for over a century has been a message affirming that the "remnant" church has the "testimony of Jesus" which is equated with the prophetic gift exercised by Mrs. Ellen G. White.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). There is a richness of meaning in the words, "testimony of Jesus." The expression with minor variation occurs eight times in the New Testament (Rev. 1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4; 1 Cor. 1:6; 2 Tim. 1:8). Since the phrase "testimony of Jesus" as found in the Book of Revelation is in the genitive case in its original form, it is usually understood subjectively, that is, as a witness or testimony which Christ Himself bears.¹ More specifically, the "testimony of Jesus" is what Christ says to the church through His chosen messengers which in this case have the prophetic gift. This is confirmed by the fact that the "testimony of Jesus" is said to be the **"spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).**

Further evidence that the "testimony of Jesus" as used in the Revelation has special reference to the prophetic speaker is seen when one compares Rev. 19:10 and Rev. 22:9. In these references **"thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus"** is equivalent to **"thy brethren the prophets."**

While meaning essentially the same thing as the "testimony of Jesus," the phrase "spirit of prophecy" apparently focuses on the Spirit which inspires the prophecy or teaching. If the spirit of prophecy or the spirit which proclaims the prophecy is in the church, then the natural way for this to function is through the prophetic gift. The prophetic gift can hardly be exercised unless there is a prophet. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church then to believe that Mrs. E. G. White exercised the prophetic gift is not to fly in the face of Scripture, but rather to suggest a fulfillment to what was clearly a promise of the Holy Spirit.

A further question might investigate the extent to which the Spirit indites prophecy and whether or not this spiritual gift may be experienced by anyone who seeks God with all of his heart. **"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).**

One may argue that there is a qualitative difference between the way the Spirit speaks to God-fearing people in general and the way He speaks to His chosen messenger, the prophet. But what may be revealed to a particular prophetic messenger at a point in time may by the same Spirit be developed and enlarged and seen more clearly by the community of faith as time passes. Inspiration is thus not locked into a particular time frame, but must ever move upon hearts in order that the message given in a unique sense to the prophet may be appropriated as God intended by His people after the prophet is dead.

¹ *Problems in Bible Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954).

". . . which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"

For the Adventist Church to believe that Ellen White exercised the prophetic gift is to believe the Spirit's promise

Inspiration is not locked into a particular time frame

selected by Kirk Powell

Notes

Last night, in vision, I was standing before an assembly of our people, bearing a decided testimony regarding present truth and present duty. After the discourse, many gathered about me, asking questions. They desired so many explanations about this point, and that point, and another point, that I said, "One at a time, if you please, lest you confuse me."

And then I appealed to them, saying: "For years you have had many evidences that the Lord has given me a work to do. These evidences could scarcely have been greater than they are. Will you brush away all these evidences as a cobweb, at the suggestion of a man's unbelief? That which makes my heart ache is the fact that many who are now perplexed and tempted are those who have had abundance of evidence and opportunity to consider and pray and understand; and yet they do not discern the nature of the sophistries that are presented to influence them to reject the warnings God has given to save them from the delusions of these last days."

Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet; and they have asked, Why is this?

I have had no claims to make, only that *I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger*; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. "Your work," He instructed me "is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and with pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. I will make My Word open to you. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you.

"Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth *under any circumstances*. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil."

Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?—Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies.

When this work was first given me, I begged the Lord to lay the burden on someone else. The work was so large and broad and deep that I feared I could not do it. But by His Holy Spirit the Lord has enabled me to perform the work which He gave me to do.

"Will you brush away all these evidences?"

**"Are you a prophet?"
"I am the Lord's messenger"**

"The Lord has enabled me to perform the work which He gave me to do"

Taken from *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 31-33.

by Robert W. Olson

Notes

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was a true prophet of God sent to guide and counsel the church in these last days. Because of the high regard Adventists have for their prophet, they are quite naturally deeply interested in all phases of her work. This paper deals with the question of Ellen White's use of uninspired sources in the composition of her own works. Specifically, the following points will be considered:

- (a) To what extent did Ellen White engage in literary borrowing?
- (b) How and why did she borrow from other authors?
- (c) Was literary borrowing considered unethical in her day?
- (d) Did her borrowings in any degree dilute her claim to inspiration?

A. The Extent of Ellen White's Literary Borrowing

Ellen White's indebtedness to other authors has long been acknowledged by Seventh-day Adventists. In 1951 F. D. Nichol published his *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* in which he quotes D. M. Canright who, as early as 1887, began writing against the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and against Mrs. White in particular. In that year Canright published the following criticism of Ellen White's work:

"Ellen White's indebtedness to other authors has long been acknowledged"

She often copies, without credit or sign of quotation, whole sentences and even paragraphs, almost word for word, from other authors. (Compare *Great Controversy*, page 96, with *History of the Reformation*, by D'Aubigne, page 41.) This she does page after page. Was D'Aubigne also inspired? (Cited by F. D. Nichol, p. 417).

The Great Controversy probably contains more borrowed material than any of Ellen White's books. Nichol puts the figure at 12 percent, but he includes only those statements which were enclosed in quotation marks in the 1911 edition (Nichol, p. 420).

In addition to the material in quotation marks there is also much paraphrasing of other authors where quotation marks cannot be used. For example, in her account of John Huss, Ellen White very closely follows J. A. Wylie's *The History of Protestantism*, but her dependence on Wylie cannot always be indicated by quotation marks.

The exact extent of Ellen White's borrowings in *The Great Controversy* is not known, but probably most of the sections dealing with church history contain material in this category.

Ellen White's literary borrowing, however, was not limited to *The Great Controversy*. According to F. D. Nichol, 15.4 percent of *Sketches From the Life of Paul* is either direct, close, or loose paraphrase of the works on Paul by F. W. Farrar and Conybeare and Howson (see Nichol, pp. 424-425). Studies by Raymond Cottrell and Walter Specht have shown that Ellen White borrowed about 2.6 percent of her words in *The Desire of Ages* from William Hanna's *Life of Christ*. (See Cottrell's study, "The Literary Relationship Between *The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen G. White and *The Life of Christ*, by William Hanna," p. 7.) W. C. White and Marian Davis both mention other books on Christ's life which Ellen White used. It is also evident that she borrowed from some works not named by W. C. White or Miss Davis, such as John Harris's *The Great Teacher*. I am indebted to Walter Rea for pointing out the following parallels between selections from Ellen White's writings and the 1842 edition of John Harris's book.

Harris, p. 71

He came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment in the temple of creation, that every worshipper might have free and equal access to the God of the temple.

Harris, p. 80

... he raised the veil of the past eternity, carried back their thoughts through dateless ages before the world began, towards the unimaginable and awful place where God dwells,—assuring them that there never was a period when he was not there; ...

Harris, p. 225 in 1836 edition

But the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is that only object on earth on which he bestows his supreme regard.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 386

Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God.

Evangelism, p. 615

Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 15

I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard.

“Tis his at last who says it best”

As I examine these and other parallels, I find Mrs. White’s wording always to be an improvement over that of the author from whom she has drawn. F. D. Nichol quotes the poet who justified such use of the works of others in these lines: “Though old the thought and oft exprest ‘Tis his at last who says it best” (*E. G. White and Her Critics*, p. 405). Ellen White can hardly be called a “copyist” since she almost invariably rewrites, rephrases, and improves on the original author when she does use another’s material.

B. How and Why Ellen White Borrowed

There are two principal reasons why Ellen White borrowed from other writers. *First, she was ever seeking for more beautiful phraseology and for more perfect and exact language.* The Lord did not dictate His messages to the Bible prophets, word for word. The choice of words, phrases, and sentences was largely their own responsibility. The Holy Spirit guided the prophets in the selection of what to write, but they had to pen these messages in their own languages. It was the same with Ellen White. Concerning herself, she wrote:

“The Lord did not dictate His messages to the Bible prophets, word for word”

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own (*Review and Herald*, October 8, 1867).

During her lifetime Ellen White wrote an estimated 25,000,000 words in her letters, manuscripts, articles, and books. Often, in her most productive years, she would average about 4,500 words (18 pages) a day. With such demands upon her strength it is not surprising that she would ever be on the lookout for appropriate literary help.

Concerning the writing of *The Desire of Ages* in particular, W. C. White states:

Previous to her work of writing on the Life of Christ and during the time of her writing to some extent, she read from the works of Hanna, Fleetwood, Farrar, and Geikie. I never knew of her reading Edersheim. She occasionally referred to Andrews, particularly with reference to chronology . . .

Many times in the reading of Hanna, Farrar or Fleetwood, she would run onto a description of a scene which had been vividly presented to her but

forgotten, and which she was able to describe more in detail than that which she had read . . .

She found it both a pleasure and a convenience and an economy of time to use their language fully or in part in presenting those things which she knew through revelation and which she wished to pass on to her readers (W. C. White to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928).

Comparison of *The Desire of Ages* with the various accounts of the life of Christ available in her day show that she drew, more or less, not only from the authors mentioned above by W. C. White, but from March, Harris, and others as well.

Having acknowledged this dependence on others, it should also be pointed out, in perfect fairness to Ellen White, that she had exceptional literary gifts of her own which she nurtured and developed as few others have.

A second reason why Ellen White at times used the works of other writers is that she relied on these authorities for historical and geographical information not revealed to her in vision. In her introduction to the book *The Great Controversy* she speaks about the "facts" of history which she presented. (see *The Great Controversy*, p. xii). She does not claim that these facts were all revealed to her in vision. For example, she states, "In 1816 the American Bible Society was founded" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 287). There is no reason to believe that this fact was revealed to her in vision.

"She does not claim that these facts were all revealed to her in vision"

Concerning *The Desire of Ages*, W. C. White says:

The great events occurring in the life of our Lord were presented to her in panoramic scenes as also were the other portions of *The Great Controversy*. In a few of these scenes, chronology and geography were clearly presented, but in the greater part of the revelation the flashlight scenes which were exceedingly vivid and the conversations and the controversies which she heard and was able to narrate, were not marked geographically or chronologically; and she was left to study the Bible and history and the writings of men who had presented the life of our Lord to get the chronological and geographical connection (W. C. White to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928).

William S. Peterson has asserted that Ellen White did not take only fine language and historical information from other authors, but ideas as well. Specifically, he mentions that Ellen White borrowed not only Calvin Stowe's words, but also his ideas when she wrote Manuscript 24, 1886, now published in *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 19-21 (see *Spectrum*, Autumn, 1971, pp. 73-84). When David Neff was a seminary student at Andrews University in 1973, he responded to Peterson's assertion with a carefully researched 29-page paper in which he compares and contrasts the writings of Stowe and Ellen White line by line and word by word. According to Neff:

We have evidence of her writing most of the ideas which are common to her and Dr. Stowe at a time prior to the writing of this manuscript. Indeed, some of these references antedate any possible awareness on her part of Dr. Stowe's book. In addition to the common theological material, there are several points at which the two authors diverge or have distinctively different emphases. These are of sufficient importance for us to conclude that in writing Manuscript 24, 1886, Mrs. White was *not* "appropriating the ideas of another man" ("Ellen White's Alleged Literary and Theological Indebtedness to Calvin Stowe," p. 25).

Neff's findings fully support Ellen White's position that her basic concepts or ideas came, not from human sources, but from God. She states:

"Her basic concepts came from God"

I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books (*Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 29).

Ellen White appears to have engaged in her borrowing consciously at times but unconsciously at other times. Eloquent phrases drawn from others appeared occasionally in her sermons where she did not have books to refer to. Apparently these gems had so deeply impressed themselves on her mind at the time she read them that they became a part of her own vocabulary. Consequently, some of Ellen White's use of the wording of others should be attributed to her unusually keen and retentive memory.

C. The Ethics of Nineteenth-Century Literary Borrowing

Apparently no one, even among Ellen White's secretarial staff, questioned the propriety of her use of the works of other writers before the mid-1880s. When, at that time, she was criticized for this practice she at first disregarded the criticism, probably feeling as John Wesley did that a series of credit lines would interfere with the flow of the message being portrayed. W. C. White explains her attitude:

In many of her manuscripts as they came from her hand quotation marks were used. In other cases they were not used; and her habit of using parts of sentences found in the writings of others and filling in a part of her own composition, was not based upon any definite plan nor was it questioned by her copyists and copywriters until about 1885 and onward (W. C. White to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928).

When *Sketches from the Life of Paul* and *The Great Controversy* were published she was advised to leave out the quotation marks and did so. But afterward when presented with the fact that this was considered unfair to the people from whom she had made quotations she said to have them in by all means (W. C. White to J. C. Stevens, July 25, 1919, W. C. White Letterbook #129).

“Ellen White made no attempt to hide her borrowing”

Ellen White made no attempt to hide her borrowing. She even called special attention to Conybeare and Howson's work in the same year that she was drawing extracts from it. In support of an advertisement for the book in the *Signs of the Times* of February 22, 1883, she wrote, “*The Life of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson I regard as a book of great merit, and one of rare usefulness to the earnest student of the New Testament history” (p. 96). Four months later—June, 1883—her own volume on Paul was published. She must have known that the relationship between *Sketches from the Life of Paul* and the Conybeare and Howson book would soon become apparent to her readers, but this obviously was of no concern to her.

Raymond Cottrell states that when he was working on the *SDA Bible Commentary*, he had occasion to compare thirty commentaries on I Corinthians with one another. To his amazement he discovered that many of these respected commentators had “copied significant amounts of material from one another without once giving credit.” Cottrell concluded that “nineteenth-century literary ethics, even among the best writers, approved of, or at least did not seriously question, generous literary borrowing without giving credit” (“The Literary Relationship Between *The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen G. White, and *The Life of Christ*, by William Hanna,” p. 6).

Since Ellen White lived most of her life in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that she should conduct most of her literary activities according to nineteenth-century literary standards.

D. Originality, Revelation, and Inspiration

Did Ellen White's literary borrowings in any degree dilute her claim to inspiration? This is the vital question. Some of the things she wrote were not original with her. Neither were they supernaturally provided by means of divine revelation. Does this mean that some of her writings were not inspired? In other words, Is originality a test of inspiration? And, Is a vision-source a test of inspiration?

"Is originality a test of inspiration?"

First, a few definitions: By "originality" we mean that the prophet was the first person to say it. By "revelation" we mean that the prophet received his information in a vision, a dream, or some other supernatural source. By "inspiration" we mean that the prophet wrote under the direct guidance and control of the Holy Spirit.

In the Scriptures we find a number of examples which indicate that a prophet's writing need not have been original and need not have come by special revelation in order to have been inspired.

The apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians, "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33). This is a line from the Greek poet Menander who lived three centuries before Christ (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 808). Paul gives no credit to Menander and neither does he hint that this is a quotation. But the proverb was not original with Paul and it is a reasonable assumption that the Lord did not supernaturally reveal to Paul what Menander had said. Yet we accept I Corinthians 15:33 as fully inspired. It was not inspired before Paul said it, but when he put that line into his letter to the Corinthians it became a part of the canon of Scripture.

Another example may be found in the teachings of Christ. Jesus gave us the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), but Rabbi Hillel, a generation earlier, had already written, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof" (quoted in *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 356). The thoughts and even some of the words in the Lord's prayer may be found in earlier Jewish ritual prayers known as *Ha-Kaddish* (see *Ibid*, p. 346).

Luke did considerable investigation in available sources before writing his gospel. He says:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, . . . Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1, 3, 4; NIV).

Luke did not acquire his information through visions or dreams but through his own research. Yet while material in the gospel of Luke was not given by divine revelation it was nonetheless written under divine inspiration. What Luke wrote was not original, but it was dependable (see *Ibid*, p. 669 on Luke 1:2). God led Luke to use the right sources.

"Luke acquired his information through his own research"

The answer, then, to our question—Did Ellen White's literary borrowings in any degree dilute her claim to inspiration?—is *No*. That is, the answer is *no* unless we insist on one standard for the Bible prophets and a different standard for Ellen White. If it was proper for the biblical prophets to use uninspired sources at times, we can hardly fault Ellen White for following their example.

by Larry D. McGill

Notes

The fact of the matter is that most people are tired of being hit over the head with quotes from Ellen G. White! Within our church many feel that God's messenger has been misused. In fact Ellen White herself counsels against misusing her writings.

So in my own study I need to be careful of this. But what can I do? How can I make sure I'm not one of those people who uses Ellen White in a manner God never intended?

1. The first thing I need to do is consider each message within its context. Unfortunately many have misinterpreted the essence of Mrs. White's writings by lifting statements here and there out of their proper cultural, historical and literary settings. Each statement and teaching of Mrs. White's work needs to be considered within its proper context and needs to be allowed to make its own contribution to our understanding of the *full subject*.

Listen to what Ellen White has said about this. "Many study the scriptures for the purpose of proving their own ideas to be correct. They change the meaning of God's Word to suit their own opinions and thus they do also with the Testimony that He sends. They quote half a sentence, leaving the other half out which if quoted would show the reasoning to be false. God has a controversy with those who wrest the scriptures making them conformed to their preconceived ideas."¹

2. Next, I need to try to discover the principle that is involved in specific counsel. "I was then directed to bring out general principles in speaking and in writing and at the same time, specify the dangers, errors and sins of some individuals that all might be warned, reprovved and counseled."²

Ellen White made specific applications of certain basic principles in order that the principles could be better understood. It was her purpose that all would be warned through the instruction given to a few. Therefore, for me to find relevant truth, I must discover the underlying principle involved in *any* counsel and then apply that principle to my own life and circumstances.

"That simply doesn't apply to us anymore," is a rationalization that is used too often. Every message from God contains valuable instruction for every generation. None of the principles found in the writings of Ellen White can be set aside as no longer applicable.

3. Finally, I must transform Ellen White's counsel into practical application—for me! I must admit, it is easier to drive these messages into the hearts of others than to make them applicable at home. But my first responsibility is to put the counsel of the spirit of prophecy to work in my own life. It is my responsibility to apply this counsel to my life and the Holy Spirit's responsibility to apply it to another's.³

I thank God for the spirit of prophecy, especially for the fact that it points me not to itself, but to the Bible as my only rule of faith. As I consider the entire context of Ellen White's messages and seek in all of her counsel to find the relevant principle involved, I can know that I am using her writings correctly and her words may then become practical counsel for me.

¹ Manuscript 22, 1890.

² *Testimonies for the Church*, vo. 5, p. 660.

³ *Gospel Workers*, p. 374.

by Doug Morgan

Notes

It was "Spirit of Prophecy" day and Seventh-day Adventist ministers across North America were preaching to their congregations about the gift of prophecy and how Ellen G. White had received that gift to give guidance to God's church. But instead of talking about Ellen White, the preacher I heard that day told us about the dreams *he* had had and how they had been fulfilled in real life. He finally did get around to saying something about Mrs. White, but not until he had been preaching for nearly an hour, far past the point where our Mork and Mindy, Charlie's Angels-fed minds could concentrate on what he was saying. I must confess that I wasn't too impressed with the significance of the pastor's dreams, but the sermon did raise a question in my mind—Is there a sense in which Christians today should possess the "spirit of prophecy"? I think so.

Prophecy means proclaiming a message from God. Possession of the spirit of prophecy by a group must mean that the individuals who comprise that group also proclaim God's message. They tell again the message of the ancient prophets, but they preach that message to the world of today.

The church does not possess the spirit of prophecy simply by reciting the messages of the prophets of old. To have the spirit of prophecy means to faithfully and prayerfully apply the eternal principles of the prophets to life as it is lived today and to the world as it exists today. As Paul grappled with the issue of food offered to idols and as Ellen White dealt with skirts that were too long, we, as bearers of God's prophetic message today, must address the issues of our times.

If we Seventh-day Adventists wish to live up to the claim that we have the spirit of prophecy, we must do more than pat ourselves on the back for having had the good fortune of receiving special guidance from God through Ellen White. In order to have the spirit of prophecy we must have something to say about God to the world of the 1980's. To both the oppressor and the oppressed we must have something to say about a God of justice; to both the hedonist and the lonely we must have something to say about a God of love; to both the university cynic and the Buddhist we must have something to say about a God of truth. Our claim to the spirit of prophecy is an empty creed unless the world through us is truly being confronted with God's message for our times.

Thank God for the precious prophetic legacy passed on to us by Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, Ellen White, and all the rest. Through the grace and power of Christ may their message find faithful expression in and through us so that the unique challenge of presenting the eternal gospel in the 1980's may be successfully met.

"To have the spirit of prophecy means to apply the eternal principles that the prophets have proclaimed"

Our claim to the spirit of prophecy is an empty creed unless we are confronting the world with God's message

YOU'RE NEXT

1. Why did Ellen White claim to be a messenger from God instead of a prophet? Is this distinction she made significant? Explain.
2. After a careful reading of Dr. Robert Olson's Evidence article for this week, list up to three questions you have concerning the writings and work of Ellen G. White.

1. _____

2. _____

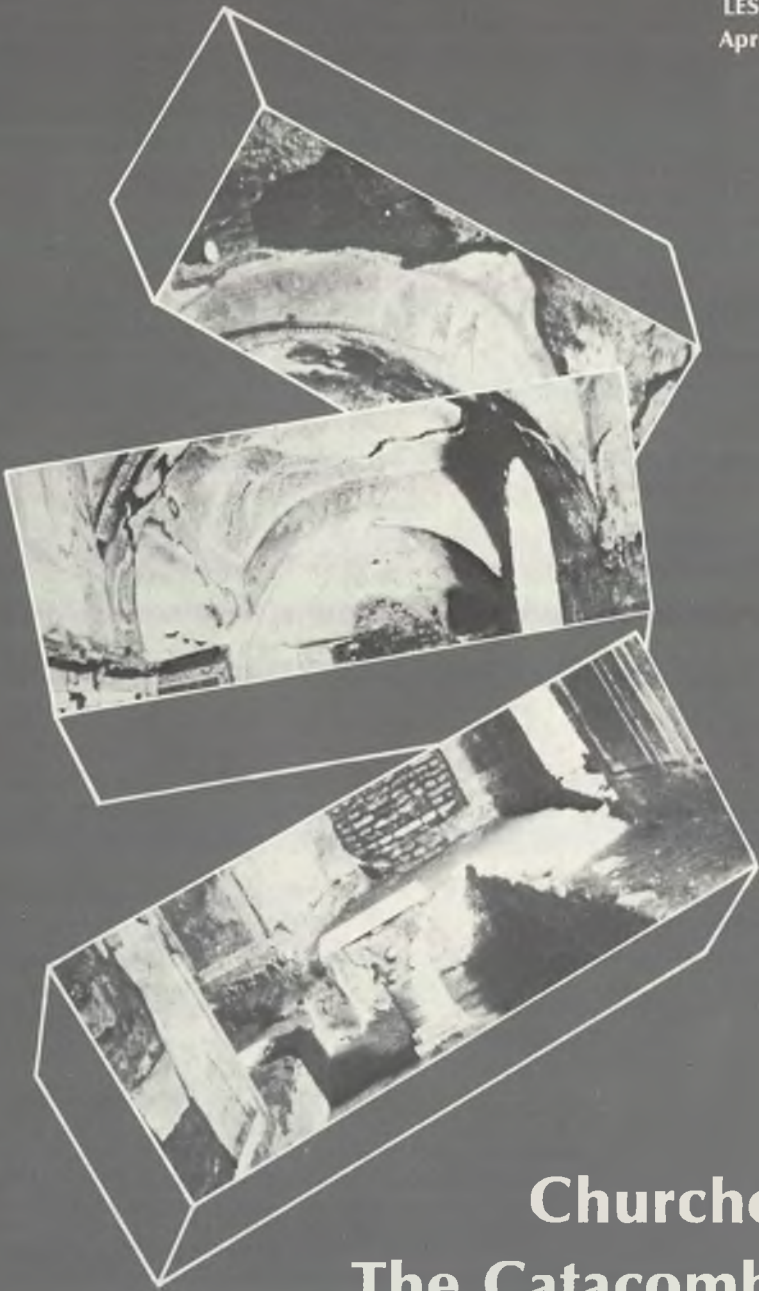
3. _____

Share these with your discussion group in an effort to discover some answers.

3. As Seventh-day Adventists, can we say that we have the "testimony of Jesus" in our midst just as long as we believe that Mrs. White was a genuine prophet?

Since the church has not had a "prophet" since Ellen White's death in 1915, what is necessary to keep the "spirit of prophecy" alive? Another prophet? if not, What?

6. Does over-reliance on the writings of Ellen White tend to make our church's message oriented to the nineteenth century world she spoke to rather than to the twentieth century world that we live in? If so, how can this be changed without discarding Mrs. White's literary contributions altogether?



The Churches of The Catacombs — Ephesus and Smyrna

compiled by editors

In prophetic history, the churches of the catacombs—Ephesus and Smyrna—represent a period in the early church of both backsliding and great religious devotion, respectively. This time period stretches from c.30-311 A.D. and is of the same span of time that the early Christian historian Eusebius (c.260-c.340) wrote about.

Below are excerpts from Eusebius' *The History of the Church*. From his accounts you should be able to see exactly what is meant by "a period . . . of both backsliding and great religious devotion."

"Evangelists still eminent at that time

"Very many of the disciples of the time . . . first fulfilled the Saviour's command by distributing their possessions among the needy; then, leaving their homes behind, they carried out the work of evangelists, ambitious to preach to those who had never yet heard the message of the faith and to give them the inspired gospels in writing. Staying only to lay the foundations of the faith in one foreign place or another, appoint others as pastors, and entrust to them the tending of those newly brought in, they set off again for other lands and peoples with the grace and cooperation of God, for even at that late date many miraculous powers of the divine Spirit worked through them, so that at the first hearing whole crowds in a body embraced with whole-hearted eagerness the worship of the universal Creator."¹

"Leaders at that time of Knowledge falsely so called

"In earlier days he [the devil] had attacked her [the church] with persecutions from without; but now that he was debarred from this, he resorted to unscrupulous imposters as instruments of spiritual corruption. . . .

