

SECOND ADVENT Herald

Issue No. 3

The Voice of Truth in Perilous Times

**The Ministry of
Heresies**

Immutable Law of God ❧ Righteousness by Faith ❧ Seventh-day Sabbath ❧ Victory over Sin
Sanctuary Types and Antitypes ❧ Three Angels' Messages ❧ Non-Immortality of the Soul
Health Reform ❧ Christ's Fallen Human Nature ❧ Ellen White - Gift of Prophecy

SECOND ADVENT — HERALD —

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It's my burden to inform you the urgency of the hour. Remember the first angel's message: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev 14:6-7.

From Scripture, when that angel with the writer's inkhorn by his side is commanded by God to begin the sealing, we know the judgment has begun. Ezekiel 9:4 tells us the command is, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

"These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel. . . ." 5T 210

Dear ones, I believe it's possible the judgment of the living has already begun. The question I must ask you is, "Are you ready? Are you ready for the judgment of the living?"

"I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message. My accompanying angel cried out with awful solemnity, 'Get ready! get ready! get ready! for the fierce anger of the Lord is soon to come. His wrath is to be poured out, unmixed with mercy, and ye are not ready.'" EW 119.

Friends, I believe with all my heart and soul that God's people are facing the final hour of probation. We may have only months before we see the Sunday laws come into effect. Remember, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thes 5:3.

The whole world is crying "peace and safety." The governments are all scrambling to put business operations on a more secure basis, but the Lord's messenger says all is in vain (Read 9T 13). "The end is near and every city is to be turned upside down every way. There will be confusion in every city. Everything that can be shaken is to be shaken and we do not know what will come next. The judgments will be according to the wickedness of the people and the light of truth that they

have had." 1MR 248 (1902); LDE 111.

The world's banking system is near collapse. The Lord's messenger has told us that the end will come as an overwhelming surprise. (Read 8T 28) We are also told, "When probation ends, it will come suddenly, unexpectedly—at a time when we are least expecting it. But we can have a clean record in heaven today, and know that God accepts us; and finally, if faithful, we shall be gathered into the kingdom of heaven (MS 95, 1906)." 7BC 989.

We are facing today the greatest crisis in the history of the great controversy. There is only one great crisis that can compare to the crisis that now exists. That was in Noah's day.

Jesus said in Matthew 22:14, "Many are called, few are chosen." Dear friends, God wants to choose each one of us, but He can choose only those who are willing to be made willing to obey on every point without compromise. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and 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. 58:13-14.

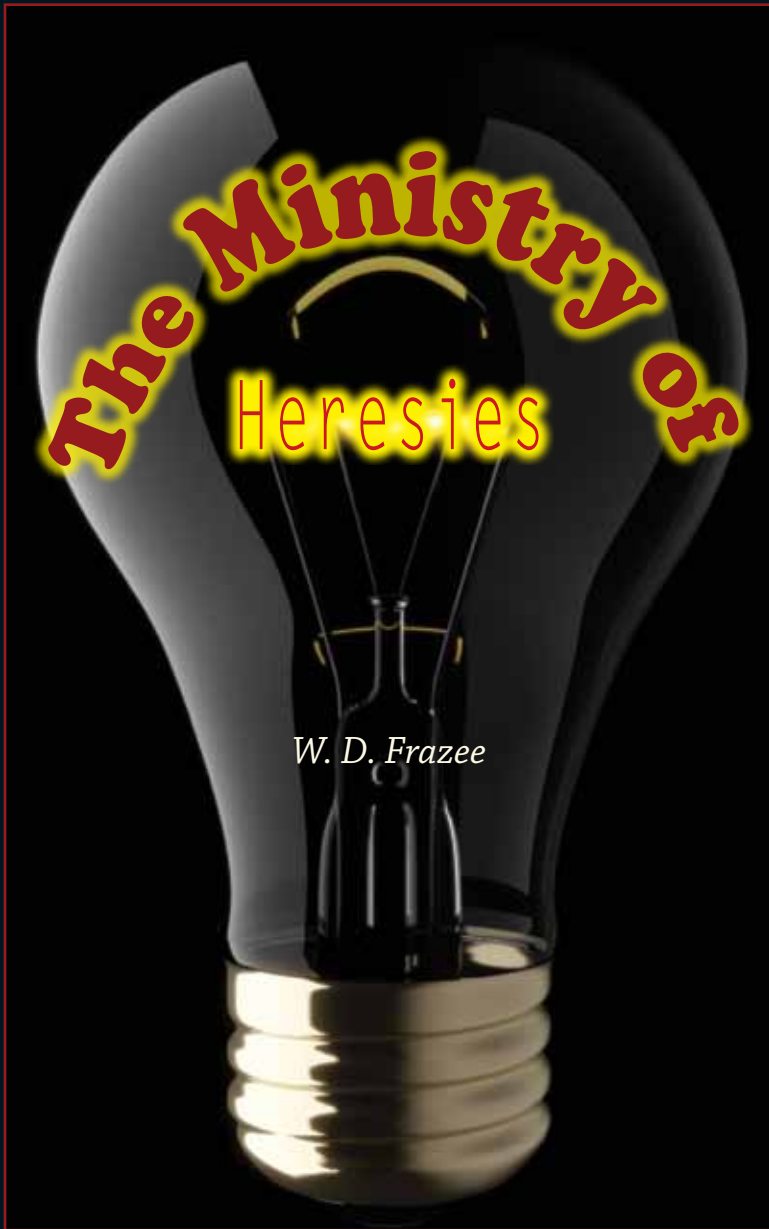
"True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God." COL 97.

