

AUSTRALASIAN RECORD

and advent world survey



Editor: Robert H. Parr

VOL. 81, NO. 41 PRICE: 13 CENTS October 11, 1976



The
Adventist
Message
and
mission.

Week
of Prayer
Readings
for
October 9-16,
1976.

Message From the General Conference Officers

As world events unfold, there is a deep concern on the part of the officers of the General Conference that the church may be ready for the final climax of the ages. A new spirit of self-examination has taken possession of the church's leaders at headquarters. They ask, Why are we still here? What is hindering the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Why do we not see more evidences of the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit? Why is there laxity and conformity to the world in segments of the church?

Annual Councils have on occasion suspended business to spend a morning or a few hours examining the spiritual trends in the church. If there ever was a time when the church needed power for witnessing—power for the finishing of God's work—it is now.

We are motivated by such statements as the following from God's servant: "If those who propose to work for the salvation of souls depend on their own finite wisdom, they will certainly fail. If they entertain humble views of self, and rely fully upon the promises of God, He will never fail them. 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' We have the privilege of being directed by a wise Counselor."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 79.

"Sin has marred the divine image in man. Through Christ this may be restored, but it is only through earnest prayer and the conquest of self that we can become partakers of the divine nature. . . .

"The true toilers in the Lord's vineyard will be men of prayer, of faith, of self-denial—men who hold in restraint the natural appetites and passions. These will in their own lives give evidence of the power of the truth which they present to others; and their labors will not be without effect."—*Ibid.*, p. 80.

God lays heavily upon leaders the burden of soul preparation, so that nothing may hinder the free flowing of the Spirit in their lives and work. God has endowed each person with mental and moral energies that must be cultivated to the highest standard of which he is capable through natural acquirement, cultivation, exercise, and the grace of God. We are told that our success "will be proportionate to the degree of consecration and self-sacrifice in which the work is done, rather than to either natural or acquired endowments."—*Ibid.*

The leaders of God's church are calling our people in the Week of Prayer readings to join them in making this kind of commitment and dedication, that together we may be entrusted with the supernatural power essential for the completion of our gigantic task of carrying this last warning message to the world.

The readings for Sunday through Friday were prepared by T. H. Blincoe, who teaches theology and Christian philosophy at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The topic is the unique message that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been given by God to communicate to the world. Dr. Blincoe's training and background, as well as his intimate knowledge of the history of the Adventist Church and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, qualify him in a special way to present this series. On the first Sabbath is a reading from the Spirit of Prophecy and on the second Sabbath is a special appeal by Robert H. Pierson, president of the General Conference.

The author of the children's Week of Prayer readings, Lorenzo Grant, has recently accepted a position in the religion department at Southern Missionary College, Collegedale, Tennessee. Previously he was director of the youth and temperance departments of the Columbia Union Conference.

CREDITS

Bible credits: Texts credited to N.A.S.B. are from the *New American Standard Bible and New Testament*. Copyright 1973, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Texts in this issue credited to Phillips are from *The New Testament in Modern English*, © J. B. Phillips, 1972. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company. Texts credited to Moffatt are from *The Bible: A New Translation* by James Moffatt. Copyright by James Moffatt 1954. Used by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Texts credited to N.I.V. are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version, The New Testament*. Copyright © by New York Bible Society International. Published by The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Art and photo credits: Cover, Alan Collins; p. 5, Henry Herzog; p. 29, Skip Baker.



Sabbath, October 9

Watchmen and Light Bearers

Ellen White confirms the uniqueness of the message SDA's are to proclaim.



By ELLEN G. WHITE

IN A SPECIAL SENSE Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.¹

The second appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is to be kept fresh before the minds of the people. Let all understand this. Jesus is coming again. The same Jesus that ascended into heaven, escorted by the heavenly host, is coming again. The same Jesus who has been our Advocate, our friend at court, pleading the cases of all who accept Him as their Saviour, will come the second time to be admired in all them that believe.²

The Third and Last Message

The third angel of Revelation 14 is represented as flying swiftly through the midst of heaven crying: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Here is shown the nature of the work of the people of God. They have a message of so great importance that they are represented as flying in the presentation of it to the world. They are holding in their hands the bread of life for a famishing world. The love of Christ constraineth them. This is the last message. There are no more to follow, no more invitations of mercy to be given after this message shall have done its work. What a trust! What a responsibility is resting upon all to carry the words of gracious invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."³

The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord.

This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel.⁴

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." The prophet declares, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel's message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit.⁵

The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.⁶

The Sabbath question will be the issue in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part.⁷

The Sabbath memorial, declaring who the living God is, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has been torn down, and a spurious sabbath has been given to the world in its place. Thus a breach has been made in the law of God. A false sabbath could not be a true standard. . . .

The Sabbath Uplifted

In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the work of those who worship God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is specified: "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations" (Isa. 58:12). God's memorial, His seventh-day Sabbath, will be uplifted. "Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath [no longer trample it under your feet], from doing thy pleasure on my holy day: and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, . . . I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:12-14).

The history of the church and the world, the loyal and the disloyal, is here plainly revealed. The loyal under the proclamation of the third angel's message have turned their feet into the way of God's commandments, to respect, to honor, and glorify Him who created the heavens and the earth. The opposing forces have dishonored God by making a breach in His law, and when light from His Word has called attention to His holy commandments, revealing the breach made in the law by the papal authority, then, to get rid of conviction, men have tried to destroy the whole law. But could they destroy it? No; for all who will search the Scriptures for themselves will see that the law of God stands immutable, eternal, and His memorial, the Sabbath, will endure through eternal ages, pointing to the only true God in distinction from all false gods.⁸

When the command was given to Israel, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," the Lord said also to them, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me." Ex. 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshippers of God.⁹

In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ.¹⁰

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

From the pillar of cloud Christ declared concerning the Sabbath: "Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exodus 31:13. The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.¹¹

In contrast to those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, the third angel points to another class, against whose errors a solemn and fearful warning is uttered: "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." Revelation 14:9, 10.¹²

In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ.

To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God. . . .

If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls "My holy day," you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.¹³

No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.

With rapid steps we are approaching this period. When Protestant churches shall unite with the secular

power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution, then will the papal sabbath be enforced by the combined authority of church and state.¹⁴

Men have honored Satan's principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority. But God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. Each sabbath institution bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each. It is our work to lead the people to understand this. We are to show them that it is of vital consequence whether they bear the mark of God's kingdom or the mark of the kingdom of rebellion, for they acknowledge themselves subjects of the kingdom whose mark they bear. God has called us to uplift the standard of His downtrodden Sabbath. How important, then, that our example in Sabbathkeeping should be right.¹⁵

The Promise of Success

Satan has been persevering and untiring in his efforts to prosecute the work he began in heaven, to change the law of God. He has succeeded in making the world believe the theory he presented in heaven before his fall, that the law of God was faulty, and needed revising. A large part of the professed Christian church, by their attitude, if not by their words, show that they have accepted the same error. But if in one jot or tittle the law of God has been changed, Satan has gained on earth that which he could not gain in heaven. He has prepared his delusive snare, hoping to take captive the church and the world. But not all will be taken in the snare.¹⁶

When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril, strife for supremacy will cease; there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest. No one of the true believers will say: "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas." The testimony of one and all will be: "I cleave unto Christ; I rejoice in Him as my personal Saviour."¹⁷

The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter. Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time.¹⁸

The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit's power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.¹⁹ □

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 19.
- ² Manuscript 31, 1896.
- ³ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 206, 207.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 19.
- ⁵ *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.
- ⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 104, 105.
- ⁷ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 18:9-12, p. 979.
- ⁸ *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 106, 107.
- ⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 349, 350.
- ¹² *The Great Controversy*, p. 438.
- ¹³ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 13:16, 17, pp. 979, 980.
- ¹⁴ *Evangelism*, pp. 234, 235.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 352, 353.
- ¹⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 107.
- ¹⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 401.
- ¹⁸ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 14:6-12, p. 979.
- ¹⁹ *Evangelism*, p. 700.

Sunday, October 10

A Unique Church

The rise and history
of the Second Advent Movement
fulfills the predictions of prophecy.



By THOMAS H. BLINCOE

DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT to say that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's true remnant church? Are there possible dangers in making such an assertion? Must we make such a claim? Says one, Why not be content to be another member of the great Protestant brotherhood with a new, interesting, but not-vital-for-salvation emphasis? Where did our spiritual forefathers get the idea that our church is God's true remnant church? Is it possible they were over-zealous, as new struggling organizations tend to be, in their endeavor to get ahead? Now that we are an established, recognized, worldwide, growing denomination with some 2.5 million members, do we still need such stimulation? Besides, some might argue that we live in a different age, an enlightened age, where the emphasis is on Christian unity and on recognizing the good that exists in all religions.

Does the old SDA claim to be God's remnant still fit? The answer is a resounding Yes.

In the *Church Manual*, under the caption "Baptismal Vow and Baptism," appears a list of 13 questions. The following sentence of instruction precedes the questions themselves: "In the presence of the church the following questions should be answered in the affirmative by candidates for baptism." We will not take the space to record all 13 questions since for our present purposes only one of them is pertinent. It happens to be number 13. Notice what it says: "Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church constitutes the remnant church, and do you desire to be accepted into its membership?"

It is obvious that the authors of the *Church Manual* believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's remnant church. Who are the authors? The title page says, "Issued by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." Is question number 13 just a product of church polity conceived by human authority?

The General Conference assures us that it is not the original source for the declaration that lies behind question 13 in the *Church Manual*. It points to the Bible as the original source. The Bible will settle it then, and to the Bible we will turn.

The tenth chapter of Revelation contains a striking prophecy. It comes as a parenthesis between the sixth

and seventh trumpets. This helps us to find its place in the stream of time, which in turn serves as a key to its correct interpretation. While it is true that not all students of Bible prophecy are in full agreement as to the time or nature of the seven trumpets, many looked to August 11, 1840, as marking the close of the sixth trumpet (see *The Great Controversy*, pp. 334, 335). On this basis we can expect the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Revelation 10 to occur after 1840. But apart from this, the fact that the seventh trumpet is mentioned in verse seven of the tenth chapter, although the delineation of it is reserved for verses 14 through 19 of the eleventh chapter, shows that the prophecy is closely associated with the seventh trumpet and the finishing of "the mystery of God," which, according to 1 Corinthians 2:1; Colossians 2:2; Colossians 1:27; and 1 Timothy 3:16, is the gospel.

An analysis of Revelation 11:14-19 and a comparison of this passage with Daniel 7:9-28; 8:9-9:27; and Revelation 16:17-21 show that the events portrayed under the seventh trumpet occur between 1844 and the second coming of Christ. A logical conclusion would be that the events of Revelation 10 also find their fulfillment within this period of time. What are these events?

Verses 1-6 of Revelation 10 reveal the true significance of what we shall discover later to be the first angel's message, as indicated (1) by the identity of the "mighty angel" who came down from heaven to introduce it; He was none other than Jesus Christ Himself (cf. Rev. 10:1 with Rev. 1:13-16 and *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 10:1-11, p. 971); (2) by the worldwide extent of the message (verses 2 and 5); and (3) by the fact that it is tied in with an event that would mark the end of prophetic time (verse 6, cf. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 10:1-11, p. 971). Verses 8-11 and the first two verses of the eleventh chapter depict graphically, accurately, and succinctly the experience that the people chosen by God to give the first angel's message had in giving it.

As we shall see, if one compares the contents of Revelation 10:1 to 11:2 with the history of the Advent Movement from its rise in 1831, it is not difficult to recognize that the movement fulfilled the prediction, even down to the finest detail of the prophecy. Referring to prophecy, Jesus said: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29). It is no secret that Jesus Christ Himself, and His apostles after Him, continually called upon the people to accept Him as the Messiah on the basis of prophecy, by showing the agreement between promise or prophecy and fulfillment.

A Fulfillment of Prophecy

We are on safe ground, then, and need not hesitate to conclude that the rise and history of the Second Advent Movement fulfills the prediction the apostle John made on the rocky Isle of Patmos more than 1,700 years before and recorded by him under divine inspiration in what we now call the tenth chapter of Revelation. This means that the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not come into being by the will of man, but by the will of God. What a heritage is ours!

We all recognize that Revelation 14:6-12 contains the three angels' messages. What hint as to the time these messages apply do we have here? Verses 6 and 7 unfold the first angel's message. This significant clause appears in the middle of verse 7: "For the hour of his judgment is come."

This was the core of the message of the Advent Movement that arose in 1831 under the God-directed leader-

ship of William Miller. William Miller connected this announcement of judgment with the 2300 days of Daniel 8 and 9. In harmony with the popular teaching of the day, he interpreted the "sanctuary" of Daniel 8:14 to represent the earth or some part of the earth. The "judgment" of Revelation 14:7 he equated with the cleansing spoken of in Daniel 8:14. When he worked out the prophetic time factor of 2300 days on the day-year principle and took his clue for its beginning date from the 70 weeks portion of the 2300 days in Daniel 9:24-27, he came up with the conclusion that Jesus was coming to cleanse the world by fire and gather His waiting saints home sometime in or about the termination of the Jewish year 1843, which ended in the spring of 1844.

Thus God raised up the Second Advent Movement to preach the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, it went like wildfire. Ellen White wrote that it was carried to every mission station and constituted the purest religious awakening since Pentecost (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 355-374). In America, it was spearheaded by William Miller, Josiah Litch, Charles Fitch, Joseph Bates, and many others. In South America, it was the Jesuit priest Lacunza. In England, it was Edward Irving, and by 1844, 600 other ministers were proclaiming the good news of Christ's imminent return. On the European continent young children were raised up by God to give the good news, when men were forbidden to preach it. In Africa, and the Near and Far East, the evangel was Joseph Wolff.

The earth was awakened to a new state of expectancy. Christ was coming soon. Thousands prepared themselves to meet the Judge of all the earth. In Protestant America church doors were opened in many different places to those bearing the message of Christ's soon coming. But as the expected day drew nearer, opposition arose. Many had to choose between loyalty to the message that was so sweet to them and being disfellowshipped from their churches. This was especially true when Christ had not come by the spring of 1844.

October 22, 1844, marked the beginning of the end of the great controversy. When the controversy is over, God's character will be vindicated before the entire universe.

In the summer of 1844 the second angel's message began to be preached by those who still held firmly to their belief in the certainty of the first angel's message in spite of the unexpected and unaccountable delay. They applied the second message particularly to the Protestant churches of America that had rejected the first angel's message and thereby had suffered a spiritual fall.

Then came the Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting in the late summer of 1844. It was here that the "midnight cry" arose, following the study by Samuel Snow in which he pointed out a six-month error in the reckoning of the beginning date of the 2300 days. The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25) did not go into effect until the fall of 457 B.C. A new date was set for the second coming of Christ—October 22, because that was the tenth day of the seventh month in that year, according to the Karaite reckoning of the Jewish religious calendar, and Adventists believed that Christ's coming would fulfill the Jewish typical Day of Atonement. The Advent people now saw their experience clearly portrayed in

Christ's parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. They had been in the tarrying time. Now, at "midnight," halfway between the spring and fall of 1844, they had discovered new evidence that aroused them out of their spiritual slumber and caused them to trim their lamps and go forth with new zeal, declaring everywhere, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

In young America some 50,000 responded to the call and went out to meet the Bridegroom. How bitter was their disappointment when October 22 came and went and Christ had not come. It was difficult for those who suffered such keen disappointment to see the hand of God guiding them through their darkest hour. But that same sure word of prophecy, on which their faith had been based, contained the answer to the questions that had arisen in their stunned, bewildered minds. Why hasn't He come? Where did we make a mistake? Have we miscalculated the time?