"Thus it came about that with the help of these ministers [the proponents of heresies] the demon that delights in evil enslaved their pitiable dupes and brought them to ruin, furnishing the unbelieving heathen with ample grounds for speaking ill of the divine message, since the talk to which they gave rise circulated widely and involved the whole Christian people in calumny. . . .

"But this propaganda brought Carpocrates no lasting success, for Truth asserted herself, and with the march of time shone with increasing light. . . .

"But the splendour of the Catholic and only true Church, always remaining the same and unchanged, grew steadily in greatness and strength. . . ."²

"Gallic martyrs of Verus's reign

"The severity of our trials here, the unbridled fury of the heathen against God's people, the untold sufferings of the blessed martyrs, we are incapable of describing in detail. . . . He left no stone unturned in his efforts to train his adherents and equip them to attack the servants of God, so that not only were we debarred from houses, baths, and the forum: they actually forbade any of us to be seen in any place whatever. But against them the grace of God put itself at our head, rescuing the weak and deploying against our enemies unshakable pillars, able by their endurance to draw upon themselves the whole onslaught of the evil one. These charged into the fight, standing up to every kind of abuse and punishment, and made light of their heavy load as they hastened to Christ, proving beyond a doubt that the sufferings of the present time are not to be compared with the glory that is in store for us."³

¹ G. A. Williamson, transl., *Eusebius: The History of the Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), pp. 147-148.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 158-160.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

by editors

Notes

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

"You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. . . . But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans,¹ which I also hate" (see Rev. 2:1-6; NIV).

¹ *Nicolaitans*: a heretical sect plaguing the early church, identified as Gnostic (*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 745).

"The Church at Ephesus had faithfully applied its tests and had weeded out all evil and misguided men; but the trouble was that something had got lost in the process. 'I have this against you,' says the Risen Christ, 'that you have lost your first love.' That phrase may have two meanings.

"(a) It can mean that the first enthusiasm is gone. Jeremiah speaks of the devotion of Israel to God in the early days. God says to the nation that he remembers, 'the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride' (Jeremiah 2:2). There had been a honeymoon period, but the first flush of enthusiasm is past. It may be that the Risen Christ is saying that all the enthusiasm is gone out of the religion of the Church of Ephesus.

"(b) Much more likely this means that the first fine rapture of love for the brotherhood is gone. In the first days the members of the Church at Ephesus had really loved each other; dissension had never reared its head; the heart was ready to kindle and the hand was ready to help. But something had gone wrong. It may well be that heresy-hunting had killed love and orthodoxy had been achieved at the price of fellowship. When that happens, orthodoxy has cost too much. All the orthodoxy in the world will never take the place of love."²

"All the orthodoxy in the world will never take the place of love"

"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

"These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. . . . Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. . . . Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (see Rev. 2:8-11; NIV).

"The Risen Christ is he who experienced death, came to life again in the triumphant event of the Resurrection, and is alive for evermore. Here again there are two aspects.

"(a) The Risen Christ is one who has *experienced* the worst that life could do to him. He had died in the agony of the Cross. No matter what happened to the Christians of Smyrna, Jesus Christ had been through it. Jesus Christ can help because he knows what life is like at its worst and has experienced even the bitterness of death.

"(b) The Risen Christ has *conquered* the worst that life can do. He triumphed over pain and over death; and he offers us through himself the way to victorious living.

"In this passage there is also a demand, and the demand is for *loyalty*, loyal even when death is the price to be paid. . . . It was R. L. Stevenson's prayer that 'in all the chances of fortune, and down to the gates of death' we should be 'loyal and loving to one another.'"²

"Christ has experienced and conquered the worst that life could do"

¹ From *The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, pp. 63, 64 (Rev. Ed.), translated and interpreted by William Barclay. Copyright © 1976 by William Barclay. Published in the U.S.A. by The Westminster Press. Used by permission.

² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

selected by Gary Deemer

Notes

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:**. . . You have forsaken your first love.”**

“The first experience of the Ephesus church led to good works. God took delight in the fact that His church reflected the light of heaven by revealing the spirit of Christ in tenderness and compassion. The love that dwelt in the heart of Christ; the love that caused Him to give Himself a sacrifice for humanity, and to suffer with forbearance the reproach of men . . . this was the love that was to be revealed in the lives of His disciples.

“But they neglected to cherish Christ’s compassion and tenderness. Self, as manifested in hereditary traits of character, spoiled the principles of the grand, good works that identified the members of the Ephesus church as Christians. The Lord Jesus must needs show them that they had lost that which was *everything to them*. The love that constrained the Saviour to die for us, was not revealed in its fullness in their lives; and hence they were unable to bring honor to the name of the Redeemer. And as they lost their first love, they increased in a knowledge of scientific theories originated by the father of lies.”¹

“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:**These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. . . . Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.”**

“It was through one who declared himself to be a ‘brother, and companion in tribulation’ (Revelation 1:9), that Christ revealed to His church the things that they must suffer for His sake. Looking down through long centuries of darkness and superstition, the aged exile saw multitudes suffering martyrdom because of their love for the truth. But he saw also that He who sustained His early witnesses would not forsake His faithful followers during the centuries of persecution that they must pass through before the close of time.”²

“Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. . . . Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward.

“Like God’s servants of old, many were ‘tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection’ [Hebrews 11:35]. These called to mind the words of their Master, that when persecuted for Christ’s sake, they were to be exceeding glad, for great would be their reward in heaven; for so the prophets had been persecuted before them. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the truth, and songs of triumph ascended from the midst of crackling flames. Looking upward by faith, they saw Christ and angels leaning over the battlements of heaven, gazing upon them with the deepest interest and regarding their steadfastness with approval. A voice came down to them from the throne of God: ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life’ [Revelation 2:10].”³

¹ Manuscript 11, 1906.² The Acts of the Apostles, p. 588.³ The Great Controversy, p. 41.

“They neglected to cherish Christ’s compassion and tenderness”

“Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses kept their faith unsullied”

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”

by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

Notes

The rise and triumph of Christianity is one of the most remarkable chapters of human history. Numerous scholars have written many books describing the reasons why an obscure Jewish sect, whose founder had been crucified by the Romans, became the most important movement in world history. To explain this enigma historians have turned their eyes of inquiry to the early centuries of Christian history—the period of the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna (ca. 30-311). It was in this period that the church, against overwhelming odds, emerged triumphant.

The emerging church faced serious obstacles, as any observant reader of Acts and the New Testament epistles can see. The main challenges were of an intellectual nature. On the one hand we see the challenge of the Judaizers who wanted to make "Jews" out of the Gentile Christians (Acts 15). On the other hand we find those who wanted to eliminate the entire Law in the name of "Christian liberty" (1 Cor. 5 and 6). Much of the apostle Paul's life and energy was spent meeting these serious challenges.

In the following centuries the church continued to be faced with such issues—Gnosticism with its dualism and rejection of the Old Testament and its God; Montanism with its anarchic and extreme tendencies; and Arianism with its rejection of the Trinity. These attacks to the foundation of the church were overcome because the church was blessed with men of outstanding abilities and good educational backgrounds—Paul, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Athanasius and many others—who knew how to discern truth from falsehood.¹ From these challenges the church emerged stronger. In fact, during this period the church formulated some of the basic doctrines of Christianity and was forced to decide which writings should be considered canonical.

Another aspect that played a major part in the success of the church was its dedication to social responsibility to the less fortunate. Right from the beginning Christ's command to help the poor became an integral part of the church's missionary activity (Acts 6:1-6).

In an age when no security existed for the poor the church not only preached salvation in the world-to-come but also provided a home for the homeless.

The period between the resurrection of Christ and the legal recognition of the church by the Roman emperor Galerius in 311 was a time of triumphs and failures for the church. We have only emphasized the positive as an example to emulate. In the last days we will encounter problems that will be similar to the experiences of the early church. Let us learn from her experience and pattern ourselves after the great defenders of the faith of that time.

¹ The attacks on the foundation of the faith in the Early Church were almost always the result of the intellectual and philosophical climate of the time. Are we today facing also challenges to our faith because of our intellectual climate? How shall we deal with them? Should we put our heads into the "sand of ignoring" or study the current issues and then meet them on their own ground? The first is the more comfortable choice but also a sure way of making a church irrelevant. The second option takes courage and intellectual rigor. There can be no half-way commitment. An effective defender of the faith has to be a person willing to undergo the pain of thorough intellectual training.

Heretical attacks were overcome by men with outstanding abilities and good educational backgrounds

The early church was dedicated to social responsibility

by Timothy Simon

Notes

I get wobbly-kneed when I think about the persecutions we Christians are to meet in the last days. I've envisioned myself being squished between two giant metal walls—very slowly. I've imagined the pain of having straight pins up the fingernails, hair on fire and operations without anesthesia. And quite frankly, I've wondered how determined I would remain to the Lord under such conditions. If giant steel doors were to enclose me like a blacksmith's vise, I wonder if I would remain true.

God wrote letters to the churches of Smyrna and Ephesus about remaining true in persecution. To the church suffering a storm of heresies He counseled to remember their first love. To the church suffering a "fire at the stake" type of persecution He admonished to remain faithful. The Seventh-day Adventist Church finds itself in danger of both heretical and physical persecution. Thus, the advice given the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna is applicable for our time today.

1. Remember your first love. This is as much a command of God as "Remember the Sabbath day." Both He requires of Christians today.

Take time to meditate on and contemplate—remember—your first love. I'm sure that many of us remember our first loves with girlfriends or boyfriends. In the same way remember the closeness, the peace, the contentment of that early spiritual experience.

And perhaps most importantly, remember *how* you came to that first love experience; after all, that's what's really important.

2. Examine your thoughts and actions daily. Jesus said, "remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent" (Rev. 2:5). There is no better way to find out what your priorities really are than to critically examine the events in your life.

Does your life show that you are following Jesus? The disciple of Christ is one who paints a house for a convict's wife, who sits with a man dying of cancer to allow his wife some free time, who would not think to "adorn" himself with overly expensive automobiles and homes.

It is one thing to sing "Christ for me . . ." but quite another thing altogether to see that He really remains in that "Number One" position.

3. Be faithful—no matter what! "Fine!" you say, "But how? I'd love to be faithful—even unto death—but what I *want* and what I *do* are sometimes two different things." Well, the first thing for you to do is "count" yourself as being faithful until death—since Jesus your Substitute was. Then the second thing for you to do is to keep your spiritual and mental "eyes" upon your faithful Substitute.

If you do these two things you will still not be faithful 100% of the time. *But*, the trend of your life will be faithful. And in the end you will be counted with the faithful believers of the church of Smyrna.

4. Finally, remember the promises and rewards of Jesus. Nothing will lift you into the sphere of hope like a look in faith at heaven. When Stephen was persecuted with hurling stones his eyes were on heaven (Acts 7:56). When heresies or physical dangers threaten you, may you likewise focus your thoughts on the promises and rewards of above.

by Barbara Goyne

Notes

The church has faced opposition and serious conflict since its conception. The time span represented by the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna was especially trying for the infant community of believers, as during this period physical persecutions and intellectual assaults were made.

As a college student you might suffer somewhat from physical abuse, but more likely persecuting blows will be dealt to your self image, spirituality or belief in a conservative theology.

Since the period of church history represented by Ephesus and Smyrna was likewise a time of persecution, I believe that the messages to these churches contain counsel that can teach us how to cope.

Scholastic failure is a very real threat in college. Often the mental computer is overloaded with thoughts such as, "I'm not smart enough," "I'll never be any good at this so why try," "My background is too poor," and so on. Soon, under this onslaught, most positive efforts cease and self-esteem wanes. But note that when the early church felt threatened, God commended it for its *work* and its *patience*. Success came with persistent effort and a strong faith in final triumph.

"Success came with persistent effort and a strong faith in final triumph"

Difficulties in the *spiritual life* also pose serious threats in college. Today's college environment with its relaxed structure offers the student a greatly expanded array of personal choices. To one who has not been drawn by the tender constraint of God's love, allurements of so-called "adult" pleasures appear as a promise of liberty. When the members of the Ephesus church lost their first love Christ counseled them to "do the first works"—to develop their "first love."

"This 'first love' enables one to escape the 'pollutions' "

It is this "first love"—both for Christ and for others—that enables one to escape the "pollutions of the world" (II Pet. 2:20). And when right-doing is the result of constraining love, there is no room for the development of a "straight and narrow," holier-than-thou personality.

A third area of conflict in college life comes from *intellectual assaults* hurled from current authorities in science, philosophy, art, etc. The Christian student, however, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can investigate with confidence and joy *all* knowledge and know that as he remains open-minded he will be led into truth. The early Christians were counseled to "Fear none of those things."

"The Christian student can investigate all knowledge"

Christ told the believers at Smyrna that He was well aware of their tribulations and poverty. In fact, Christ is portrayed as *holding* the seven stars in His right hand and *walking* in the midst of the candlesticks, symbolic of His personal involvement and concern. Thus, I think we can safely say that He is not unaware of our problems today. When we, our spirituality, or our theology are dealt persecuting blows, we may know that Jesus Christ is among us still.

1. Are restrictive dormitory rules the best method of protecting college students from the corruptions of this world?
2. What tactics for overcoming sin can be gleaned from Christ's messages to the seven churches?
3. Commenting on the message to the church at Ephesus, William Barclay in this week's Logos section writes, "It may well be that heresy-hunting had killed love and orthodoxy had been achieved at the price of fellowship."

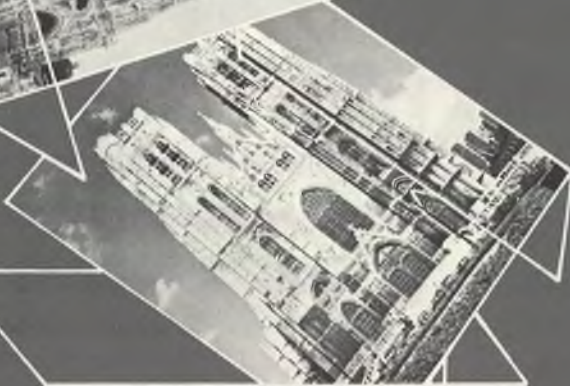
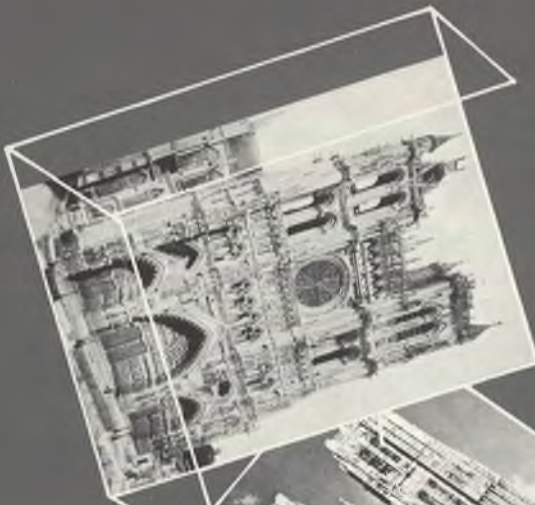
Do you agree with this statement? In what ways is it inaccurate or incomplete? In what ways is it true?

4. Also in this week's Logos article William Barclay—referring to the church at Sardis—states, "Christ has experienced and 'conquered the worst that life can do.' "

Share with your discussion group what this fact means to you personally.

5. Karl Schroeder, author of this week's Evidence article, describes the early church as one which contained men of good educational backgrounds and which was dedicated to social responsibility.

Considering these two factors separately, how important do you feel they were to the success of the early church? How important are they to the success of our church today?



The Churches of The Cathedrals — Pergamum and Thyatira

by Ruthita Jensen Fike

Jerilyn Jackson had a slight smile on her lips as she closed the door of her office. At 36 she was not only the youngest candidate ever to run for Presidential office, but the only woman. She was the candidate for a third party, which she had pioneered, called the Compromats. The latest UPI poll had just announced that Jerilyn was far ahead in the race and attributed it to her ability to bring opposing views together.

Jerilyn was still feeling the full pleasure of the announcement when she sat down for a few moments of relaxation. In college she had always been the most popular girl in school. It was during those years that she had discovered her amazing talent as a moderator. She fancied herself a peace-maker, and built most of her campaign around that concept. She believed that all differences could be solved if people were just willing to cooperate. Her campaign slogan said it all: "Unity, Moderation, Compromise."

It was Jerilyn's design to unify all of America and possibly even the world by building on man's common issues. "If people could only learn to give a little, as I have," she thought to herself. For a passing moment she felt weakened as she considered the ways in which she had "given" a little. She knew that some of her strongest supporters were violent and godless men, but on the other hand, they were very intelligent and certainly had a large following. All types of people deserve representation, she rationalized. Besides, she had never actually seen them do anything offensive.

A few weeks ago such thoughts would have depressed Jerilyn, but she had become artful in her ability to pass over them quickly. Interestingly, each time she dismissed these thoughts, they seemed to return with less frequency.

Jerilyn jumped as her top aide tapped her on the shoulder.

"The leaders of the major religions are waiting to see you."

"Yes. I'll be right there."

This would be Jerilyn's greatest triumph and was the issue that contributed most to her popularity. She planned to organize all of the religions into one and then to run them like a government office. The church would receive vast amounts of federal funding for selected projects and would be headed by a church official who had a larger following than even Jerilyn. Of course Jerilyn realized that his views on dissenters were much more radical than her own, but she had expected to disagree on some points. "There is some sacrifice to every agreement," she thought. "Furthermore, who is to say who is in the right?" She had to be tolerant of all viewpoints. That was the key. That was how she planned to get elected.

As Jerilyn rose to leave, she studied herself in the full length mirror that was on the wall of her office. She pulled at the soft brown locks that hung on the nape of her neck, and adjusted her skirt. She avoided looking directly in her own face, and found herself wondering how long she had been doing that. She also wondered if she did it to other people. She didn't think so. She was more disciplined than that. Decidedly, she forced her eyes to view themselves in the reflection.

Are there some viewpoints which should be condemned rather than accepted? By overlooking the lifestyles of some of her supporters was she actually condoning them?

Jerilyn withdrew her eyes from her face and fixed them on her blouse. "Unity, Moderation, Compromise," she said aloud. A look of practiced calm returned to her troubled countenance. "I am a peace-maker," she said reassuringly as she left the room.

by Sieg Roeske

Notes

Read Revelation 2:12-29.

The history of the Christian community seems to indicate that the degree of spirituality within the church was strongly influenced by pressures from the outside. Whenever these pressures existed—persecutions, heresies, etc.—the church banded together, withdrew from the world, and depended more fully upon the “arm of the Lord.” But as such threatening forces diminished, the church let down its standards and lost much of its sense of mission.

This was the case with the churches in Pergamum (or *Pergamos*) and Thyatira (Rev. 2:13, 20). The church at Pergamum had gone through a time of persecution and had risen to a state of unchallenged popularity and power. But with this came a false sense of security that led to compromise and apostasy. The word *Thyatira* has been suggested to mean “sacrifice” or “contrition,” which seems very fitting in view of the sacrifice the church made in substituting true faith for works and penance. Thus, salvation became a matter of law instead of a matter of faith.

“A false sense of security led to compromise and apostasy”

The sins of the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira can be placed into two categories.

1. **“Eating things offered to idols” (Rev. 2:14).** This represented more than the mere eating of food. The total picture referred to here is the participation of God’s people in the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles. We find an analogy to this in the Old Testament when Balaam encouraged the children of Israel to commit “whoredom with the daughters of Moab,” to participate in the worship of the Moabite gods, and to “eat”—presumably of the food sacrificed to their gods. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 749 and Numbers 25:1, 2; 31:16.)

Here we might ask the question, In what ways does the church today enter into worldly practices that would parallel “eating things sacrificed to idols”? Is there a similarity between heathen worship and some of our entertainment habits and health practices?

2. **“The sins of Jezebel, the prophetess” (Rev. 2:14, 20),** who seduced God’s servants to commit fornication. On the spiritual level, fornication describes the condition of the impure, compromising soul. Thus, fornication here means the mixture of paganism with the true religion of Jehovah.

The Old Testament account of Israel’s spiritual fornication is recorded in the book of I Kings. Here we find Ahab marrying a heathen princess and entering into an alliance with unbelievers (I Kings 16:31); we see Jezebel persecuting and destroying the leaders whom God had chosen; and we read that when Elijah had destroyed the false prophets, Jezebel threatened to take his life (I Kings 19:1, 2).

From this account some very relevant questions arise: Should Christians enter into business partnerships (or agreements) with unbelievers? Could we be guilty today of destroying the influence of those whom God has put in the position of leadership? Are those who take reformation seriously considered somewhat unwanted?

The churches of Pergamum and Thyatira—though surviving in a relatively calm era of Christian history—are characterized by apostasy and compromise. But to them the Lord not only gives a message of repentance, but of hope. To those who overcome Jesus says He will “give some of the hidden manna.” And, He declares, He will also give “a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it” (Rev. 2:17).

by Joy Burton

Notes

The churches of Pergamum and Thyatira are characterized by apostasy and compromise. Though Ellen White discusses these two churches by name very little, she does say quite a bit about apostasy and compromise. In the book, *Early Writings*, in a chapter entitled "The Great Apostasy," she tells the following story.

Sister White saw that Satan and his followers were persecuting Christians, but that the Christians wouldn't lower the standard. While Satan rejoiced over the physical sufferings of the saints, he wasn't happy; for he wanted the mind as well as the body. These sufferings, however, had only driven the Christians closer to God. Therefore Satan led his followers "to embrace a part of the Christian faith." ". . . I saw that at last the standard was lowered, and that the heathen were uniting with the Christians. . . . As the followers of Christ gradually united with them, the Christian religion became corrupted and the church lost its purity and power."¹

"But the Christians wouldn't lower the standard"

Such is how the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira apostatized: They compromised. Such is also how we may find ourselves becoming backsliders, by compromise.

"Only obedience to the requirements of Heaven will keep man from apostasy. God has bestowed upon man great light and many blessings; but unless this light and these blessings are accepted, they are no security against disobedience and apostasy. When those whom God has exalted to positions of high trust turn from Him to human wisdom, their light becomes darkness. Their entrusted capabilities become a snare."²

How else can we avoid compromise and apostasy? "He who understands well his own character, who is acquainted with the sin which most easily besets him, and the temptations that will be most likely to overcome him, should not expose himself needlessly and invite temptation by placing himself upon the enemy's ground. If duty calls him where circumstances are not favorable, he will have special help from God, and thus go fully girded for a conflict with the enemy. Self-knowledge will save many from falling into grievous temptations, and prevent many an inglorious defeat. In order to become acquainted with ourselves, it is essential that we faithfully investigate the motives and principles of our conduct, comparing our actions with the standard of duty revealed in God's word."³

God's forgiveness always accompanies His warnings

What can we do if we find that we *have* compromised, or backslidened? "The solemn warnings against idolatry, spoken through Moses in the hearing of all Israel, had been accompanied by prophecies of God's willingness to hear and forgive those who in times of apostasy should seek Him with all the heart. . . . The gracious assurance was given: 'If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.'⁴

¹ *Early Writings*, "The Great Apostasy."
² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 83.
³ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 517.
⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 334.

by Charles E. Felton

Notes

Pergamum (or Pergamos) was situated on the imperial highway, northeast of Smyrna, in the Caicus River Valley. The city was built by Aeolian Greeks soon after the fall of Troy. Public buildings were built on the summit and the slopes of a lofty hill which rose abruptly from the broad and fertile valley.

"Pliny called Pergamos the most illustrious city of Asia. There Homer, one of the earliest poets, and Herodotus, 'father of history,' studied and wrote, because of the great library which, according to Plutarch, contained 200,000 volumes. It was second only to the world-famous library of Alexandria. These libraries caused a long and bitter rivalry between the two cities. Egypt, in order to curb the growth of the Pergamum library, withheld shipments of papyrus, the ancestor of paper. To meet the emergency the Pergamenians dressed the skins of animals, on which to do their writing, calling the new writing material pergamos, and later, parchment. The rivalry between the two cities ended when Mark Antony removed the Pergamum library to Alexandria as a gift to the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, with whom he was infatuated."¹

When the eminent Sir William Ramsay saw the ancient ruins of Pergamum, he excitedly called it "a royal city," which indeed it was. The temple of Zeus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was the most important of all the temples of Pergamum and dedicated to Aesculapius, the serpent god of healing who was also known as the "Great Physician" and the "Saviour," a counterfeit of Christ. "Serpent worship was so universal in Pergamos that many coins have been found with a picture of a serpent entwined around a pole."² The altar in this temple of Zeus was a tremendous black marble structure, covered with beautiful carvings, 127 feet long by 120 feet wide and 40 feet high. "Bacchus, the god of wine, and Venus, the goddess of lust, were also worshiped in Pergamos. There paganism reigned supreme, with all its impure and licentious rites."³

Though Christ recognized the very sinful environment in which His Pergamenian followers lived, He planned that they should be shining lights to those around them who sat in darkness.

About twenty-five miles southeast of Pergamum, a little off the main road, lay the city of Thyatira. This city had been founded by one of Alexander's generals as a garrison. Since there were no natural fortifications, the city was destroyed and rebuilt on numerous occasions.

Thyatira was an important manufacturing city, populated mostly by common laborers. The workmen, especially metal craftsmen and dyers of purple cloth, were organized into unions. Thyatiran cloth, red and purple, was well-known in the ancient world. We remember that Paul shared the "good news" of salvation with "a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira" (Acts 16:12-14). There is some indication that the local church in Thyatira was a result of Lydia's labors.

Regardless of the circumstances one is in or the environment in which he lives, each Christian is admonished to "hold fast" the light which Christ has given, for we are responsible for truth which we have been shown or have had an opportunity to learn.

¹ Taylor G. Bunch, *The Seven Epistles of Christ* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), pp. 145-6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

by Gary Wisbey

Notes

Though the messages for Pergamum and Thyatira were not intended to be taken prophetically for the church of our day, we face many of the same kinds of problems these churches faced. Thus, the messages to these ancient churches can be of help to twentieth-century Christians in 1) meeting modern dilemmas and 2) offering promises which all believers may claim as their rewards.