This experience in right doing brings joy and happiness in our love for Christ and His sacrifice. "When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance." COL 384. This experience is the key to the pearly gates and eternal life. Without it, we are lost.

My dear friends, get ready, get ready, get ready! Ω



Ron Spear continues to add to his 55 years of active service in the Lord's cause as preacher, editor and author. He and his wife Carmen reside in Washington state and travel wherever he has speaking engagements.



“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

What do all things do? They work together. As we view them, they seem to be working at cross purposes, but all things are working together. They are working together for good, not for everybody, but for those who love the Lord. Man has been given the power of choice. It rests with each one whether everything that is working together is working together for his personal good or not. We must never lose sight of the eventual triumph of God’s purpose, the eventual carrying out of His plan. We must never forget those forces that seem to bring defeat are, nevertheless, being used by God.

Notice how Paul spoke of this, “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Corinthians 13:8). Isn’t that wonderful? Even the devil can’t do anything against the truth. He is trying all the time, and here in this world, he

seems to be having his way. Let us look behind the scenes. God is working out His will.

In the great crisis that is ahead of the church, which it is even now entering, we shall need the wisdom as well as the courage that comes from reminding ourselves of these promises, appreciating their full import.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Psalm 76:10). God uses even the wrath of man to praise Him. Man shouldn’t get any credit for that, but God should get a great deal of credit for using even the plans of His enemies and the wrath of the dragon to work out His will. Any wrath that doesn’t praise Him, He restrains.

This is no credit to Satan or his devils, and it is no credit to human beings that are used by him. They must all suffer in the final judgment for their rebellion against God and for the specious theories that they have advocated. They are just as guilty as though they had succeeded in subverting the truth of God and unseating God from His throne, but they cannot succeed.

Concerning the security of His children, Jesus said, “No man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:29). We can be glad for that.

I’ve been led to study this subject as I have contemplated this inspiring statement from the messenger of the Lord in an article in the *Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1898:

Heresies “Work Together” for Our Good

“It is thought by some to be a misfortune when erroneous theories are advanced, but the Lord has said, “All things work together for good to them that love God.” The contention among the Corinthians made it necessary for Paul to write his wonderful epistles to them. If the Gentiles [of Galatia] had not backslidden from the faith, Paul would not have written, ‘I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you out of the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another.’ It was a misapplication of the Scriptures, to prove falsehood and error true. If the Thessalonians had not misinterpreted the instruction they received, they would not have entertained the belief that the Lord was immediately to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, thus making it necessary for Paul to present the truth as it is in Jesus, leaving on record truth important for all time. And so opposition against light and truth called from Christ a clearer definition of the truth. Every time that error is advanced, it will work for good to those who sincerely love God; for when the truth is shadowed by error, those whom the Lord has made His sentinels will make the truth sharper and clearer. They will search the Scriptures for evidence of their faith. The advancement of error is the call for God’s servants to arouse, and place the truth in bold relief.”