Evidence That God Was Leading

The faith of God's people was severely tested. Those who had been caught up in the sweep of the movement merely emotionally were quick to surrender their belief in the blessed hope of the Second Advent. But those whose faith was grounded in the Word of God remained steadfast, unmoved by the vacillation of their former brethren and the harsh ridicule of nonbelievers. They were absolutely convinced that God was their leader. The evidence was overwhelming. They were people of deep genuine piety. They knew how to pray, and pray they did. They knew how to study the Bible, and study they did. Earnest prayer and diligent Bible study were the chart and compass of the Advent Movement from its inception. They had been God's means of carrying His people through rough seas and darkened skies before. True, this storm was the worst they had ever encountered, but they would not abandon the ship. They would check their bearings to make sure that they were on course, and trust all to the One who had led them thus far on their journey to the haven of eternal rest to see them safely through.

As they studied and prayed, the light of Heaven began to penetrate the thick darkness. New truth from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation began to open up to them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was as if God was removing cataracts from their eyes.

During the days immediately following 1844, their study centered around the doctrine of the sanctuary. This too had been indicated in the prophecy of Revelation 10 and the first two verses of the eleventh chapter. As a result they came to a new understanding of the first angel's message they had been heralding since 1831, especially the clause "the hour of his judgment is come." In turn, this solved the mystery of their great disappointment. They learned that on October 22, 1844, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and began a new phase of His priestly ministry, the great antitypical day of atonement. On that day, something happened in history that had never happened before, "the judgment was set and the books were opened" (see Dan. 7:9-14).

October 22, 1844, marked the beginning of the end of the great controversy. God is holy and just. When the controversy is all over at the close of the millennium, every issue will have been settled to the fullest satisfaction of all concerned. Jesus Christ, through His earthly life and ministry, His death on the cross, and His priestly ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, will have vindicated God's character completely before the entire universe, and thus made the universe secure for all eternity. □

Monday, October 11

A Remnant Foretold

The SDA Church
meets the Biblical specifications
for the remnant church.

SHORTLY AFTER the great disappointment in 1844, God brought the group that had accepted the sanctuary doctrine into contact with the doctrine of the true Sabbath. Some laid hold of this Bible truth quickly and became its strong advocates. Among them was Joseph Bates. Others followed, among them James and Ellen White.

About the same time the third angel's message came into focus. The Sabbath truth is indicated in that message. Revelation 14:12 makes that clear: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." The Sabbath is the fourth commandment, right in the heart of God's holy, eternal, immutable law. Now the broad outline of their message was complete. Details were to be filled in as earnest prayer and diligent Bible study continued. Sabbathkeeping Adventists knew who they were and what message they were to preach. They were the people whose rise and experience had been predicted in Revelation 10:1-11:2. They were raised up to carry the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people in order to prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus Christ. This was a unique work that no other people had done or were doing. Oh, yes, many churches were preaching the everlasting gospel in different parts of the world. But none was preaching it in the fullness, nor in the setting, in which Seventh-day Adventists had been divinely called to preach it. They realized that the prophecy of Revelation 10:11 applied especially to them: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Prophecy and the Remnant

One more question remains to be answered. What is the relationship between the historical church of the Old and the New Testament and this people, who by 1860 had organized themselves into a church and had taken on the name Seventh-day Adventist? The answer is found in the twelfth chapter of Revelation. In verse one the prophet sees the church, symbolized by a pure woman, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of 12 stars upon her head. The fact that she is about to give birth to Christ shows her tie-in with the Old Testament church. The relationship between the Old and the New Testament church is the idea we need to grasp. Verses 3-5 reveal Satan's preparation to destroy the Seed, whom he hates, as soon as He is born; the birth of the Seed; the identity of the Seed; and God's intervention to thwart Satan's attempt to destroy the Seed. Verses 7-10 record the Son of God's victory over Satan and his hosts. The first victory was gained in heaven, when Lucifer's disaffection erupted into open rebellion and he became "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." In this battle, the Son of God as Michael the arch-

angel, met him and completely defeated him. The second one was in the earth, Satan's stronghold, where for 4,000 years he had claimed his victims. In this battle the Son of God met Satan—met him as the Son of man, and as man proved Satan's claims false, and through His death on the cross of Calvary He opened the prison house of Satan and made it possible for every one of his captives to be set free. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18).

Satan trembled when Jesus cried out, "It is finished." He knew that his kingdom was doomed and that he and his angels would go down to eternal destruction with it. He knew that he had "but a short time." Yet he would not give up the struggle. The stinging defeat that the Son of God had inflicted upon him increased his hatred of Him. He could no longer reach Christ in person, but he would intensify his warfare against the one supreme object of Christ's affection—the woman, or the church.

Verse 6 and verses 13-18 unveil the history of the church between the two advents of Christ, in the setting of Satan's intensified warfare against her. Two periods of the most severe persecution are singled out. The first period is introduced in verse 6 and amplified in verses 13-16. The time element spoken of in verse 6 appears again in verse 14. It is expressed differently, but the context argues that it is the same. This is the 1260 years of papal suppression, 538-1798, during which there were periods of the most severe persecution of the church. By the church we mean those who were remaining loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of His Word in the midst of the great apostasy.

Verse 17 introduces us to the second and last period, when Satan directs his wrath against the "remnant" of the church. The word "remnant" is the translation of the Greek *loipoi* and means "remaining ones." In other words, Satan declares war on the members of the church that remain after 1798. And notice that two specific characteristics of these "remaining ones" are mentioned, they "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

This seems to equate the "remaining ones" with those spoken of in the last verse of the third angel's message. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

The phrase "the testimony of Jesus," or words similar, appears six times in the book of Revelation, twice in the first chapter, once in the twelfth chapter, twice in the nineteenth chapter, and once in the twentieth chapter. Standing by itself the phrase can mean either "testimony that Jesus bears" or "testimony to Jesus," that is, "testimony about Jesus." In most of its occurrences the latter seems to be its meaning.

The Testimony of Jesus

But in Revelation 19:10 the context suggests the meaning "testimony that Jesus bears." The angel rejects John's worship on the basis that he is a fellow servant with John and John's brethren who have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy. Revelation 22:9 adds further light. The angel says, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." For this reason then, we can say that it is the prophets who "have the testimony of Jesus" which is "the spirit of prophecy."

In a REVIEW editorial a few years ago the following meanings were suggested for the clause "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," based on a careful analysis of the Greek: "When prophecy operates it is

Jesus who is bearing witness," or "The characteristic of prophecy is that Jesus is bearing witness" (Aug. 17, 1967, p. 13). These meanings fall not only within the category of legitimate translations according to the Greek construction but they also fit the immediate context and agree with Peter's testimony in 1 Peter 1:10, 11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

With these facts in mind, we return now to Revelation 12:17. One of the designated characteristics of the remnant church is that it has the testimony of Jesus. As interpreted by Seventh-day Adventists, this verse when compared with Revelation 19:10 and 22:9 affirms that the remnant church will have the gift of prophecy and therefore a prophet or prophets through whom Jesus will bear testimony.

Do we have any corroborative scriptural evidence to support this interpretation of Revelation 12:17? We answer in the affirmative. Consider Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 on spiritual gifts in the church. The impact of the whole chapter is important, but let us single out verse 28: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Paul places no time limit on these gifts. He gives no hint that they are to terminate at the close of the first century of the Christian Era. He does tell us, however, in verse 8 that the Spirit is the source of all these gifts. And in verse 11 he states that the Spirit gives them to "each one individually as he [the Spirit] wills" (R.S.V.). It shouldn't surprise us, then, if the Spirit decides to activate the gift of prophecy or raise up a prophet or prophets in the church at any time.

Again, Paul speaks on this theme of gifts in the church in the fourth chapter of his letter addressed to the Ephesians, verses 11-15. He specifically includes prophets among the gifts that Christ gave to His church and indicates that they, along with apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, were to labor for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ till all should come into full spiritual maturity in Christ. Why then should we be surprised to find prophets in the church even in our day?

Prophetic Gift Manifested

When the gift of prophecy was first manifested among the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some were skeptical. This was understandable, and the chosen human instrument did not press the issue of immediate acceptance. But when the pioneers applied every Bible test to the prophet and her work, she passed and she has continued to pass the most critical examinations, when those examinations have been conducted free from bias and prejudice.

From 1955 to 1958 it was my privilege to teach the adult Sunday school class on a U.S. Air Force base overseas. For at least two years Major A was a regular member of that class. We became close friends. One day he told me that he would like to come to see me in my home. We set a date, and he came. After the evening meal I asked him what he had on his mind. He looked at me and said, "I have come to get your permission to join the _____ Church."

I replied, "Major, I am afraid that you have come to the wrong place, but what has led you to this?"

For the next three or four hours we talked in a most sincere and straightforward manner. He was serious, and so was I. During much of that time I was praying silently. Here was a soul in the balance. He was presenting the arguments of the _____ Church right down the line. I knew that he had been very friendly with the civilian chaplain of the _____ Church. Now I found out that he had been studying with him. At one point in our conversation he said to me, "Blincoe, you will admit that Christ founded a church and said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. This means then that His church is still with us today. Now, tell me, what church is His true church if it is not the _____ Church?"

I looked him right in the eye and replied, "Major, it is the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Let us not hesitate for a moment to believe it with all of our hearts. Our church alone fulfills the prophecy of Revelation 10:1-11:2. We are the only ones who are preaching the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. There is no other church that meets the specifications of Revelation 12:17.

What are the implications of these conclusions? (1) We cannot be content to become just another church, with an emphasis that is new, interesting, but not vital for salvation, in the great Protestant brotherhood. Our message is vital for salvation. It stands between the living and the dead. Without it men and women will not be prepared to meet the current and forthcoming issues in the religious world and will go down to eternal ruin.

The Message to Every Nation

(2) For this same reason we could never agree to the evangelization of the world on the share plan. This isn't God's solution for finishing His work in the earth. We must carry the message He has entrusted to us to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people on the face of the globe. Not one person is to be passed by, in spite of the population explosion. If we are honest with ourselves and realistic, we will have to admit that we face an impossible task! Yet, our small numbers, limited funds, meager success, apparent defeats and setbacks, or any other factor must not deter us. Our primary need is not more money, or a larger membership, or even better educated and skillfully trained workers. Our greatest need is the Holy Spirit. This is God's work. He will finish it in a grand and glorious way. Can't you hear Him saying, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6)? When we pray and prepare for the Holy Spirit with all our hearts, He will come in His fullness and with Him will come every other needed blessing. By His Holy Spirit, God brought our church into being and by His Holy Spirit He will lead it through to ultimate victory. (3) Spiritual bigotry cannot exist in the heart of a true Seventh-day Adventist. Why? As the *SDA Bible Commentary* puts it: "Adventists repudiate emphatically and unequivocally any thought that they alone are children of God and have a claim upon heaven. They believe that all who worship God in full sincerity, that is, in terms of all the revealed will of God that they understand, are presently potential members of that final 'remnant' company. . . . Adventists believe that it is their solemn task and joyous privilege to make God's last testing truths so clear and so persuasive as to draw all of God's children into that prophetically foretold company that is making ready for the day of God."—Volume 7, p. 815.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."—*Life Sketches*, p. 196. □

Tuesday, October 12

A Unique Message

The unique message to be proclaimed by SDA's is clearly delineated in the Scriptures.

THERE SHOULD BE NO identity crisis among Seventh-day Adventists. We have deep and strong Biblical roots. We have a rich religious heritage passed on to us by our spiritual forefathers. We have abundant evidence of the leadership of the Holy Spirit among us and the blessing of God upon us. Our origins and development are clearly the work of divine Providence.

We know also the reason for our existence. We have been established by the mighty hand of God to proclaim the three angels' messages to every intelligent, accountable person on this earth. Such a work is "the most solemn, sacred work ever given to mortals" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 76). There is no other work so important (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 19). These messages are to separate people from churches and the world and to bring them into a sacred nearness to God (*ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 445). They are to prepare earth's inhabitants for the second advent of Jesus Christ (*The Great Controversy*, p. 435).

Our mission is not veiled with the mists of ambiguity. This fact, however, does not remove, but rather underscores, the absolute necessity for a continuous, earnest, in-depth study of the message we are to deliver, lest we run to the ends of the earth and when we arrive have really nothing relevant to say and share.

We must understand our message so well that we can translate it into the modern idiom; our rapidly changing world makes this a necessity, at any particular time and in any particular place, without transforming it by accommodation, addition, reduction, or distortion into something other than the original. "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these [the first, second, and third angels'] messages."—*Early Writings*, p. 258.

Moreover, our study must always proceed in two dimensions simultaneously. Ellen White explains: "The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths."—*Evangelism*, p. 196. (Italics supplied.)

It has been said that the message to Laodicea is for the church, while the three angels' messages are for the world. There is an element of truth in this; however, we must remember that we are not immune to any part of these messages and that we cannot proclaim effectively that which we ourselves do not live out in the wear and tear of everyday life. In the Adventist movement there should be no qualitative difference between message and messenger. Indeed, the character of the messenger, in God's plan, is to corroborate the divine character of the message he bears. Otherwise, confusion results and the truth of God is discredited, if not totally rejected. Bible

history shows that God has always been concerned about the character of those whom He has chosen to be His ambassadors.

Our ministry, like the ministry of the apostle Paul, is not of the letter, for the letter kills, but of the Spirit, for the Spirit gives life (see 2 Cor. 3). We must be careful here lest we conclude that we have been called simply to engender some kind of warm, subjective feeling toward God in the human heart. The "letter" only kills when it is not accompanied by the Spirit. God intends that His message, stated in clear propositions, shall be written by the Spirit on the fleshly tables of the heart. The Spirit never destroys or supersedes the message He causes to be written and proclaimed, rather, He magnifies, shows the spiritual depths of, and fulfills that message in the life of every believer. He re-creates the life through and according to the contours of the message.

Reveal God's Character

Our message and mission is to reveal the true character of God in an hour when He is unknown or grossly misunderstood. We live in a time of darkness. What is the nature of this darkness? "It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415. The message Ellen White writes of here clearly comprehends the third angel's message, which, as we have seen, includes the first and second angels' messages. In short it reads, "Behold your God."

As the curtain rolls back on Revelation 14:6-12, three angels appear one after the other in midheaven. The rapid succession with which they come on the stage of action and the content of the messages they carry point to the interdependence and interconnection of their messages. Like the movements of a great symphony one follows the other and each contributes to the composition and interpretation of the whole work, but none stands alone as a separate entity. The solo of the first angel, who began to cry with a loud voice about 1831, becomes a duet when he is joined by the second angel in the summer of 1844. A trio is formed when the third angel adds his voice shortly after the bitter disappointment of October 22, 1844. Once their messages are conjoined they can be distinguished but never disjoined and never silenced until they have accomplished their divine mission.

Every Seventh-day Adventist is somewhat acquainted with the rich symbolism of the book of Revelation. It is thrilling, and at the same time solemnizing, to discover that the three angels symbolize the members of the church (*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 387, 388). Do we really know our message? Are we settled into it intellectually and spiritually? Are we proclaiming it with urgency and speed and in the power of the Holy Spirit? Are we like the angels on their missions for God?