From the counsel given to the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira come important lessons.

1. Face difficulties squarely. God commended the church at Pergamum for staying in the heathen city—a center of culture and learning—and for holding on to Christianity in the face of a morally debased society (Rev. 2:13), even though it would have been easy for the Christians to have left. In commenting on Pergamum, William Barclay has written, "The principle of the Christian life is not escape, but conquest. . . the duty of the Christian is to witness for Christ where life has set him."¹

2. Avoid compromising with wrong. If compromise has occurred already, repent. At Pergamum there were "Christians" who held to the teachings of Balaam and the heretical doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:14-16). Both groups attempted to persuade Christians that there was nothing wrong with careful conformity to the world's standards. The message to these two groups, however, is clear, "repent . . . I am coming quickly to . . . war with them" (Rev. 2:16, 17).

3. Avoid conforming to materialism. Apparently, in the church at Thyatira, Jezebel (perhaps an actual person symbolized here by this Old Testament character) may have been advocating accommodation with heathen practices and philosophies (spiritual adultery) (Rev. 3:20). In Thyatira—a center of commerce—some Christians may have joined worldly business associations (like modern labor unions?), possibly at the urging of Jezebel. Worldly businesses, however, were associated with heathen customs incompatible with Christianity, such as feasting on meat dedicated to idols. Yet, these compromising "Christians" appeared genuine.

Likewise many "Christians" today are materialistic and yet appear to be and claim to be followers of Christ. They are active in the church and generous; but the Lord reads motives, not just deeds (Rev. 20:23). He declares them, with those church members in Thyatira, to be bankrupt.

4. Claim the rewards promised Pergamum. Christ promises hidden manna to the overcomers in verse 17. This is variously interpreted and means either: 1) the heavenly home, a heavenly feast if the Christian abstains from earthly heathen practices, or best of all, 2) the gift of Christ Himself—His character and His power within us. Christ also promises to the believers a white stone (Rev. 2:17). The holding of a white stone probably refers to replacing heathen charms which were worn for safety in the days of Pergamum for carrying Christ's name as the only needed protection from all life's difficulties. The promised new name which is inscribed in the stone certainly refers to the character of Christ the Christian receives.

Indeed, what rewards are ahead for those who meet life's difficulties squarely and overcome compromise and conformity in their lives!

¹ William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Volume 1 (Chapters 1-5), rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 91.

by Jana Ford-Harder

Notes

What pictures come to mind when you hear the word "cathedral"? Soaring interiors with fan-vaulted ceilings? Beautiful stained glass windows? Splendid choirs and church music? Ritual and pageantry?

The cathedral churches of the Middle Ages—the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira in their prophetic guise—did indeed worship God with splendor and praise. And, according to God's Word, the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira held onto Christ's name, were patient, faithful, and charitable. Not a bad record, one could say.

Yet success, and even steadfastness and good works, can lead to compromise and apostasy; most of the comments made by Ruthita Fike, Sieg Roeske, Joy Burton, Charles Felton, and Gary Wisbey have underscored these dangers. Success seems to invite compromise in order to produce even more success. When steadfastness turns into stubborn rigidity, intolerance and persecution of others soon creep in. Finally, the good works which are often praised in the Bible can turn, with help from a bit of pride, to legalism, a sort of apostasy which negates the power of Christ's atoning death.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today needs to pay special attention to the message given to the church of Laodicea, but even so, it still needs to take warning from the problems encountered by the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira. Our church *has* been successful; many worthy projects and religious groups which began about the same time our church did have died. We need to rejoice in God's blessings, but we also need to carefully assess our motivations. Is bigger always better? Do we tend to want our church to grow just for the joy of seeing large numbers?

Then too, our church may need to worry about an almost opposite danger. Just as the medieval Catholic Church codified its theology, in the process creating a rigid dogma, so we may today exhibit traits of intolerance and spiritual pride. Any church which does take a holier-than-thou attitude, condemning others rather than helping them, has taken the first step toward apostasy.

The messages John the Revelator gave to the seven ancient churches all begin with recognition of their "works." But for the church at Thyatira, works are mentioned twice: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first" (Rev. 2:19). Clearly, this church is being commended. The commendation did not prevent apostasy, however. In fact, apostasy (literally, standing off, or withdrawing) will always result when a person or a group withdraws from the good news of Christ's atoning death to a reliance on works, good though they may be, for salvation.

The churches of the cathedrals, like all the churches of prophecy, have special beauties and values, and also special dangers. Famous rose windows and gothic arches can remind all Christians of God's special care and concern for His Church.

Success invites compromise in order to produce more success

"Is bigger always better?"

Apostasy: standing off, or withdrawing

1. In what ways is the Christian church guilty of compromise with the world today?

2. How can apostasy in the church be checked?

3. When, if ever, is compromise appropriate? When does it become apostasy?

4. Which of the following should an Adventist never compromise his stand on:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a vegetarian diet | <input type="checkbox"/> the eating of unclean animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the idea of justification by faith alone | <input type="checkbox"/> the infallibility of the Scriptures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adornment | <input type="checkbox"/> drinking alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> drinking alcohol while driving | <input type="checkbox"/> a lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sabbath observance | <input type="checkbox"/> theater attendance |

Why?

5. Speaking of the church at Pergamum, Sieg Roeske, author of this week's Logos article, suggests that "a false sense of security . . . led to compromise and apostasy."

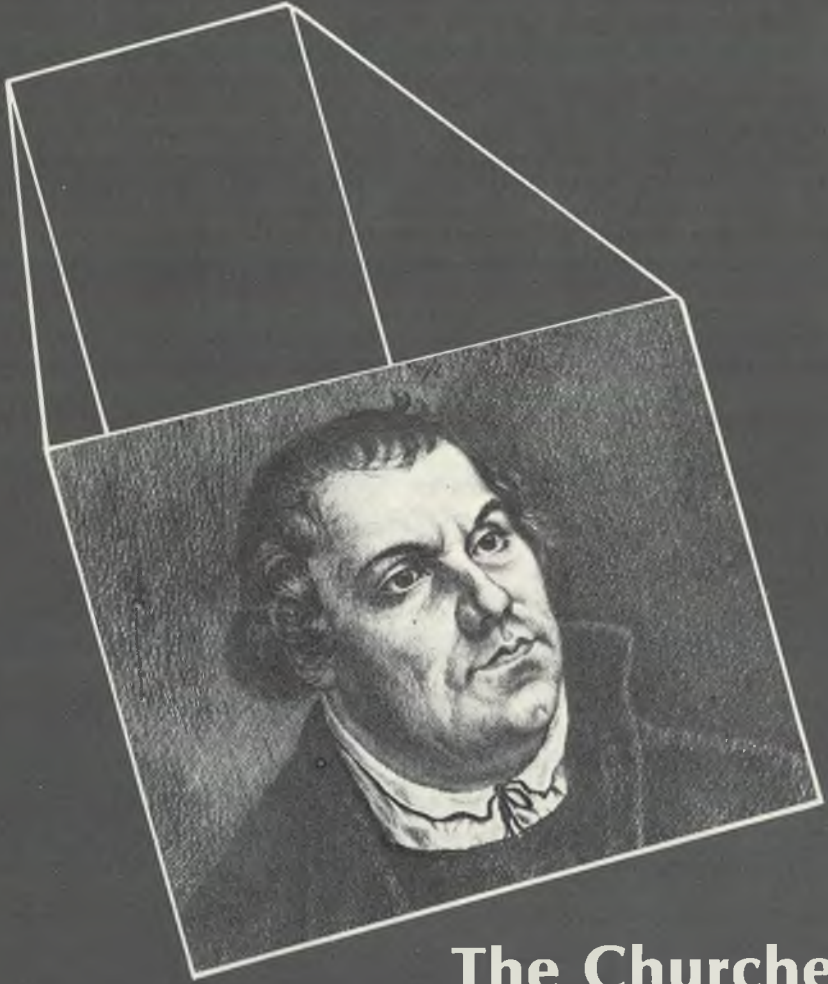
List three specific ways in which this statement is relevant to our church today.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. Under what circumstances could you envision yourself compromising your principles?



**The Churches of
The Reformation
And Revival —
Sardis and Philadelphia**

by Jana Ford-Harder

One night I dreamed I saw two travelers, each journeying to a separate destination. The one, Christian Goodman, was on the road which led toward Sardis. The other, Faith Godseeker, traveled toward Philadelphia.

Christian Goodman approached Sardis with hope, looking intently at the sign set along the road: "Sardis, City of Vibrant Living." He entered the city from the northeast, looking right and left with excited, quick glances.

On the left his attention was held by a group of children, all playing with balls which were many-colored and bright. The children moved rapidly, as children do, yet they all moved in perfect rhythm. All the balls being bounced hit the ground at the same time. All the balls being thrown left the throwers' hands at the same instant.

After a moment, Christian moved on. As he walked, he saw a number of sights that to him seemed to contradict Sardis' description of itself. Christian was uncomfortable. So he moved quickly toward the southwest quarter of the city.

There, life was far different. He saw no more uniformity, but rather intense conversations everywhere. Christian thought that the people seemed to care about one another; their small groups, heads closely bent together in conversation, and their spontaneous gestures, were a welcome change from the atmosphere he had just been in. Yet, as he moved closer, he discovered that he could not understand what the people were saying. The words themselves were plain enough, but the sentences were meaningless. After trying in vain to comprehend the conversations that had appeared so vital and interesting, Christian gave up and trudged out of the city.

While Christian was journeying through Sardis, Faith Godseeker was

in Philadelphia, a place that advertised itself as "The City That Will Last." At first, Faith saw no evidence that Philadelphia would last even a few years, let alone the indefinitely long period of time suggested by the sign. She saw anger shown openly on the city's streets as two men of different races shouted at one another. She saw an old woman, hobbling painfully, struggle to cross a crowded street, unaided by any of those who hurried by.

After a few hours of observation Faith stopped at a cafe, The Open Door, to order some lunch. As she sat down, her eyes caught the glimmer of unusual pendants hanging from chains around the necks of all the customers. As she noticed them she began to realize that all the Philadelphians wore an identical pendant—a small door and door frame made of pewter, specially designed so that the door was always open.

After her lunch arrived and she had begun to eat, Faith heard the voices of the two men she'd seen earlier. Now they were entering the cafe together, both apparently happy. The taller of the two men fingered his pendant as he offered to pay for his companion's lunch.

Faith shifted her position and glanced out the cafe window. Her eyes stopped on the old crippled woman she had so recently seen, this time surrounded by little children who were listening with rapt attention as she told a story. As she talked, she held her pendant in her hand as if it were a talisman.

Faith was curious about the power of that pendant. She began to sense that it was more important than a simple piece of jewelry, for it seemed to act as a symbol of something, or some kind of reminder to the Philadelphian inhabitants. *But a symbol, a reminder of what?*

compiled by editors

Notes

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

"These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!" (See Rev. 3:7-13; NIV).

"The lifelessness of the Church at Sardis had a strange effect.

"(I) The Church at Sardis was untroubled by any heresy. Heresy is always the product of the searching mind; it is, in fact, the sign of a Church that is alive. There is nothing worse than a state in which a man is orthodox because he is too lazy to think for himself. He is actually better with a heresy which he holds intensely than with an orthodoxy about which in his heart of hearts he does not care.

"(II) The Church at Sardis was untroubled by any attack from the outside, neither by the heathen or by the Jews. The truth was that it was so lifeless that it was not worth attacking. The Pastoral Epistles describe those who had drifted away from the true faith by saying that they had a form of godliness but denied its power (2 Timothy 3:5). Moffatt translates it: 'Though they keep up a form of religion, they will have nothing to do with it as a force.' Phillips puts it: 'They will maintain a facade of "religion," but their conduct will deny its validity.'

"A truly vital Church will always be under attack. 'Woe to you,' said Jesus, 'when all men speak well of you!' (Luke 6:26). A Church with a positive message is bound to be one to which there will be opposition.

"A Church which is so lethargic as to fail to produce a heresy is mentally dead; and a Church which is so negative as to fail to produce opposition is dead in its witness to Christ."¹

"There is nothing worse than a state in which a man is orthodox because he is too lazy to think for himself"

A church with a positive message is bound to cause opposition

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

"See, I have set before you an open door that no one can shut.' . . . I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown." (See Rev. 3:1-6; NIV).

¹ Implies unlimited opportunity for the church in victories over sin and in witnessing.

"In verse 11 there is promise and warning combined.

"The Risen Christ tells them that he is coming quickly. It has been said that in the New Testament the Coming of Christ is continually used for two purposes.

"(I) It is used as a *warning to the heedless*. Jesus himself tells of the wicked servant, who took advantage of his master's absence to conduct himself evilly and to whom the master made a sudden return that brought judgment. (Matthew 24:48-51). Paul warns the Thessalonians of the terrible fate which awaits the disobedient and the unbelieving when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven and shall take swift and final vengeance on his enemies (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Peter warns his people that they will give account for their deeds to him who comes to judge the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5).

"(II) It is used as a *comfort to the oppressed*. James urges patient endurance on his people because the coming of the Lord is drawing near (James 5:8); soon their distresses will be at an end. The writer to the Hebrews urges patience, for soon he that shall come will come (Hebrews 10:37)."²

The Risen Christ is coming quickly

¹ From *The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, pp. 117-118, (Rev. Ed.), translated and interpreted by William Barclay. Copyright © 1976 by William Barclay. Published in the U.S.A. by The Westminster Press. Used by permission.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

by Shelley Dickinson Bacon

Notes

Have you ever seen a zombie? No? Well, John the Revelator did—in those who spiritually are members of the church in Sardis. He described them: "I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Rev. 3:1; NIV). In other words, John was telling the Sardian "saints" that they were but animated corpses—not a very cherished description of one's spiritual life. Nevertheless, John "called them as he saw them" and challenged the believers to "wake up" to victorious living.

On the other hand, John commended the members of the church at Philadelphia and said that those who *overcome* will become pillars "in the temple" and bearers of new names (Rev. 3:12).

As I take a look at these letters to the two churches I know one thing for sure—that I want to be in the Philadelphian congregation when heaven's bells toll for me. In fact, not only at the end of my life but all during my life I want to be counted with the overcomers of Philadelphia.

But how? At times I can identify with the zombies in the church of Sardis. How can I spiritually enter the fellowship of the strong and loving Philadelphian believers?

"Let the repenting sinner fix his eyes upon 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world' (John 1:20); and by beholding, he becomes changed." Here we see the beginning work for the person who is being transformed from the zombie-state of Sardis to the spiritual pillar-state of Philadelphia. As the repenting sinner looks not to himself, but to Jesus, "His fear is turned to joy, his doubts to hope. Gratitude springs up. The stony heart is broken. A tide of love sweeps into the soul. Christ is in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. When we see Jesus, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, working to save the lost, slighted, scorned, derided, driven from city to city till His mission was accomplished; when we behold Him in Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood, and on the cross dying in agony,—when we see this, self will no longer clamor to be recognized." Continuing on in the same paragraph we are challenged to look unto Jesus, and "we shall be ashamed of our coldness, our lethargy, our self-seeking. We shall be willing to be anything or nothing, so that we may do heart service for the Master."¹

Heart service. That is the foundation of the church at Philadelphia, the church of "brotherly love." There is no force. There are no brownie points to be sought after. There is no peer pressure, leadership pressure or parent pressure. Heart service is a personal thing, and the only place it can come from is *your* heart.

"Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's our thoughts are with Him, our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things."²

Through the work of Christ alone we who spiritually are but animated corpses are taken out of this Sardian state and brought into the vital experience of the Philadelphians.

"Of whom do we love to converse?"

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 439-440.

² *Steps to Christ*, p. 58.

by Ralph E. Neall

Notes

Read Revelation 3:1-6 – the message to the church in Sardis.

Background: Founded before 700 B.C., Sardis stood like a watchtower on a 1500 foot high spur of Mount Tmolus. The greatest of its kings is remembered in the proverb, "As rich as Croesus."

In 547 B.C., Cyrus of Persia laid siege to Sardis, but it fell after 14 days when one of Cyrus' soldiers discovered a crack in the rocks through which he led a party of Persian troops to the top. Finding the battlements completely unguarded, the city fell. Indeed, the Sardians needed John's admonition to "Watch."

In John's time the city was wealthy but degenerate, and the church there had lost its vitality and power. The city was finally destroyed in 1402 by Tamerlane the Mongol.

Application: The Sardis period of church history was the time of Protestant Scholasticism and Rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During that time the church lost the life and mystery of the truths handed down from the reformers. The scholastic theologians spent their time in sterile discussion of questions which had been left open by the reformers, while others turned from the Word of God to the philosophies of men.

As we may see, the letter to the church at Sardis applies also to our time: "If the coat fits, put it on." We too are in danger of ignoring or diluting the truths received from our fathers. We too are called to "remember" what we have received and heard, and repent (vs. 3). Fortunately the door of repentance remains open and the power to conquer is still available (vs. 5).

Read Revelation 3:7-13 – the message to the church in Philadelphia.

Background: The city was named after Attalus II, who loved his brother Eumenes so much that he was called "he who loves his brother." It was founded in order that it might be a missionary of Greek culture to Lydia and Phrygia. Three centuries later it had "another great missionary opportunity, an open door to carry to men who never knew it the message of the love of Jesus Christ."¹

The Christian churches at Philadelphia and Smyrna persisted longer than any of the others in Asia Minor. "They were conscious of the admonition to hold what they had, so that no man would take their crown. (Rev. 3:11)."² The church disappeared only when its members were driven out by the Kemalists in 1923.

Application: In history, this was the period of Pietism, the Great Awakening, and the Advent Awakening of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America.

In Christian experience, there is much in the letter which applies also to us. For believers today there is an open door: It is the door of access to the throne of grace and the door of missionary witness to the world (vs. 8). But we must ask ourselves whether we have kept the word of Jesus, the word of patient endurance (vs. 8, 10). We too must hold fast what we have so that no one can seize our crown (vs. 11). And we must remember that for us the means of victory is still available and the new name is about to be placed on those who are victorious (vs. 12).

¹ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 158.

² SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 100.

by Gary Wisbey

Notes

The messages to Sardis and Philadelphia are to specific historical churches. However, the inference that we can profit from the admonition they received seems obvious from the closing injunction: "Let him who has an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (Rev. 3:6 and 3:13).

Let us first consider the experience of Sardis. Located high on a plateau—seemingly impenetrable from attack—and situated next to a gold-bearing stream, the city was wealthy. Its citizens could be stereotyped as lazy and degenerate. Perhaps it was because of the sheer laziness of its citizens or because of the position of the city that no watchman was posted. And twice was the sleeping city conquered as enemies scaled its walls.

Unfortunately, the Christian church at Sardis was as lethargic as was the city itself. In fact, the members were so spiritually bankrupt they were described as being "dead" (Rev. 3:1).

So the practical question for us to consider is, How may we profit from the message and experience of the church at Sardis?

1. Watch. That is, be spiritually alert. *Watch against temptation.* Unless guarded, all the senses provide entrances to the mind for an enemy waiting to destroy us spiritually. *Watch for the second coming.* "... for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). *Watch against false teaching.* Study God's Word and strengthen your mind through prayer.

2. Remember Christ's Love and Sacrifice (Rev. 3:3). If we could each day imagine ourselves standing before the cross of Christ it would be impossible to forget His love and the price of the gospel message.

3. Keep the gospel (Rev. 3:3). This is suggesting an ongoing process. It is not an on-again off-again Christianity that Christ wants us to have or that the world needs.

4. Repent (Rev. 3:3). In recognition of and sorrow for degeneracy, worldliness, and spiritual laziness, look to Christ for a new life.

Philadelphia received the greatest praise of the seven churches. She had "a little" strength, had kept Christ's word, and had not denied His name. How then may we profit from Philadelphia's experiences and the promises made to her?

1. Share Christ. Three centuries before the birth of Christianity, Philadelphia had been established as a "missionary outpost" (a door) through which to spread Greek culture to the surrounding cities. She had been successful in that mission. Now another great missionary opportunity had come, another door was open, one through which Christ's love could be shared with those who did not know Him. Again the challenge was met. For centuries Philadelphia — the city of "brotherly love" — shared Christ with the pagans around her. Thus we can all learn that the missionary work to be done is not far away. We can share Christ within our homes and neighborhoods.

2. Believe that Christ can bless you even though you have just "a little" spiritual strength. The church at Philadelphia was told "... because you have a little strength and because you have kept my word, and have not denied my name," you will have great opportunity and blessing. What fantastic encouragement! We need only "a little strength." For Christ supplies the power needed to grow and meet life's challenges.

by William Hemmerlin

Notes

Considering that Sardis represents the church that existed during the Reformation, we might expect to read some flattering comments in the first few verses of Revelation 3. After all, didn't the church break away from the dogmas and rituals represented by the Catholic Church? Wasn't the Bible put back in the hands of the people and weren't church members allowed freedom to think for themselves?

But notice: ". . . *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*" (Rev. 3:1). Although the Reformation church had a commendable early history, the period represented by Sardis (some suggest 1517 to 1755) was not characterized by open-mindedness and honest truth-searching. "Eventually, differences of opinion were settled by the adoption of definitive creeds that tended to discourage the search for additional truth."¹

Whereas the early Reformation period was characterized by true reform and honest scholarship, most of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries were, in some respects, little different than the centuries which preceded the Reformation. Protestant churches of this latter Reformation period had more of the form of godliness, rather than the power. Hypocrisy was the order of the day. No wonder Sardis received a most bitter criticism. What is worse than pretending to be godly? Christ's attitude toward hypocrisy was direct. He pulled no punches. (See Matthew 23.)

Unfortunately, however, the spirit of Sardis is alive and well within the Christian church today, causing many to have no interest in learning about a God represented by two-faced Christians. Thus, one can understand the strong position Christ held concerning hypocrisy. For this is, no doubt, one of the major hindrances to the effective spread of the gospel message.

Fortunately, however, the modern-day church also contains an element characterized by Philadelphia. This group is actively involved in an open-minded study of God's word. They are earnest, pure, and trying to live what they believe is truth. It is this group that reflects God's true character. These will, by their example, draw others to Christ.

So we have considered two early Christian churches which prophetically represent important periods of church history. But there is more to be understood: We can see likenesses of both churches in the modern-day Christian movement. Thus, from what we know of the church of earlier historical periods we can better understand the composition of our modern-day church and thereby better discern truth from error.

¹ SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 756.

"Differences of opinion were settled by the adoption of definitive creeds"

Hypocrisy: One of the major hindrances to the gospel message

1. Referring back to the story by Jana Ford-Harder in the Introduction for this week's lesson, what do you think the often-mentioned pendant is symbolic of?

What is the major flaw of the inhabitants of Sardis?

Why is Philadelphia "strangely appealing" to Faith?

2. William Barclay states in the Logos article for this week that "A Church with a positive message is bound to be one to which there will be opposition."

Is this true? Why is our church and Christianity in general experiencing such little opposition here in America?

3. What factors contribute to an awakening or a revival and reformation within the church?

4. Commenting on the period of church history symbolized by the message to the church at Sardis, William Hemmerlin in this week's Opinion article states, ". . . differences of opinion were settled by the adoption of definitive creeds. . ."

Does a "definitive creed" tend to discourage the search for additional truth? Is this wrong? Why?

5. From the contrasting expressions below choose the one most important to you.

orthodoxy/brotherhood

academic freedom/creedal statements

unity/searching, differing minds

thinking for oneself but arriving at heresy/too lazy to think but holding to orthodoxy





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Many persons, such as Pilate when Christ stood before him, do not want to know Truth because knowledge of Truth—brings conviction and responsibility.

A Christian educational institution, such as SMC, should be devoted to this search—the never ending struggle to know the good, the true, and the beautiful.



Southern Missionary College was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.



Photo by HAROLD M. LAMBERT

The Church Of the Last Days — Laodicea

by T. S. Eliot

The broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we here rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyred virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

Taken from *The Complete Poems and Plays*, by T. S. Eliot. Copyright © 1971 by Esme Valerie Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, p. 30. Used by permission.

compiled by editors

Notes

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

"These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see" (see Rev. 3:14-22; NIV).

LAODICEA NEITHER ONE THING NOR ANOTHER

"The condemnation of Laodicea begins with a picture of almost crude vividness; because the Laodiceans are neither cold nor hot, they have about them a kind of nauseating quality, which will make the Risen Christ vomit them out of his mouth.

"The exact meaning of the words is to be noted. *Cold* is *psuchros*; and it can mean cold to the point of freezing. Ecclesiastes (43:20) speaks of the cold north wind which makes the ice congeal upon the waters. *Hot* is *zestos*; and it means hot to boiling point. *Tepid* is *chliaros*. Things which are tepid often have a nauseating effect. Hot food and cold food can both be appetizing, but tepid food will often make the stomach turn. Directly opposite Laodicea, on the other bank of the Lycus, and in full view, stood Hierapolis, famous for its hot mineral springs. Often hot mineral springs are nauseating in their taste and make the person who drinks them want to be physically sick. That is the way in which the Church at Laodicea affected the Risen Christ. Here is something to make us think:

"(I) The one attitude which the Risen Christ unsparingly condemns is indifference. It has been said that an author can write a good biography if he loves his subject or hates him but not if he is coldly indifferent. Of all things indifference is the hardest to combat. The problem of modern evangelism is not hostility to Christianity; it would be better if it were so. The problem is that to so many Christianity and the Church have ceased to have any relevance and men regard them with complete indifference. This indifference can be broken down only by the actual demonstration that Christianity is a power to make life strong and a grace to make life beautiful.

"(II) The one impossible attitude to Christianity is neutrality. Jesus Christ works through men; and the man who remains completely detached in his attitude to him has by that very fact refused to undertake the work which is the divine purpose for him. The man who will not submit to Christ has necessarily resisted him.