So I want to study with you why God allows erroneous theories to come to His church either from without or from within, for the Scriptures state clearly that both happen. Paul said, “Grievous wolves” shall “enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30).

The Purpose of Heresies

Why does God allow His church to be rent and torn with schisms, factions, contentions, discussions over this and that point? Why is the unity of the church threatened at times by these things? We can see already from the texts we have read that God must have a purpose, or He wouldn't allow them.

Let us look at three great purposes accomplished through the ministry of heresies, three objectives that God has in mind in allowing erroneous theories of various kinds to find their way to you and me. God could stop them. Why does He let them come? As we study the ministry of heresies, we shall find at least three answers.

Sifting Out the False-Hearted

The first is to sift out the false-hearted. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:18, 19).

The falsehearted went out. Why? It might be made manifest. That is, clearly revealed, they were not of us.

Notice this wonderful statement on heresies by the servant of the Lord in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 707: "God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat."

What do heresies do? They sift the church! What happens to the chaff? It is separated from the wheat! Never forget, as the winds blow, whether they be the winds of heresy or the winds of persecution, it's the chaff that goes out; the wheat remains.

Like Sorting Oranges



When I was visiting in Florida, a friend took me to a packing shed where oranges were being sorted according to size. The oranges were on a chute. As they passed over a certain place there were little holes, and the tiniest oranges dropped through them. Presently, as the oranges went along, there were holes a little larger, and the little larger oranges fell through them, and so on. Just because we may not be fooled by one heresy, we must be careful not to pat ourselves on the back. In my imagination, I have looked at those oranges going along, and I heard a medium-sized orange say, "Well, we are not going to fall through; we've already been through that test and this one and we didn't fall through. We are going to go right on to the end." However, they hadn't gone the whole length of the sieve yet.

Some of the heresies the devil brings into the church are so crude and bungling that I am amazed they fool anybody. The devil is not finished with the work of placing heresies among God's people, and God is not finished allowing him to do it. Some far more subtle, more seductive, more difficult to discern and detect than we have yet seen are doubtless on the planning boards of the devil's corporation. He is studying our minds and characters, and if there is anything falsehearted, there he will design something that will sift out the chaff. Our only safeguard is to be sure we are anchored in Jesus and His truth, and that we love God and His church more than we love ourselves and our own opinions.

Zeal, Without Love, Is Nothing

There is a second purpose of the ministry of heresies. I trust that God will use this to bless some heart who may feel secure, who may, indeed, be secure as far as theology is concerned. We get it from the story of Jehu, one of the kings of Israel.

Let us get a picture of Jehu from the sacred record. "The driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously" (2 Kings 9:20). Jehu was a driver, and he has descendants today. He was furious against the apostasy and heresy of Ahab and rightly so, but there was something that he lacked. He lacked love.

Jehu was full of zeal. Watch him in action. "When he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord. So they made him ride in his chariot. And when He came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake to Elijah" (2 Kings 10:15-17, emphasis supplied).

Jehu was doing God's work, but not in God's way. Yet, God used him. Baal worship needed to be rooted out, and Jehu did it, but I am afraid we won't see Jehu in heaven.

I am calling attention to this because I read something in the book *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 333: "All who are longing for some engagement that will represent Jehu riding furiously will have opportunity enough to

distinguish themselves.”

So Jehu’s chariot still rides, and like Jehu of old, some today will stop the chariot just long enough to say, “Is your heart right as my heart is? If it is, get in and ride with me; we’re going to go places and destroy Baal worship in Israel. Let me show you my zeal for the Lord.”

Jehus of Today

Notice this inspired comment, an Ellen G. White statement in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1038:

“Men are slow to learn the lesson that the spirit manifested by Jehu will never bind hearts together. It is not safe for us to bind our interests with a Jehu religion, for this will result in bringing sadness of heart on God’s true worshipers. God has not given any of His servants the work of punishing those who will not heed His warnings and reproofs. When the Holy Spirit is abiding in the heart, it will lead the human agent to see his own defects of character, to pity the weakness of others, to forgive as he wishes to be forgiven.