The initial words that reach us from the lips of the first angel are a double imperative addressed to the inhabitants of the whole world: "Fear God, and give glory to him." Why? "Because the hour of His judgment has come" (N.A.S.B.). This is a first. In his defense before Felix, Paul discussed the judgment "to come" (Acts 24:25), but it remained for the first angel of Revelation 14:6, 7 to declare that the hour or time of God's judgment of mankind "has come."

The solemn call to judgment is still rolling through the earth when the angel adds a third imperative, "and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Three imperatives and an announcement of judgment! Hasn't the angel made a mistake? Isn't he supposed to be carrying "the everlasting gospel"? How could anyone living in these times consider his message to be good news? He comes to us with three commands and a summons to judgment. What could be more repulsive to a generation that rebels against commands, especially when they are contrary to its life-style—a generation exposed to the constant threat of imminent nuclear annihilation, to say nothing of the population explosion along with economic, food, and pollution crises, with a live-it-up-big-now-who-knows-that-there-will-be-a-tomorrow attitude? Is this the message that we are to preach in order to prepare men and women for the coming of Jesus?

The book of Revelation is a mosaic composed of pieces of the other 65 books in the Bible. "In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585. We cannot, therefore, interpret this book in isolation from the rest of the Bible. If one reads through the Scriptures he will notice again and again that God speaks in the imperative mood. If one believes that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe he recognizes that God has not only the right but the responsibility to speak in this mood, especially when one comes to see that all of God's commands are full of wisdom and love and designed for the happiness and eternal salvation of His creatures. Indeed, the imperative mood is the medium of expression for the intensive outcry of God's loving heart and concern in a crisis situation. "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?' " (Eze. 33:11, N.A.S.B.).

The situation is similar in Revelation 14. The situation is desperate. The crisis hour of all crisis hours in history has come. God is marshaling His forces in heaven and earth, equipping them with the power of His love and truth and sending them into the midst of the mad, run-away world in an all-out effort to persuade His estranged children to return to their Father that they might live.

Reverence for God

"Fear God." What does this mean? The Greek word translated "fear" includes meanings such as "reverence," "venerate," "treat with deference" (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 656). Thus, to fear God includes a feeling of profound respect or wonder inspired by the greatness, superiority, grandeur, glory, majesty, sublimity, holiness, purity, and love of God. Neither would it be amiss to include His justice, power, and wisdom, nor the fear that comes over a man or woman who stands in awe of God, an awe created by the qualitative chasm between the sinless Creator and the sinful creature (see Isa. 6:1-7).

We begin to sense what seems at first to be an irreconcilable tension in the character of God. On the one hand there stands immutable, absolute divine justice demanding the punishment of the guilty; on the other, divine mercy extending unmerited favor toward the guilty. How can this be? God can be just or merciful, one observes, but how can He be both at the same time? The resolution speaks so beautifully of the depths of the wisdom and love of God. "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might

be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ the sinless One died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). Thus God can be just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). In Christ, God bore in His own person His own judgment upon sin. The sufferings and death of the spotless Lamb of God in Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary met the full requirements of divine justice for the sins of the whole world for all time, and opened the floodgates of the fountain of divine mercy and forgiveness (God's mercy is more than an attitude, it is an act) that will take an eternity to measure.

Ellen White summarizes it in these words: "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

This is the message that God is asking us to take to the world. Why are we so slow in doing it? This, in part, is what is wrapped up in those arresting words, "Fear God." But this isn't all. There is more good news to come.

"Give glory to him." What is God calling for? Is He giving simply an arbitrary command for us to praise and honor Him? Such could result only in a formal, perfunctory, mechanical response. Would this please God? In Isaiah 29:13 He issues a complaint against His people: "This people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote" (R.S.V.). It is clear that God can accept only that honor which comes from the heart of man.

When we fit this all together we arrive at the glorious truth that God makes available to us that which He requires of us. Ellen White puts it this way: "God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 76. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!" God commands us to give glory to Him and then He holds Himself responsible for making that possible, for "to give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rev. 18:7, p. 979).

There is yet another side of the imperative "Give glory to him." It constitutes a solemn warning to all the inhabitants of earth that all glory belongs alone to God, Creator of heaven and earth. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth" (Jer. 9:23, 24). Every creature who takes glory to himself is subject to the judgment of God. Indeed, this is where sin had its beginning and has its continuance. All wisdom, might, and riches have their original source in the Creator God. So does every other good and perfect gift (James 1:17). The creature-man has them only in a derived sense. Whenever he takes glory or honor or praise to himself he is robbing God of what is rightfully His. He is corrupting himself. He is deceiving himself into believing that he is autonomous. He is seeking to displace God, to dethrone Him from the universe. It is no wonder that God, out of His matchless love, sends us a strong warning against such a heinous sin that can end only in indescribable tragedy. □

Wednesday, October 13

The Hour of His Judgment

Earth's inhabitants must be warned that their probation is about to close.

"FOR THE HOUR of his judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7, R.S.V.). Is this good news or bad news? Is it something to rejoice over, or to weep and mourn over? Is it a message we can deliver to the world with zeal and vigor, or must we whisper it in a corner with fear and trembling? The doctrine of judgment is clearly taught in both the Old and New Testaments. Solomon closes the book of Ecclesiastes with the words, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13, 14). The apostle Paul informs us that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Cor. 5:10, R.S.V.). There is no ambiguity or uncertainty here. The Christian church has long known, believed, and proclaimed the doctrine of the judgment. One aspect of it, however, remained enfolded until the fullness of prophetic time had come.

God Took the Initiative

As we observed Sunday, the pre-Advent or investigative phase of the judgment began to unfold shortly after the disappointment in 1844. God took the initiative. On the morning of October 23, 1844, immediately following the long, dark night of keen disappointment and weeping, Hiram Edson saw "distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He, for the first time, entered on that day into the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in the most holy place before coming to the earth; that He came to the marriage, or, in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and that we must wait for His return from the wedding."—*Review and Herald*, June 23, 1921, p. 5. As study continued, it led to a new understanding of the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters of Daniel, and corresponding chapters in Revelation, and to the opening up of the book of Hebrews until Adventists realized that "the intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.

Daniel 7:9, 10 was seen as an explication of "the hour of his judgment has come" clause of Revelation 14:7. Here we learn that according to Daniel 7 it was to be shortly after 1798 (the exact time of October 22, 1844, does not come to view until chapters 8 and 9) that God set His hand to bring the great controversy to an end, to

vindicate and deliver His saints and give them the kingdom, and to overthrow and destroy His enemies through the process of judgment in full view of the angelic hosts and the intelligent, unfallen creatures of the entire universe. The investigative phases of this judgment are not conducted for God's information. He knows those who are His and nothing is hidden from Him with whom we have to do. But He enters into the process for at least two reasons:

First, He is about to take into the sinless universe millions who have been involved in the great controversy and were at one time on the side of Satan. Are they safe to save? If they are taken in, might not iniquity arise the second time? In His desire to be merciful is God not jeopardizing justice? These questions must be answered to the satisfaction of all concerned, because the security of the universe rests upon an understanding and appreciation of God's character, not upon arbitrary power, since God elected to create every intelligent creature a free moral agent. The thorough, close investigation will be of every person who has ever professed to leave the service of Satan and to join himself to Christ, "as close and searching . . . as if there were not another being upon the earth" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 490). "As the features of the countenance are reproduced with unerring accuracy on the polished plate of the artist, so the character is faithfully delineated in the books above."—*Ibid.*, p. 487.

God Is Just and Merciful

Second, God is going to close the door of probation. The time is coming when His mercy will no longer plead for the guilty sinner, when the merits of Christ's sacrifice will no longer be available, when His intercession in the heavenly sanctuary will cease. Then the irrevocable word of God will be uttered, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11).

Does this reveal a defect in God's character? Has His patience run out? In His desire to rid Himself and the universe of the pain, sorrow, and suffering that sin has caused from its very inception, has He arbitrarily refused to be merciful to those born in and deceived by sin any longer? Moreover, is their punishment just? The investigative judgment of the wicked during the millennium, when, in addition to the angelic hosts and the other unfallen intelligent creatures of the universe, the redeemed of this world will be present, will answer these questions (Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661). The judgment in both its investigative and executive phases will demonstrate to the universe that God is and can be just and merciful at the same time, and that His sovereignty is the sovereignty of love that operates within the context of creaturely freedom.

The entrance of the Son of man, borne by the heavenly chariot into the presence of God the Father in the midst of the numberless throng gathered for the great assize in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, the vastness and glory of which we have little concept, is a most significant event (Dan. 7:13, 14; cf. *Early Writings*, pp. 54, 55). It marks the beginning of a new phase of His ministry as High Priest in the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:1, 2).

His incarnation qualifies Him in a unique way to serve as Advocate-Judge in the judgment. As the Son of man, He is the guarantee to every member of the human race that God has a full understanding of his or her predicament in this sinful world. "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are,

yet without sinning" (Heb. 4:15, R.S.V.). As the Son of God He is our assurance that the God who determines our eternal destiny is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:6, 7, R.S.V.), because that is the way He was when He was here among us as the perfect revelation of God (John 14:9 and Col. 2:9), and He is the same forever (Heb. 13:8). In Jesus Christ "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10). How could we possibly be in better hands?

How to Face the Judgment Unafraid

Though we should meditate much upon the judgment (*The Great Controversy*, p. 601), its solemnity and finality, we need not fear it if we have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour from sin and continue to abide in Him. When our names come up for judgment, as they surely will, He will stand before the vast supreme court in full view of the entire universe and plead our cause. "The law requires righteousness, a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' Rom. 3:26."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

According to Zechariah 3, Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), is present at the judgment to secure our condemnation, to urge upon God our sins, our guilt, and unworthiness and to demand that his right to us as his lawful subjects be recognized. Jesus, symbolized by the Angel of the Lord, does not deny Satan's charges. He makes no attempt to palliate our sins or to alter the record on the open books. His response is similar to the one He gave more than 3,000 years ago when, as Michael the Archangel, He contended with Satan about the body of Moses (Jude 9). "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. 3:2). Then He turns to His Father seated upon the eternal throne. As "the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14) He raises His nail-pierced hands, wherein is the hiding of His power (Hab. 3:4) and upon the palms of which He has engraved our names (Isa. 49:16), and affirms our repentance toward God and our faith in Him. He claims us as the trophies of His victory over Satan (*The Signs of the Times*, Feb. 14, 1900). His testimony is accepted without question. Satan's accusations are refuted. He is silenced forever. His case against us is lost. Our sins are blotted out.

Awesome Responsibility

This is the judgment hour message that we have been divinely commissioned to proclaim to the whole world. Could we have a more serious, awesome, impressive, and yet a more hopeful, reassuring, love-filled, and fulfilling mission? We must not delay to carry it out. It is the King's business and it demands haste.

The first angel's message also informs us that the Judge of all the earth is the Creator of all the earth. This

justifies His sovereignty, His right to judge, and His sole right to be worshiped by His creatures (Jer. 10:10-16; Isa. 45:18; Neh. 9:6; and Ps. 96). It also points up the true dignity of man, for it declares God to be the Creator. The true nobility of man suffers when his origin is grounded in evolution or myth rather than the Biblical doctrine of special Creation. His sense of responsibility to and his dependence upon God are lessened. In turn his estimate of and his relationship to his fellow beings are adversely affected. Moreover, there is a loss of security, which accompanies the assurance of belonging to One who has all power in heaven and earth, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast (Ps. 33:9).

In the last book of the Bible, God authenticates the historical fact of Creation as enunciated in the first two chapters of Genesis. He has made the doctrine of Creation an integral part of the first angel's message, because it is foundational to every other doctrine or teaching of the Scriptures, including the doctrine of the Seventh-day Sabbath. Without it the world could never be prepared for the final crisis.

At a time when the majority of Christendom has rejected the Biblical doctrine of Creation and is questioning any judgment beyond that which one reaps in this life for what he has sown, God sends a warning, corrective message. It is not new. It is the everlasting gospel, with special emphasis upon neglected or rejected facets of that eternal truth. Because it is the truth as it is in Jesus and because it is reformatory in nature it must be proclaimed tactfully and with the warm glow of divine love. This means that we must know by experience the message we bear. Our whole life-style, if we are to be effective, must show to the church and to the world that we truly believe we are living in the time of the judgment; yet, without being afraid, because we have the inner assurance, based on the authority of God's objective word, that He who made us has given to us the righteousness He requires of us in Jesus Christ. □

Jesus Prayed for Us

By VIRGINIA VESS

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20).

Jesus prayed for you and me
When He was here on earth.
Can we fathom such deep love?
Appreciate its worth?

After that the cruel cross;
Would we have shed our tears?
Will we live our days for Him
In these remaining years?

Will we sacrifice for Him,
Show others the true way,
Helping all mankind to know
He prayed for them that day?

Thursday, October 14

Babylon Is Fallen

Doctrine supplies the knowledge to build an intelligent faith.

"DOCTRINE, DOCTRINE, doctrine, that's all I hear. Don't give me doctrine, give me Jesus." These or similar words are heard frequently these days among young people and among those not so young. They are heard within the walls of Adventist churches and the halls of Adventist academies, colleges, and universities. What lies behind these words?

Misunderstandings. Basically the word *doctrine* means "teaching," "instruction," "that which is taught." In the context of the Christian faith it means the cardinal teachings or instructions of the Bible. When someone says, "Don't give me doctrine, give me Jesus," he is saying, "Don't give me doctrine, give me doctrine," because one cannot teach anyone about Jesus without being involved in doctrine.

There is a deeper, more serious misunderstanding. It is the outgrowth of a failure to understand the proper relationship between doctrine and Christian experience.

The person who protests against doctrine and cries out, "Give me Jesus," may be telling us that he does not believe that a knowledge of, or even mental assent to, doctrine—pure, sound, healthy doctrine—constitutes Christian experience. If this is what he is saying, he is absolutely right. It is written: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Or the person may be expressing his thirst for the living Christ. It may be his way of reaching out beyond the form, the theory, the letter of doctrine. If so, we must encourage him in his quest. It is written: "The written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6, R.S.V.).

Doctrine and Experience

Again, it is possible that the one who downgrades doctrine may believe that there is no relationship between doctrine and Christian experience. He may go so far as to declare that it just doesn't matter what a person *believes*; it is what he *is* that counts. Shall we agree? What does the Bible say?

The New Testament has much to say about doctrine. Jesus informs us that a readiness to do God's will is essential in determining the source of His doctrine (John 7:17). Luke characterizes the members of the infant Christian church as those who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). The apostles themselves were accused by the Jewish rulers of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine of Jesus, a crucified and risen Jesus, exalted by the right hand of God "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (chap. 5:31).

Paul thanks God as he traces the spiritual pilgrimage of the members of the church in Rome. Once they had been slaves to sin. Now they had been set free from sin and had become slaves of righteousness. What brought about the change? They had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which had been shared with them (Rom. 6:17, 18).

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul writes that the condemnatory function of the law is aimed at whatever is contrary to sound doctrine. Sound doctrine conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to his trust (1 Tim. 1:8-11). No less than three verses in the fourth chapter of the same Epistle speak of doctrine. Verse one contains an express statement of the Holy Spirit: "In later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (R.S.V.).

In verse six we learn that a good minister of Christ Jesus is nourished by the words of faith and good doctrine. In verse 16 Paul admonishes his true son in the faith, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (N.I.V.). In verses three and four of the sixth chapter, Paul says, "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing" (N.I.V.).

The apostle's teaching about doctrine is found also in his letter to Titus. In chapter one Paul reminds Titus of the directive he had given him to appoint elders in every town. He then proceeds to list the qualifications that such a leader must have. Among other things, "he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (verse 9, R.S.V.). Verse one of chapter two contains a direct word of counsel to Titus himself: "Teach what befits sound doctrine" (R.S.V.).