"(III) Hard as it may sound, the meaning of this terrible threat of the Risen Christ is that it is better not even to start on the Christian way than to start and then to drift into a conventional and meaningless Christianity. The fire must be kept burning. There is an unwritten saying of Jesus: 'He who is near me is near the fire.' And the way to 'maintain the spiritual glow' (Romans 12:11, Moffat) is to live close to Christ."¹

The problem of modern evangelism is not hostility to Christianity; it would be better if it were so

The fire must be kept burning

¹ From *The Revelation of John*, vol. 1, pp. 141, 142, (Rev. Ed.), translated and interpreted by William Barclay. Copyright © 1976 by William Barclay. Published in the U.S.A. by Westminster Press. Used by permission.

compiled by Mark Driskill

Notes

"The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments. 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked [Rev. 3:17].'"¹

"With some the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not fully understand it; because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it. And yet they rest as unconcerned and well satisfied as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, as token of God's favor, went before them. They profess to know God, but in works deny Him. They reckon themselves His chosen, peculiar people, yet His presence and power to save to the uttermost are seldom manifested among them. How great is the darkness of such! yet they know it not. The light shines, but they do not comprehend it. No stronger delusion can deceive the human mind than that which makes them believe that they are right, and that God accepts their works, when they are sinning against Him. They mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof. They suppose that they are rich, and have need of nothing, when they are poor, wretched, blind, and naked, and need all things."²

"The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.

"It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, and who believe themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' I was shown that many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians, who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life. They need a deep and thorough work of self-abasement before God before they will feel their true need of earnest, persevering effort to secure the precious graces of the Spirit.

". . . a terrible deception is upon our people, which makes it necessary to come to them with warnings, to break their spiritual slumber, and arouse them to decided action."³

For further reading:

Testimonies, volume 3, pp. 252-293.

¹ *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 406-407

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 253-254

Their works do not measure with their profession

"They suppose that they are rich, when they are poor"

The message to the Laodiceans is that they are deceived

anonymous

Notes

Though the ruins of ancient Laodicea have never been excavated, the city is well known from contemporary documents. The city was founded by Antiochus II during the 3rd century B.C., and named for his sister Laodice. Situated on the main road from Ephesus to the Euphrates, the town soon became a major trade center. Several great banking houses were established and riches abounded. But not only were the Laodiceans well off, they were also self-reliant. When their city was partially destroyed by earthquake in A.D. 60, they declined aid from Nero's royal treasury, and rebuilt the city themselves.

Laodicea was known as a center for the manufacture of glossy black wool garments, obtained from a local breed of sheep (now extinct). Another source of local pride and wealth was the famous medical school at the shrine of Men Karou. Its physicians compounded the famous Phrygian powder, and ophthalmic potion for the cure of conjunctivitis and trachoma.

The local water supply was a stream fed by nearby hot springs, making tepid rather than cool and refreshing water a well-known local phenomena.

In light of these historical insights, Christ's rebuke to Laodicea takes on added meaning. He describes the Laodiceans who lived in a wealthy fashion and garment center with one of the best medical schools in the world as naked and blind and wretched. Certainly they had never thought of themselves this way.

Equally as sobering though are the comparisons to us today. Our church has never been richer, better dressed, or more sophisticated than it is today. We support our church generously and refuse all government aid. We even support a large and respected medical school. Thus it leads one to wonder if Christ were to rewrite the letter to Laodicea today would there be anything He would need to change?

by editors

Notes

Written between the lines of the message to the Laodiceans is a glimmer of hope. The church is noted as being lukewarm, poor, blind and naked. But at the same time we know that it represents the end-time church—the church in existence when Christ returns. Therefore (and here is that glimmer of hope), the spiritual condition within the Laodicean church has to change, for the church that Christ comes to gather home is alive and victorious.

In this article, let's discuss how we, as prophetic members of the Laodicean church, may change our wretched and miserable spiritual condition and become ready to meet Jesus at His soon coming.

1. Know yourself. According to Revelation 3:27, one of the Laodicean conditions is that the church thinks it is rich and increased with goods but doesn't realize that it is actually naked and poor and blind and miserable. So, "Know thyself."

2. Accept Christ's acceptance. Ask yourself the question, "If I were to die tonight, would I *know* I have eternal life?" If you answer this question with "maybe" or "I sure hope so" you can be certain that you have not yet really accepted the fact that Christ has accepted you.

For some reason accepting forgiveness is a difficult thing for us humans to do. Maybe our pride gets in the way, or maybe it's just that salvation as a free gift is so unique and fantastic that it is also nearly unbelievable. But whatever the case may be, the power of the Spirit has been promised to help us accept the fact that Christ has accepted us.

3. Accept yourself. This is where Lucifer had his downfall—in not accepting himself. He wanted to be greater, to be more than he actually was; he was not satisfied with himself. Eve fell into this trap also—she was tempted to not be satisfied with being "just a person," but wanted to be a god.

Apparently the members of the Laodicean church are also tempted in this way. The reason I say this is that a sure sign of a person who does not accept himself is the wall of false fronts he builds up. If a person does not like himself he will put on a number of different false images that he *can* accept—the joker image, the "brain" image, the self-sufficient image, etc. The church at Laodicea was saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." This the Holy Spirit exposed as a false front when John said, "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Indeed, to be delivered from the Laodicean attitude we must learn to accept ourselves.

Know yourself, accept Christ's acceptance, accept yourself. I hope we members of the Laodicean church remember these three key thoughts.

by Dean Hubbard

Notes

Atrophy—the process of arrested growth, and the loss of flexibility and adaptiveness—has fascinated many thinkers and writers. Physical and natural scientists have studied the phenomenon. Social scientists use *atrophy* to describe the process by which an organization or individual becomes rigid, structured and resistant to change. “Parkison’s Law,” “The Peter Principle,” “The Pearly-Gates Syndicate” are all light-hearted attempts at describing its symptoms.

Stated clearly, the concept is this: Every person, every institution, every society may start off in a very zealous and altruistic fashion, but as maturation takes place, it will become rigid, structured and resistant to change. It will lose its adaptiveness. John Gardner put it this way: “When organizations and societies are young, they are flexible, fluid, not yet paralyzed by rigid specialization and willing to try anything once. As the organization or society ages, vitality diminishes, flexibility gives way to rigidity, creativity fades and there is a loss of capacity to meet challenges from unexpected directions.”¹

“The new organization is loose in procedure, unclear in organizational lines, variable in policies. It is willing to experiment with a variety of ways to solve its problems. It is not bound by the weight of tradition . . . as it matures it develops settled ways of doing things and becomes more orderly, more efficient, more systematic. But it also becomes less flexible, less innovative, less willing to look freshly at each day’s experience. Its increasingly fixed routines are congealed in an elaborate body of written rules . . .”²

Indeed, this problem of atrophy seems to be a basic difficulty which has always confronted God in dealing with His people. The experience of the children of Israel is an excellent example of this—in fact, they finally rejected Christ because of their inflexibility. And as the church organization today searches for rationality and efficiency, there is a tendency to close the system; i.e., eliminate meaningful exchange with the environment. Thus, organizational maintenance becomes the reason for existence.

A “Peter Principle” corollary says that this process is inevitable: There is no way to short-circuit the Laodicean anomaly of Christ on the outside of His own church, knocking to get in.

But Peter’s corollary is wrong: It is not necessary for the church to enter a Laodicean condition. Two simple but critical steps, initiated under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can avert organizational atrophy. *First, the church must maintain a clear sense of purpose, for the initial sign of atrophy is when purposes are compromised. We must therefore be constantly clarifying our objectives and setting meaningful (i.e., problematic, measurable) goals that relate to the larger context of purpose. We must rank order our ambitions and not allow ourselves to engage in any activities that will compromise the broader plan.*

Second, we must encourage, indeed demand, active mental involvement on the part of all. This precludes the stifling of doctrinal debate. This welcomes constructive challenges to old methods and approaches. This refuses to be intimidated by past failure or inoculated by past success. Thus, the enigma of Laodicea—satisfaction with the status quo—can be overcome.

¹ Copyright © 1963, 1964 by John W. Gardner. From the book *Self-Renewal*. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row Publishers, Inc. Page 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

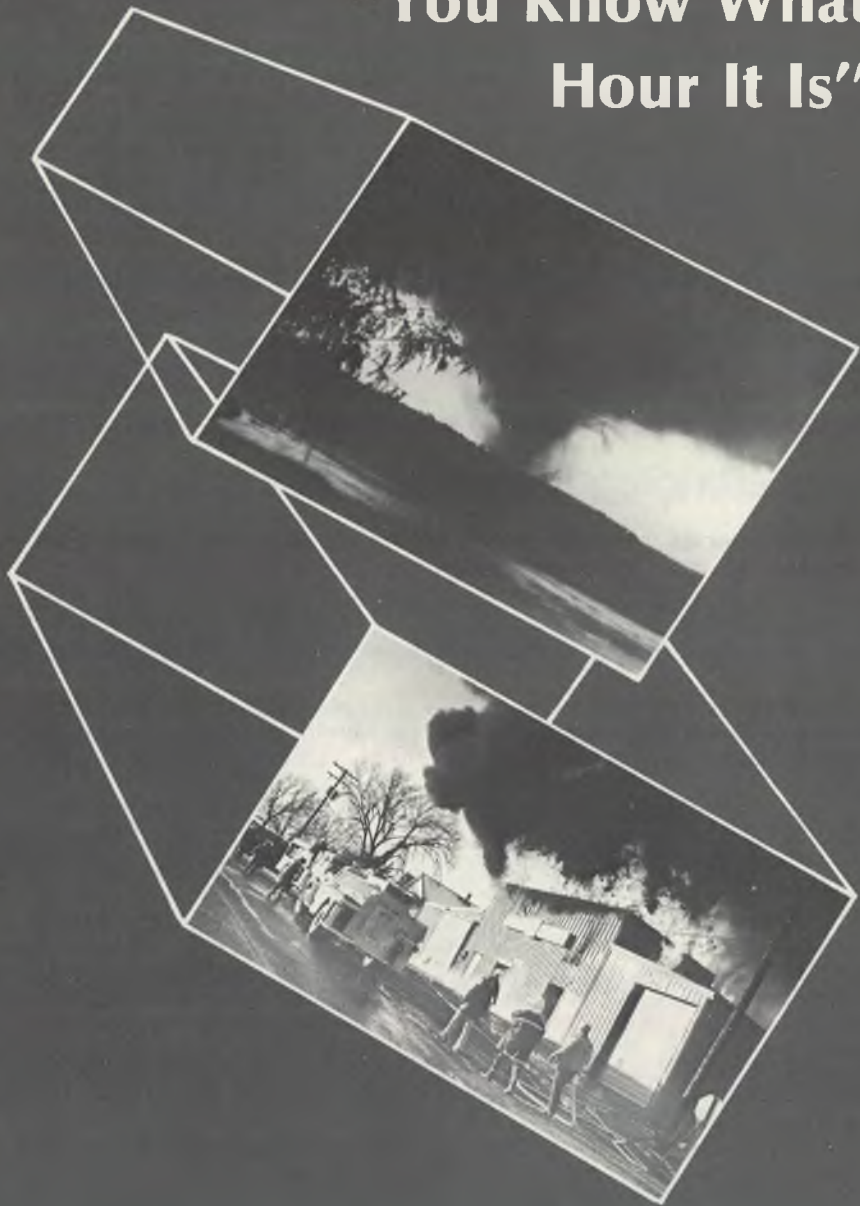
1. The Christian church at large has slept in a Laodicean condition for centuries. Is this inevitable? Can something be done about it? If so, What?
2. Complete the following:
To be in Laodicea means to . . .

To bring myself out of Laodicea I must . . .

To help bring my fellow church members out of Laodicea I must . . .

The church will be delivered from this condition because . . .
3. Share with your discussion group the significance you see in the poem for this week's Introduction — "The Hippopotamus."
What does it tell you about yourself? About your church? About Christianity?
4. In the message to the Laodiceans, we see perhaps the greatest paradox of the whole Bible — that of Christ on the outside of His own church, knocking to get in.
In what specific way does this paradox speak to you? How can this situation be remedied?
5. Does the Lord really desire that we be spiritually cold instead of lukewarm? Why?
6. On a separate sheet of paper rewrite the letter to the Laodiceans making it speak specifically to your situation.

“You Know What Hour It Is”



by Doug Morgan

"O Lord, how long must I call for help before you listen, before you save us from violence? Why do you make me see such trouble? How can you stand to look on such wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are all around me, and there is fighting everywhere. The law is weak and useless, and justice is never done. Evil men get the better of the righteous, and so justice is perverted" (Hab. 1:2-4 TEV).

How long? Mass starvation in Indochina—it shouldn't be much longer. Crises in the Middle East—it can't be much longer. The Consumer Price Index rose 1.6% last month—no, not much longer. 80-year-old Adventist minister sentenced to Siberian labor camp—surely, not much longer. 614,291 cases of child abuse reported in the United States last year—it can't go on much longer, but how long?

"I saw one weary, sad, and torn,
With eager steps press on the way,
Who long the hallowed cross had borne,
Still looking for the promised day;
While many a line of grief and care,
Upon his brow was furrowed there;
I asked what buoyed his spirits up,
"O this!" said he—"the blessed hope."

Annie R. Smith

by Helmut Ott

Notes

“. . . so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28; NIV).

The second coming of Jesus will be the most dramatic and radical of all God’s redemptive acts. It will bring the present order—life and history as we now experience them—to an end in order to establish God’s eternal kingdom of righteousness and love (Daniel 2:44; II Peter 3:13).

Jesus described His return as a worldwide event nobody will miss; **“every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7)**. He promised to come in person, in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory. And He will come for His people. The righteous dead will be raised to life and the justified living will be transformed, and the angels will bring them all into the presence of Jesus. Then will begin a life of unending joy and self-fulfillment in God’s restored universe for those who have accepted salvation through Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:27, 30; Rev. 1:7; John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 21:1ff).

God saw best not to reveal “the day and hour” of Christ’s return. But He has given us many specific signs by which we can know when the appointed time draws near. Some of these signs take place in the world of nature, both here on earth and in the sun, the moon and the stars (Matt. 24:7, 29; Acts 1:7).

Other signs take place in and among people. The New Testament speaks of wars and famines, lawlessness and apostasies, false prophets and a generation of people that, like Noah’s contemporaries, will be totally unprepared to meet their day of destiny (Matthew 24:7-12, 37-39).

Jesus made the prophetic promise that the gospel will be preached in the whole world (Matthew 24:16; Zech. 4:6). But it will have no significant effect on mankind at large. Men will be utterly self-centered, greedy, unthankful, lacking in **“reverence and normal human affections . . . , loving what gives them pleasure instead of loving God” (II Tim. 3:1-4; Phillips)**. Many will be “irreligious” while most will **“keep the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it” (II Tim. 3:2, 5; Jerusalem)**.

Jesus gave us all these signs so that when we see their fulfillment we may, **“know that He is near, at the very gates,”** and intensify our preparation to **“stand before the Son of man” (Matthew 24:33, 42, 44; Luke 21:34, 36; NIV)**.

Our personal preparation to meet God must be our first order of business whether Jesus comes tonight or fifty years after tomorrow. At the same time we must listen to the apostolic writers as they admonish us to be more zealous—to have greater urgency in our preparation—precisely because the time is very short (Romans 13:12; II Peter 3:13, 14; NIV).

And to “be ready” is not a matter of our merits or accomplishments, of course. Rather, it depends on our unreserved dependence on, and total commitment to, Jesus as our only and all-sufficient personal Saviour (John 8:24; 1:12; 15:1-7; Eph. 2:8, 9; Romans 3:23-25).

Christ’s second coming is the most radical of all God’s redemptive acts

Our first order of business: to prepare to meet God

by Dennis Bailey

Notes

Probably most believers feel that Christ should have come long ago. Some have even begun to wonder if He will come at all. What is He waiting for? Why the delay? What can we do to hasten His coming?

The following statements by Ellen G. White may help to answer these questions.

"The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay."¹

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain."²

"The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message.

Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional."

"God had committed to His people a work to be accomplished on earth. The third angel's message was to be given, the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people. The Sabbath reform was to be carried forward. The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.

"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!"³

It would seem that Mrs. White gives at least two reasons for the delay in Christ's coming: (1) God is unwilling that any should perish and (2) the work of spreading the gospel is not finished. Perhaps it is time that we fill our hearts with Jesus instead of with worldly things. Certainly it is time that we finish the work.

"The morning is deferred in mercy"

"The promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional"

"Christ would have come ere this"

¹ *Evangelism*, p. 694

² *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 22, 23

³ *Evangelism*, p. 695-696

by David Steen

Notes

"The
world is
in trouble"

In the scientific community today there is a great deal of uneasiness. Thoughtful researchers generally agree that the world is in trouble. Though some are optimistic that technology will be able to solve the environmental dilemma, most are urging immediate and radical changes in social, political and economic systems in order to salvage a mere existence for future generations.¹ Some are resigned to the fact that it is already too late to salvage anything, even with immediate changes.

This pronounced insecurity stems from the fact that the earth's population will probably double within the next 25 or 30 years, even with the most stringent birth control practices.² More people will naturally need more food, but the present world food production is very near the theoretical maximum.³ And with huge losses of prime agricultural land to industrial development, suburban sprawl, erosion by wind and water, and the increasing difficulty of combating pests, world food production will probably go down.

The annual Environmental Quality (EQ) Index continues to show losses in other areas also. In spite of strict government regulations, the air itself continues to be harmful to one's health in many parts of the country. Water contains more and more toxic substances. Mineral resources, including fossil fuels, continue to be squandered at alarming rates. And in our pursuit of the "good life" we continue to promote the extinction of species, mostly through habitat destruction. As more and more nuclear power stations are put into operation around this earth, accidents like Brown's Ferry and Three Mile Island seem inevitable. Truly the world is "waxing old like a garment" (Psalm 102:26 and Isaiah 51:6).

Nature, as God's second book, has in the past shown signs of the nearness of Christ's second advent. As Adventists we have repeatedly been reminded of the Great Lisbon Earthquake, of the demonstrations in the sun, moon and stars, and of other natural events heralding Christ's soon return. And it seems that the increasing environmental disruption brought about by the greed of sinful man is another voice of nature fairly shouting in an attempt to awaken us from spiritual slumber. Since even the usually optimistic scientists are now worried about the future of the earth, what are we as informed Christians doing to be ready for the final act of redemption? "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Christ's return to earth must be soon. And I suspect that the rescue mission to save those who love and obey their Creator will be necessary partially because the earth will no longer be habitable for humans.

¹ Grahame J. C. Smith, Henry J. Steck and Gerald Surette, *Our Ecological Crisis* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), p. 15.

² Paul R. Ehrlich and Ann H. Ehrlich, *Population, Resources, Environment* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1972), Chapters 2 and 3.

³ Eugene P. Odum, *Fundamentals of Ecology* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 3rd Ed., 1971), pp. 54-55.

⁴ John Strahm, Ed., "Environmental Quality Index," *National Wildlife*, 17 (Feb.-Mar., 1979), pp. 22-32.

by editors

Notes

Commenting on His second coming, Jesus admonishes, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). "Watch therefore." I've often wondered what this phrase actually meant.

I remember once as a little boy when, after reading this text, I decided it meant that I should search the eastern sky every so often—about every ten or fifteen minutes—to see if I could see that "small, black cloud, about the size of a man's hand." Not long after that experience I decided—probably as a result of eye fatigue—that searching the sky was not exactly what Jesus had in mind when He said "watch." I had no better interpretations—I just decided that that one was out.

Recently, however, *watching* has come to mean three things to me, and I would like to share these with you. To me, *watching* means:

1. To re-evaluate my biblical but traditional customs. Take the ordinance of humility and Lord's Supper for examples.

I can honestly say that each time I have participated in the foot-washing exercises in our church that I have received a spiritual blessing. But the paradox to me is that I will wash a stranger's feet but not help my little sister take out the garbage.

Likewise, I have been blessed through receiving the Lord's Supper. Yet I have thought: Can I really be eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus and not want to share of my time and my means with, for example, the Cambodian refugees?

Indeed, I wonder if the following texts apply here: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? . . . I am full of the burnt offerings . . . I delight not in the blood . . . of lambs or of he goats . . . Wash you, and make you clean . . . Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:11, 16, 17).

2. To be intellectually honest. Unfortunately, theology historically has not always held such a reputation. During the middle ages, when evidence pointed to the fact that the earth revolved around the sun, theologians became quite upset and even blood was shed because the Bible seemed to suggest that the sun rotated around the earth (Joshua 10:13). Thus, scientific investigation (and the investigators!) was suppressed.

"Come now, and let us *reason* together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). Indeed, there is a need for Adventists today to be intellectually honest with themselves and with others.

3. To be informed of current events. I mention this for a twofold reason. First, the signs of His coming of which Christ so plainly spoke are sharply pronounced in the current events of our day. And these signs should tell us something.

The second reason why I mention that we should be informed of current events is so that we may better communicate with and help our world. If we truly love our neighbors on this globe, we will be concerned about everything that is affecting their world.

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (Hab. 2:1).

by Gerald F. Colvin

Notes

Whenever we start talking about Christ's second coming the question, "Are we ready?" always seems to come up. But as Helmut Ott reminded us in this week's Logos section, spiritual readiness does not depend upon our own merits or accomplishments. Rather, we are "ready" when we show a total dependency upon and commitment to Jesus.

**Christians
are
ready**

Yet, as Christians who believe and teach that the second coming of Christ is imminent, there seems as if there must be something we still must *do* in order to prepare. And perhaps that "something" is simply to intensify our preparation toward dependency.

Most scientists apparently believe that the earth is in deep ecological trouble. But is there not also a similar need for "ecological" balance in *human* nature?

Today the world at large seems quite unwilling to move outside of itself to a "Reality" beyond in order to find solutions to its problems. Men seem intent on not only looking out for, but depending solely upon "Number One."

**"The greatest
mastery is
self-mastery"**

Many years ago S. D. Gordon wrote, "The greatest mastery is self-mastery."¹ In reality, this mastery of ourselves means dependence upon and control by the Holy Spirit—not ourselves. Through the Holy Spirit the mind of Christ abides within those who determine to serve Him. Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ: the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20, NEB). As you cooperate, said Paul, you will find that "it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose" (Phil. 2:13; NEB). Indeed, the Holy Spirit makes us ready for Christ's coming by teaching us total dependence upon the Lord Jesus.

**Total
dependence
upon Jesus
is the key**

As we continue yielding the control of our wills to God each day, depending solely upon the strength and merits of Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings our natural tendencies into harmony with holy principles, and we develop strong and constant minds. "Thou dost keep in peace men of constant mind, in peace because they trust in thee" (Isaiah 26:3; NEB). As we hold to God, He will not leave us to the control of Satan and the weaknesses of our own natures. We will become more and more invincible to the fierce assaults of the devil. "Can his prey be taken from a strong man, or the captive be rescued from the ruthless? And the Lord answers, The captive shall be taken even from the strong, and the prey of the ruthless shall be rescued; I will contend with all who contend against you and save your children from them" (Isaiah 49:23-24; NEB).

Indeed, may we each "be ready" by depending solely upon the strength and merits of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.

¹ Gordon, S. D., *Quiet Talks On Personal Problems* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), p. 10.

by Merton E. Sprengel

Notes

Editor's note: Was the great Dark Day of 1780 a supernatural phenomenon? Is the frequency of earthquakes increasing? Why did the "stars fall from heaven" in 1833?

In his well researched report below, Merton Sprengel, an associate professor of chemistry at Union College, reveals some interesting—and to some, perhaps unsettling—evidence suggesting that what many have learned regarding the "supernaturalness" of the signs of Christ's second coming have no basis in fact.

Though it is the *fact* that an event occurred and not the *cause* of that event which is significant to many regarding the "signs," it is nevertheless important to understand and teach what is most accurate relative to these events (see editor's note in the *SDA Bible Student's Source Book*, p. 317).

For two thousand years Christians have watched for Christ's soon return. Various visible phenomena in the heavens have been interpreted down through the centuries as signs of His soon appearing. For more than a century, Seventh-day Adventists have called attention to the signs of the advent in the sun, moon and stars as prophesied in Matthew 24:29. Hundreds of articles and references on this topic appear in our church literature.

James White was the first Sabbath-keeping Advent leader to publish on these signs. Of two differing Millerite views publicized in Advent literature in 1841-43, William Miller preached a figurative, political interpretation relating to the deposing of the French government during the French Revolution. James White accepted and published the literal interpretation developed by Josiah Litch in the Millerite *Signs of the Times*.¹ The views and sources used by Litch and another Advent writer, D. T. Taylor, were published in early issues of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* by the editor, James White.²

Seventh-day Adventists today accept the literal events that James White introduced to the SDA church as fulfillments of the prophecies regarding the second advent of Christ.

Dark Day and Reddened Moon of May 19, 1780. Most of what has been written on this subject has appeared since 1840. A few key authors, widely quoted by others, have made careful selections from 1780 materials, avoiding many references to physical phenomena which would suggest a natural cause for the 1780 darkness. Few authors appear to have studied the actual 1780 sources for themselves. Consequently a balanced view of the recorded events is not found in the available literature since 1780. Until 1919, the "supernatural cause" concept predominated.

In his early works,³ James White published materials which suggested that the Dark Day was caused by clouds. Later most of those quotations were replaced with others that did not mention clouds, and he expressed the opinion that it was a supernatural event.⁴

Others have also espoused the supernatural theory which had its origin in 1780 and which was published widely in Advent literature of the 1840s. Various claims regarding the extent, duration and cause of the Dark Day are found in both Adventist and non-Adventist sources.⁵ But many of these do not agree with the historical records of 1780.