“Part of the ministry of heresies is to give an opportunity for Jehus to manifest themselves. However, because some in the church militantly defend the faith, get out their swords, and ride the chariot zealously, is no evidence that they will be with God’s people at the finish.”

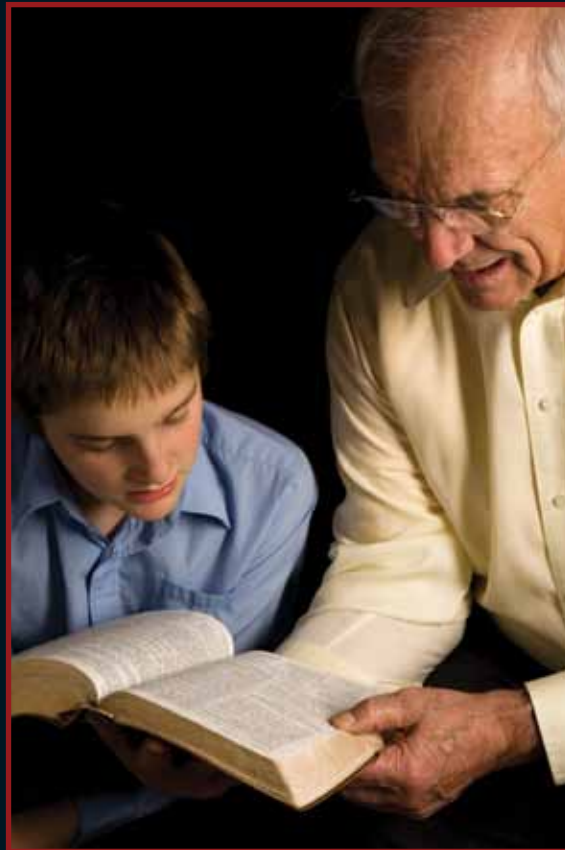
Note the warning in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 400: “As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them will, under one pretext or another, go out from us.”

There is more than one way to go out. We can get out the way Ahab got out, or we can get out the way Jehu got out. God keep us from either path of peril. But, remember, God was using them all.

Driven to Search God’s Word

Finally, there is a third ministry of heresies. Oh, I wish every one of us might be among those for whom it accomplishes this third purpose—that is, to lead us to study the Word of God. Concerning those in Berea, the Scriptures say, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they

received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).



In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 707, we are told, “There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness.

“The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God’s professed people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what.”

So one of the reasons that God allows erroneous theories of various kinds to come in is to lead us to go to the Word of God and to study for ourselves what God has said. If heresies accomplish that, has not some good been accomplished?

More than Superficial Knowledge Needed

We need more than a superficial knowledge of the Bible. Satan is adept at quoting Scripture. In the wilderness his first temptation was met by Jesus from the Word. Satan said, “I can do that, too.” So in the second temptation, he quoted from the Scriptures. Merely because a man quotes Scripture, does not mean he teaches truth. Just because he gets out leaflets and photocopied material liberally sprinkled with quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy, doesn’t prove that he is an angel of light.

This may be the most important thing: what we need to study most of all are the original sources—the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Notice this statement in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 298: “Perilous times are before us. . . . The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. . . . We must follow the directions given through the spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. . . . I beseech those

who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. . . . Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth.

“Throughout the history of this movement, there have been good men, educated men, experienced men who have lost their way and fallen on the dark mountains of unbelief. The enemy succeeded in leading them away from the truth even while they thought they were pursuing truth with all their heart.”

We Need So Much

We need God. We need the help of our brethren. We need the Holy Spirit. We need to dig deep into the written Word and the inspired commentary of the Spirit of Prophecy. In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 273, is this statement: “Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine.”

God allows these false teachings and heresies to get us to study the original sources and to acquire a systematic knowledge of the principles of truth. We need to see how the different principles fit together, to weave a tapestry of truth into our minds, to build a solid temple of truth, to wear every piece of the heavenly armor. We need all of these elements to wage the battle in which we are now engaged.