Doctrine and Christian Experience

Two more passages of Scripture demand our attention. In the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul cautions them not only to be on the lookout for those who create dissensions and difficulties by teaching things that are in opposition to the doctrine they had been taught but to avoid them (Rom. 16:17). The second passage is 2 Timothy 3:15-17. Here Paul makes it clear that the holy, inspired Scriptures are profitable for doctrine.

The weight of this Biblical evidence is formidable. If one accepts the Scriptures as the infallible, authoritative revelation of God, he cannot doubt that there is indeed a close and decided relationship between doctrine and Christian experience.

However, doctrine is not an end in itself. It does not, it cannot, save us. But Bible doctrine is designed to lead us into a personal, living, joyous, fruitful, saving relationship with Jesus Christ, based on faith that works by love (Eph. 2:8-10; Gal. 5:6).

While faith is not limited to knowledge, it has a knowledge content. Faith is not irrational. It is not a leap in the dark. It is written, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17, R.S.V.). It is no wonder that Ellen White wrote, "Ministers are to present Christ in His fulness both in the churches and in new fields, that the hearers may have an intelligent faith."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 162.

Doctrine supplies the knowledge we need upon which to base an intelligent or reasonable faith—not total knowledge, but sufficient knowledge. That is why God revealed Himself to us in the Bible, providing trustworthy statements of fact about Himself, about us, and about the world in which we live. Moreover, doctrine nurtures our faith, our personal, subjective Christian experience, and stands over against it to test its genuineness, to correct it, and to protect it from the deceptions of Satan and his hosts.

Why all of this emphasis on doctrine? Unless we have the right understanding of the significance and role of doctrine we will never be able to comprehend the meaning of the three angels' messages, especially the second angel's message. If we do not understand the second angel's message, failing to profit from that understanding in our own lives, naturally we cannot proclaim it, at least not with any real conviction and sense of urgency. Thus our message will be garbled and our mission crippled.

The "fall of Babylon" is intimately connected with the rejection of true, pure, sound Biblical doctrine and teaching (and eventually enforcing) false, corrupt doctrines. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, . . . because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8).

"The term 'Babylon' is derived from 'Babel,' and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

"The great sin charged against Babylon is that she 'made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ."—*Ibid.*, p. 388.

"The second angel's message . . . was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where . . . [the first angel's message] had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected."—*Ibid.*, p. 389. The message "was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world, and to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding."—*Ibid.*, p. 379.

Where the Advent message was received "denominational barriers were hurled to the ground; conflicting creeds were shattered to atoms; the unscriptural hope of a temporal millennium was abandoned, false views of the second advent were corrected, pride and conformity to the world were swept away; wrongs were made right; hearts were united in the sweetest fellowship, and love and joy reigned supreme. If this doctrine did this for the few who did receive it, it would have done the same for all if all had received it."—*Ibid.*, pp. 379, 380.

But, alas, as we have said, the churches in the United States generally did not receive the message that God had sent for their testing and purification. Why? "As worldly hopes and ambitions filled the heart, love for God and faith in His word had grown cold; and when the advent doctrine was presented, it only aroused their prejudice and unbelief."—*Ibid.*, p. 380. The rejection resulted in a moral fall (*ibid.*, p. 389).

What happened generally in the churches of the United States in 1844, however, is only a microcosm, or partial fulfillment, of the macrocosm, or final and full fulfillment, of the second angel's message that is yet to come. A study of Revelation 12 to 18 reveals that Babylon is "the synagogue of Satan," his counterfeit of the true Christian church. It has its antecedents in paganism. Paganism gradually infiltrated the church, was "baptized," and Roman Catholicism was the result of the union. By the time Babylon becomes "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," a worldwide religious-political confederacy, she will have seduced almost the

whole of Protestantism into apostasy. Thus Satan will consider the mighty triumvirate of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet capable, under his leadership, of wiping God's remnant off the face of the earth. Moreover, he hopes in this way to do battle against the Almighty Himself, to defeat the Lord Jesus Christ in their third and last encounter—Armageddon.

How is Satan able to accomplish this, his biggest and by far most successful deception? The Bible says, "The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Rev. 17:2). Ellen White amplifies: "Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience. [Elsewhere the Lord tells us through His messenger that "the people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her example."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 18.]

Satan as an Angel of Light

"As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

What enables the remnant church to escape the snares of Satan? It is their perseverance in, their strict adherence to, sound Biblical doctrine. They demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" for everything they believe and practice. Furthermore, they understand the right relationship between doctrine and Christian experience. Within the context of their own lives they have learned that the former leads to, nurtures, enhances, tests the genuineness of, corrects, and protects the latter from the corrosive acids of modern living, skepticism, and false doctrines. The truth makes and keeps them free.

Moreover, they have been active under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit and the aid of the angels of heaven in proclaiming the second angel's message. They have laid open the sins of Babylon and called God's people out of her. How? By the mere reiteration of doctrine? No, but by lifting up the One who stands at the center of every Bible doctrine, the One who is the Source of every Bible doctrine, the One who has entered their lives as Saviour and Lord through the avenues of Bible doctrine. As a result, men and women have been captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. For in them, as in Him, is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of a compassionate Saviour. They have not merely shouted a warning against the sins and deceptions of Babylon the great. Neither have they merely announced the blessings that Christ offers to all. They have studied and prayed and sought the fullness of the Holy Spirit in order that they might present them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire in all to possess them. In word and deed they have melted millions of hearts with the love of Christ. □

Friday, October 15

Worship and Obedience

The world is preparing now to receive either the seal of God or the mark of the beast.

THE CENTRAL ISSUE in the third angel's message is *worship*. In the first angel's message there is a clarion call to worship Him who "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7). In the third angel's message there is a warning against the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of his mark in the forehead or in the hand (verse 9).

This warning is immediately underscored with the threat of the most severe punishment to be found anywhere in Scripture to be meted out to anyone who disregards it (verses 10 and 11). The message closes with a word picture of the saints, those who emerge victorious over the beast and his image and who do not receive his mark in the forehead or in the hand (see chap. 15:1-4). They "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (chap. 14:12). Herein is the secret of their victory.

The third angel's message began to be understood and proclaimed shortly after the great disappointment of 1844. Several factors contributed to its unfolding. As our early pioneers came to understand the meaning of the word *sanctuary* as used in Daniel 8:14, they were able by faith to follow Jesus into the second apartment, or Most Holy Place, of the heavenly sanctuary and to begin to comprehend His ministry there as our high priest (Heb. 8-10).

They were first introduced to the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath by Rachel Oakes, a Seventh Day Baptist. Gradually, on the basis of the scriptural evidence, more and more of them began to observe, teach, and defend the Sabbath. On Sabbath, April 3, 1847, at Topsham, Maine, Ellen White had an important and quite comprehensive vision. She did not record the whole of it in any one place (see *Early Writings*, pp. 32-35; *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 82-83; *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 76-77; *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 137; *Life Sketches*, pp. 95, 96, 100-103; Letter 2, 1874), but in the book *Messenger to the Remnant* (p. 34) Arthur L. White gives us the following summary of its contents: "(1) In this vision Mrs. White seemed to be transported to heaven and conducted through the heavenly sanctuary. (2) In the most holy place she saw the ark that contains the law, and was amazed to note

that 'the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it.' (3) There was also shown her the change of the Sabbath, the significance of Sabbath observance, the work before them in proclaiming the Sabbath truth, the relationship of Sabbath observance to the troublous times before the loyal people of God, climaxing in the second coming of Christ bringing final deliverance.

"(4) The relationship of the Sabbath to the third angel's message was also revealed." "I was shown that the third angel, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message and raise the voice of warning to the world, to keep the commandments of God as the apple of the eye, and that in response to this warning many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord." "

In addition, earnest study of the great prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, along with other passages of Scripture, aided Adventists in their understanding of the third angel's warning. As the need arose, God gave further revelations to His servant Ellen White. The message of the third angel—the last of the three—must be correctly understood by those whom God had raised up to proclaim it.

Babylon Rejects the Light

The words of the angel of Revelation 18:1ff., help one to understand that the three angels' messages contain God's healing balm for the spiritual ills of mystical Babylon. In the final crises, however, it will be seen that Babylon will not allow herself to be healed, "for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7). She therefore rejects the light from heaven, even though it is given at this time under the fullest manifestation of divine love and power in and through God's people; for this is the time of the loud cry, the time of the latter rain, the time when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh and fills the life of every true messenger.

Babylon thus suffers her final, irreversible, irrevocable, complete moral fall, soon to be followed by her physical fall and total destruction. Only one alternative remains. Those who are God's people in Babylon must be called out.

In the beginning one major point of the great controversy between Christ and Satan was the law of God. The issue was "whether the divine statutes were defective and subject to change, or perfect and immutable" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 69). Christ and His followers, armed with love and truth, have contended that God's law, which is a transcript of His character, is perfect and immutable, the sign of His authority, and the foundation of His government. Satan and his followers, armed with deception and coercion, have contended that the law is imperfect and mutable. Thus they have attacked God's character and authority and have attempted to overthrow His government. The third angel's message shows that the issue over God's law remains, and that the great controversy continues. In fact, it is during this time that it will reach the peak of its intensity and scope.

The third angel's message precipitates the final crisis that ripens the harvest of the earth by causing every person in the world who has the capacity of being morally responsible, and therefore accountable, to make his final, irrevocable decision on one side or the other in the great controversy. What a message! Who can measure its solemnity and importance? Brothers and sisters, we must

Continued on page 18

One

By DON LEO GARILVA

Apart,
We came out
From the Creator's hands.

Together,
We tread along
Love's sacred ground.

The Commentary Reference Series is one of the most essential helps for YOUR lesson study.



An invaluable self-contained library set for every Sabbath school leader, teacher and student. The **S.D.A. BIBLE COMMENTARY** in seven volumes is a verse-by-verse exegesis of the whole Bible, supported by recognized scholarship in ancient languages, chronology, sacred history and modern archaeology. The special articles in these fields are illuminating. The **BIBLE DICTIONARY** defines every significant Bible word. The **SOURCE BOOK** provides reliable historical aid in understanding prophecy. The **ENCYCLOPEDIA** contains the history of the Advent Church, its organizations, major doctrines and beliefs. **\$15.75 a volume. Complete 10-volume set, \$149.75.**

RECENTLY RELEASED — in one volume. Ellen G. White's comments compiled from the 7-volume Bible Commentary set. Numbered 7A and bound to match the set. **\$7.95**

PLEASE ORDER FROM YOUR CONFERENCE BIBLE HOUSE OR A.B.C. mailing service.



5-VOLUME "CONFLICT OF THE AGES" SERIES

in beautiful, red hard covers.

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Own the "CONFLICT" set today.
You will treasure your decision.

"PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS"
"PROPHETS AND KINGS"
"THE DESIRE OF AGES"
"THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES"
"THE GREAT CONTROVERSY"

ONLY \$19.95 SAVE \$17

The "CONFLICT" set should be in every Adventist home, school and church library. Present a set to your youth on baptism or Academy/College graduation.

The "CONFLICT" set of books follows the complete story of man and his relationship to God through the ages of history. This inspired commentary on Bible chronology is without parallel in Christian literature.

The Bible student of all ages will appreciate the information and guidance found on every page of this wonderful set.

put forth every effort to understand it and to proclaim it with the greatest care. Ellen White says that the heralding of it is the highest and grandest work in the world at this time (see *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 11).

In Revelation 14:9 God warns against worshiping "the beast and his image" and receiving "his mark in his forehead, or in his hand," because the true power behind these institutions is Satan. A study of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 reveals what Satan, working through his earthly representatives, is up to. He is preparing for his master stroke against the law of God. And he does it in the name of Christ! Before the conflict is over he will actually make a personal, physical appearance in different parts of the earth "as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 624). Why? In order to strengthen his "almost overwhelming delusion" (*ibid.*).

What is this master stroke and why is it so effective? It is an attempt to change the law of God by establishing the first day of the week as a holy day as a substitute for the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Thus he leads men and women to violate the precepts of the law while professing to obey it (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 178, 179). Satan "needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, [either through deception or coercion] his purpose is gained. For 'whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan's power."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 763.

The last verse of the third angel's message shows that Satan's nefarious work does not go unchallenged and unexposed. For here is a people who, like Jesus, not only verbally contend for the perfection and immutability of "the commandments of God" (unqualified,

therefore all ten of them, including the fourth) but who actually keep them habitually.

The last phrase "and the faith of Jesus," which can very well be translated "faith in Jesus," assures us that they are not trying to earn or merit sainthood by good works. The reason for, and secret of, their lawkeeping is their love for and their faith in Jesus, just as the reason for and secret of the lawkeeping of Jesus when He walked among us was His love for and His faith in His heavenly Father (John 15:10). Faith, if it is genuine, is always grounded in love and issues in obedience to the commandments of God (Gal. 5:6; John 14:21; and 1 John 2:3-6).

Jesus' Character in His People

These saints have accepted God's offer, in His Son, of the perfect righteousness of the law. They have opened their hearts fully to receive Christ. Thus the very life of God, His love, has dwelt in them, transforming them into His own likeness (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 55). Of them, as of Jesus, it is appropriate to say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8). Jesus has reproduced His own character in them through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore they, like their Saviour, cannot and will not consent to break one precept of God's holy law, even in the face of economic sanctions or the threat of death. They would rather die than sin against the One who loved them and gave Himself for them.

The word *patience* points in this direction, for it is the characteristic word used in the New Testament "of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings" (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 644).

At the outset we stated that the central issue of the third angel's message is *worship*. Now we seem to be saying that it is *obedience*. There is no contradiction here. Whom we worship we obey, and whom we obey we worship. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16). Which will it be, Christ or Satan? The commandments of God or the commandments of men (actually the commandments of Satan through men)? Sabbath or Sunday? The seal of God or the mark of the beast (because the day kept is the outward sign of an inward love, loyalty, and likeness)? This is the question posed by the third angel's message.

No one has yet received the mark of the beast, for it is not until "Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath. . . . [It is not until all] are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'"—*The Great Controversy*, p. 449.

Neither has anyone yet received the seal of God as it is used in the context of the third angel's message. "The Lord has shown me clearly," wrote Ellen White, "that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . . This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on p. 976.

According to Revelation 14:9-11, those who worship

Composed in Jesus

By MARY SPEIDEL.

"God's people are to be minutemen, always ready, always composed in Jesus Christ. The time is now come when one moment we may be on solid earth, the next the earth may be heaving beneath our feet." *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 421.

Composed in Jesus, sweet the thought
That anchored to the Rock,
We need not quail though tempests rage
Nor fear the trembler's shock.

Though fearful chasms open wide
And nothing here endures,
We know that our Redeemer lives
And that His word is sure.

Look up, lift up your heads, ye saints!
Redemption draweth nigh.
Though this world shall wax old and fail,
Our God still reigns on high.

Composed in Jesus, sweet the thought;
It calms our anxious care,
We'll watch and work till He descends,
And meet Him in the air.

the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands will become the objects of God's strange act (Isa. 28:21). His wrath, the reaction of His holy nature to sin, has been seen in the earth before in order that the inhabitants of the world might learn righteousness (chap. 26:9). But now His wrath is to be poured out without mixture, that is, without mercy, in the form of the seven last plagues. See Revelation 15:1; 16:1-21; and 20:7-15. The severity and finality of the punishment points up the magnitude of the sin that calls it forth.