Recent republication of many of the original 1780 sources, however, makes it easy to research this event in order to determine the facts.⁶

According to 1780 records, May 19 was a very dark day in the New England states of North America, but it is by no means the only dark day that has been recorded. The sun rose that morning and in some places it was already obscured by rain and storm clouds. As the day progressed, a weather front moved across the countryside in a northeasterly direction. For several days prior to the 19th, the woods in some areas of New York and New Hampshire had been burning furiously, covering much of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and some adjacent areas with smoke. The sun, within an hour or two of the horizon, could be safely viewed with unshielded eyes. It had a reddish appearance for several days, as did the moon.

As the weather front advanced vast quantities of smoke, soot, suspended ash and vegetable matter were swept along and mixed with the storm clouds. The densest region of clouds and smoke moved across the land causing the unusual darkness. In many locations it became about as dark as it gets a half hour after sunset on a normally cloudy evening. Yet it did not become totally dark, and the darkness varied with the location.

The most intense darkness typically lasted from one to three hours. During this time work was suspended and candles were lit. The total time when unusual darkness was noticeable, including the time when light faded out and back in again, was typically between four and six hours. In eastern towns it became light again in the afternoon before sunset, but it darkened once again in the early evening. Persons out walking that night had difficulty finding their way, even in familiar territory.

Many post-1780 sources refer to the duration of the darkness as 14 hours. But analysis of the 1780 references shows that this amount of time refers to a period stretching from the earliest recorded beginning of darkness in some locations to the end of the period of darkness in other locations. In any one place, the duration was a much shorter time.

Smoke was dense over a large area for several days before and after May 19. On Friday, the 19th, leaf ash and soot settled out of the air with the rain. Rain water, collected in tubs, had a scum over it. Freshly shovelled snow was turned from white to black with soot and ash during the darkness. Lines of black scum several inches wide washed up along river banks where water lapped the shore.⁷

Various claims regarding the extent of the May 19, 1780, darkness have appeared. But the area darkened was essentially limited to the states of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts with portions of Vermont and New Hampshire. One ship, about 240 miles southeast of Boston, reported sailing into the darkness. Newspaper reports indicate that it was not dark west of the Hudson river or into New Jersey or Pennsylvania. Published claims of the darkness covering most or a large portion of the United States or a considerable portion of the earth's surface have no known factual basis.

Regarding the red-moon phenomenon, it is interesting to note that on the night of May 19 the moon was several hours past full as it rose about an hour after sunset. Later in the evening, when a wind came up, the clouds dispersed. Thus smoke lingering in the air caused the moon to appear blood-red as it had on several previous evenings. When the last of the smoke was driven away by the wind after midnight, the moon

“As the front advanced, smoke, soot, ash and vegetable matter were mixed with the storm clouds”

“Claims of the darkness covering most of the United States have no known factual basis”

and stars were seen with their usual brilliancy.⁸

The historical records from 1780 were written by at least two types of contributors: those who stated their opinions and speculations, and those who recorded observed facts of time, weather conditions, atmospheric content, etc. Reports of deliberately observed facts from several independent writers in different locations leave little doubt as to the much-disputed cause of the darkness.

The 1780 darkness generated immediate and wild speculation as to its cause. A flying mountain, a comet, a blazing star, a planet coming between the earth and the sun, and an eclipse were among the suggestions made. Throughout our church history both writers and spokesmen have emphasized, and some today still continue to support, that the event has never been explained by scientists or others. This type of conclusion is not difficult to arrive at given only the biased record since 1840. However, with the 1780 sources available, it is not wise to continue to use sensational, exaggerated and unsupportable claims about the Dark Day as a basis for our theological beliefs. God has used natural phenomena in the past as signs to His followers. Thus we need not insist that historic events to which we have attached religious significance must be beyond our understanding, especially when the original records indicate differently.

“God has used natural phenomena in the past as signs to His followers”

Falling Stars. November 13, 1833, was a night to be remembered by residents of the eastern part of the United States. Thousands of brilliant fireballs scored the night sky in a spectacular display for several hours. This event stirred scientists to once again take up the puzzling origin of meteors. Few facts were known, and much folklore and superstition about meteors abounded at that time. A popular idea in 1833 was that meteors were bits of gas, which upon being naturally exhaled from the earth, rose and caught fire high in the atmosphere. Only after the 1833 spectacle did scientists begin to realize that meteors were solid objects orbiting the sun.

Study of early historical records revealed that the November 1833 meteor display was by no means a singular event. Records of the shower returning every 33¼ years were found dating back to 902 A.D. Predictions of its return in 1866 came true when another brilliant display, a little inferior to that of 1833, was observed. In 1899 and 1933, however, few were seen. Apparently a shift in the orbit of the meteor stream had occurred during its circuit about the sun, taking it away from Earth's position.⁹

In 1966, however, observers in the southwestern United States were treated to a brilliant display. Although it is difficult to make valid comparisons of the data from 1833 and 1966, some astronomers who observed the 1966 spectacular note that it may well have been the greatest on record, even surpassing that of 1833.¹⁰

Few seem to know that the November 13, 1833, Leonid meteor shower was only one of a recurring sequence. The impression is sometimes given that there has been only one spectacular meteor shower, when in fact there have been many. Another spectacular display occurred in 1799, which is closer to the other associated events seen as signs and closer to the end of the 1260 year prophetic period which they are sometimes used to help establish.

“The 1833 meteor shower was only one of a recurring sequence”

It has also been claimed that the 1833 shower is the greatest on record. While this may have been true up until 1965, it is no longer verifiable from the facts recorded by a number of 1966 observers. In any

case, the early records are too sketchy and nonquantitative for making valid comparisons.

As we present our beliefs to others regarding the falling of the stars and other physical phenomena, let us be careful to present a balanced, factual picture which will not be a cause of distress when further details of these events are learned in the future. Less emphasis on the sensational and spectacular aspects of these events will be to our advantage.

Earthquakes. Earthquakes have been known to occur for thousands of years. Some believers in the second coming of Christ consider them as signs, others do not. Few references are made to earthquakes in the Bible and the writings of Ellen White and each reader is encouraged to study these references for himself.

Available earthquake records are known to be incomplete, and therefore do not allow valid, long-range comparisons of earthquake frequency. Catalogs that have been assembled, however, do show a phenomenal increase in earthquake frequency over the last 400 years.¹¹ But conclusions based on this apparent increase must be made with caution. The data is biased in several ways which are not obvious from a casual frequency count analysis. Spread of population following European exploration, increased scientific interest in recent centuries, and better record keeping have all had a positive influence on the number of earthquakes recorded. Most earthquakes occur in regions of the earth that until recent times were inhabited only by tribal peoples with no written languages. And of course, no records from any of these areas exist from times earlier than their European colonization.

Instrumental measurement of earthquakes began in the early 20th century. Because seismographs detect tremors of much lower intensity than was possible without them, earthquake frequency is expected to be much higher, when all intensities are considered, after 1900 than before. This explainable increase is seen in the data sources.

But this increase in recorded earthquakes is limited to those of low intensity which cause little or no damage. The frequency of strong, damaging quakes has been essentially constant for centuries. This can be readily seen in the data from countries like Italy, China and Japan, where earthquakes are frequent and where records have been kept since ancient times.

A U.S. government agency list of recent earthquakes¹² shows a similar acceleration of the number of recorded quakes from 1900 to the present. Once again the raw data is biased by certain factors: lack of data from early decades, improvements in seismic instrumentation and reporting procedures, and automatic, worldwide, computerized recording of tremors since 1960. When contacted by this author about the validity of drawing conclusions regarding earthquake frequency from this catalog, its compiler in Boulder, Colorado, said that it is only reliable back to 1960! Records prior to that year are so incomplete that no comparisons should be made, except, possibly, for high intensity events.

When the high intensity quakes are plotted against time, the plot shows considerable oscillation due to the normal buildup and release of strain within the earth's crust. Interestingly, when oscillations are averaged out, the general trend for the period 1900 to 1975 is *down*. But because of cyclic patterns every few years, short-term comparisons should be avoided. And long-term comparisons should be made only with a detailed understanding of the data and its limitations, and after removal of artificial biases, where possible.

“Let us be careful to present a balanced, factual picture”

“The frequency of strong, damaging quakes has been essentially constant for centuries”

Conclusion:

Recognition of the promised signs of Christ's coming is a serious concern to Seventh-day Adventists. Careful study must be given to the inspired record and to historic or empirical evidence before stating that a given event constitutes a sign or a fulfillment of prophecy. And once we have decided that a given historical or physical event fits the biblical requirements, we must be careful to state the observed facts completely and fairly. With respect to the events discussed above, this has not always been done. Consequently a number of popular beliefs exist among the Seventh-day Adventist church membership that is based more on speculation and untrustworthy secondary sources than on verifiable facts. For the sake of accuracy, and the credibility of the Seventh-day Adventist message, serious research still needs to be done and publicized to correct errors that have crept into our understanding of these events over the years.

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1. What does it mean to "prepare to meet God"? How does one go about doing this?

2. List seven different signs of Christ's second coming.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

How many of these signs can find their application in numerous time periods?

What is the purpose of the signs of the second coming?

3. What is your reaction to the supplementary article in this week's lesson by Merton Sprengel? Does the information he presented bother you? Why?

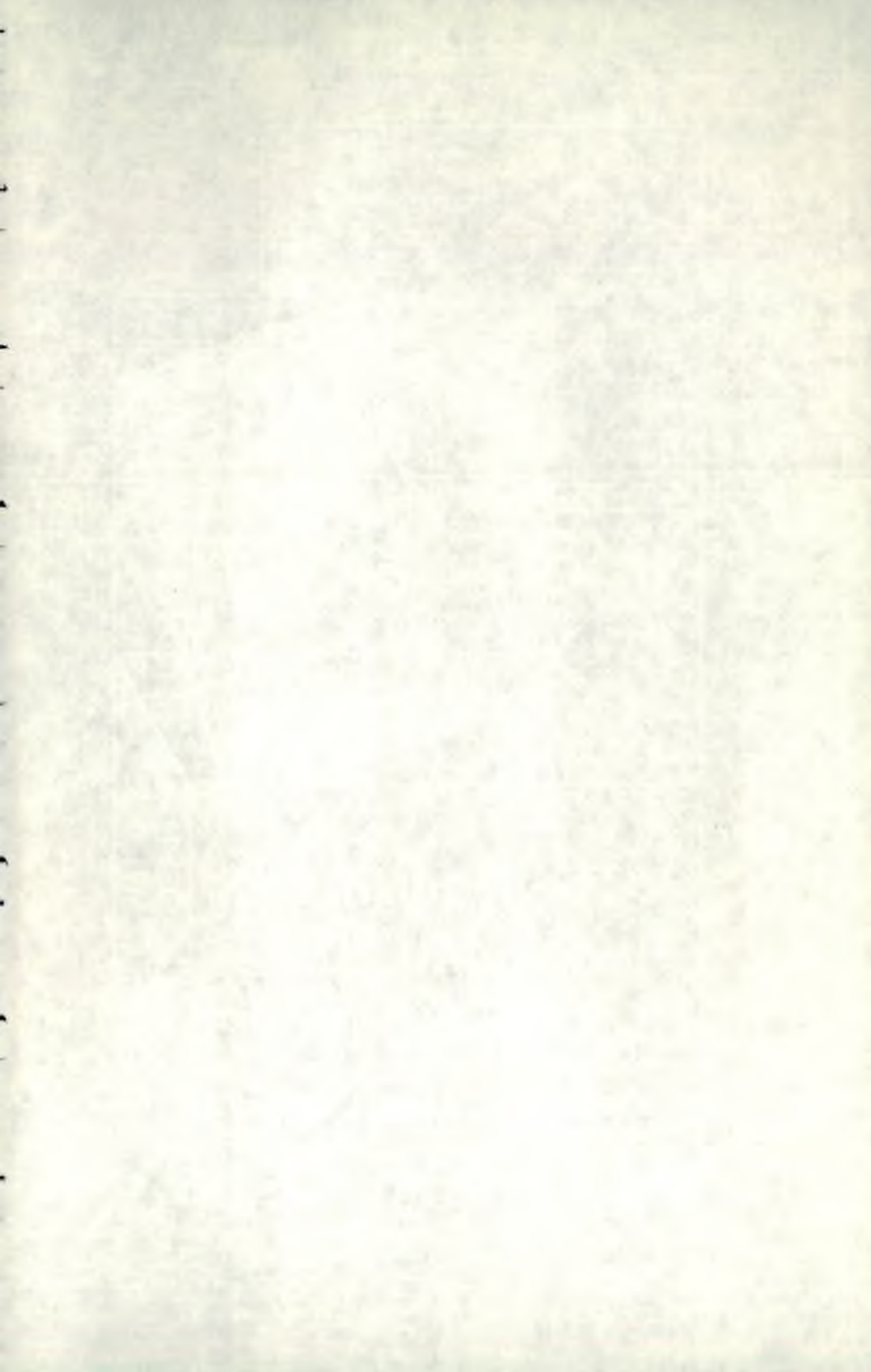
After reading this article, do you believe that Adventists are correct in claiming that the 1780 Dark Day, the 1833 meteor shower, and the frequency of earthquakes are signs of Christ's coming? Why?

What does Professor Sprengel's article suggest to you regarding the use of scientific data by those who have had no training in scientific method?

4. Christians have been blamed for taking a careless attitude towards the environment because, as the accusers say, "Christians believe that they are leaving this earth soon so they don't care what happens to it."

Support or refute this claim.

5. In these last days, what do you feel is the most important mission for our church? For us individually?





**“The Hour of . . .
Judgment
Is Come”**

by Minon A. Hamm

It was not like any other morning of Eliab's life. The desert breeze seemed oppressive, menacing. Sheep bleated, a strange, disturbed cry. Birds were silent. Yes, Eliab remembered, this was the day.

As he sat up Miriam opened her eyes. "We must be quick," he whispered hoarsely; "awaken the children." The family was scarcely dressed in the clean clothes Miriam had washed the day before when the trumpet blasted its signal to assemble.

Carrying their sons, Eliab and Miriam pushed along with hordes of neighbors past the farthest tents in the encampment to the place where the mountain started abruptly upward. The sky grew dark; distant thunder rolled. The voice of the leader came grave and urgent: "Do not for any reason pass the fence, or even touch it. To do so is certain death. When the trumpet blasts long, be ready. Then you will hear Him."

A rumbling underfoot left Eliab dizzy; he clutched Miriam lest she reach out to the fence to steady herself. The mountain was smoking now, and growing blacker. Its crest, stabbed by lightning, exploded in crimson flame. Eliab's throat was ashy. He clutched his child tightly, feeling Miriam's shaking shoulder against his.

Then it came—a trumpet note from high in the blackness: a pulsating, persistent, ever-loudening blast that seemed to ring against every object on that Mid-Eastern plain. But as He began to speak the trumpet quieted.

The voice assailed like a cyclone. Eliab heard it, not so much with his ears, but as a painful throbbing in the veins, as though the words were chiseled upon his skull, as though the reverberations would burst his temples. "I AM Yahweh Eloheka," the words began, "the One who brought you out of the house of bondage." It was as though the sound of His voice had been rolling through the universe since the first day of creation, as though there would never be room for anything else in space except His voice.

The writer of Hebrews describes the scene in Hebrews 12:18-21. In verses 22-29 he adds that though not marshalled before Mount Sinai, we too are to be called up before God, who this time addresses us from "the heavenly Jerusalem," speaking through the protecting "blood of sprinkling." No less awesome, the apostle maintains, this time God's words will "shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

An ancient voice is sounding in mid-heaven today, "Fear God and give glory to Him." A message of grace, of justification, of reconciliation? Yes, and of judgment. For the heedless, a word of doom.

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. . . . For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:25, 29).

by Wayne Niemyer

Notes

"Then . . . he said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come' " (Rev. 14:6, 7; NIV). Herein John the Revelator refers to the day of accounting during which every human being will be judged by the infinite standard of God's perfection. Every sin will be magnified by the One who reads the thoughts and intents of the heart. In that day, all will be abased. Hence, the cry, "**Who shall be able to stand?**" (Rev. 6:17).

In his words to the Romans, however, Paul gives us hope for the coming judgment: "**Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us**" (Romans 8:34; NIV). The writer to the Hebrews expands upon this thought when he says, "**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need**" (Hebrews 4:14-16). Even now Jesus is interceding for us in the sanctuary as High Priest, and we have the promise that He will continue to intercede for us through our day of judgment.

The sanctuary service illustrates well the relationship we share with Christ as our High Priest. Below, let us examine this relationship through the sanctuary types.

1. The Priest. Continual access to God is denoted here (Eph. 2:18, Hebrews 10:19-22). He is our continual advocate. We are continually covered by justification (I John 2:1).

2. The Continual Burnt Offering. Here, continual forgiveness is signified (Acts 5:31; I John 1:9; Hebrews 7:25; John 6:37). Spiritual cleansing and sanctifying grace are never-ending gifts of heaven (I John 2:1; Psalms 51:1-7).

3. Golden Altar. Incense was ever kept burning upon this altar (Exodus 30:7-8). The Hebrew word for *perpetual* is *tamid*, meaning, *continual*. Thus Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for believers (Hebrews 7:25).

4. Candlestick. This also burned continually (Exodus 27:20; Lev. 24:1-4) (again the Hebrew expression, "tamid"). When we compare this with Revelation 4:5, we find that the lighted candlesticks are representative of God's Spirit, who ministers to us without fail because of the mediation of Christ (Titus 3:5-7).

5. Shewbread. (Exodus 25:30); (Note the word "always" which also comes from "tamid"). The Hebrew expression for *shewbread* may also be translated as *bread of the Presence*. The lesson to be learned here is that we are not only spiritually, but physically dependent on God (Phil. 4:19; Matthew 6:26; Jer. 15:16).

In summary, let me say that in order to receive a reprieve in the judgment, we must walk spiritually through the sanctuary with Jesus. This is to say that we trust in the merits of Jesus Christ's ministration of forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration as seen in the continual work He is now doing in the heavenly sanctuary.

by Robert R. Morrison

Notes

With what standard will each character be judged?

"The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 482).

What is the only question that will be asked in the judgment?

"The only question asked in the judgment will be, 'Have they been obedient to My commandments?' " (*Gospel Workers*, p. 315).

What is the wedding garment that all must have?

"The wedding garment represents the *character* which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 307; italics mine).

In the parable of the feast, how does the king's examination relate to the judgment?

"By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, 'to give every man according as his work shall be.' Before His coming, then, the character of every man's work will have been determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward will have been apportioned according to his deeds" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 310).

Is there further clarification of the judgment standard?

"God requires *perfection* of His children. *His law* is a transcript of His own character, and *it* is the standard of all character" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 315; italics mine).

What then is our hope?

"Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. . . . The works show whether the faith is genuine" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312).

"It was by self-surrender and confiding faith that Jacob gained what he had failed to gain by conflict in his own strength. God thus taught His servant that *divine power* and *grace alone* could give him the blessing he craved. Thus it will be with those who live in the last days. As dangers surround them, and despair seizes upon the soul, they must depend solely upon the merits of the atonement. We can do nothing of ourselves. In all our helpless unworthiness we must trust in the merits of the crucified and risen Saviour. None will ever perish while they do this. . . . He . . . who listened to the cries of His servants of old, will hear the prayer of faith and pardon our transgressions. . . . Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. . . . Those who are unwilling to forsake every sin and to seek earnestly for God's blessing, will not obtain it" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 202-203).

by Mitchell Thiel

Notes

The concept of a final judgment is not one that many people are comfortable with. The idea that some time in the future all our motives, acts and thoughts will be weighed is probably not anticipated by anyone with pleasure. Yet the Scriptures mention a judgment and it does seem right that there should be some total assessment of one's life.

Judgment should not be foreign to you as a college student. College life seems to consist of a series of assignments, quizzes, tests and papers. The purpose of these is several but one reason is to give the teacher some basis on which to make a judgment of your ability and knowledge. Indeed, part of your work in college is to train you to make judgments. A book report or a critique of an essay is ultimately a judgment by you.

Certainly one fact you have learned is that judgment can be difficult; a complex book or essay is not easy to judge. Even critics whose business is judgment come to diametrically opposite opinions. Indeed to judge a life would seem presumptuous to most of us. To weigh deeds and motives seems impossibly complex for humans.

Our final judgment will be done, however, by a Judge who does not have our human limitations. He knows all the secrets of the heart. This may be a small comfort to some of us but we do know that He is skilled.

Moreover the final judgment may have a different perspective than the judgments you are used to making. When you go out to look for your first professional job you may be surprised to find that your prospective employer is more interested in what you can become than what you are. The employer is interested in your potential, your ability to grow; your accomplishments up to now, assuming some basic skills, are of secondary importance.

Likewise Christ is interested in your potential, your ability to grow, your aptitude for becoming a citizen of heaven. If you have a right relationship with Christ, your accomplishments up to now are of secondary importance to Christ. None of us now are fit citizens of heaven, but a belief and trust in Christ will give us the ability to become citizens of heaven and power to pass the final judgment.

“Christ is interested in your potential”

by Tina Hoover

Notes

Trusting in the merits of Jesus to pass heavenly judgment is basic to Christian beliefs, but it is so basic that it is often completely overlooked. There are so many doctrines, standards and ideas thrown into Christianity that come from a desire to please God and to improve oneself that a Christian often bypasses the basic comfort of assurance. Below are a few suggestions to lead the Christian back to basics.

1. Don't be afraid of the judgment. It is true that the judgment is important and will determine your eternal destiny. But being afraid will only inhibit the Christian and make it difficult for him to understand his Savior and God. Many people have been taught that God is a severe Judge and have developed an unhealthy impression of Him as a cruel tyrant who would like to see them defeated. But the very fact that there is a judgment reveals that God loves His creatures and will go to any length to save them.

The very fact that there is a judgment reveals that God will go to any length to save His people

2. Don't listen to Satan's accusations against you or God. From the very beginning Satan has been "the accuser of the brethren." It was Satan's accusations that revealed his selfish character and required his expulsion from heaven. He accuses God of being unjust and unloving. And he accuses the Christian of being inferior to God's requirements. He points to the faults of the Christian and capitalizes on them.

Now, a healthy conscience is good, and with the Holy Spirit working with your conscience you can see your faults and how God's grace will enable you to overcome them. But Satan encourages feelings of failure, and if the Christian listens to Satan's accusations he will eventually become the failure Satan wants him to be.

3. Don't dwell on self. Many Christians—old and new alike—get in a rut of dwelling on every act and every decision they make. They find difficulty in making decisions because they place universal and eternal importance on the most trivial matters. It is true that the Christian is a special person, representing God to the world, but by constantly dwelling on his own life he will inevitably become discouraged by his imperfections or become too proud as a result of his victories. And while it is possible to become obnoxious in verbally crediting God with every positive happening or every ability, the Christian should always remember in his own heart that his whole existence is only possible by the grace of God.

4. Look constantly to Jesus' life and to His interest in you individually and personally. Jesus' entire life is an example of unselfishness and total dependence on the Father. By studying His life of constant communication with God the Christian can better understand the team effort involved in the plan of redemption and the enveloping love which both the Father and the Son had for us—individually.

Although trusting totally in Jesus is often bypassed or overlooked, albeit unconsciously, the Christian can see how simple and easy "acceptance" can be only when he turns from himself to Christ.

by Ronald M. Springett

Notes

If a student receives a better grade than he deserves simply because he knows the teacher, or if the charges against a criminal are excused because he is a buddy of the judge, we would consider such to be grossly unfair, a miscarriage of justice. This is simply common sense.

But now, what about the Judgment, the law, and the condemnation of God? When we turn to these topics our fair-play, common sense ideas don't work; or do they? In the Judgment two people accused of the same sins stand before the Judge. One is condemned to death, the other receives eternal life. Reason: the one knows the Judge; the other doesn't.

In John 17:3 Jesus prayed, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Obviously, there is a difference between *knowing* God and *knowing about* Him. Indeed, the knowledge that saves is a knowledge that expands beyond the mind and permeates the entire being.

Saving knowledge permeates the whole being

But, if the "not guilty" verdict in the Judgment depends simply upon knowing the Judge, why then must there be a law? Here we run into a basic difference between the human and divine situations. The human judge, who is obviously not the law itself, is merely an executor of the law. On the other hand, the heavenly Judge is at one and the same time both the standard of judgment and the executor of that standard. For Christians, this standard is the Spirit or Mind of Christ, i.e., Christlikeness or Godliness (see Romans 8:2; 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5). By getting to know the Judge we learn more than about the mere letter of the law, we learn about the spirit of the law, the intent of the commandments. For, to know Christ is to know His law. So to answer the question, Why then must there be a law?, we could say, Because it is impossible to separate Christ and His standard of judgment.

The Judge and the law are one

The question then that remains is not *whether* we keep the commandments, but *how* we keep them. If we are slavishly keeping the ten commandments out of fear for Judgment we may be sure that we have missed the point entirely; and we cannot really be keeping the law since its very foundation is love and not fear (Matthew 22:30-40; Mark 12:28-33). But to love Christ is to keep, indeed more than keep, the ten commandments.

"The one knows the Judge"

In the Judgment two people accused of the same sins stand before the Judge. One is condemned to death, the other receives eternal life. And the reason is that the one *knows* the Judge; the other doesn't.

1. Why does an all-powerful, all-knowing God need to operate a judgment?
2. Will the theologically ignorant be judged against the same standard as the knowledgeable? Why?
3. Can the "heathen" be saved? If so, How?
4. If one is judged on the basis of the amount of truth he has had the opportunity to receive, then why should Christians evangelize the world?
5. Which of the following best explains how you feel about the Judgment?
 - _____ It scares me
 - _____ I am confident I will be pardoned
 - _____ I hope I will be pardoned
 - _____ I have already been pardoned
6. *God will soon judge this world and only those who have trusted in what Jesus **has done** for them will be guiltless.*

Share with your discussion group what it means to trust in "what Jesus *has done*" for you.
7. Is it possible for one to be pardoned in the Judgment without being obedient to God's commands?
8. In the great cosmic lawsuit—"the great controversy between Christ and Satan"—is God on trial before man, or is man on trial before God?