Study the True to Know the Counterfeit

Several years ago, the United States government conducted a school in various parts of the country to teach bank cashiers and others how to detect counterfeit money. The instruction lasted for fourteen weeks. How many pieces of counterfeit money did they examine? Not one! The government instructor knew that what they needed was a thorough knowledge of the genuine. Then they could detect the counterfeit.

If we are going to be saved from the many erroneous theories floating around, we need to study the original sources and fill our minds with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We will never find our safety in going into the false theories and studying them over and over. The better we know the genuine, the more surely will we detect the counterfeit when we meet it.

May God solemnize our hearts. May we not be wise in our own conceits and so sure of our own opinions or those of others that we fail to get on our knees as little children and say, “Dear Lord, there is much I don’t know. I want to know You and Your way. Oh, keep me from the delusions of the enemy.” We shall need to pray that prayer again and again. We shall need to intercede with God, for we are entering into the time foretold in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 80: “Every wind of doctrine will be blowing.”

“If we would not have the Scriptures clouded to our understanding, so that the plainest truths shall not be

comprehended, we must have the simplicity and faith of a little child, ready to learn, and beseeching the aid of the Holy Spirit.” (Ibid., p. 703) Ω



W. D. Frazee (1906-1996) was a medical evangelist and teacher. He was a co-founder of Wildwood Medical Missionary Institute.



On the Signs of the Approaching Ruin of Antichrist

An encouragement to the people of God.

John Bunyan

I now ...speak of the signs of the approach of his [Antichrist's] destruction. Whether I shall hit right as to these, that I must leave to time to make manifest.... That she shall fall, there is nothing more certain; and when she is fallen, that she shall never rise again, is also as firmly decreed.... This is her fate and destiny, from the mouth of the Holy One; and is sealed up in the scriptures of truth, for the comfort of the people that have been afflicted by her.

True, the time of her fall is not certainly known by the

that designs for utter ruin, are laid against God's Church all the world over, and that none of the kings, princes, or mighty states of the world will open their doors, or give them a city for refuge, then is the ruin of Antichrist at hand. For Haman's plot, though the most universal that ever yet was hatching, (being laid in a hundred and twenty-seven provinces,) did but presage the deliverance and exaltation of the Jews, and the hanging of Haman and his sons; yea, and I take it, that the very day that this great enemy had set for the utter overthrow

When God's Church is absolutely forlorn, and has no hiding-place any longer in the world, the kingdom of Antichrist will quickly begin to tumble.

saints, nor believed by her [Babylon] at all; wherefore her plagues must come unlooked for by her. And as to the saints, their guesses, as to the time of her ruin, must needs be conjectural and uncertain.... For her part, she shall say, "I shall be a Lady for ever." And as to the saints that would very willingly see her downfall, how often they have been mistaken as to the set time thereof! I shall not therefore meddle with the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power....

But since the Most High hath irreversibly determined her downfall also, let us see if we can have better success in discoursing upon the signs than others have had, who have meddled with the timing thereof.

No More Refuge

First, then, the downfall and ruin of Antichrist draws near, *when the church and people of God are driven from all those hiding-places that God has prepared for them in the wilderness.* The Church of God, when the Dragon did his worst, had a hiding-place prepared her of God; that she might not utterly be devoured by him; and so shall have till the time of his end shall come.... But now, when the time of the ruin of Antichrist draws on, then is the Church deprived of her shelter, and laid open, as one would think, to be utterly swallowed up for ever, having no more place in the wilderness, (that is, among the nations,) to hide herself from the face of the serpent....

When we therefore shall see that plots and conspiracies,

of the Church, God made the day in which their deliverance began, and that from whence it was completed; and I take that to be a type of this....