To worship the beast and his image and to receive his mark in the forehead or in the hand is the unpardonable sin. It is the sin of open rebellion against God and His government in a time of great enlightenment. It is doubting the goodness of God, disbelieving His word, and rejecting His authority. It is saying of Christ, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

It is sinning willfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth. It is treading under foot the Son of God and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. It is doing despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:26-31). It is joining the ranks of Satan, the archenemy of God and His Christ and His people. It is high treason against the Creator of the universe and Redeemer of the human race. When one understands this he does not question the justice or judgments of God as set forth in the third angel's message.

On the other hand, according to Revelation 7:1-4, 9-17, those who receive the seal of God in their foreheads, those who have washed their robes and made them white (free from the stain and properties of sin) in the blood of the Lamb, are received up into glory, and there before the throne of God they "serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . . . For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (verses 15-17).

Much Depends Upon Us

This is our message, brothers and sisters of the remnant church. We stand between the living and the dead. The whole world is now preparing to receive either the seal of God or the mark of the beast. Which will it be? Much depends upon us. God, in His love and mercy—not our merit or worthiness—has chosen us to be His messengers. It is the greatest privilege in the world to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. At the same time it is the most weighty responsibility. We have been entrusted with the present truth, the truth for these times, divinely revealed truth.

We have already felt some of the wrath of Satan and his hosts. We shall meet with far more formidable opposition than we can ever imagine. What shall we do? Shall we retreat or water down our message? How can we? To do so would be a tacit admission that we have no commission and no message from God. To do so would be to fail God and our fellow men. This is unthinkable! What shall we do, then?

Here is God's answer. If we follow it we will save both ourselves and those that hear us. "Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, 'Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy word; for the entrance of Thy word giveth light. Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit that I may love my brethren as Christ loves me.'" —ELLEN G. WHITE, in *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902. □

Sabbath, October 16

Truly Members of His Church

The hour is too late to have our assurance of salvation rest merely upon a supposed hope.



By ROBERT H. PIERSON

GOD DOES HAVE a church in the world today. It is His remnant church—the last church, which is soon to welcome Christ's return to earth at His second advent. Throughout this week Elder Blincoe has spelled out clearly for us the identifying marks of God's church. We believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church meets these requirements doctrinally and in terms of the work it is doing in the world today.

We are not in the world today merely as another ecclesiastical organization. We are here because God has a message to proclaim to all the world during this time of the end (Rev. 14:1-16). Seventh-day Adventists are proclaiming this message. We believe that it is doing its work around the world in preparing men and women, boys and girls, for the return of our Lord in the near, very near, future.

But Seventh-day Adventists do not teach that only members of their church will be saved. This is not their position. There are good people—godly men and women—in other churches who love their Lord supremely. There are many who belong to no church at all who live up to all the light they have received. They, too, are God's children, although not at present members of His visible church.

Jesus speaks of members of His flock in other folds. "Other sheep I have," the Saviour declares, "which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

The voice of the Great Shepherd of the sheep is heard calling His true followers out from the world, out from apostasy. Thousands every year respond to His call. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (chap. 18:37).

And so they come from the north, far beyond the Arctic Circle, from the south, near the frozen wastes of the Antarctic, from the teeming lands of the Orient, from the nations of the Western Hemisphere, acknowledging the cross of Christ and the claims of the Master upon them.

Both inside and outside the church a work needs to be done in preparing a people to meet their Lord at His soon coming. All about us are multiplied millions yet outside the church—multitudes who know not the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of these unsaved, unchurched people are in our own communities, some even in our own families. What are we doing *now* to bring these needy ones God's last-day message, to lay heavily upon their hearts the claims of God, to invite them to become sheep of the Great Shepherd's fold? These are questions we dare not pass over lightly. God has a work for every one of us to do in the growth and expansion of His visible church on earth today. Let not one of us fail Him.

There are many whose names are on the church books who are unprepared to meet their Saviour face to face. As the apostle Paul says, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). The Lord's last day messenger declares: "There are many in the church who at heart belong to the world."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 289.

"As I look upon the professed people of God, and see their unwillingness to serve Him, my heart is filled with a pain that I cannot express. How few are heart to heart with God in His solemn, closing work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 13.

I read something in the *Quiet Hour Echoes* one time that contains much food for thought. I do not have the name of the author. The title is, "These Are Strange People."

"People who talk about prayer . . . but never pray.
People who say tithing is right . . . but never tithe.
People who wish to belong to the church . . . but
never attend or support it.
People who say the Bible is God's Word to man . . .
yet never read it.
People who say that eternity is more important than
time . . . but who live for the present time.
People who criticize others for things they do them-
selves.
People who stay from church for trivial reasons . . .
but sing "O How I Love Jesus."
People who follow the devil all their lives . . . but
expect to be taken to heaven when Jesus comes."
—July, 1974.

Thank God this does not describe all—or even the majority—of God's people today. I believe in this church. I believe in the people who make up this church. Most of them are the salt of the earth. But if you happen to be one who is "not *all* Israel," one "who at heart belong[s] to the world," I would appeal to you earnestly on this last day of the Week of Prayer to prayerfully consider your broken relationship with Jesus and "make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

Having our name on the church books is very important. We dare not minimize it. But whether we are truly a part of God's church and whether we are ready to meet our Saviour when He comes is not determined merely by the technicality of church membership. As I indicated earlier, a name in a clerk's book does not assure that we are, in God's sight, a part of Christ's body.

Not only a name penned on a record but a mature Christian character, whether Christ's righteousness has been imputed and imparted to us, determines whether we are Christ's and He is ours—whether we are, in His sight, truly spiritual members of His remnant church. It is of utmost import that we recognize this lest we deceive ourselves and depend upon a mechanical transaction, a name recorded in a church clerk's book.

Again I repeat, church membership is very important,



Those who know there is sin in their lives are invited to turn to Jesus in true repentance and confession and to find forgiveness in Him.

for Christ is coming back for His church. If we truly love Jesus with all our hearts and have given our lives to Him, we will want to be a member of His church. But let us study further just what it means to be a true member of His church.

What kind of church is Jesus going to come for and claim soon? Paul answers this question in his Epistle to the believers in Ephesus: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The Lord's messenger writes: "Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

Three vital truths stand out in these words of inspiration.

First, there is a time just ahead of us when God's people must stand without a mediator before the Judge of the universe. Now Jesus stands as our intercessor. He pleads His blood, His righteousness, on behalf of His faithful chosen ones—those who are truly members of His church in truth and in deed, as well as by profession, because they are without "spot or wrinkle," through the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ. Such will be prepared to stand faithful, without blemish, when there is no Mediator to plead their cause.

Second, such true members of God's church have become overcomers through the grace and power of the indwelling Christ. This grace has enabled them to overcome the besetting sins in their lives.

This experience in Christ is theirs before the second coming of Jesus. Thank God for a Saviour whose blood and all-prevailing grace provides strength for the child of faith to be an overcomer in this life. Only such can be said to be a member of God's church in truth and in deed.

Third, the Lord's messenger indicates that in this preparation experience we have a part to play and God has a part. "Through the *grace of God* and their own diligent effort" we will come out victors in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Enabling grace, strength, endurance, forgiveness, acceptance, and justification, all

are provided by God. Decision, repentance (as the result of God's conviction), confession, faith, and obedience (through His grace and power) are our part of the transaction. When this two-sided experience is fully entered into we are indeed members of His remnant church.

Because the standard of righteousness in Christ's last-day church is so high, because the return of our Lord is so near at hand, "there is to be a *special* work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 425. (Italics supplied.)

"When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing."—*Ibid.* "The followers of Christ" in that day will indeed be God's true church—His remnant church made ready for His appearing. "Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a 'glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Ephesians 5:27. Then she will look 'forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' Song of Solomon 6:10."—*Ibid.*

I am so thankful today for a God, for a Saviour, and for the Holy Spirit, who have not only made the way of eternal life plain but have provided ample help for us to become all that God desires us to be. We are not confronted with a bleak prospect. We are faced with the glorious promises of God that will never fail us. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

Help Promised

These precious promises are for you today in your struggle against the evil one:

"The victory is ours, thank God! He makes it ours by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57, Moffatt).

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation" (2 Peter 2:9).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

"My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9).

"To be strengthened with might by his Spirit" (Eph. 3:16).

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1).

These reassuring words are for you today. "Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. God would send every angel in heaven to the aid of such a one, rather than allow him to be overcome."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 17.

"He is watching those who are climbing, ready, when the grasp relaxes and the steps falter, to send help. Yes, tell it in words full of cheer, that no one who perseveringly climbs the ladder will fail of gaining an entrance into the heavenly city."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 95.

Brothers and sisters, God invites you to make certain that you are truly a part of His church—that yours is the life of a true overcomer—through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—"not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." If there is known sin in your life, turn to Jesus in true repentance and wholehearted confession, find forgiveness, acceptance, cleansing in Him. He is only a prayer away from the most hardened transgressor. As a tender Father He lovingly holds out His hands to you

just now, inviting you to come just as you are. His love, His care, His grace, His power provides all a guilty sinner needs. Won't you admit this knocking, waiting Saviour into your heart?

If you are a halting saint, if you are spiritually weak and need new power, thank God there is help for you today. The same precious promises, the same blessed assurances we have mentioned several times today, are for you. God loves the *weak* saint just as He loves the over-coming saint. There is help for you just now. Won't you cast yourself at His feet again and let Him renew His help and strength for you?

An Appeal to Dissidents

If there are any who are reading these words or listening to this message who happen to be among those who are lending their influence in tearing down the church of God under the mistaken guise of reforming it, I want to make a special appeal to you. You may feel you are doing God a service in pursuing the course you are following. You may be honest in your mistaken zeal. I would not judge your motive. But if you are engaged in pulling down the church or its leadership, you are on a wrong course. "Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not."—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 305.

"There will come in the last days mockers who live according to their own godless desires" (Jude 18, Phillips).

If you happen to be in such a group today I have a special word for you. The Lord loves you. He wants you, also, to be ready when He comes. You cannot be ready for His coming while you rail and criticize. Righteousness by faith does not produce criticism and bitterness. It sweetens the life and refines the character. It builds. It does not destroy. If you happen to need help in this area I would earnestly invite you with God's help to overcome, to turn away from pulling down and help us build up God's church, to come back and be a part of God's people once again. He loves you. We need you. We want you.

Last, I invite every single one of you—those who are the salt of the earth, God's chosen ones, who day by day are seeking to serve Him and let their lives tell for Him before all about them—wouldn't you like to stand with me and reconsecrate your lives to Him who gave His all for us? On this last Sabbath of another Week of Prayer let us show the world where we stand. Let us commit our all not only to *live* for Him but also to *work* for Him, so that the church of God on earth may soon become the church of God in heaven and we can be with the ransomed of earth and our Redeemer forever!

Will every one of you join me in such a commitment? God bless every one of you.

Let us bow our heads as _____ prays for all of us just now. □

**Annual Sacrifice Offering
to Be Taken at This Time**

Grandma's Patchwork



By LORENZO GRANT

Guidelines for Leader:

This series of lessons is a continuous autobiography written in first person. While it is usually preferable to study the lesson and give it in as natural a manner as possible, this may be a bit awkward in this case. For this reason some may elect simply to read the lessons as written. This should present no special difficulty if:

1. The lesson is gone over beforehand to get the drift and rhythm of the story.

2. A brief explanation is given to the children beforehand, letting them know that they will be hearing a continual biography written by Elder Grant himself.

First Day

Where Do We Come From?

LIFE STORIES have always fascinated me, no matter how plain or unexciting. I especially like to hear about the childhood and teen-age years of people I know. Even the small and unimportant things interest me. I suppose it is fun to discover what makes a person tick, and just why he is the kind of person he is. I suspect that if we all knew more about one another we would be more understanding and forgiving. Do you suppose that's why God is so patient with us? He knows all the little details that have gone into making us complicated human beings.

I remember when my three uncles came back from the war. How I loved to sit at the table and listen to them tell the tales of their Army adventures! Invariably they would recount the experiences of childhood years they had spent together. This just thrilled me wonderfully! I never wanted to go to bed when one of those evenings got started. There were certain stories that were repeated over and over. Through the years I must have heard them scores of times. But even now, when we get together, those same

old stories keep popping up. And I listen to them with the same eager anticipation.

Well, now I've gotten ahead of myself. Let me back up and explain what this series of Week of Prayer talks will be about. I want to share with you some experiences that I think have made me the person I am today. Some of them will be humorous, some sad. All of them, I think, have left their mark on my personality. Some will be important, and some will appear to be trivial. And yet there's not a thing that happens to us that does not leave its impression in our minds. That's why it is so important for us to choose carefully what experiences we will have. This includes not only what we do but what we watch on television, what we listen to, what we say, and especially the friends we choose. Even now I can remember practically all of my childhood friends and whether they were good or bad for my spiritual growth. There are a number of them I wish I could forget. But I thank the Lord for those who made it easy for me to decide for Jesus.

Well, I hope you're ready now to journey with me back many, many years ago (maybe not quite that many). But you're going to have to take your coat, because when we arrive at the place of my childhood and the time that we want to talk

about, it's going to be winter in St. Louis, Missouri. That's where I "discovered America." And, of course, I was born in the "good old days," like everybody else.

The story begins when I was about 4 or 5 years old. I don't remember much before then. We lived in what now would be called the ghetto. Though I never even heard that word until I was in high school. I suppose we were "underprivileged," if that means poor. We knew we were poor, but that wasn't so bad. All the other people we knew were poor too, and they were just as good as we were and just as happy. In fact, all the good people I remember hearing about were poor, such as Tiny Tim, Robin Hood, and oh, yes, Jesus Christ. He was a poor little baby born in a stable. So I don't think it ever bothered me much that we were "underprivileged." They were really the good old days to me. There were the summer days filled with baseball, bicycle riding, and watermelon (don't ask how we could afford watermelon, but we always seemed to get some from somewhere). And the summer nights that always ended with a shower in front of the neighborhood fire hydrant.

The winters had their special times too. The makeshift sleds, the snowball fights, but especially the evenings with Grandma. We were a large family. Grandma and her children (all grown by then), my aunt and her husband, and my mom and myself. We all lived in a big house upstairs over a pool hall.

Winter evenings were especially fun for me. After dark when the older folks were out or had gone to bed, often I was allowed to sit up with Grandma while she quilted. I can almost remember the first time I saw her spread out all that "stuff" on my bed. I had been curious about that bag of rags that she kept in my closet. In fact, there was a bag of rags in almost every closet of the house. I had no idea what they were for, but I had learned long ago not to touch them. It seemed that every reusable piece of cloth Grandma got her hands on she stuffed in one of those old bags, and it seemed that a lifetime would pass before I would ever find a use for those bags.

AUSTRALASIAN RECORD

Now it was about to happen, for there were bags and bags of rags spread all over my bed and on the floor. And there was Grandma, her glasses on her nose, her chair rocking back and forth and that big, big piece of sheet spread out on my bed and on her lap. What on earth was she doing?

"What's that, Grandma?"

"Quilting, son."

That sounded as though it should have satisfied me so I wouldn't ask any more questions. But I really knew no more than I did before. I wondered what in the world "quilting" meant. However, I would sit and watch, happy for the occasion to snuggle by Grandma, to sit between her and the pot-bellied stove until it got too hot, and to listen to the sleet or the rain fall on the skylight overhead. As often as not, I would wake up the next morning neatly tucked in bed and with all the "stuff" put back in its proper place. I would eagerly look forward to the next time the "stuff" came out again. This time I was determined to see what Grandma was making and what quilting was all about.