A Message For Our Time

by Eugene Shirley with Maude Pugh

From the middle-late 1870s until his death in May of 1909, Rev. Thomas McKnight Aikman—a Methodist circuit rider—was delivering the first angel's message in Nebraska. Making his way from homestead to homestead across the Nebraska prairie, the Reverend would be gone weeks at a time before returning to his wife and family, the youngest member of that family being my grandmother.

During a recent visit to my grandparent's home I spent some time in their library, searching through my great-grandfather's books, notes and sermon sketches. I discovered that from the Sunday School of one church he received two dollars worth of meat, ten cents worth of catsup, one-half bushel of turnips and fifty cents in cash as payment for his ministerial services there.

Scanning the books from which he preached I noticed a well-used paperback with the front cover and pages one through eight missing. I was surprised to find upon closer examination that he—a Methodist minister from the 1870s until the day he died—had not only used but had worn out *The Three Messages*, an Adventist publication on the three angel's messages.

Raised a Presbyterian, young Aikman left his church and joined the Methodists because they were sending missionaries as far west as Nebraska—and he wanted to go. So after attending college in Indiana, he left his widowed mother and seven brothers—all doctors or lawyers—and headed, unmarried, for his mission land.

And what did he preach to those early settlers? Well, as I said before, he preached the gospel of the first angel's message.

The first angel is the one with "the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth." It is the one with the "judgment hour message"—a message of hope, of righteousness by faith, to the believing. And it is this gospel that he spoke in those early pioneer days.

From his book of sermon sketches, consider his first-angel, gospel message and the distinctions he made between justification and sanctification.

"Justification changes our state in law before God as judge; sanctification changes our heart and life before him as our Father. Justification is first; sanctification follows as the fruit and evidence of it. Justified by imputed righteousness of Christ; sanctified by [the] grace of God being implanted in the soul. Justification is all done at once; sanctification [is] a gradual work. Justification removes [the] guilt of sin; sanctification [removes] the power of it. Justification delivers us from the wrath of God; sanctification conforms us to his image. Justification and sanctification [are] connected in [the] promise of God."

The messages of the three angels illumined the whole earth with their glory. Indeed, they even reached the pioneers and a Methodist circuit rider in Nebraska.

Maude Pugh, daughter of Rev. Aikman, is a housewife, grandmother and businesswoman living in Edmond, Oklahoma.

by William Johnsson

Notes

"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water' " (Rev. 14:6, 7; NIV).

The first angel's message calls for a three-fold response on the part of mankind—fear God, give Him glory, and worship Him as Creator. These three duties are in ascending order, and, when taken in their entirety, crystallize the response of a loving subject to his Maker.

Fear God

The Christian's fear of God is not like the heathen's. **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18)**. We do not come to God cringing, ringing the temple bell to wake Him up, bringing offerings or flowers or food, as I have seen in some Oriental lands. We come to God freely, confidently, expectantly, as a child approaches a loving father. What then does it mean to "Fear God"? It means primarily that we approach Him with a sense of who He is, as the Source and Ground of all things—visible and invisible. It means that we see ourselves as we truly are—creatures of His hand. *To fear God then, is to have a sense of the respect and honor that is due to Him for who He is and who we are.* That is why "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

Give Him Glory

To give God the glory means to praise Him. Just as the angelic beings around the throne spend their time in ceaseless adoration (Isaiah 6:1-4; Rev. 4:9-11), so the child of God is to constantly magnify his Lord. This means more than simply singing songs of thanksgiving (Eph. 5:19, 20); the outflowing of the total life is to be a hymn of adoration. In the long haul, what we *do* speaks more loudly than what we *say*, so God calls for a life that will match the hymns we sing. By giving glory to God we show that we have turned away from egocentricity: we're no longer grasping, supersensitive, jealous of our reputation, catering to our own wants and ready to push others down that we may gain some miserable advantage. We have turned away from self to God—in whom **"we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28)**.

Worship the Creator

With this injunction we reach the summit of Christian experience. Worship signifies the highest activity available to humanity. As St. Augustine prayed, "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Man, made in the image of God, is intended to achieve the full essence of his existence as he returns in worship to God. Worship in itself is based on the fear of God and glorifying God—it gathers up fear and glory and goes beyond as the *total* man or woman responds *completely* to the King of the universe. This is why worship involves singing, thinking, speaking and doing. It may be corporate; it may be individual. It comes to expression at a point of time, but ideally worship should permeate the attitude of the Christian at any hour of any day. Rightly understood, even work is worship.

selected by editors

Notes

A great religious awakening under the proclamation of Christ's soon coming is foretold in the prophecy of the first angel's message of Revelation 14. . . . "With a loud voice" he proclaims the message: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Verses 6, 7.

The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it. . . .

The message itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the "everlasting gospel"; and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had come*. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfillment of these prophecies. . . .

No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.

Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near. . . .

The proclamation of a definite time for Christ's coming called forth great opposition from many of all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, Heaven-daring sinner. The words of prophecy were fulfilled: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Peter 3:3, 4. Many who professed to love the Saviour, declared that they had no opposition to the doctrine of the second advent; they merely objected to the definite time. But God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not wish to hear of Christ's coming to judge the world in righteousness. They had been unfaithful servants, their works would not bear the inspection of the heart-searching God, and they feared to meet their Lord. Like the Jews at the time of Christ's first advent they were not prepared to

welcome Jesus. They not only refused to listen to the plain arguments from the Bible, but ridiculed those who were looking for the Lord. Satan and his angels exulted, and flung the taunt in the face of Christ and holy angels that His professed people had so little love for Him that they did not desire His appearing. . . .

With unspeakable desire those who had received the message watched for the coming of their Saviour. The time when they expected to meet Him was at hand. They approached this hour with a calm solemnity. They rested in sweet communion with God, an earnest of the peace that was to be theirs in the bright hereafter. None who experienced this hope and trust can forget those precious hours of waiting. For some weeks preceding the time, worldly business was for the most part laid aside. The sincere believers carefully examined every thought and emotion of their hearts as if upon their deathbeds and in a few hours to close their eyes upon earthly scenes. There was no making of "ascension robes" . . . ; but all felt the need of internal evidence that they were prepared to meet the Saviour; their white robes were purity of soul—characters cleansed from sin by the atoning blood of Christ. Would that there were still with the professed people of God the same spirit of heart searching, the same earnest, determined faith. Had they continued thus to humble themselves before the Lord and press their petitions at the mercy seat they would be in possession of a far richer experience than they now have. There is too little prayer, too little real conviction of sin, and the lack of living faith leaves many destitute of the grace so richly provided by our Redeemer.

"Would that there were still with the professed people of God the same spirit of heart searching . . ."

Taken from *The Great Controversy*, pp. 355-373.

Interview by Eugene Shirley with Andrew Jilani

Notes

*"So, my little kid brother, Kalu! Have courage; bear with your circumstances; do not try to change them and never ask for human rights and justice; you will be clubbed to death if you talk for your Community or your colleagues; keep turning your cheeks because that is your religion; Oh, yes, Jesus Christ took the whip and drove people out of the Church; He didn't tolerate Nonsense; but he is a man of Courage because that [is] what He preaches: **Courage.**"*

For these comments and scores of comments like them, Peter Zafar Jilani was arrested, imprisoned, and then ran as a fugitive in Pakistan until recently escaping to Germany. His brother, Andrew Jilani, is a student at Union College and granted the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY this interview.

In recent years, Pakistan has been under great political turmoil. I understand, Andrew, that your brother was until recently very much involved with these political and social problems. Would you elaborate on his work?

My brother, Peter Jilani, was very much interested in strengthening the Christian community which is depressed and discriminated against in Pakistan. In a country where the vast majority of the people are Muslim, the Christian society is scorned. Ninety-five percent of all Christians are in the Sweeper's class (those who sweep the public streets and the homes of the wealthy) and those that do rise above this class find employers prejudiced and raises in position and salary difficult to obtain. The national voting policy is especially biased against Christians. It is the electoral policy that there be two ballot boxes—one for the Muslims and one for the minorities. This means that ninety-eight percent of all officials are elected by the Muslims alone, while two percent come from the minority groups, including Christians. Christians are constituents of only two percent of the government leaders, and they therefore have little or no voice in the nation's affairs.

What did your brother specifically do in an attempt to change this situation?

Peter joined the People's Party—a liberal, nondiscriminatory political party. The former Prime Minister, Ali Bhutto, was also a member of this party.

In 1977, however, Bhutto's administration was overthrown by the military. When this happened the leaders in the People's Party were arrested, including, of course, Ali Bhutto. My brother, being a lawyer and secretary to the former Attorney General of Pakistan, served as a legal counselor for the former Prime Minister.

As government and defense lawyers were developing their cases previous to his trial, Bhutto began writing a book in the dark of night on scraps of paper. These notes were then hidden in legal references and collected by my brother during counseling periods. One of Peter's tasks then was to compile and arrange Bhutto's comments and to prepare them for publication.

My brother, also a writer, frequently took up his pen to argue for religious freedom. Fortunately and unfortunately, a number of his articles on prejudice against the Christian community in Pakistan were published in national and international journals. Thus, because of his involvement with Bhutto and his comments concerning freedom of conscience, my brother was imprisoned under martial law in February of 1979. Peter was accused of "trying to promote or attempt to promote

feelings of enmity or hatred between different provinces, classes, sects or religious orders," among other things.

When was your brother tried?

Peter was never given a trial. He was arrested while photocopying the Supreme Court's decision to hang Prime Minister Bhutto and no one knew where he was taken—or if he were dead or alive—for three months. During this time he was kept in solitary confinement and mentally and physically tortured.

Where is Peter now?

Because of the work of Amnesty International, my brother was granted a temporary visa by Germany—good for six months. His case is now under review by the German High Court and it will determine whether or not he should be granted political asylum.

Revelation 14:6 says, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." If Christians are truly concerned about preaching the gospel and clothing the naked and feeding the malnourished, they must also be concerned about the ideologies and practices that suppress the gospel and allow for inhumanity among men.

Andrew, what is the Christian's responsibility in matters such as these?

I will let my brother answer that question from one of the last papers he circulated among the Pakistanis and Christian ministers before fleeing Pakistan.

He wrote:

"It is the task of the Church to discern what is going on in the world, where God is doing his work. And say 'yes' where God says 'yes.' But more important, the Church is needed in the World to say its 'no' to where God is saying 'no' to the world. Whenever human selfishness and human egotism are trying to defeat the purposes of God, the Church has the duty to say 'NO.'

" 'NO' IN THE NAME OF GOD, 'NO' IN THE NAME OF THE GOSPEL, 'NO' IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY AND 'NO' IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE. We are a discerning Community, we are a Prophetic Community and we are a Saving Community. Say 'Yes' as an echo to where God is saying 'Yes' and please say 'No' as an echo where God is saying 'No.' "

"But Kalu! You cannot do that; the clergy will be annoyed if you stick your head out. Just stay put; accept the status quo; do not step out of line; don't react; action or reaction is not our way of life. Tolerance, Kalu boy, tolerance is the name of the game here."

by Robert E. Francis

Notes

It was a dull, flat Bible class. The students were disinterested; the teacher was ineffective; discipline was non-existent.

Then a guest teacher came. Apparently the principal wanted to "firm up" the situation. The lesson for the day was: The First Angel's Message.

"Open your Bibles," he urged with enthusiasm, "and turn to Revelation 14:6, 7." Those few students who had brought their Bibles turned to the appropriate verses while neighboring classmates leaned over in their seats to share. As the teacher read these verses, he emphasized the words, "Give glory to Him." Then he startled the whole class by stating, "Within 20 minutes one of you is going to give glory to God."

With that he laid his Bible on the desk and verbally assigned to each member of the class a number. Then he announced, as he put the written numbers in a box, that he wanted the class's assurance that they would do what he asked. He then drew out three numbers.

The first number out of the box was "13," the number of Marlin—a boy whose mother was secretary to the principal. Upon learning this the teacher told him to go to his mother, kiss her, and tell her that he loved her. He was then to bring back a report of what happened to the class.

Somewhat reluctantly, Marlin did it. The response: "Marlin!" cried out his mother, "Aren't you supposed to be in class?"

"This is the assignment," he answered.

"To tell me you love me?" she managed to say. Her voice was higher, yet softer.

She stood up. Her arms held him close. And in obvious, joyful emotion cried out, "What is going on in that class?"

Would you believe it? Before that class was over there were several people outside the classroom door eager to find out "what is going on."

And inside there was an animated discussion on *how to give glory to God*. Of course it was established that kissing one's mother, offering to wash the principal's car for nothing, etc., could be either hypocritical "works"—"to be seen of men"—or, if motivated by love, a fulfillment of the command, "Fear God and give glory to Him." That is, it is possible that the gospel actually "works."

A woman asked Dwight L. Moody, that famous evangelist, how she could live for the glory of God. He outlined three things she should do:

- 1) **Pray 15 minutes a day for her own personal needs.**
- 2) **Study the Bible 15 minutes a day for her soul's enlightenment.**
- 3) **Take 15 minutes a day to do something for someone else—something for which she received no pay, just the privilege of doing it.**

He told her that if her heart were right and God's Spirit were in it, it would tell for God. This, he said, was his prescription for "growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). Indeed, this is also my prescription to you for living for the glory of God.

by Ronald Pickell

Notes

What constitutes giving God fear and glory? The prophet John has warned us of our duties here and many of us may go about "worshipping" with the "God's gonna getcha if you don't" attitude. But will God accept this kind of fear-motivated devotion?

This week we have viewed the first angel's message from the perspective of a Methodist circuit rider—Rev. Thomas Aikman. We have seen that the first-angel gospel message he preached was indeed that of the reformers and one which suggested assurance in salvation and active concern for the well-being of others as an evidence of that salvation.

In Monday's lesson it was shown that God deserves a three-fold response from man: fear, glory, and worship. Dr. Johnsson showed that to fear God meant to have a proper understanding of who He is and who we are; to give Him glory means more than *saying* but *doing*; and to worship Him means to respond with our total being to the King of the universe.

Our author for Tuesday, Sister White, explained the first angel's message from her historical point of view, and showed its significance within the context of the 1844, judgment hour message. Wednesday's and Thursday's lessons reveal in a very practical way what it means to live for the glory of God.

Beautiful! For isn't glory and love and worship the very least that He deserves? As our Creator, God is responsible for our very existence. However, we lost the privilege of this existence because of sin. But Christ retrieved it and became our Redeemer, and on top of all of this, He sustains our borrowed lives daily with food, protection, every necessity and many luxuries.

Indeed, it is on the basis of what God has *already done*, and only on this basis, that He demands our fear and due worship in Revelation 14:6, 7.

In asking for our worship God is not asking for us to drum up some kind of meaningless praise. Rather, He is asking us to examine His attitude and behavior toward us and allow from our hearts to come the appropriate responses. If we believe that this is true then our heart-felt responses will be accepted by God, for, as Ellen White puts it, "The pure motive sanctifies the act."¹

Let us each examine God's love to us every day that we might respond to Him with fear, glory and worship.

On the basis of what He has already done, God demands our worship

¹ *The Sanctified Life*, p. 9.

1. Rewrite Revelation 14:7 — the first angel's message — in terms of your own experience and understanding of this passage.

List three specific ways in which the first angel's message should make a difference in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Complete the following:

To fear God means . . .

I give glory to God when I . . .

My worship of God is in its purest form when I . . .

To preach the "everlasting gospel" means . . .

3. To our irreligious society, how may we more effectively preach the message of the three angels? List four evangelistic methods we currently employ which you feel are not adequate.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

List four good alternative methods to these inadequate ones.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____





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Loma Linda University was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.



There is sunshine in our soul



Come Out Of Babylon, My People

Photograph by HAROLD M. LAMBERT

by Shirlee Neisner

I asked a number of pastors in the Lincoln, Nebraska, community, "How do you interpret Revelation 18:4, 'Come out of her [Babylon], my people?'"

Babylon is spoken of as a literal city; a commercial, religious, and yet sin-filled metropolis. This text refers to the fall of the city, the destruction of which occurs after the rapture and at the end of the great tribulation. God has become fed up with her sins, and through the supernatural use of earthquakes and fire, the earth swallows up the city and its residents. It's a lesson for all who rebel against God and shows the result of wickedness.

In Revelation 18:4 Jesus urges residents to separate from the city, the purpose being to free those who love Him so that they may not receive her plagues. Perhaps remembering God's call to Lot from Sodom and Gomorrah serves as an example of a call to believers to separate from sinful practices and involvement. — **Assembly of God; Pastor Jack Glass**

The historical account of the actual tribulation explains the 144,000 as being Jews who paid the price for their love and loyalty to Jesus. Similarly, Christians who pay the price for their loyalty and obedience to God's commandments, and keep utmost in their minds their full commitment to Jesus—no matter what the price—are those who come out of Babylon, which is a symbol of apostasy and wickedness as characterized by idolatrous Rome with all its immorality. — **Baptist; Pastor Gale R. Baldrige**

I haven't studied the book of Revelation. The church hasn't spoken definitively of what it means.

— **A Roman Catholic Priest**

Babylon is a symbol of religious apostasy, an apostate system that develops similar to the ecumenical movement. I'm not saying that that is Babylon, but one can see how it

could lead to an apostate religion. The "coming out" refers to people who will come in faith to Christ during this period. — **A non-denominational church; Pastor Don Goertzen**

Babylon is the world and the things of the world under the influence of Satan. Originally, we taught that the coming out and gathering in Zion meant that the saints were encouraged to go to Salt Lake City. Now we hold that it means to gather together spiritually and strengthen each other, to share in each other's problems. By doing this and living righteous lives, studying, praying, and keeping the commandments, we will have the Holy Ghost. And when Christ returns—we hope soon—we will be ready. A familiar phrase of the Mormons is to be "in the world, but not of it." — **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Minister's Wife**

There were two fulfillments to this, the first in the summer of 1843-4 when the Protestant churches kicked out the Millerites. A decline in spirituality followed. E. G. White later mentioned that the second angel's message would be fulfilled again. It would speak against the sins coming into the church: sins of erroneous beliefs, theology replaced with anthropology, the divine supernatural given up for demoniac Satanism, acceptance of evolution, rejection of the Bible as a divine book and the rise of false revivals, both charismatic and hathen. These doctrines oppose and challenge the truth of God and lead to the denial of miracles, Jesus' second coming, and the resurrection. Thus Babylon represents churches who have lost their faith in God. — **Seventh-day Adventist; Pastor Ralph Neall**

by Darrell Holtz

Notes

“Come out of her, my people,” calls a voice from heaven in Revelation 18:4, urging all of God’s followers to leave “Babylon.” But what does this mean? To understand this earnest appeal we must answer two basic questions:

1) **Who, what, or where is Babylon?**

2) **In light of our answer to #1, what does *leaving Babylon* mean?**

1) It is quite clear that John believed the book of Revelation would make sense to his Christian contemporaries, for in Revelation 1:3 he pronounced a blessing on the person who publicly read the book and on those who heard it read. It would make no sense to read the book publicly unless the hearers could understand the book’s message.

And there can be little doubt that those early Christians understood “Babylon” as primarily a reference to the Roman government under which they lived. The harlot Babylon, sitting on “seven hills” (Rev. 17:9), is an unmistakable allusion to the city of Rome. (See also I Pet. 5:13, a reference to the Roman Christians.) Just as, historically, literal Babylon had captured and oppressed God’s people, so in John’s day imperial Rome persecuted, tortured and oppressed those who trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

But John couldn’t call Rome “Babylon” without stirring memories of the great city on the Euphrates where Daniel had been a captive, and he seems to have intended to do so (compare “Babylon the Great,” John’s phrase, with Nebuchadnezzar’s words in Daniel 4:30). Rome was not unique in John’s mind, but rather the current embodiment of an ongoing spirit. For Babylon is a moral reality more than a political or geographical one. Rome earned the title by its rampant immorality, its oppression of God’s people, its self-satisfaction, its refusal to repent and listen to God’s message. It is in such characteristics that we find the moral reality of Babylon. Any power, any group of people, any system of thought which is primarily concerned with the importance and goodness of man, which opposes or rejects the good news of God’s grace, which will not respond to God’s love in obedient commitment, or which considers itself above the need for repentance, partakes of the ageless reality of Babylon and stands as a part of that complex of hostile powers against which God’s people are warned.

2) When we read the call to “come out” of Babylon, we have often tried to identify one historical point when this call sounded. But in fact the Bible shows us that the call to “come out” has been an on-going one (Genesis 12:1; Genesis 19:12-14; Isaiah 48:20; Jer. 51:6, 45). The basic biblical words which describe God’s followers (holy, saints) refer to being “set apart” for God’s use, so that separateness or *coming out* is the on-going experience of the committed Christian.

Depending on our circumstances, coming out of Babylon might involve changing friends, changing jobs, changing habits, or changing churches. But coming out of Babylon *always* involves changing lords—setting ourselves aside, and daily renewing our commitments to God’s saving grace, which has set us apart to be citizens of His kingdom.

Early Christians understood “Babylon” as referring to the Roman government

Rome: the current embodiment of an on-going spirit

“Any group of people which is primarily concerned with the goodness of man . . . partakes in the ageless reality of Babylon”

Coming out is an on-going experience

selected by Jay Miller

Notes

"God denounces Babylon 'because she made all nations drink of the wrath of her fornication.' This means that she has disregarded the only commandment which points out the true God, and has torn down the Sabbath, God's memorial of creation. . . .

"God has a controversy with the churches of today. They are fulfilling the prophecy of John. 'All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' They have divorced themselves from God by refusing to receive His sign. They have not the spirit of God's true commandment-keeping people."¹

The teaching of Babylon is designed to prevent people from seeing God as a loving Creator whose supreme desire is to save men.

"The theory of eternal torment is one of the false doctrines that constitute the wine of the abomination of Babylon, of which she makes all nations drink. . . . It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated?"²

In Revelation 18, God is calling His people to leave Babylon.

"The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared 'drunken with the blood of the saints' as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with 'the kings of the earth.' It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation."³

"According to this scripture [Rev. 18] many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith."⁴

What is the basic principle of Babylon?

"Nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation."⁵

"The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion."⁶

"The schemes of the Babel builders ended in shame and defeat. The monument to their pride became the memorial of their folly. Yet men are continually pursuing the same course—depending upon self, and rejecting God's law."⁷

Are there traces of Babylon in my religious experience?

"Many of God's people must still be in Babylon"

"Nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation"

¹ SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 979

² The Great Controversy, p. 536

³ Ibid., p. 382

⁴ Ibid., p. 383

⁵ Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 73

⁶ The Desire of Ages, p. 36

⁷ Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 123

by Harold Shryock

Notes

"Babylon" is an institution of Satan's devising. It is his master counterfeit of God's pattern of living for His people on earth. So in order to bring men and women to accept his counterfeit, Satan's strategy undermines the various concepts of God's influence. It contradicts the record of creation, it questions the existence of God, and it gives selfish indulgence a higher priority than the rights of others. We are saying, then, that three hallmarks of "Babylon," in addition to the eventual legal requirement for Sunday observance, are: 1) a belief in evolution, 2) atheism, and 3) criminal selfishness. Notice what spectacular progress Satan is making in these matters.

The September, 1978, issue of the prestigious journal, *Scientific American*, presented a symposium on evolution. The introductory article was by Ernst Mayr, professor emeritus of zoology at Harvard University. In the article he remarked, "Man's world view today is dominated by the knowledge that the universe, the stars, the earth and all living things evolved through a long history that was not foreordained or programmed, a history of continual, gradual change shaped by more or less directional natural processes consistent with the laws of physics."¹

Evolution

Dr. Sherwood L. Washburn, professor of physical anthropology, in another article of the same issue wrote that while the age of the earth was thought of as a few thousand years during the 18th century, at the end of the 19th century the figure was about 40 million years.²

It becomes clear that most of the scientists of our day leave God out of the picture by not accepting the Bible's account of creation.

When a person leaves God out of the picture he qualifies as an atheist. At first thought we would suppose that atheists are antireligious. Notice, however, the following statement which indicates a surprising trend which began several years ago. "The Church, it would seem, would be the last place to look for an atheist. Fools who say, 'There is no God,' would be wise enough, one would think, to stay out. But not so." This author then refers to a study conducted by two sociologists from the University of California which indicated that "one percent of the Protestants and one percent of the Roman Catholics they investigated are agnostic. These said baldly, 'I do not know whether there is a God, and I don't believe there's any way to find out.'" The researchers stated further that they discovered a significant number among Congregationalists, Methodists, and Episcopalians who asserted, "I don't believe in God."³

Atheism

Such an attitude within a society is conducive to criminal selfishness. Crime involving property and financial assets reaches an annual total of about 40 billion dollars a year in the United States. This is responsible for adding nearly 15 percent to the prices of goods sold—about \$200 a year for every child and adult.⁴

Criminal
Selfishness

In connection with New York City's blackout on July 13, 1977, we were shocked to learn the extent to which looting was practiced when the city was dark. The citizens of the city stole luxuries, cars, TV sets, etc. Compunction of conscience was lacking. It was a matter of *Get what you can while you can't be caught doing it.*⁵

If these are the characteristics of "Babylon," where are we now?

¹ *Scientific American*, Sept., 1978, p. 47

² *Ibid.*, p. 194

³ *Christianity Today*, Nov. 20, 1964, p. 30

⁴ *U.S. News & World Report*, July 23, 1979, p. 59

⁵ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1977, p. 14

by Margaret Hempe

Notes

"What do you mean, 'Come out of Babylon'? I've *joined* the remnant church!"

While we recognize the historical significance of this second angel's message, God appeals through it to us individually *today*. What is this spirit of Babylon that God asks us to come out of?

God's call to His people is a *continual calling* to move away from a false set of values—from the multiplicity of false gods that our culture ever tempts us to worship. With the help of a few significant questions, let's find "how to" get in touch with the spirit of Babylon in our lives.