Ziklag

Wherefore let God's people consider and remember, that when God's Church is absolutely forlorn, and has no hiding-place any longer in the world, the kingdom of Antichrist will quickly begin to tumble. Nor is this the lone place from whence we may gather these conclusions. The time of Pharaoh's tyranny, of his life, and of the deliverance of the children of Israel, came out much together.... David, when Saul did sorely persecute him, fled last into the wilderness to Achish, the king of Gath, a Philistine for shelter; and he gave him Ziklag for his refuge. And that place so continued to David, till just about the time in which Saul must die; and then, behold, David's Ziklag is burnt with fire, and himself stripped naked of harbor! But what matter? The time of Saul's life, as well of David's Ziklag, was now upon expiring; for within three or four days after, David became the king of Israel. And thus also it was with the King of Babylon; his time expired, when the captivity of Israel was upon the finishing: then was the time of his land come, and in that very night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. Thus therefore it will happen to the Church in the latter days. Her place of shelter in the wilderness, her Ziklag, will be taken from her, about the time that the war

that the Beast has to make upon the Woman and her seed shall be finished. But now the Church is not therefore immediately delivered, when her Ziklag is taken from her; for after that the Beast levieth a new war, to the overcoming and killing of the

and that all nations should shut up their gates,...and set open their floodgates to destroy them. But so will be the dispensation of God, to the end deliverance may be the sweeter, and the enemies' fall the more headlong, and the arm of God the

It is a fearful thing for the Church of God to be exposed to the rage of her enemy all over the world at once; and that all nations should shut up their gates,... and set open their floodgates to destroy them. But so will be the dispensation of God, to the end deliverance may be the sweeter, and the enemies' fall the more headlong, and the arm of God the more manifest, both for the one and against the other.

Church. I say, therefore, that this is a sign, not of the downfall of Antichrist, but of the approach thereof; for the Church's bondage shall continue but three days, and a little after this. Much like to this was that of David; for after he had lost his Ziklag, for two or three days he had sore distress; but lo, then

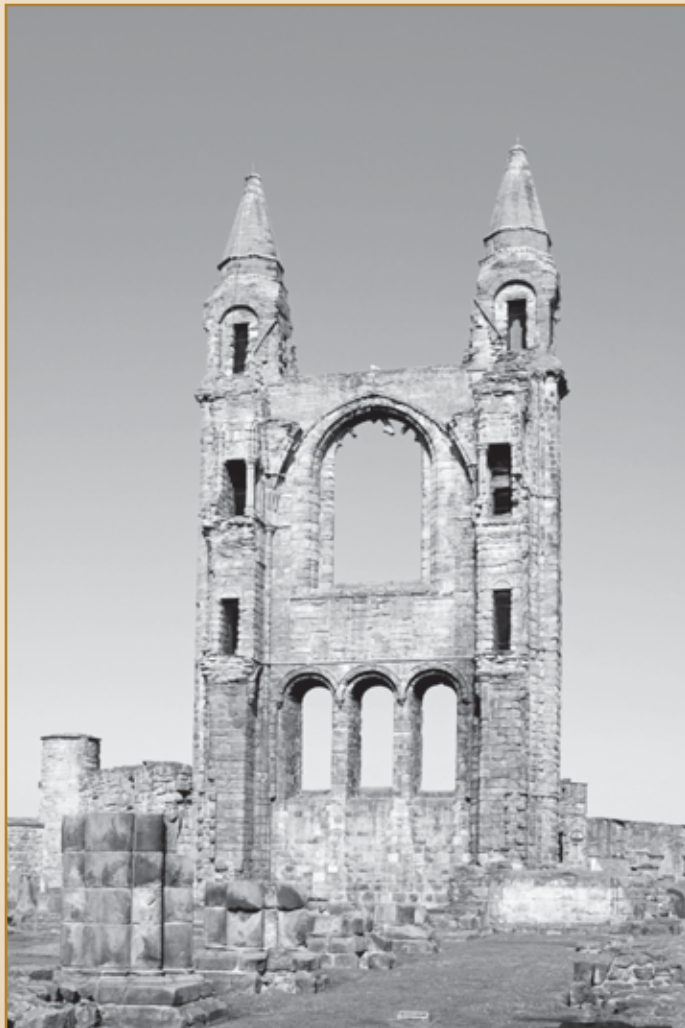
more manifest, both for the one and against the other. And in this will that scripture be fulfilled: "And there will be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

It is a sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, when God's Church can find no more shelter in the wilderness; because when her Ziklag is burned, the time of the war that the Beast is to make against her, is finished. Wherefore, he hath given one desperate struggle more, and laid the Church of God, or his Witnesses, for dead, in the street of his great city for three days and a half; then come the kingdom, and the long looked-for rest and glory. Wherefore it remains that an Angel should stand in the sun, and make proclamation to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to gather themselves together to the supper of the great God...