Getting to Know Grandma

There would be long periods of silence, with just the sound of the fire in the stove, the rain or sleet on the skylight, and the squeak of Grandma's rocking chair. What a wonderful time it was for just getting to know Grandma and the rest of the family. You see, it took only a little prodding to send her off on a long story about Mamma, my Aunt Ida, my Uncle William, James, or Sam. These were the stories I remember, but there were also stories about Uncle Ned, Aunt Gert, and Aunt Elmira. It was such fun to learn about the many silly things these adults had done. I screamed at the thought of my Uncle William chasing my mother around the house with a little bug or a frog, as he delighted in doing.

"And then what did he do, Grandma? What happened next, huh? Was it a real big bug?"

On and on I would go until I had pulled every last detail from Grandma. And then she would shoo me off to bed. Grandma had a certain lilt to her voice that held me captive. It seemed to say that everything was all right with

the world and that if there was anything wrong, Grandma could fix it. Grandma knew everything about everything, and I was sure she was God's best friend. This was one of the reasons, at least, for some of the wild questions I would ask her. The other reason was to keep her talking.

It was one of those nights when I had exhausted every conceivable means of fighting off sleep when I decided to ask, "Grandma, where do we come from?" Grandma didn't seem in any hurry to give an answer. I tried to read her face. I didn't know whether to expect a "Don't ask silly questions" or "Off to bed with you now." And then I saw the light come in her eyes that seemed to say, "You don't really know how important that question is, but I'm glad you asked it." Then she said, "God made us. He made everything. 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is.'"

Being a good Baptist, Grandma didn't see the importance of the rest of that verse, but she did know that it was important for people to understand that they were created by an omnipotent and all-wise God. To her this was reason enough for us to respect God and to obey His commandments. After all, if He created us we must be responsible to Him. Sort of like we were to our mothers and fathers.

"Not only did God create us," she explained, "but He takes care of us day by day."

One of her favorite illustrations was that of the sparrow:

"You see that tiny little bird?" she would say. "God sees to it that it gets enough to eat every day. Don't you think He will take care of us too?"

I didn't realize what "depression time" meant, but in later years I came to know that the illustration about the sparrow was very real to Grandma. I can remember the piles of coal on the street corners, left there by some unseen hand, and all the other blessings that came our way during those trying years. As large a family as we were, we were never cold, we were never hungry, we never begged, and we never stole.

Grandma used to say, "His eye is on the sparrow, so I know He's watching me."

Second Day

Nails in His Hand

I DON'T recall how often Grandma pulled out her patchwork, but it never seemed often enough to me. I can remember the early sunsets of winter's days. All the dishes would be washed and put away. Everybody would resort to his favorite nook or pastime. I would almost hold my breath, wondering what the long evening would be like. There were no TV sets, and after the evening news there wasn't much a little kid was allowed to listen to on the radio. And then I would notice Grandma heading for the closet and rummaging around for her bag of rags. Out I would dash to the woodpile on the porch! I would try to find the biggest hunks of wood I could carry. The longer they would burn, the longer the evening would be with Grandma. When the old potbellied stove was well stoked and I was in my pajamas, I would try to be just as helpful as I could.

"Can I do anything else, Grandma? Have you got your glasses? What about the sewing box? Can I get it for you?"

How happy I would be for another evening alone with Grandma! All this seemed to put Grandma in just the right mood to open her storehouse of stories. I was all set for another imaginary trip to Monroe, Louisiana.

Mother's Nickname

All the characters of her old hometown seemed amazingly real to me. I would often start her on the front porch by asking about some of the neighbors that used to visit her home. I always got a special chuckle out of the story behind my mother's nickname.

It seemed that when Mom was a baby, Grandma would put her on the front porch to get a little fresh air and sunshine. Grandma's house was on the road to the sawmill where many of the folks in their neighborhood worked. In those days everybody took a personal interest in a new baby that had come to town. It was no different with Grandma and her new baby, Gertrude. On the way to work in the morning, and again in

the evening when the sawmill closed down, there would be a steady stream of visitors who stopped by to pat "baby" or give her a hug, a squeeze, and a big wet kiss.

There was one woman in particular who always seemed to be in a big hurry. She never had time for much hugging and squeezing. She could only breeze by long enough to take hold of the little pink foot that would be sticking up from the crib and, giving the toe a kiss, she would say, "There's my little sugarfoot! Now you be a good girl, hear?" My mother can still remember the embarrassment as she grew older when the dear old saint would inquire right in front of all her schoolmates, "How's my little sugarfoot?" How her friends would tease her. Well, the name Sugarfoot has stuck till this very day among our close friends and relatives.

When Grandma was especially inspired she would go to her dresser drawer and pull out the old picture album. Some of those pictures would put you in stitches if you could see the baggy old pants the men wore, the wide brim hats, the great ostrich plumes the women were so proud of, and the high button shoes that must have been torturous to wear. Maybe that accounts for some of the gruesome expressions on their faces. Of course, many of those fashions are back with us today, and I'm told they are no less painful now than they were a generation ago.

I was more thrilled than tickled as Grandma pointed out the various relatives in childhood pictures, and I would begin to recognize familiar faces that would drop in from time to time to visit us. It was sad to see the pictures of little uncles and aunts that I had never known because they had died in infancy or early childhood. Back in those days they did not have as many hospitals and doctors available as we have today. So a simple thing like whooping cough or even measles might be fatal to a little child who did not get the best of medical care. How thankful I was that God had spared my mother.

"Is that Mamma there? The little baby with the fat jaws?"

"Yes, son, that's your Mamma. She was a doll!"

"Did she cry, Grandma?"

"Just as all babies do."

"Did I cry, Grandma?"

"You sure did. Enough for any five babies!"

"Who is that there?"

"That's your Aunt Ida."

"She was pretty, wasn't she?"

"Yes, she and your Mamma both were very pretty girls."

I can remember beaming with pride as I saw the cute little girls that always stuck together—my mother and her older sister, Aunt Ida. Then there was my oldest uncle, Sam. Grandma started reminiscing: "He was really cute in his little sailor suit. How he loved it! Thoughtless boy, ran off and joined the Navy just as soon as he was big enough! He was the marble-shooting champion of the neighborhood. He loved to shoot marbles. You see his breeches? They always had holes in the knees. That boy kept me busy sewing patches of all sizes on the knees of his pants."

"I'll bet he was good at it too, wasn't he, Grandma?"

Box of Marbles

"Why, you see that box in there, don't you? He used to bring that thing home full of marbles. It's a wonder he didn't turn out to be the town's biggest gambler, the way he would shoot marbles."

"Can I see that box, Grandma?" It had been stored under my bed all along. But it was one of the things I knew I dared not touch.

"Why sure, son. In fact, why don't you take it. I don't think your Uncle Sam will be shooting marbles anymore—anytime soon."

"Oh, thanks, Grandma!"

Under the bed I crawled, where the old marble box was kept. It was really a converted old lunch pail with a place for a thermos bottle and all. It had long since been converted to the family marble box. You could see where each uncle's name had been written as it was handed down from brother to brother. And now I was falling heir to this family treasure. My eyes must have been as big as saucers as I opened the box, and there, beheld, not only 100 of the most beautiful marbles and agates a boy ever wanted to see but a real bit of history right before my eyes. These marbles were actually won by my Uncle Sam. I must have fondled those

things for a solid hour, holding them up to the light and marveling at the colors.

"Why, you can't find marbles like this anywhere today, Grandma."

"No, they don't make them like they used to, son."

After the original shock had worn off, I decided to go exploring a little deeper into the old lunch box, and, sure enough, in the little section where the thermos bottle was kept, there was a treasure within a treasure. For there were not only the real extra special "aggies" but other little priceless items, as well. There was a hunk of rock that must have surely been pure gold. There was a bottle cap with a picture of Captain Marvel inside. There was a Cracker Jack ring and, of all things, a crucifix! We were not Catholics, so I suppose that Uncle Sam must have found this crucifix somewhere in his wanderings and hidden it in his marble box.

The little cross seemed to have a strange fascination for me. It was beautifully carved and was probably brass, maybe even gold! I don't think I had ever seen one so close before, let alone actually hold one in my hand. I stared at it intensely, examining every feature. I knew that it had something to do with church and religion, but just who the Man was and what this thing was all about, I had never really understood. Since Grandma was in one of her specially good moods, I was not afraid to ask even the most ridiculous questions, so I started right in.

Nails in Jesus' Hands

"Grandma, who is this?"

"Why, that's Jesus, boy. You know that."

"Are those really nails in His hands?"

"They sure are, son."

"Who did it, and why did they do it?"

There was a long pause and again that reflective look that told me that the answer was going to really be worth hearing. So I mustered up all the attention I could and focused right in on Grandma's face as she began to answer.

"Well, son, all I can say is they were evil men."

I had expected a long story. It was only years later that I began to realize how really true her words were. They were evil men. That's why they had nailed Jesus to the cross. Not that they were

more wicked than other men, but mankind is sinful. Of course, so short an answer would never satisfy me on a quiet, cozy night like this one was.

"Did He do anything wrong, Grandma?"

"No, son. Jesus never did anything wrong."

Then as she began to unfold the story, which I'm sure she must have told me before, I really listened for the first time.

"Jesus was the best Man that ever lived. He always did good. He healed the sick. He gave sight to the blind. He even raised the dead."

"Well, why did they kill Him, Grandma?"

"Well, son, I suppose it was because they were jealous of His good works."

"You mean they were bad, and they didn't like Him because He was good?"

"That's right, son. You see, people never like to be around good people when they want to do bad things."

How true I found that to be through the years! Evil just does not like the presence of good. And I'm sure that boys and girls everywhere are experiencing the same thing. Whenever your friends are planning to do something wrong, they will either want you to join them or leave them alone. And, of course, then you have the big decision to make. Will you join them in their evil or will you leave their company? Friends are difficult to give up. But, remember, the best Friend you could ever have is Jesus. And even if we must give up some of our earthly friends it will be worth it to follow Jesus and have Him as our Friend. Those friends who would send you away because you will not do wrong would also send Jesus away. And if He refused to go away, they, like the people many years ago, would crucify Him.

In the years that followed, as I studied my Bible I learned something else about Grandma's answer. You see, two things really happened that day that Jesus was crucified. Evil men killed Him, but as Jesus said, "I lay down my life." Jesus actually gave up His life for us. And He did it for the same reason; that is, men were evil. Jesus knew that men were evil. He also knew that they inherited a tendency to evil by no choice of their own. Certainly God

gives us all many chances to repent and change. But how can a man change himself? And this is the reason that Jesus gave up His life. To offer us a choice. Now that Jesus has died we can choose to be different. He died to provide us with a new nature. Now those of us who decide that we don't want to be evil, that we'd rather be good and choose to live the way God wants us to live, may have the Spirit of Christ to live in us. Isn't that a wonderful thought—that Jesus died so that He could come and live within our hearts? Won't you ask Him to come and live in your heart today?

Third Day

You Can't Play With Him

MY GRANDMA was bigger than life. She hovered over us like a mother hen. I suppose the thing that made her so important in all our lives was the fact that we viewed her as the "high priestess" of our home. Oh, we respected Grandpa, and when Grandpa said "Jump" everybody said, "How high?" But most of the time it was Grandma who gave the orders. She bandaged the bruises, cooked the meals, swept the house, and saw to it that our chores were done. When the chores were not done, or our little feet went astray in some other way, it was Grandma who got the strap from the door where it hung and lovingly applied it in just the right doses.

I remember one occasion when the strap had to be applied to me. Grandma had distinctly told me that I was not to ride on the back of Mr. Robertson's truck. Mr. Robertson was the neighborhood fruit peddler. All summer he would drive through the streets of the city, selling fruits and vegetables, and especially watermelons. Mr. Robertson was getting on in age. It was difficult for him to lift the big watermelons, so he always needed two or three boys to help him every day. Early in the morning as he was about to start his day, there would be a whole gang of the neighborhood fellows gathered around his truck yelling, "Take me!" "Can I go with you today, Mr. Rob-

ertson?" "Take me, take me!" He would stop and look over the crowd, then he would feel the muscles of the guys as they rolled up their sleeves. This morning as he came to me, and his big hand wrapped almost all the way around my arm, he said, "There's a strong young man, are you ready to go to work, son?" "Yes sir," I replied. "All right, I guess you'll do. But, remember, no eating up the fruit 'til we're all done, you hear? Up in the truck with you." Off we went, smiling proudly and yelling, "Fruit for sale, fresh fruit, watermelons." We really felt grown up, weighing the vegetables on the scales that hung from the back of the truck. We never let on how tired we were, or how heavy the watermelons seemed near the end of the day. Mr. Robertson would even let us make change for the customers if we could count well.

By the time I returned home late that evening one of the neighbors had called our house and told Grandma that she had seen me riding Mr. Robertson's truck in her neighborhood. When Grandma asked about the report I confessed that indeed it was true. I had disobeyed. "Didn't you remember that I told you never to ride on the back of Mr. Robertson's truck? It's too dangerous, and you are too small to be selling fruit with the other boys. Selling fruit is no job for a 10-year-old."

"Yes, Grandma, I remembered."

"You mean you remembered what I said but you willfully disobeyed me and rode the truck anyway?"

"Yes, Grandma."

Disobedience can become a habit, and willfully engaging in wrong, expecting that we will get away with it or that we will be forgiven, is a very deadly kind of sickness.

I knew this time I had earned my "dancing lesson" (Grandma usually took hold of my left arm with hers and round in a circle we would go, with me trying to outrun the black strap, and her in hot pursuit. It must have looked like an old-fashioned square dance. I usually made the music too!). Grandma never gave a "lesson" without first having a little heart-to-heart talk, making sure I understood why I was getting it and how I could avoid getting another one.



P.S. A gift subscription of "GOOD HEALTH" makes an inexpensive, but ideal, Christmas present. See your Lay Activities Secretary today and do your Christmas shopping early this year.

GIVE IT A "GOOD HEALTH" TO SHARE!

For many years the healthful counsel of the Adventist Church has been referred to as the "right arm of the message." This is because of the importance of the health aspect of our work and its witnessing potential.

But an empty arm is a useless thing. It must have a hand at one end working for it. And the best tool in the hand of a health-oriented arm is the "GOOD HEALTH" magazine. Full of interesting articles specially written by leading figures in the medical field, as well as qualified laymen, "GOOD HEALTH" is, and has been for years, the most widely read family health journal in the nation.

So why not share "GOOD HEALTH" today with friends, neighbours, or acquaintances. It's the best way to keep the "right arm" active.

Good Health

AUSTRALIA \$A2.75 ■ NEW ZEALAND \$NZ3.30 ■ OTHER COUNTRIES \$A3.50

This time Grandma explained to me that the strap was a part of a horse's harness that had belonged to her father. The horses had long since been dead and buried, and all the other tack had been sold or lost, but somehow Grandma had managed to save just this three feet of rein strap. It was about an inch wide and made of fine, black leather. She kept it hanging across the kitchen door, where we would have to pass it often and be reminded of its presence. "A mule can be a stubborn thing," she said, "but even a mule has to learn to obey if he's to be worth anything. My father used to lead his mules with this strap. They had to plow a straight furrow. When they wandered to the right hand or to the left, my pa just used this strap. Now, if you're going to act like a mule I'm going to have to use the strap too. And I'm sure that if it could keep those old stubborn mules straight, it can keep you straight too." Of course, straps were attached to a bit in the mule's mouth and that's how they were led. Grandma placed the strap some place else on me, but it had the same effect. I never had to get a licking for the same thing twice.