1) Which practice(s) in the SDA subculture tempts me to depend on that practice for salvation? 2) How does the "caste system" on our campuses affect my life? 3) How much of the "new morality" has seeped into my value system? (Premarital sex, the idea "If it feels good, do it," etc.) 4) In what significant areas has peer pressure for conformity subtly coerced me to behave contrary to my conscience? In what ways am I coercing others? 5) How much of my self-concept is based on the world's values? a. good looks b. money c. prestige d. the "right" profession e. the "right" amount of education f. power and influence g. competitive spirit h. being married to a spouse with the "right" profession. 6) How much of my self-concept is derived from God's values? a. love b. joy c. peace d. patience e. kindness f. goodness g. faithfulness h. gentleness i. self-control.

When I accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of my life, I committed myself to the adventure of a lifetime: BECOMING THROUGH HIS GRACE, WHAT GOD ALREADY COUNTS ME AS BEING!!!

And because of my identity with Christ and His values as I come out of Babylon I recognize that: 1) My self-worth is now reckoned according to the price He paid for me! 2) My uniqueness frees me from the need to be someone or something other than myself. As an authentic Christian I refuse to be coerced by people or false values! 3) I appreciate the freedom of choice He gives me. Because He gives me freedom to make mistakes and loves me while I'm making them, I can give others freedom to make mistakes and love them in the same way. 4) Meditation and prayer boldly call me into the very presence of the living God. His caring confrontation results in changes in my attitudes and behavior. 5) I desire to give up the crippling ineffectiveness of Babylon's false value system and I experience the liberating power that Christ's unconditional, nonjudgmental love gives me (nothing I do can make Him love me more . . . or less!). 6) Yes, I still have mistaken beliefs and faulty ideas, some distorted views and perhaps some unhealthy attitudes about myself, you, and God. *But* because I refuse to build my own "tower of Babel," I choose to trust God.

And He will finish the work He began in me!

God's call to "come out" is a continual calling

"Nothing I do can make Him love me more . . . or less!"

by editors

Notes

And the writer of the Apocalypse saw in vision another angel come down from heaven and trumpet the final warning: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen . . . For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her . . ." (Rev. 18:2-3).

Raised on a diet of Adventist evangelism as a child and teenager, I learned to associate the "Babylon" of the above mentioned prophecy with parts of Roman Catholic and apostate-Protestant theologies. Because of viewpoints on the Sabbath commandment, the state of the dead, etc., I was shown how these churches had committed "fornication" with the doctrines of Satan. And I am thankful for the instruction I received regarding these things.

I have deeply appreciated the writers of this week's lessons, however, in pointing out how we, in the Adventist church—the "guardians of truth"—are also in danger of committing "fornication" with the devil's lies.

Dr. Shryock, with his Evidence article, got me to thinking about sins and philosophies of life I am holding that show I may be a part of Babylon. Elder Holtz "stepped on my toes" (stomped them, crushed them!) by suggesting that Babylon is "any system of thought that is primarily concerned with the importance and goodness of man." Jay Miller and our lady pastor from Loma Linda, Margaret Hempe, made it even more clear how the Babylon which I have for so many years felt safe from following may be alive and well within my own experience. To these writers: Thank you for opening my eyes to the Babylon that threatens *me* as a Seventh-day Adventist.

Continuing on in this "what Babylon means to *me*" way of thinking, I would like to introduce you to the ideas of Douglas F. Welebir, an attorney from San Bernardino, California. Dr. Welebir contributes an interesting thought on *Babylon and static truth*.

"Where in each of us lies a Babylon from which we must come out and flee? To come out of Babylon is a plea and a command for all to come forth out of spiritual *lethargy* and smug *complacency* of having 'the truth' and being God's 'chosen people.'

"If we feel all truth has been decided, that no further elucidation and interpretation is needed and that a definitive creedal statement can be formulated for the edification and conformity of fellow believers, then we are in a woeful and perilous status. It is the questioning, inquisitive mind, opened to and by the moving of the Holy Spirit, which presents infinite possibilities of spiritual growth, and which will lead us forth from the cleaving sins of Babylon."

But, lest any think that "coming out of Babylon" is something one can accomplish as easily as "coming out of the college cafeteria" (no correlation between Babylon and college cafeterias intended), Dr. Welebir offers this counsel:

"To come out of Babylon is not and cannot be accomplished by one's own will or desire. When we flee from the 'city' lest we be 'partakers of her sins' there is the probability that we carry with us something in our hearts that we cherish and must overcome. Thus, 'coming out' requires not just a physical removal from the 'city' but an inner transformation. To accept Christ's call to 'come out' presupposes a commitment to significant and meaningful change in our lives."

"To come out of Babylon is a plea for all to come forth out of smug complacency of having 'the truth' "

"To accept Christ's call to 'come out' presupposes a commitment to meaningful change in our lives"

1. What has it meant for you personally to leave Babylon?
2. In what ways are God's people to "come out" of Babylon? By moving out of the cities? By severing all contacts with non-believers? By protesting the hallmarks of Babylon?
3. Douglas Welebir in the Opinion article for this week suggests, "To come out of Babylon is a plea and a command for all to come forth out of spiritual lethargy and smug complacency of having 'the truth' and being God's 'chosen people.'"
"It is the questioning, inquisitive mind, opened to and by the moving of the Holy Spirit, which presents infinite possibilities of spiritual growth, and which will lead us forth from the cleaving sins of Babylon."

Do you agree with his thinking?

How much freedom should there be in our churches and educational institutions to teach other than traditional theories and interpretations?

4. How much of "coming out of Babylon" is accomplished by our own efforts and how much is God's work for us and/or in us?
5. List five criteria for identifying "Babylon."
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

Other than the traditional powers or systems of thought so identified, what would you designate as being part of "Babylon" today?

The Third Angel's Message



Sculpture by Alan Collins

by Kenneth J. McGill

The warning of the third angel in Revelation 14 has often been ridiculed as the fire and brimstone gospel. Here, God is presented as the sovereign executor of justice—the type of God Jonathan Edwards and others enjoyed preaching about. **“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”** (Rev. 14:9-11).

The John of Patmos has indeed described a most terrifying final destruction. The believer, however, can face the events of this impending crisis with confidence and trust in the sure word of God's promises.

There is a parable I once heard about twins in their mother's womb. It seems that they became aware of their existence at quite an early stage of their development, and they began to talk with each other.

“Where did you come from?” asked one little fellow of the other.

“I don't know,” said the little one called Faithful, “but it sure is fun just kicking and hitting around in here.”

“Yes, but I'm worried,” said the little one called Fearful. “I just can't understand what this is all about. Where did we come from? What are we here for? What do you think is going to happen to us?”

“I don't know,” said Faithful, “but I am sure that for whatever purpose we were made, it could not have been for nothing.” And here the conversation—and for a while their fears—ended.

So they lived and played in what seemed to be an endless expanse of water. They were warm and comfortable, and they had assurances moment by moment of a caring mother. But as the weeks and months began to add up, they found less room to stretch and play, and it seemed they would soon run out of space to live.

“Did you notice that we are getting squished in here?” said Faithful. “I wonder what is going to happen?”

“I will tell you,” said Fearful. “It is the end of everything! We'll be just like we were before we came here—nothing!”

“That cannot be true,” said Faithful. “There must be a life beyond this little world! We just don't understand everything yet.”

“But I know,” said Fearful. “I have done some experiments. Do you see this little cord that is attached to your belly? Well, just squeeze it and you will see that you cannot live without it. Therefore we cannot travel out and beyond; we shall soon come to an end—forever.”

Suddenly there was shaking and trembling, such as the little ones had never known. Little Fearful became frightened and struggled to enfold himself in a dark crevice of the womb where he believed was his only hope. Little Faithful also found the constrictions most unpleasant, yet he stretched forth his little head till he saw the brightest light flash before his eyes. He could not imagine what was happening. But he took a deep breath, and cried in a voice he had never before experienced.

Kenneth J. McGill is an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University.

by Niels-Erik Andreassen

Notes

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. . . ."

"And I saw another angel . . . saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:9, 10; 7:2, 3).

The book of Revelation asks the simple question, Will the Christian church survive, or will it be swallowed up by a large and unbelieving world? The answer is that the church will be victorious but its victory will not come easily, for the enemy that is both within and without is ferocious: He threatens God's saints with apostasy (Rev. 1-3) and with extermination (Rev. 13). The very survival of Christianity and all it stands for—faith, truth, honesty, purity, integrity, yes, even life itself—is at stake. This explains the seriousness of the third angel's message. It addresses the last critical winner-take-all confrontation between the Christian church and its enemy.

Who is the enemy? The beast and his image, described in Revelation 13 as being haughty, blasphemous, deceptive and tyrannical—all characteristics that are opposed to God and to His church (see Rev. 13). Whoever is characterized by these ungodly and un-Christian traits belongs to the enemy.

How does one become aligned with the beast and his image? The passage speaks of a mark on the hand and the forehead. The Greek word for *mark* used here is *charagma* and it refers to a mark or stamp that is engraved, etched and branded. A *charagma* can brand animals, stamp documents and press coins. Whatever is marked in this way receives a distinctive character. The mark of the beast also gives its recipients a distinctive character, both on their foreheads (thoughts) and on their hands (actions). And as we have discovered, this character is haughty, blasphemous, deceptive and tyrannical. These traits belong to the beast, are opposed to God and His church and lead to death.

What is the alternative to being so marked? Our second passage of Scripture speaks of the servants of God who are sealed on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3). They are mentioned again in Revelation 14:1-5, and here the seal is described as the name of God the Father. God's name represents His distinctive character, with which He saves sinners (remember when God became man, His name was Jesus—Saviour). So then, to be sealed is to accept God's salvation.

How do we become sealed? According to Revelation 7:3, we cannot seal ourselves. The sealing is done by *God* to those who accept His name, that is, His salvation. Similarly, the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9) is given by the beast to those who worship it, that is, to those who accept its distinctive character. It is all a matter of commitment (or faith, as the Bible calls it). The third angel's message is a final plea to not commit ourselves to the beast, but to cast our lots with God.

The third angel's message addresses the winner-take-all confrontation between the Christian church and its enemy

"Whoever is described by these ungodly traits belongs to the enemy"

by John A. Goley

Notes

"And the third angel followed them, saying . . . If any man worship the beast . . . and receive his mark . . . the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. . . ." (Rev. 14:9, 10).

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"¹

At first glance it is hard to see the relationship between justification by faith and the third angel's message. The third angel is saying, "Don't get the mark of the beast" and implying, "Do get the seal of God." Ellen White states, "The keeping of this day [Sunday] is the mark of the beast,"² and "the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God."³ How then is justification by faith seen in light of the Sabbath-Sunday issue? Let's consider some interesting statements by Ellen White here.

"God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good; and He rested in the joy of His *completed work* . . . The Sabbath is a memorial to the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ."⁴

"At last Jesus was at rest. The long day of shame and torture was ended. As the last rays of the setting sun ushered in the Sabbath, the Son of God lay in quietude in Joseph's tomb. His *work completed*, His hands folded in peace, He rested through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day. In the beginning the Father and the Son had rested upon the Sabbath after their work of creation . . . Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption. . . ."⁵

"As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is a sign that now distinguishes God's people as they came out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people. . . ."⁶

"The Sabbath, which God had instituted in Eden, was as precious to John on the lonely isle as when he was with his companions in the cities and towns . . . It was the sign to him that God was his. . . ."⁷

Indeed, the Sabbath not only points Christians to the work of creation, it is also a memorial of God's mighty power in redemption. Thus, to all who receive it as a sign and seal of Christ's creative and redemptive power, the Sabbath will be a delight. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, the seventh day tells of peace restored through the Saviour.⁸

Therefore, when the third angel warns Christians of receiving the mark of the beast—and thereby implies that they ought to be sealed by God—it is warning against a symbol of righteousness by works in favor of a memorial of justification by faith. And thus, the message of justification by faith is "the third angel's message in verity."

The Sabbath is a sign of both our history and our destiny

God warns us of receiving the *mark*—a symbol of righteousness by works

¹ *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 372.

² *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 281 (emphasis ours)

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 769 (emphasis ours).

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 350 (emphasis ours).

⁷ *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 955.

⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

by David Smith

Notes

A study of the meaning of the mark of the beast is certainly a worthwhile pursuit, but the main thrust of the third angel's message focuses on *what happens* to those who receive the mark. The emphasis is not as much on the mark itself as it is on the drastic results of receiving the mark. The third angel cries with a "loud voice" that if anyone receives the mark of the beast he "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation" (Rev. 14:9, 10). Wine tends to separate the drinker from reality. The wine the marked wicked must drink will separate them forever from God, the ultimate Reality. The fact that this wine is poured "without mixture" is very significant: For the first time in the history of mankind, man will taste the wrath of God unmixed with mercy.

This cup of God's indignation is foreboding, indeed. In his book, *Behold He Cometh!*, Herman Hocksema observes that drinking this wine causes the worshiper of the beast to "receive the wrath of God as a burning fire within his soul, so that this wrath of God burns him from within, troubles him, leaves him no rest day or night. It shall be spiritual torment night and day. Even as the greatest happiness and the most profound peace consists of communion with the God of grace and love, so the most terrible suffering shall be that which is caused by the consciousness of the wrath of the Almighty."¹

It was in Gethsemane that Christ pleaded with His Father to remove this same cup. His cry on the cross, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" dramatically portrayed His despair while drinking fully of the "unmixed" wine of God's wrath. Christ died the death of the wicked on the cross, not the death of the righteous. He faced the prospect of eternal separation from His Father.

Though we often view the righteous as "sleeping" when they die, we tend to ignore the fact that the wicked dead are merely "sleeping" as well. Both groups will be resurrected again, the righteous to be united forever with God, the wicked to face eternal separation from God by experiencing the second death, the death of the cross. Paul notes in Hebrews 9:27, 28, that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Throughout His ministry Christ demonstrated an awareness of the significance of the type of death He faced. After Lazarus' death Jesus asserted to Martha: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

The significance then of the third angel's message is not so much the fact that the wicked must drink the cup of the unmixed wrath of God, as the fact that Christ has already drunk that cup for the righteous. The good news of the third angel's message is that the righteous will never have to drink the cup of God's wrath; they "shall never die" the second death. Perhaps the best way to view the third angel's message is to read it this way: "If a man does not receive the mark of the beast, he will not drink of the bitter cup of God's wrath, and he will be united forever with the One who has already drunk it for him."

The "wine of the wrath of God" separates the drinker from ultimate Reality

On the cross Christ drank of the wine of the wrath of God

¹ Herman Hocksema, *Behold He Cometh!* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1969), p. 798.

by Jack Bohannon

Notes

In the final contest of faith mankind will be divided into two great classes: those who observe the commandments of God, and those who worship the beast and his image. According to Revelation 15:1 and 2, those who avoid the beast of Revelation 13 are spared the seven last plagues and will be redeemed.

Indeed, it is inconceivable that God would issue such a dire warning as is found in Revelation 14:9-11 without giving His people some idea of what is to be avoided. "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath" (NIV). These words were written not to terrify, but to inspire—to prepare for decisive action.

Consider the four "thought blocks" below as we explore this subject of the mark of the beast.

Treason

Lucifer sought to set up his own government by disrupting God's. He attempted to undermine God's law and thereby neutralize God's authority. "The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God's commandments."²

Thus, by refusing to accept those points of faith which would violate the law of the kingdom of God, we show that we have not received the mark of the beast. But by refusing to observe the law of God, we show that we have renounced citizenship in God's kingdom.

Loyalty

"The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God."² That is, keeping the Sabbath is like displaying one's national colors on the front of the house. The person inside the house may or may not be loyal to his country; likewise, the keeper of the Sabbath may or may not be loyal to God. Nevertheless, other things being equal, they are a strong indication that the person involved is loyal.

Counterfeit

Whenever a religious principle of man's design is substituted and enforced above one of God's design, it will lead to the worship of the beast of Revelation 13. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that the issue is not found in the externals of signs, symbols, marks, seals, etc. The real issue is *worship* (Revelation 14:9). Those who worship the beast will receive the ultimate punishment of God, while those who worship their creator will receive an eternal reward.

"The real issue is worship"

How To

Because Jesus has paid the full price of our redemption on the cross, anyone who maintains his trust in Him alone can be assured that he will be sealed. To maintain a relationship with Jesus Christ, one should:

1. **Begin and/or consistently continue to have a dedicated study of the sacred Scriptures.**
2. **Remember that a consecrated prayer life is essential to the maintenance of a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.**
3. **Become an active positive witness for Christ in an effort to win others to accept the plan of salvation.**

Anyone who thus maintains a relationship with Jesus Christ will stand true to Him even in the face of persecution and death.

¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 446.
² *Ibid.*, p. 438.

by Ralph E. Neall

Notes

Modern scholarship tends to support the traditional Adventist belief that the Sabbath is the seal of God.

Some years ago George Mendenhall, a professor at the University of Michigan, pointed out that the ten commandments are in the form of ancient treaty documents as they were written in the days of Moses.¹ Treaties between the Hittites and other powers have been found which always show six special features in this order:

1. *The name of the suzerain ("the Lord your God").*
2. *The history of his benevolent acts ("who brought you out of Egypt").*
3. *The stipulations of the treaty (the ten commandments themselves).*
4. *A list of blessings and curses (compare Deut. 11:1-13; 28:48).*
5. *A call to witnesses, including various features of nature (compare Deut. 4:26).*
6. *A provision for keeping the treaty in the sacred shrines of the suzerain and of his vassal, and for bringing it out and reading it publicly from time to time (compare Deut. 31:26).*

Building on Mendenhall's thought, Meredith Kline, of Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Boston, has suggested that the large seal which was usually stamped into the face of these old treaties has its counterpart in the Sabbath commandment.² The dynastic seals in the face of the treaties identified the maker of the treaty by his name, title, and territory, as well as his gods. Naturally the Sabbath commandment would not mention any other gods, but it does proclaim the name, title, and territory of the Maker of this treaty with Israel: He is the Lord, the Creator, of heaven and earth.

The Sabbath as a sign of God's treaty (the Bible language is "covenant") is supported also by Exodus 31:13 and 17. Moses says that the Sabbath is a sign of two things: that Yahweh is the God who makes His people holy, and that He is the God who created heaven and earth. In fact, the Sabbath is not only a *sign* of the sanctifying and creating God, it is a *means* of sanctifying and recreating. Not in a righteousness-by-works sense—no, not at all. But in the sense that the Sabbath provides time for laying down the business of the week and spending time with God. It is time with God that enables Him to recreate us and make us holy.

If the Sabbath is indeed the seal of God, then it is easy to see that Sunday-keeping will become the corresponding sign of the opposing powers. Thus, the Sabbath is a sign of allegiance to the Creator and Sanctifier, while Sunday will become the sign of allegiance to men. There will undoubtedly be other signs of allegiance to men—modern totalitarian powers enforce a variety of signs to demonstrate the loyalty of their people—but the final issue according to the prophecy of Revelation 13 and 14 will be the question of the day of worship.

How can we prepare for this final test? Only by complete loyalty to our Creator and Sanctifier God today.

¹ G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962).

² Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 18, 19. See also "Seal," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, p. 974.

1. What would you say to explain to someone how he or she could avoid receiving the mark of the beast?

2. Could a Sabbath-keeper receive the mark? If so, how?

Could a Sunday-keeper receive the seal of God? If so, how?

3. Have people been sealed or marked throughout history, or is this something that happens only at the end of time?

4. List two ways of how your understanding of the mark of the beast make you a better person?

1. _____

2. _____

How will it make you be more loving?

How will it make your world love God more?

5. An athlete's success in an event depends mostly upon his or her skill and strength relative to that event. In what way is Christian "success" during the time of the end different?

In what sense is it the same?





Canadian Union College

FOUNDED: 1907

LOCATION: College Heights, Alberta, Canada

CHAPLAIN:
Don Corkum

COLLEGE EDITOR:
Herbert Kiesler



Kingsway College

FOUNDED: 1903

LOCATION: Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

COLLEGE EDITOR:
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Canadian Union College and Kingsway College were responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.

Repairers of The Breach



by Beverly Matiko

"I start tomorrow at 6 a.m.," Brad proudly announced, kicking off his *Adidas* at the front door.

"That's great! I knew you'd land a job if you were persistent." Dad got up from his desk and gave Brad's shoulder a squeeze.

"I don't know about that part, Dad," Brad puzzled. "Those people at the Hire-A-Student office acted like they had been waiting for me—like they really wanted me. Even the president was there—mingling with the secretaries, shaking our hands, even doing errands. He tried to get me to start right away instead of waiting till tomorrow. He said there is really a lot to do."

The next morning Brad reported for construction duty. His beige gloves and reinforced shoes soon lost their store window appearance. In a few days Brad looked like the rest of the crew.

Brad couldn't work as fast as the rest, but he didn't get discouraged. Jake and Andy and all the others were really helpful.

Brad was assigned to the *reconstruction crew*. This outfit was set apart from the rest of the workers. Their job was to repair an existing highway that had fallen into disuse.

"The road hasn't gotten the attention it's needed," the foreman told them. "It had a lot of traffic

once, but it's been abused. The weather's given it a beating. Overloaded semis. Public mischief. Some people have even tried to tear down the road signs, but they're still standing. It's a good road; shame people aren't using it anymore. They've gotten so used to the detours. A real shame."

Brad was disappointed at first. He had wanted to work on the newer westbound highway. All the modern machinery was being used there. Their budget was many times that of Brad's small crew. Huge government grants had poured into that project. But Brad had been assigned to the neglected eastbound highway. It didn't take long, however, before he realized that his road and his crew were special.

"It's a good road," Brad concluded after only a few days on the job. "Someone put a lot of work into it in the first place. The town just doesn't realize how much they need it. They're wasting their time on the detours. This road is so much better."

Brad picked up his paint brush and enthusiastically added the finishing touches to his project while Andy and Jake blackened themselves and the road in a hot asphalt coat. Brad stood back and scrutinized the six wet letters on the green sign: *One Way*.

by Sieg Roeske

Notes

God called the Advent Movement to do a work of reform similar to that carried out by Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah in the days of Israel's return from captivity. These and others in history's long line of reformers may each find a place in Isaiah's prophecy, **"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in"** (Isaiah 58:12).

God has needed and needs today men and women who—though faced with satanic opposition—will restore His gospel to its rightful position. For man's ever-present temptation throughout the ages has been to break down God's way in favor of building up his own. A supreme example of this can be seen in the rejection of the law of God—especially the Sabbath commandment. But Seventh-day Adventists are to be conscious of their unique position as reformers who are to call an idolatrous world back to worship the Lord of the Sabbath.

The spiritual setting for this work of reformation may be found in the framework of the Judgment, with the Lord Jesus Christ officiating as the Great Advocate of His people. Here we see two points of emphasis:

- 1) *The Law* — God's standard of judgment and righteousness
- 2) *The Mercy Seat* — Christ's provisions of mercy that satisfy the claims of the broken law.

These two areas are significant in that both have been trampled upon and broken down. Thus, to fully "repair the breach," both the law and the gospel must be restored to their proper, cooperative positions.

To the modern reformer, law and grace must not be seen as opposing each other, as though originating in two different sources; both must be seen as issuing from the same righteous and loving God of heaven. The law must be seen as the reflection of God's perfect character, as ten principles of God's eternal government, as a positive factor in the plan of salvation. Indeed there is power in the Law—not to save, but to lead to salvation; not to be a savior, but to point out the necessity of a Savior; not to forgive sin, but to point out the horror of sin; not to change man's heart, but to magnify the graciousness of God's provisions on Calvary's cross. To those whose work it is to "build the old waste places" and repair "the breach," the law will be seen in the glory of the cross.

As Professor Edward A. Park has put it so nicely, "The law is a transcript of divine perfection, and that a man who does not love the law does not love the gospel; for the law, as well as the gospel, is a mirror reflecting the true character of God. This peril (of not appreciating the law) leads to another, that of underrating the evil of sin, the extent of it, the demerit of it. In proportion to the rightfulness of the commandment is the wrongfulness of disobeying it.

"The tendency of the modern pulpit is to strain out the divine justice from the divine benevolence, to sink benevolence into a sentiment rather than exalt it into a principle. The new theological prism puts asunder what God has joined together. From the habit of underrating the divine Law and justice, the extent and demerit of human disobedience, men easily slide into the habit of underestimating the grace which has provided an atonement for sin."¹

"To fully 'repair the breach,' both the law and the gospel must be restored to their proper, cooperative positions"

"A man who does not love the law does not love the gospel"

¹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 465-466

selected by editors

Notes

Solemnly and publicly the people of Judah had pledged themselves to obey the law of God. But when the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah was for a time withdrawn, there were many who departed from the Lord. Nehemiah had returned to Persia. During his absence from Jerusalem, evils crept in that threatened to pervert the nation. Idolaters not only gained a foothold in the city, but contaminated by their presence the very precincts of the temple. Through intermarriage, a friendship had been brought about between Eliashib the high priest and Tobiah the Ammonite, Israel's bitter enemy. As a result of this unhallowed alliance, Eliashib had permitted Tobiah to occupy an apartment connected with the temple, which heretofore had been used as a storeroom for tithes and offerings of the people. . . .

Nehemiah set to work to correct these abuses. He gathered together those who had left the service of the Lord's house, "and set them in their place." This inspired the people with confidence, and all Judah brought "the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil." Men who "were counted faithful" were made "treasurers over the treasures," "and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. . . ."

In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. . . .

The success attending Nehemiah's efforts shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action will accomplish. Nehemiah was not a priest; he was not a prophet; he made no pretension to high title. He was a reformer raised up for an important time. It was his aim to set his people right with God. Inspired with a great purpose, he bent every energy of his being to its accomplishment. High, unbending integrity marked his efforts. As he came into contact with evil and opposition to right he took so determined a stand that the people were roused to labor with fresh zeal and courage. They could not but recognize his loyalty, his patriotism, and his deep love for God; and, seeing this, they were willing to follow where he led. . . .