Nations Will Abhor Her

Another sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, is this: *towards the end of her reign, the nations will be made to see her baseness, and to abhor her and her ways....* So long as the nations and their rulers shall continue in that dead sleep that she hath bewitched them into, by their drinking of the wine of her fornication; so long we have no ground to think that her ruin is at the door: but when God shall lay her before kings, and shall discover her nakedness to the nations, then be sure her destruction is at hand. Hence you read, that precedent to her downfall, an angel comes down from heaven, and lightens the earth with his glory.... "Lightened," to let them see the filthiness of the Whore. "With his glory," with the doctrine that he had commission to preach against her, for the discovering of her lewdness to the earth....

For though the people that suffer at her hand can do nothing against her, but lay in prayers and tears against her before the God of heaven, and bear their witness against her before the gods of the earth; yet when kings shall come to be concerned (and they will count themselves concerned when they shall see how they have been deceived by her), then let her look to it. "Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts: and I will discover thy skirts upon the face, and I will show the



came the kingdom to him.

Indeed,... it is a fearful thing for the Church of God to be exposed to the rage of her enemy all over the world at once;

nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame: and I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing stock." And what follows? "And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee, shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her...?" Wherefore there wants nothing but that she be discovered to the nations and their kings, for did they but see her, though they lay yet in her bosom, they would rise up against her that she must die....

Kings Uncover Her Nakedness

The chief of the wisdom of Antichrist this day is laid out, if perhaps by it she may cover her nakedness and keep it from the eyes of kings and their people. But God has said it shall not avail. "Thy nakedness shall be uncovered; yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance..." But how will he make her naked? Verily, by kings. But how shall kings do it? Why, by virtue of the glory of the angel....

And why should not the kings have it granted unto them, that she should fall by their hand? The kings are those that she has abused ...in the grossest manner, and has served herself of them.... Nor shall all the tricks, lies, and deceit, under which formerly she used to shroud herself, be able to prove a balm to her any longer. No, "in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for no cure shall be unto thee; the nations have heard of thy shame." ...Wherefore now it follows immediately, "Babylon is fallen!" that is, in the eyes and esteem of the nations, as well as otherwise.

True, some of the kings will bewail her fall, and will cry, "Alas! alas!" when they see they cannot help her; for that they shall see, as is evident, because they stand afar off to lament her, afar off, for the fear of her torment. The kings therefore into whose hands God shall deliver her, and who shall execute His judgments upon her, shall be more mighty and powerful to bring her down, than shall be the whole world besides to uphold her.

And this observe further, That as the kings that shall hate her, shall hate her because in the light of the glory of the angel they are made able to see her filthiness, so the kings that shall bewail her are such as in judgment are left in the dark, and that shall be bewitched by her to the end....

God's People "Come Out"

A third sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist is this. *When Babylon is become the habitation of devils, &c., then the downfall thereof is upon us.* True, Babylon was always a habitation for devils, but not a habitation only for them; Israel once dwelt there.... The meaning then is, when you shall see the church and people of God so forsake her, that she is left in a manner to herself, and to her disciples, then she is to fall quickly. When you hear it proclaimed by them of God's people that are yet in her, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one to his own country:" ah! Then she will soon be hissed out of the world.

For this is the way of the wisdom of God, namely, to bring his people out of a city or place, when he intends the ruin of that place. When God was about to destroy the old world, he put Noah into an ark: when God was about to destroy Sodom, he sent his Lot away thence to Zoar: when Christ was about to destroy Jerusalem, he bid his disciples flee from that city. And when there shall be by God a hissing for his people; and they shall hear Him, and obey, and gather to Him, then you shall see what will become of this enemy of Christ. "I will hiss for them and gather them; for I have redeemed them."