It seemed that Grandma had spies all over our neighborhood. I could never get away with anything. We often played baseball in the schoolyard down the street from our house. Occasionally the baseball would find its way through one of the windows. This would promptly end our game, and we would each go dashing home. Well, sir, quicker than I could get home, Grandma would have the news that I was involved in the window-breaking. No matter how far away from home an incident would occur, there always seemed to be someone just passing by, or watching from a window, eager to report the news to Grandma. I used to think that they were the meanest people in the world. It was only years later that I began to learn who they really were. They were the same people who were so kind to me at Christmas and on my birthday and on every other special occasion. In fact, these were the neighbors whom I had grown to love and whom I realized loved me very much; enough to watch over my character as I was growing up. They were

like the unseen angels that always keep watch over us.

That was Grandma's full-time job, being the guardian of our characters. She would see to it that we were going to be "decent folk," as she put it. Even as a child, when she taught me the lessons of right and wrong, she made it clear that these were lessons from God Himself, and that there were some things that a *Christian* just didn't do.

Patchwork Pattern

Through the years the bits and pieces of knowledge about God that Grandma gave to me began to make a pattern, just like her patchwork. I began to see a picture of God holding out His hand to me. I was still a rather young lad when I asked one evening, "Grandma, how do you become a Christian?" Grandma's reply was prompt and definite. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). I knew Grandma would have a ready answer, but this seemed so simple—like a magic formula. I was relieved to know that that was all there was to it. Grandma didn't say anything else for a while. I began to wonder just what it was that I was supposed to believe. I believed that there was a God. There was never any question in my mind about that. I hadn't been baptized yet, but I was sure I'd be willing.

As we sat, listening to the crackling of the fire and watching the patchwork take shape, my mind began to explore all that I knew about God and religion. It didn't take me too long, because I didn't know very much about it. Could it really be that all I had to do was believe that there was a God in heaven and then be baptized? And I would be saved?

"Grandma, what do I have to believe?" I was almost afraid to ask it. The question seemed so foolish, even for a little kid. I have since discovered that the only really foolish question is the one that is not asked. In fact, a lot of grown people would like to ask that very same question, but they're afraid. There are other people who need to ask that question too, but they think they already have the answer. I *knew* Grandma would have the answer.

"It's not so much *what* you believe, boy, but *how* you believe. You have to believe in

God with *all* your heart. You can't play with Him; you have to really believe." I felt a story coming on. I fastened my eyes on Grandma's glasses, snuggled up just as close as I could, and listened with all my might. Grandma began to tell how she "got religion."

"I was just a little girl," she said, as she put her needle and thread down. Then that far-off look came into her eyes. She turned her head to the side a little and smiled. "It was in the little church next door to our house. I always thought those church folks were foolish. All that singing, clapping of hands, and shouting. We used to laugh at them. We could see into the church from my bedroom window. My sister and I used to watch the old folks singing and praying. Some days they would even wash each other's feet. How we would laugh at the old ladies with their long-handle underwear and their high button shoes as they washed each other's feet. They would even hug and kiss each other when they'd finished. We thought that was the funniest thing in the world.

"Then one day Inez [that was Grandma's name] realized that she was a sinner. That she would be lost and go to hell if she didn't get things right with God. It started to worry me, so I made up my mind that on Sunday night I was going to confess religion. I went to the church, and sure enough, when the preacher made the call I went down to the altar. [Back in those days they had what we called a "mourner's bench" and you had to "tarry," or wait for the Spirit to come on you, to get religion.] The old women and the preacher gathered around me and the preacher put his hand on my head and prayed a prayer like you'd never heard before. There was singing and shouting, and then it all died away. It seemed like forever, but was no more than ten or 15 minutes. It was quiet in that little church. All I could hear was the sound of one dear old saint calling on the Lord in my behalf. Finally, I was just overcome with tears and a feeling that all my sins had been forgiven. It was like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. At last I was free to stand up, move, jump, and shout. And that's exactly what I did. I ran out of that

church like a rabbit with his tail on fire! Down the road I ran. I didn't stop until I came to the little creek at the edge of the woods. I sat down and cried. I told the Lord how sorry I was for every bad thing I had ever done, and promised I would serve Him until I die. And, son, I'm still trying to keep that promise."

"Were you baptized, Grandma?"

"Not that Sunday, but the next Sunday morning, in that very same creek. The preacher took me down and buried the 'old man' in that creek and I rose to walk in newness of life. That's what you're going to have to do, boy. Believe with *all* your heart and be baptized."

I'm glad God has made it so simple for us to be saved, aren't you? The devil is trying very hard to lead us into sin and then death. But Jesus has made a way for us to escape his traps and snares. What about you? Do you believe—I mean really believe—in the God of the Bible? If you do, will you trust Him with your life? Why not decide right now to let His Holy Spirit take control of your heart?

Fourth Day

Left-handed Monkey Wrench

THE STORY about Grandma's conversion made a deep impression on me. In fact, it became the model of what I thought my own conversion was supposed to be like. This scared me a bit. Maybe that's why I never thought about becoming a Christian until I was a teen-ager. I was about 13 or 14 when I started thinking seriously about my soul. It began when a little neighbor girl, only 12 years old, died of leukemia. I knew then that I was not too young to get on friendly terms with God.

The next Sunday morning I went to church, looking for the "mourner's bench." Of course, I never saw such a bench in our church. I was scared to death when the preacher made the altar call. I held on to my seat just as tightly as I could. The same thing happened the next week, and the next week, until eventually I was able to shake off that deep conviction.

tion. However, I kept going to church, and I tried to live right. In fact, I was a pretty decent fellow. I had stopped going to Grandma's church because my schoolmates all went to another church, and I wanted to go with them. I went with a friend of mine named Emmitt, and it was Emmitt who introduced me to Ben Price.

Ben was a young fellow like us, maybe a year or two older, but really bright. He was the teacher of the young people's Sunday school class. Of course, I was too shy to join the Sunday school class. There were older kids and even girls in it. I thought it might be fun to stay outside with some of the other fellows Sunday mornings. I soon learned that the fellows who hung around the steps and the rest rooms were always getting into mischief. Besides, I never found anything attractive about the atmosphere in a rest room.

A Different Life

However, I got acquainted with Ben on the basketball court. Basketball was my first love, and Ben Price was a tiger on the basketball court. No, not rough, but just terrific! In fact, the unusual thing about Ben was that everybody who played with him knew he was a born-again Christian. All the years I knew Ben, I never heard him raise his voice. He never argued on the basketball court and never did or said an unkind thing. He lived the kind of life that made you know there was something different about him. Even when he lost a game, which was very seldom, Ben was the same cheerful fellow.

I developed a great admiration for Ben. He was the kindest fellow I knew. Most of the boys our age were beginning to pick up dumb habits, such as smoking, just to be one of the crowd. Ben never touched a cigarette. This gave me the courage to say No, too. Some of the boys would even pick up things when the group of us went into the corner drugstore. They thought it was smart to take these things without paying for them. Not only would Ben Price never do this himself, but he would always talk to those boys afterward. He never preached to us, but with a smile, he would always say: "You know, that isn't right. How would you like it

if Mr. Bell were to come to your house and take some of your things without asking you?"

Of course, none of us ever told Ben how much we admired him or how much we watched him. Deep down in our hearts we all thought that he was the greatest fellow we knew. In fact, Emmitt and I used his name as a byword. Whenever we were tempted to do something that was wrong, one of us would say to the other, "Now Ben Price wouldn't like that." And we would laugh. Emmitt and I both knew what was right and how a Christian should live, yet we were sort of standing on the front porch of religion, not quite ready to go into the house.

One summer, late in August, when all the exciting things of the summer had just about come to an end (little league was over, the swimming pools were all closed down, and there were no TV's in the neighborhood), out of sheer boredom Emmitt and I decided to attend the Sunday night meetings at our church. We attended several times, always sitting in the balcony, where we could be spectators and not really participants in the service. We could talk when we wanted to, because all the parents were seated downstairs. On one particular night, to our surprise, who should be sitting right behind us but Ben Price! I guess he had come in late and didn't want to disturb the service by walking to his usual seat downstairs. Well, of course, there was no talking when Ben was around. The sermon was probably an ordinary sermon for Dr. Bracy, our aging minister; however, during that entire service I seemed to feel Ben's eyes piercing right through the back of my head.

When the altar call was made, I got a firm hold on my seat. I felt that old feeling coming back again. It seemed that the preacher was never going to stop. "Do you have sins that you know God has not forgiven? Do you believe that the Lord has died for you? Then why do you keep on putting Him off?" On and on he went. I started praying, not for the Holy Spirit or for forgiveness, but that the preacher would hurry up and sit down, so I would not embarrass myself. It seemed that he was waiting just for me and he would not stop—

until suddenly I found myself out of my seat, down the stairs, and down that long aisle to the front of the church. It seemed like a 20-minute walk. I had forgotten to bring a handkerchief, and there was a waterfall running down my face. As I reached the front of the church, a dear sister sitting near the aisle reached out and handed me a pink-lace handkerchief. I felt even sillier now wiping the unexplainable tears from my face with a pink-lace handkerchief. I sat down while the preacher concluded his remarks and gave the benediction.

Into God's House

As I left the church that night, who do you suppose was waiting on the steps to greet me? Right! It was Ben Price. He gave me that big 14-carat smile and shook my hand firmly and said, "God bless you. I'm sure glad you did it. I was praying for you." This really scared me. What would he be praying me into next? I almost told him he could stop praying now, but I was too happy and excited about this important decision I had made. Emmitt shook my hand too. As we walked home together I kept trying to explain to Emmitt, and myself, just what had happened: Now I had come all the way in to the house, God's house, and it was a good feeling!

Grandma was so happy she wept tears of joy when I told her what had happened. She had spent many anxious nights in prayer for me. I was not exactly the prodigal son, but I had started to feel pretty grownup when I got to high school. She would notice when my grades were not good or when I came in late at night. She never scolded—she just kept praying that the devil wouldn't keep me chasing after a left-handed monkey wrench.

That was one of the traditional tricks we played on new guys at camp. Someone would always send the unsuspecting new boy after the "left-handed monkey wrench." When he came to the person who was supposed to have it, he would send him all the way to the other end of camp to ask someone else. "Oh, I think I saw Mr. Jackson with it last, over near the cornfield. If you see the bunk stretcher over there, would you bring it along too? My bunk is a little too short for

me." Back and forth you would go, looking for the left-handed monkey wrench and the bunk stretcher. Of course, there are no such things. Neither of those tools exists, but everybody seemed to be in on the joke except the new boy.

That's the way the devil does with us sometimes. He has us chasing after fun, or money, or popularity in ways that don't really provide them. There is no such thing as a really happy liar or cheat. And a person who hopes to find happiness in soul-polluting or body-destroying habits such as smoking, drinking, or drugs is like a fellow searching for a left-handed monkey wrench—he'll never find it. Grandma was really glad that the devil had not fooled me. God had shown me a better way.

Being a Christian gave me teen-age years just the direction I needed. Without some standard to live by, and a purpose in life, I'm sure I would have fallen into some of the same bad habits and difficulties many of my friends did. I could never go too far away from the things Grandma had taught me without my conscience, or the Holy Spirit, pulling me back into line. Yet my life was not very different from what it was before, or from those of some of my buddies and classmates. I still went to the movies and dances like my friends, although my conscience did bother me a little when the jokes got smutty or the music was particularly bad.

How Does God Feel?

Somehow, I felt that this was not exactly the way a Christian should live. I often wondered just how God felt about it all. I mean, I was a bit confused about just how different a Christian was supposed to be. Even Grandma seemed resigned to the fact that the Christian world had outvoted her by their behavior, so she never condemned my borderline living. Ben Price would never go to a dance himself, yet he, too, seemed to tolerate a lot of the things that were starting to worry me. But who was I to buck the world? I told myself that it must be O.K. since everybody was doing it and nobody said it was wrong. I would go ahead and have fun, and perhaps later, when I was older, I would make some changes.

and advent world survey



ORDER YOUR
PERSONAL
COPY NOW.



Design in the Patchwork

IT WAS about five years later when changes began to take place. I had started playing drums in a rock-and-roll band. It was an exciting life, but many times while playing in some smoke-filled nightclub I would ask myself, "What am I doing here?"

It all started in a normal way. One hot July day I was home alone. I had slept in after being up late the night before. There was a knock at the door—gentle but persistent. It must be a bill collector or salesman, I thought. None of my friends are up this early. Whoever it is, I'll get rid of him in a hurry.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" I grumbled, opening the door slightly. "Good morning, sir. I'm Mr. Johnson. I've been doing some missionary work in the neighborhood. It's such a warm day, I wonder whether I might have a glass of water?"

Poor guy, I guess he's earned a glass of water, climbing all those stairs.

"Oh, that's just fine, thank you."

He sat his big, black bag beside the chair as he sat down and began sipping the water slowly.

"Nice place you have here."

"It's O.K."

"What school do you attend?"

"Oh, I've graduated from high school. I'm a musician."

I said proudly.

"That's nice," he replied.

On and on the conversation went. It seemed he would never get finished with that glass of water so I could get back to bed. Before I realized it, there lay a shiny black Bible in front of me on the kitchen table.

"Do you own a Bible, Mr. Grant?" Mr. Johnson looked me right in the eye as he spoke. He had a kind, innocent face. I couldn't lie to him.

"Well, I think I do. That is, I own one, but I must have misplaced it. I guess I really don't have a Bible." The words stumbled out awkwardly. I was really ashamed to admit that I didn't have a Bible. It started getting warm in the room now. For the first time in a long while I be-

gan to realize that I was not really living as a Christian should.

"Well, I want you to have this one," said Mr. Johnson.

"But I don't have any money."

"It's all right. A nice fellow like you should have a Bible." With that he stood, said good-by and left. I was flabbergasted. I looked at the Bible, thumbing through its crisp new pages. It smelled good and had beautiful pictures in it. It reminded me of the good times I had spent with Grandma. I didn't know where to begin reading it, but I was glad to have it. It seemed like sort of a good luck charm that everybody ought to have around.

The next morning Mr. Johnson was back in the neighborhood. He probably knew what I had been thinking, for when he knocked on the door, the first thing he said was, "Hi, how are you enjoying your new Bible?" The puzzled look on my face was answer enough. However, I was glad to see him. "Come in, Mr. Johnson. I really like the new Bible. I just don't know where to start. When I read all that stuff about 'in the beginning' before, I never seemed to get very far."

"I've got just the thing for you," he said. He pulled from his bag a large green book entitled *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. "Now, what would you like to know about the Bible?"

"What happens when you die?" Quickly he turned to the index. He explained how I could find any subject I wanted there. Then, turning to the right page, he read the scripture and began showing me the pictures. He read, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). There were the pictures of the great judgment scene with the angels standing around, God on His throne, and the sinner lis-

tening to the record of his life read from the great books.

"What an awful time," I said. I was glad to see Jesus standing there beside the sinner pleading for him. Would Jesus plead for me? I wondered. Then the questions began to pour out.

"When is this going to happen? Where? Is everybody going to be saved? Where is hell?"

"Wait a minute, hold on, young man. Just take your time. I'll leave this book with you. You may pay for it when you can. You study it with your Bible and next time I'll bring my wife by. She's a Bible teacher. She'll be able to help you with any questions you can't answer with the *Bible Readings*. Well, I must be going, but first, may we have a word of prayer?"