The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth's history. . . .

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.

—Selected from *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 669-678.

"Those upon whom rests the burden of this work will not hold their peace when wrong is done"

Nehemiah bent his every energy to the accomplishment of a reformation

"God's remnant people are to show that the Sabbath is to stand"

by Warren C. Trenchard

Notes

We use the word *law* in many ways. There are two meanings, however, which are particularly significant. One meaning of *law* is a rule of conduct determined and enforced by the supreme governing authority. A second meaning is a statement of an observed order in relation to phenomena.

In the first instance, laws are those rules in society enacted by legislators or rulers for regulating civil and criminal behavior. Such laws vary with the country, culture and age, and have operated since the dawn of history. These laws not only define correct behavior but also indicate the penalty for non-conformity—for breaking the law. Such law is said to be *prescriptive*.

But *law* according to the second definition is that which describes the function and uniformity of the universe or any force or body within it. It is not enacted by any person or group. It is merely observed and reported. Such laws do not contain statements of penalty for violations because they cannot be broken. They are simply statements of the way things are. These laws are said to be *descriptive*.

Prescriptive and descriptive laws, more commonly known as community and natural laws, represent the two types of law under which we can place all known laws. Since we are concerned here with moral law, is it reasonable to ask, Under which category does moral law fit?

Moral law concerns behavior. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to consider it a kind of community, or prescriptive law. In this case the community is the universe and the legislator God. Accordingly, moral law defines correct conduct for life in God's universe. And, as community law, it demands obedience and indicates the penalty for violation.

However, we may also view moral law from the perspective of natural, descriptive law. In this way moral law may be said to describe man's state of existence in the universe. Since morality deals with love behavior, we may express the basic descriptive moral law as follows: *Life continues only where there is love*. Such a law you cannot break. You can control certain conditions that activate both the scientific and the moral descriptive laws, but you are always subject to these laws.

The ten commandments are an example of both prescriptive community law, and of descriptive, or natural, moral law. The natural moral law, stating that only love sustains life, lies behind the prescriptions, just as surely as the natural law of inertia lies behind the government's rule for wearing seat belts. You may choose to not wear your seat belt, but in a front end collision you will still be propelled forward as one subject to the law of inertia. In the same way you can choose to ignore the ten commandments, but you will certainly suffer the consequences of breaking the moral principles which lie behind these commandments.

The condition for life, according to moral law, is love. The presence of love is a matter of dual responsibility. God is the only source of love and, hence, of life. But we are the ones who decide whether or not we want this love within us. We may accept or reject His gift, but we are always subject to His law.

Prescriptive Law: Rules in society enacted by legislators for regulating civil and criminal behavior

Descriptive Law: That which describes the function and uniformity of the universe

Moral law as prescriptive law

Moral law as descriptive law

by Lyndon K. McDowell

Notes

Almost one hundred years ago E. G. White gave a graphic description of the sort of society that would result from a disregard of God's law. Her prescient statements have now come true. Sin has ceased to be sinful. Morality is disparaged and ridiculed. And this generation, brainwashed by media phantasies, imagines that virtue and goodness and faithful love are boring and outmoded things and that all the excitement and fascination of life lies in evil.

So we ask, What can Seventh-day Adventists do to "repair the breach"? But that is an evasive question. The question should be, What can I do to help uphold God's standard? Both question and answer must be personal.

I. How to Do It — The General Programme:

I believe that God's general programme for this age is found in Revelation 14:7. Here we are told to "Fear God." This calls for a rigid personal standard of ethics and morality, and awareness that every act is done in the sight of a holy God. To fear God is to recognize that He will not countenance evil, but will honour those who do fear Him (Psalms 60:4).

Also in Revelation 14:7 we are told to "give glory to him." To give glory is two-phased. In the first place, it calls for complete personal commitment to Christ. For "The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God."

Second, it calls for a personal concern for others. The worship of God is more than attendance at formal Sabbath services; it involves a real concern for the needs of others. (Note Isaiah 58:6-10, 13.) Men have basic physiological needs which are desperately lacking in this grasping world of today: the needs for love, for esteem by others, for a sense of belongingness. Only people relating to people can provide for such needs. We must ever be ready to give Bible studies, but before the Bible study must come *concern*.

II. How To Do It — The Personal Programme:

A. Change your denominational "self-image." We are apt to imagine the missionary task of the church to be teaching doctrine to reluctant listeners. It is not. The task of the church is to send out men and women with a deep love for Christ and humanity. See yourself as such. Imagine getting behind the smiling facade, seeing the deep emotional needs of men, and sharing joy and hope with them.

B. Set personal goals. Every successful person sets goals. Make them specific and measurable but flexible. Determine that you are going to smile at, speak words of comfort to, pray with, or read to x number of people this week. Name them if you can.

C. Set aside a couple of hours each weekend to plan your programme for the week. This will direct your efforts and take away your fear of acting. Then, when you have a planned programme in your mind's eye imagine yourself carrying it out.

D. Be enthusiastic. See the world's needs and see how you hold the answer to those needs in your hands. Get excited about it. Act enthusiastic about it and that enthusiasm will work constantly from within. And suddenly, unexpectedly, joyfully, you will find yourself numbered as one of the "repairers of the breach"!

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.

"Fearing God" calls for a rigid personal standard of ethics and morality

To "give glory" to God calls for a personal concern for others

"Before the Bible study must come concern"

"The task of the church is to send out men and women with a deep love for Christ and humanity"

selected by Charles Tidwell

Notes

This week we have received a challenge to “repair the breach.” We have traditionally recognized this as a command to honor the fourth commandment, but because of a general attitude of lawlessness which has settled in our society, this statement may also be seen as a directive to re-affirm the importance of the entire ten commandments. Indeed, in this twentieth century society Seventh-day Adventists are no longer called to simply uphold “Remember the sabbath day,” but to also support “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” “have no other gods,” and “Thou shalt not covet.” To bring honor and glory to God’s law is indeed to “repair the breach.”

When we set out to accomplish this God-given task, however, we will find strong opposition. Some will say the law is priggerish, or pointlessly demanding and precise. Some will argue regarding its truth or applicability to our times. And these challenges must be met. Listen to C. S. Lewis as he speaks to these problems below.

“As everyone knows, the Psalm specially devoted to the Law is 119, the longest in the whole collection. And everyone has probably noticed that from the literary or technical point of view, it is the most formal and elaborate of them all. . . . It is a pattern, a thing done like embroidery, stitch by stitch, through long, quiet hours, for love of the subject and for the delight in leisurely, disciplined craftsmanship.

“Now this, in itself, seems to me very important because it lets us into the mind and mood of the poet. We can guess at once that he felt about the Law somewhat as he felt about his poetry; both involved exact and loving conformity to an intricate pattern. This at once suggests an attitude from which the Pharisaic conception could later grow but which in itself, though not necessarily religious, is quite innocent. It will look like priggery or pedantry (or else like a neurotic fussiness) to those who cannot sympathize with it, but it need not be any of these things. It may be the delight in Order, the pleasure in getting a thing ‘just so’—as in dancing a minuet. Of course the poet is well aware that something incomparably more serious than a minuet is here in question. He is also aware that he is very unlikely, himself, to achieve this perfection of discipline: ‘O that my ways were made so straight that I might keep thy statutes!’ (5). At present they aren’t, and he can’t. But his effort to do so does not spring from servile fear. The Order of the Divine mind, embodied in the Divine Law, is beautiful. What should a man do but try to reproduce it, so far as possible, in his daily life? His ‘delight’ is in those statues (16); to study them is like finding treasure (14); they affect him like music, are his ‘songs’ (54); they taste like honey (103); they are better than silver and gold (72). As one’s eyes are more and more opened, one sees more and more in them, and it excites wonder (18). This is not priggery nor even scrupulosity; it is the language of a man ravished by a moral beauty. . . .

“. . . the Psalmists themselves can say it best; ‘thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains, thy judgments are like the great deep’ (36, 6) . . . Their delight in the Law is a delight in having touched firmness; like the pedestrian’s delight in feeling the hard road beneath his feet after a false short cut has long entangled him in muddy fields.”

Taken from C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958), pp. 54-58. Used by permission.

“To bring honor and glory to God’s law is indeed to ‘repair the breach’ ”

“It is the language of a man ravished by a moral beauty”

1. Sieg Roeske in the Logos section of this week's lesson stated, "God has needed and needs today men and women who . . . will restore His gospel to its rightful position." List four things we must do in order to become such men and women.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

2. Are Christians to be more concerned with orthodoxy and doctrine or with loving one another? Or do you see a conflict here?

3. Why is the law significant for Christians?

4. If by eating pork you could save someone's life, would you eat it? Would you tell a lie to save the life? Would you commit adultery?

5. If a clerk in the grocery store undercharged you by 50¢, what would you do? Correct her? Let it go?

6. Coming back to school after Christmas vacation, you decide to telephone your parents to let them know that you have arrived safely. Calling person-to-person, you ask for *yourself* — who is obviously not there—and then hang up, without paying for the call. But your parents, with whom you've pre-arranged this operation, know that you're safe. Is this use of the telephone service right or wrong?

What if you had arranged to let the phone ring five times and then hang up—as a signal to your parents? Would this be wrong?

7. The house which you are selling has a water well which is unfit for consumption in the month of July (the water turns green from frog juices). Are you obligated to inform a prospective purchaser of this fact?

8. You work for a firm which always has a bowl of paper clips on your desk—property of the firm. You use about five of these clips each week for your personal use. Is this right or wrong?

9. Rank order the following from the most important to the least important.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| _____ A strong, steady devotional life | _____ Justification by faith |
| _____ Law | _____ Love |
| _____ Jesus | |

Share with your discussion group your order of ranking and your reasons for it.





Southwestern Adventist College

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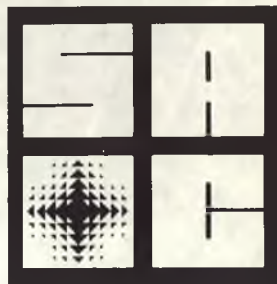
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That small college with Texas-sized friendliness.



Southwestern Adventist College was responsible for obtaining the articles that follow this page.

“Behold He Cometh With Clouds”



by editors

From what I have observed, it would seem to me that a number of Adventist young adults don't want the Lord to come *soon*. Am I right? At least this is the feeling I pick up at times. And this is how I sometimes have felt. Being in school for quite some time now, I am anxious to get out and "try my wings." I am excited about vocational opportunities, the possibility of raising a family, and living in and visiting exciting, interesting places.

But, I have thought, Christ's second coming spoils all that. Granted, Safeway's apples can't compare with those from the Tree of Life, but I still have had a deep, deep desire to find fulfillment and happiness in *this* world. And my desire for happiness *here* has seemed to conflict with my desire to be "over there."

Why is this? Well I'm sure there are many reasons—both known and unknown to me. But as I think about it, I believe that the main reason I have wanted to be successful and find fulfillment in this life before going to heaven is not because I have not appreciated the kingdom of God, but because I have wanted the best of two worlds. It's not that I haven't wanted to be with Jesus in heaven, but just that I have wanted to raise a family and "be someone" on this earth before I go on to enjoy the "earth made new." I have wanted to take advantage of opportunities in both heaven *and* earth.

Why then, should a young person desire Christ's *imminent* appearance? A well-known Adventist minister, when speaking to this problem, had this to say: *Being made for heaven, you'll never function fully until you get there*. Sure I want to raise a family; sure I want to "be someone"; sure I want to find satisfaction; for I was created to seek and find these things. But, I was created not for *this* earth but for the earth made new. And being created for heaven, I'll never find complete fulfillment or satisfaction until I get there.

So what the believer leaves behind at the second coming of Christ is not a fulfilled life. It's not fulfillment on earth versus fulfillment in heaven. Rather, it's partial, incomplete, sin-choked fulfillment on this earth compared with total fulfillment, satisfaction and happiness in the earth made new.

If Jesus comes in just a few years, I don't need to worry if it will interrupt my life plans or not. For I know that at best, all I could get out of living on this earth would be incomplete satisfaction and partial fulfillment. On the other hand, the sooner I fly away and am placed in the environment for which I was created, the sooner I will find total satisfaction, a restful fulfillment, and never-ending happiness.

Indeed, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

by Donald R. McAdams

Notes

You are twenty years old, a rising junior at your union Adventist college, a business major with a career planned in law. Money is tight, but you are making it by working in construction and borrowing through NDSL. Your girl, Debbie, has everything: personality, looks, brains, and she is a good Christian. Life is hectic, but there are many good times and your future looks great.

But there is this "second coming of Christ" business that keeps coming up. You are an *Adventist*—that means you believe that Christ is coming—and the Church teaches that He will come soon. Of course your mother did not expect to finish college and get married because she knew Christ would come before that time, and your grandfather felt the same way in 1910. So it's easy to think, will it really happen?

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:1-3; NIV). And spoke the angel, **"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:11; NIV).

Yes, Christ will come. We have it from the mouth of an angel and from Jesus Himself. But *when* will He come? The apostle Paul apparently expected Christ to return in his lifetime: **For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"** (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; emphasis mine). We shall note, however, that Paul himself expected some time to elapse between the time of his writing and the Lord's coming (see II Thess. 2:2, 3). And by the time of the prison epistles Paul was emphasizing that Christ's return would not be in the present, but "in later time," (I Timothy 4:1) and "in the last days" (II Timothy 3:1).

Certainly this apparent delay in the Lord's coming was a great concern for the apostolic church. So Peter addressed this problem in one of his epistles: **". . . do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"** (II Pet. 3:8, 9; NIV).

We have the assurance that Christ will come again. His promise is sure and His word is true. We have the hope that He will come soon. But time has passed, and since we do not know the day or the hour we are sometimes inclined to push aside the precious hope and forget the promise. But instead, let us keep the blessed hope constantly before us; let us be students of current events so that we may be alert to the signs of the times; and let us live each day in such a way that when Christ does come He will find us "watching and prepared."

Paul expected Christ to return in his lifetime

The Lord is not slow, but patient

by Donald R. McAdams

Notes

In 1845 James White was so convinced that the Lord was soon to appear that he wrote a letter which was published in the Adventist journal *Day Star*, saying that an Adventist couple who had announced wedding plans had "denied their faith in being published for marriage," and that "we all look upon it as a wife of the devil. The firm brethren in Maine who are waiting for Christ to come have no fellowship with such a move."¹ When James and Ellen chose to marry a year later, partly so they could travel to churches together without others gossiping, James acknowledged four days before the wedding that some firm Adventist believers were concerned about a possible slackening of faith in the immediate return of Christ. James wrote, "Brother Nichols said that he was tried when he first heard of our marriage, or intended marriage, but he is now satisfied that God was in it."²

Time was still seen as short when in May, 1856, Mrs. White addressed a conference at Battle Creek. "A very solemn vision was given me. I saw that some of those present would be food for worms, some subjects for the seven last plagues, and some would be translated to heaven at the second coming of Christ, without seeing death."³

By the turn of the century, however, the Adventist Church was deeply involved in institution building. Prior to the General Conference Session of 1901 Ellen White responded to Adventists who opposed this emphasis: "Let no one conclude that, because the end is near, there is no need of special effort to build up the various institutions as the cause shall demand. You are not to know the day or the hour of the Lord's appearing, for this has not been revealed, and let none speculate on that which has not been given him to understand. Let everyone work upon that which has been placed in his hands, doing the daily duties that God requires.

"When the Lord shall bid us make no further effort to build meeting-houses and establish schools, sanitariums, and publishing institutions, it will be time for us to fold our hands and let the Lord close up the work; but now is our opportunity to show our zeal for God and our love for humanity."⁴

Is it possible that Christ will come this month? Is it possible that He will not come for 1,000 years? These are questions to ponder. But the most important question before us now is, How does Christ want me to use my time as I look forward to and wish to hasten His coming?

"But now is our opportunity to show our zeal for God and our love for humanity"

¹ *Day Star*, Oct. 11, 1845, p. 47; quoted in Ron Graybill, "The Courtship of Ellen Harmon," *Insight*, Jan. 23, 1973, pp. 6-7.

² Letter of James White to Brother Collins, Aug. 26, 1846; quoted in Graybill, p. 7.

³ Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, Battle Creek, Mich., 1860, p. 208.

⁴ Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, PPPA, Mt. View, Calif., 1948, pp. 440-441.

by editors

Notes

On November 28 of this last year, I had the privilege of listening to one of the foremost women theologians in America today—Dr. Rosemary Radford Ruether, professor of theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Speaking on "The Bible and Ecology," Dr. Ruether carried her audience through different philosophies in an attempt to explain the etiology of the exploitation of the natural world. She sought to give philosophical and biblical reasons for the mudslides in California, erosion in the Appalachians, and the like.

She explained that some see the root of our present ecological crisis in the biblical injunction to conquer and subdue the earth and have dominion over it (Genesis 1:26-30). This command, some suggest, sets man above and outside of nature. He is indeed the agent of God in the process of nature, yet he is not one with creation, but above it. Consequently, this "conquest and dominion" idea of nature destroyed the kinship between man and nature and is the springboard for man's rape of the earth.

Dr. Ruether believes, however, that the key to solving our conflicts with the earth is found in biblical faith. She suggests that the injunction to have "dominion over the earth" is not suggesting exploitation but stewardship. Biblical faith demands that we do not treat nature as a mere object, but as a friend and companion. This means that the Bible-believing Christian will exploit neither the land nor the society of that land.

Dr. Ruether therefore sees natural disasters as the result of an imbalance between a controlling class of people, and an exploited land and society. Natural disasters, where there has been the exploitation of the earth and of peoples, is not so much a fact of nature, as it is an ethical judgment, she claims. When humanity breaks the covenant with society the result is violent. It is no accident that nature is most imbalanced where poor people live. Therefore, as stewards of the earth, the Christian is responsible to both nature and to social problems. The stewards of this creation must deal with both ecological harmony and social class disharmony.

So, what do Dr. Ruether, ecology and social problems have to do with the second coming of Christ? Consideration of these things challenges us to thoughtfully reflect on the role of an Adventist in dealing with social and ecological problems. On the one hand is the opinion that those who are truly concerned about humanity must of necessity also be concerned about social injustice and erosion of the natural world. On the other hand, what sense does it make for an advent-believing Christian to be concerned with a 100-year coal supply—since within 100 years he would expect to be in the kingdom. On the other hand, doesn't the "good news" we are to preach to the world certainly include racial and sexual equality and a feeling of kinship towards Mother Earth? On the other hand, don't we have a much more powerful and unique gospel message which must be delivered before Christ comes?

As a community of people which lives in an unjust and imbalanced world and which believes in the imminent advent of our Lord, we must deal with these questions and seek to define our last-day mission to nature and to society.

by Carol Sample

Notes

According to an old anecdote, St. Francis of Assisi was working in his garden one day when a friend stopped and asked, "Brother Francis, what would you do if you knew for certain that Jesus would return to earth today?"

Without pausing from his work, Francis replied, "I would go right on hoeing my garden." No hurrying and scurrying in a last minute effort to recall and rectify wrongs. No "minutes to midnight" mania. Indeed, the assurance that we are ready for Jesus to come should be as spontaneous for us as it was for Francis of Assisi.

But how? How can we get and stay ready? Here are four suggestions for having a meaningful relationship with Christ and being ready for His return.

(1) Read your Bible every day, particularly the sections that tell about the life of Jesus and the plan of salvation. It is well to remember that God's word is like the manna that sustained the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to Canaan: Each day required a fresh supply.

(2) Trust in Jesus alone for your salvation. When you fall, remember that Jesus paid the price for your sins—past, present, and future. Best of all, remember that He is on *your* side and does not leave you when you fail: "If one who daily communes with God errs from the path, if he turns a moment from looking steadfastly unto Jesus, it is not because he sins willfully; for when he sees his mistake, he turns again and fastens his eyes upon Jesus, and the fact that he has erred does not make him less dear to the heart of God."¹

(3) Share your love for Jesus, including the good news of His imminent return. The fact that the Christian's salvation is not dependent upon his own works frees him to work effectively for others.

The story is told of a crew of men who built a huge bridge over a precipitous canyon. During its construction many laborers fell to their deaths. Finally someone suggested placing a strong net beneath the area where the men were working. Once the net was securely in place, fewer men fell (no one was killed) and the quality and quantity of their work improved. No longer fearful for their lives, the men gave themselves unreservedly to their task. "My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

(4) "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Paul's paradoxical admonition should not be interpreted as an invitation to the cloistered life. The lives of Jesus and Paul evince that active and contemplative lifestyles are not mutually exclusive, since both spent the years of their ministry between the mountain and the market.

So what does it mean to "pray without ceasing"? Certainly it is suggesting a type of communion with Christ which can be constant in every facet of life. And indeed, when this experience is a reality for the Christian, his prayer becomes, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

¹ Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, May 12, 1896

anonymous

Notes

It is evening—if heaven has an evening. Two figures walk silently, arm in arm, through the golden streets. One of them we recognize immediately as the Master. The other . . . must be the angel Gabriel. On they walk, through beauty beyond description. . . .

But the beauty tonight seems marred by the strange silence of the two. They have come now into that vast part of the city which is uninhabited. Just why it should remain so is hard to understand. For the homes that line its winding streets are lovely beyond words. The terraces, the lawns of living green, the rose gardens rich with bloom, would bring tears of joy to any child of God who, looking upon such beauty, could cherish even the faintest hope of one day possessing it.

At last Gabriel breaks the silence. "Master," he says, "all that has come from Your hands is good. And these homes are no exception. They are beautiful—as only You could make them."

"They would be beautiful," is the Master's reply, "if they were not empty."

Again there is silence. Then Gabriel speaks. "Master, when do You plan to bring them home?"

"Not yet," He replies. And then softly, with a look of yearning sadness, "Not yet."

"Didn't You plan to go for them years before this?" Another silence, and then, "Master, You know there is a housing shortage down there. Many have *no* homes. . . . And those that do have them seem to be satisfied with the old earth. They seem to feel no need of heaven. But, Master, the loveliest homes down there are only shacks compared to these that You have built."

"Yes," the Savior says.

There is more silence, and this time it is the Master who breaks it. "Gabriel, do you see those groups of people—the ones that are kneeling?"

"Yes, Master."

"They are My people, Gabriel. They are faithful to Me. They love My words. They tell others I am coming back. And they pray, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'"

The Master hesitates. Then He continues. "But Gabriel, sometimes when My people feel that I am about to come for them, I detect a worried look on their faces, as if . . ." The Master cannot say what is in His heart. But Gabriel knows and turns his face. For he has no answer for his Lord.

A few moments pass and the angel turns again, his face expressing the love and admiration that are in his heart. "Jesus," he says.

And the Savior's face seems to light up as Gabriel addresses Him. He loves to be called by the name that in a special way expresses His mission to a fallen world. . . .

Gabriel pauses an instant as he looks at the nail prints in His hands. Then, clasping both wounded hands in his own, he continues, repeating that matchless name: "Jesus, You gave so much for them." He says no more, for even an angel cannot find words adequate to express such infinite love.

The tears that a moment ago were stealing down the Master's cheek now flow unchecked. His disappointment is so great that its intensity cannot be described. At last, motioning toward the empty mansions about Him, He finds the words: "Gabriel, don't they want to come home?"

1. Relative to "Ecology or Advent?," the Evidence article for this week, how would you define the Adventist's last-day mission to nature and to society?

How active should Adventists be in dealing with social injustice and erosion of the natural world? (e.g., ERA, nuclear generators, etc.)

2. What would you do if you knew for certain that Jesus would return to earth at the end of 100 years? 10 years? 1 year?

3. Do you really want to go "home"? Why? On a separate sheet of paper outline your reasons.

4. To hasten the Lord's coming I need to:

_____ be more committed

_____ improve my health habits

_____ do nothing; the Lord will come at His appointed time regardless of my actions or the actions of others

_____ have more compassion

_____ perfect my character

_____ witness to my neighbors

_____ support public evangelism on a worldwide scale

5. What bearing do the present world crises—international, political, economic—have on the time of the Lord's return?



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Not Long Ago and Not Far Away

Not long ago there were eight small race cars, each designed by the same Mechanic who built them to be the best race cars in the world. They were exquisitely crafted machines with finely tuned engines, and they were very happy. But one day the eight cars began looking at other cars made by a much different mechanic. They noticed that the other cars were larger, had more chrome and fancier wheels. Suddenly, the little cars didn't feel so happy. They began to worry that no one would want to race with such plain little cars. So each began buying and installing different extras for himself. One modified his bodywork to give himself the illusion of size. Another painted himself a bright color and added a large spoiler hoping to look bold and daring.

Two of the cars became so impressed with their own additions that they changed their name from "race car" to "super car."

As time passed on one of the little cars grew weary of his additional chrome and modifications. It was cumbersome and made him run slower. So piece by piece he peeled away the needless extras and began to concentrate on precision. He cleaned and tuned his engine and suspension according to the original specifications set out by the Master Mechanic. He concentrated on quality, craftsmanship and his unique design.

When he was done he looked smaller but he knew he had always been the same basic size. Before long drivers began to notice the little car and he began to hear them say things like:

"I like it because it is small. I feel like I can really get to know all the parts."

"It performs better because it's not weighted down with a lot of extras."

"It won't always win on circular race tracks but in real road races it's a winner."

"It's the best for running in the 'big' race."

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Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	S.S. Members
Atlantic	35,021,853	288	44,990	40,551
Canadian	22,983,474	247	29,009	28,126
Central	12,320,352	297	36,400	26,405
Columbia	57,625,265	502	65,915	56,908
Lake	32,977,379	446	54,891	47,223
North Pacific	7,927,700	343	58,107	49,278
Northern	7,914,128	195	15,397	12,404
Pacific	26,082,778	505	131,091	102,564
Southern	31,855,540	628	69,226	70,091
Southwestern	24,347,735	382	36,685	28,269
DIVISION TOTALS	259,056,204	3,821	581,721	458,817

(Figures as of September 1978)