It was a funny feeling listening to Mr. Johnson pray. I felt especially good when he called my name in prayer. I knew then that something very special was happening in my life. God was trying to get involved, and now I was opening the door and inviting Him in. When the prayer was over I felt like I had just stepped out of a nice refreshing shower, clean all over.

Exciting Bible Study

A few days later I met Mrs. Johnson. She was really an excellent Bible instructor. She was always so pleasant. She knew how to make Bible study exciting. It was interesting to have her ask just the questions I'd always wondered about, and then give the text where the answer could be found. How exciting it was to learn where the books of the Bible were, who wrote them, and how all the things we ever need to know can be found in the sacred pages.

The Johnsons visited our house regularly for weeks. Then Mrs. Johnson announced that there was going to be a tent meeting nearby and asked if we would attend. I didn't mind studying the Bible around the kitchen table in my own home, but I wasn't about to be caught in a tent meeting. I could just see the "mourner's bench," and the "saints" dancing around me like wild Indians, with tambourines jangling. I made one excuse after another why I couldn't attend the tent meeting. I even bent the truth a little just to keep from appearing ungrateful for all the

kindness the Johnsons had shown me.

One night when I thought the Johnsons might be coming by to get me for the meeting, I decided to sneak off to a movie. By the time the movie is over they will have gone home, and the tent meeting will be over, I thought. I seemed to remember Mrs. Johnson saying that this was the last night, anyway. That night the movie was over a little earlier than usual and my bus wasn't due for a while, so I decided to walk home. I'll just take the long way home tonight to make sure the Johnsons aren't waiting for me, I thought. As I neared my neighborhood I could see bright lights down the street and people standing on the sidewalk. There were a lot of cars around and I thought I heard music. Sure enough, it was the tent. "So this is the tent! It looks like they're all standing up to leave," I said to myself. "I'll just slip up to the back of the tent and see whether I can see the Johnsons." As I reached the rear of the tent a very pleasant usher handed me a song book and invited me to step inside. "Well, just for a moment," I said. Why not? I thought. This is the benediction; I'll be on my way home soon.

When we had finished singing the familiar hymn someone began to pray, and then before we could be seated the evangelist was before us announcing his subject for the night. He explained that, since it was the last night of the campaign he would briefly review some of the main points of doctrine and prophecy he had discussed. I felt trapped! Instead of the *closing* song, it had been the *opening* song we had sung. How in the world was I going to escape from here before they came around with the tambourines? Every time I started to move toward the aisle, the usher would look my way and smile kindly. She seemed so eager to make me comfortable, I couldn't be impolite and just walk out. So I decided to sit through it—at least until the dancing started. Then, I supposed, I could hop up and dash out.

As the evangelist presented the prophecies and showed the pictures of the images and great beasts of the Bible, his explanations had a ring of truth that I could not escape. When the sermon was over I



was convinced that the preacher knew what he was talking about, and that this was something I should like to know more about. Music was played as the meeting drew to a close. A picture of Jesus was projected upon a large screen at the front of the tent. There He stood with His nail-pierced hands outstretched to me. "All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now." The words of the song seemed to be saying just what I wanted to say as I looked at Jesus' tender, compassionate face. "He gave His all for you," said the preacher. "What will you give for Him? Tonight He is calling for you. He wants you to be a part of His remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. Will you come?"

Suddenly I was up from my seat and walking down the sawdust aisle. I felt so very good! Puzzled and unsure of the future, but happy that I had taken my stand. That night as I left the tent I could hardly wait to tell my folks. I rushed into the house excitedly and called my mother and grandma and my Aunt Ida together.

"Guess what, I'm going to become a Seventh-day Adventist," I said. "Baptism is going to be next Sabbath, that's Saturday, you know. Can you come?"

Now I really didn't expect them to jump for joy, but what I got was even more surprising. Aunt Ida slipped out of the room first, without saying a word. My mother gave me a look of disgust that I will never forget. Only Grandma stayed around, and she turned and went about her cooking.

A few moments passed before I noticed a sniffing sound coming from her direction. As I got closer I could see the tears streaming down her face.

"What's wrong, Grandma?" I asked.

"Well, son, I guess you have a right to make your own decisions, but I always wanted you to be a Christian."

"Seventh-day Adventists are Christians, Grandma."

"Well, why do they go to church on the Jewish Sabbath?"

"Grandma, it's like this. You see, Saturday is the real

Sabbath. The Bible says . . . "Don't tell me what the Bible says, I've been reading the Bible since before you were born."

There was a tone of finality about Grandma's voice that told me there was no use continuing the conversation. As I started toward the door my mother called me and gave me a sound reprimand for "hurting your grandmother like that."

"Well, what did I do, Mom?"

"We brought you up to be good and decent. We never thought you'd do such a foolish thing as this. Turning your back on all we've ever taught you. How could you?"

With that she turned her back also, and I've never felt more alone than I did at that moment.

Heart-searching

By the time Sabbath rolled around I had done a lot of heart-searching. The Johnsons had prayed with me and for me constantly. Friday evening as the sun went down, I tried to keep the Sabbath, but it was all I could do to keep my mind off the job I would be losing, the loneliness and estrangement I was beginning to feel in my own home, and the ridicule of my friends who had already started to ask some very embarrassing questions. My boss had agreed to let me have this one Sabbath off, when I told him I wanted to be baptized. He was sure this foolish notion would disappear before the next Sabbath rolled around.

Sabbath morning I could hardly sleep past daybreak. Sabbath school started at nine-thirty and I wanted so much to be there, but how could I hurt my mother and grandmother, and turn my back on all my friends like this? What a decision! I left the house early and started walking the streets. About nine o'clock I found my way to the schoolyard, where the usual basketball game was going on. I could hardly keep my mind on the basketball game for thinking about what was going on at that little church. I had never been to the church before, but I knew where it was. Soon it was 9:30 and I was not at the church. I was still there at the school, so now, I guess, the decision had been made. I might as well go ahead and enjoy the basketball game. I played with all

my might until about 10:30. Usually these games go on all day, but somehow, most of the fellows had something else to do about this time. One by one they all drifted off, until there I was by myself. There was nothing more to do, so I started wandering around the neighborhood.

Mrs. Johnson's voice started echoing in my mind again! "You're going to be buried with your Lord in baptism." "Remember, we ought to obey God rather than man." I could see the pleased look of anticipation on her face as she said those words when I last saw her. She would be there at the church waiting for me, eagerly watching to see me become a member of God's remnant church. How could I disappoint her? And Mr. Johnson, who had been so kind to me? My footsteps seemed to be automatically turning toward the little church on the corner of Maple and Union streets. It was quite a long walk, but the blocks seemed to go by unnoticed. Well, I thought to myself, I won't have to worry about baptism. It will surely be over by now. But at least I can take a look at the little church just to see what it's like.

Just in Time

As I wandered near the side entrance to the church, where they had the baptistry, I could still see people standing on the stairway. There were still plenty of cars in the neighborhood, but I was sure baptism was over by now. Mrs. Johnson had said, "Be there by 9:30." It was now after 12 noon. I'll just walk up on the steps and take a peek inside. I had forgotten what happened to me the last time I was just going to "take a peek inside." Sure enough, the door opened and a smiling young man, whom I had noticed at the tent, stepped out and said, "You must be Mr. Grant. Come right in. You're just in time for baptism." I could hardly get my excuses together before they had showed me to the room where several other young men were changing into the long, black robes for the rite of baptism. One of the deacons handed me a robe and I started putting it on, like the others.

Soon the music could be heard and someone was there to usher us into the sanctuary of the church.

Someone read us the baptismal vows and instructed us to say "I do" to each one if we agreed. I listened very carefully. There were one or two that I didn't understand too thoroughly, but I was sure that if they were anything like the others, I agreed to them also. Soon it was my turn to be baptized. I had never really met the pastor before, but he recognized me and knew my name. Just before he baptized me, he told the congregation that "this young man has come to find his place in the work of the Lord." After I was baptized, the Johnsons were right there to throw their arms around me and to introduce me to all the other young people of the church.

It wasn't long before I had really found my place in the work of the Lord. Everybody in the church seemed so happy to see a young man willing to commit his life to the Lord. It made me feel so very important! Every Sabbath people would greet me and ask how things were. I suppose they knew some of the difficulties that a new Seventh-day Adventist like me was facing. My folks got over their feelings soon enough, but it was a different matter with my employer and some of my old buddies. It was very trying at times, becoming a new person. But the Lord was with me, and I was glad that I had buried the old Lorenzo in the watery grave and that Jesus was making a new man of me.

I was beginning to see the design in the patchwork Grandma had put together. I mean the pieces of truth about God that she had taught me. The big pattern became even more beautiful as I followed the Lord's leading into the gospel ministry. Then I had the privilege of seeing Aunt Ida and my mother join me in baptism and in the blessed hope of Jesus' soon return.

I will never forget the thrill I felt as I made an altar call in my old hometown church one Sabbath and saw my aged father walk feebly down the aisle to give his heart to Jesus for the first time. I have had the joy of baptizing my own son and daughter and many, many more into the family of God.

Who knows how different it might have been if I had not decided for Jesus? How about you? Have you decided for Him?

ANY QUESTIONS?

About cassettes, records, stationery, Sabbath school aids, birthday presents, graduation gifts, baptism and dedication mementoes, and books. Study books, adventure books, children's books, textbooks, Bibles, hymn-books, teenage books, poetry books, song books, devotional books, commentaries, colouring-books, pre-school reading books, picture books, tracts, story books. Information about stereos, tape recorders, music, periodicals, teaching-aids, amplifiers, speakers, church sound equipment. Et cetera, et cetera.

SEE YOUR LOCAL ABC MANAGER, HE'S THERE TO HELP YOU.

THE ADVENTIST BOOK CENTRE IN YOUR CONFERENCE IS MORE THAN A BOOKSTORE, IT IS A SERVICE.

AUSTRALASIAN RECORD

and Advent World Survey

Official Organ of the
AUSTRALASIAN DIVISION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

Editor - - - - - R. H. PARR
Associate Editor - - - - K. S. PARMENTER
Editorial Assistant - - - JAMES H. RABE
Office Secretary - - - - SHARON CLARKE
Wahroonga Representative - KAREN BALDWIN

☆ ☆ ☆

Annual subscription—post paid:

All areas covered by the Australasian

Division \$AUST.6.50

Other countries \$AUST.12.10

Air Mail postage rates on application.

● Order through your Adventist Book Centre or send direct to the Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria, Australia. 3799.

All copy for the paper should be sent to The Editor, RECORD, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria. 3799.

Appearing regularly in the *Australasian Record* are articles from the *Review and Herald*, the general church paper of the Seventh-day Adventists, published at Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Printed weekly for the Division by the Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria.

☆ ☆ ☆

ADVERTISERS PLEASE NOTE! All advertisements should be sent to the editor at Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria. 3799.

Advertisements approved by the editor will be inserted at the following rates:

First 25 Words - - - - - \$2.00

Each additional 5 words - - - - 10 cents

Remittance and recommendations from local pastor or Conference officer must accompany copy.

DIRECTORY

AUSTRALASIAN DIVISION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076.

President	- - - - -	R. R. Frame
Secretary	- - - - -	K. S. Parmenter
Treasurer	- - - - -	L. L. Butler
Assistant Secretary	- - - - -	R. A. Evans
Assistant Treasurer	- - - - -	W. T. Andrews
Field Secretary	- - - - -	A. S. Jorgensen
Auditor	- - - - -	S. H. Macfarlane
Associate Auditors	- - - - -	G. J. Bland D. R. Eliot

Departmental Directors

Education	- - - - -	G. F. Clifford
Health Food	- - - - -	F. C. Craig
Lay Activities	- - - - -	R. H. Abbott
Health	- - - - -	D. E. Bain
Health (Associate)	- - - - -	B. A. Shollenburg
Ministerial Association	- - - - -	C. R. Stanley
Sabbath School and		
Communication	- - - - -	M. G. Townend
Communication (Associate)	- - - - -	R. A. Vince
Publishing	- - - - -	J. T. Knopper
Stewardship and Development	- - - - -	G. A. Lee
Temperance and Religious Liberty	- - - - -	R. W. Taylor
Young People's Missionary		
Volunteer	- - - - -	G. R. Miller
Trust Services	- - - - -	W. E. Rudge

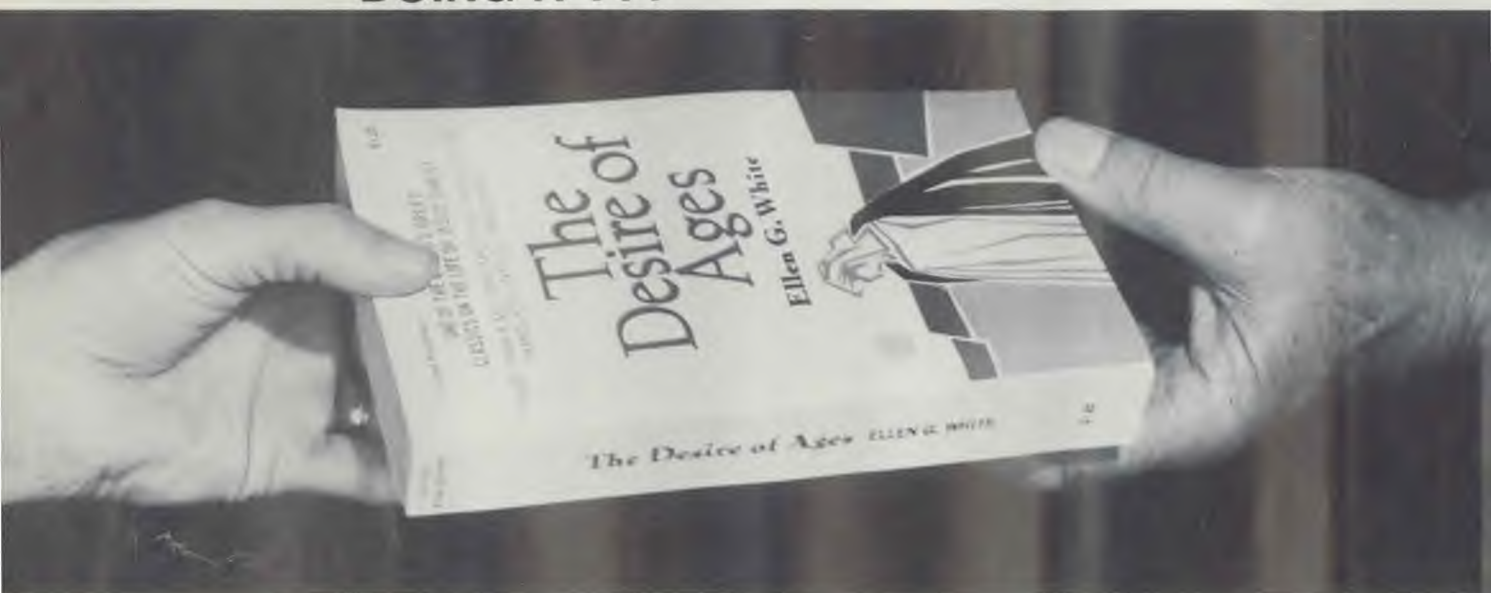
EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

DOING IT . . .

DOING IT . . .



DOING IT . . .



WE HOPE!

This is the year for THE DESIRE OF AGES. Produced in an inexpensive paperback edition, this Book of the Year is now available for all church members in their outreach for Christ.

Make your bulk order right now. Only 50 cents each. Join those who are doing it. Giving THE DESIRE OF AGES this year.