"...And thus the Angel that lightened the earth with his glory, proclaimed, Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen! And is become the habitation of devils, and a hold for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird." ...God will have gleaned His people from the midst of her, those that are left behind will appear more than ever to be what they are, namely, devils, foul spirits, and hateful birds; wherefore, now will Antichrist appear in his own most proper colors.



Against All Appearances

But to comment a little upon the words. "Is become." That is, through the labor of the fanners and winnowers that God hath sent to fan Babylon, and to fetch out His people, that she might be left to her chaff. "I will send to Babylon (saith God) fanners, that shall fan her, and that shall empty her land (of good men); for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about."

"A habitation of devils." Devils; not such by nature but by practice; ...the most vile of the sons of men; for as devils have acted towards the world, so shall the sons of this Sor-

ceress, and this Whore, act towards Christ and his members in the latter days.... Let God's people, there, when Antichrist is towards her end, look for nothing from her, but what the devil, in times past, used to do.... But, Lord God! Think I, what will become of good men! And where will they be safe in such days! Only I comfort myself, by saying to myself again, This is a sign that the ruin of Antichrist is at the door. But this I say, he must needs be a tuneable man, that shall be able in those days to sing this song to himself at all seasons.... For what will the good man's reason say, when it seeth all Babylonians are become devils, but that the Church of God will certainly be torn in pieces? But behold! The text and the Holy Ghost run counter to this. "Babylon is fallen! Is fallen!" ...These words for certain are the words of a holy angel; for it could not have entered into the heart of mere man to have conceived them.

Men Like Devils Inhabit Her

"A habitation." ...And thus will Babylon be ... a house, a dwelling-place... only for devilish-minded men; thither may such men come; for such her doors stand open, and there may such inhabit. *When therefore you see good men come out thence, and all sorts of wicked men flock in thither, then know that Babylon is near her end.*

"And a hold for every foul spirit." Understand by "spirit," either those that are devils by nature, or such as are such otherwise.... Babylon is their ...place of defense, for by a hold we often understand a place of strength, a castle, a fort, a tower.... Yea, they will find her an upholder to them, and a countenancer of them, in all their foul and devilish pranks.

"Every unclean bird." ...These unclean birds . . .are not all of one feather, or kind, but of all and every kind; and it intimates, that the worst sort of all professions shall be ...in Babylon, a little before her downfall.... The basest of all sorts, sects, professions and degrees shall take shelter in Babylon towards her end; and that they shall there, in their temper, unanimously agree to show themselves monstrous, to devour and eat up the poor and needy, and to blow out the light of the gospel.

"A cage...." Not to imprison them in, but for them to sit and sing in, to confer their notes in, to make melodious music ...to their own thinking.... To sing ...doth also denote security, and that the heart is far from her, for she saith, "I shall see no sorrow," in that hour in which her judgment comes.

...When therefore we shall see men like devils, yea, every foul spirit and hateful bird, flock to, and take shelter in Babylon; let us not be frightened or dejected, but pluck up our hearts, and say, "This is one of the signs that the downfall of Babylon is near."

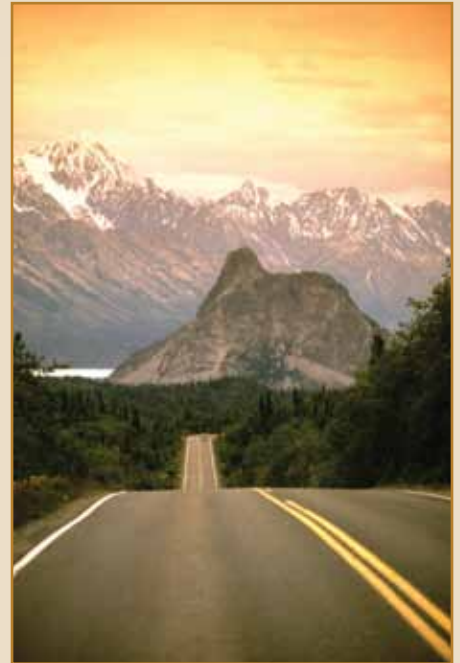
To Strengthen the Fearful

Wherefore it follows, (after the prophet had told us that these birds should dwell in the land of the people of God's curse,) that "the wilderness, and the solitary places, shall be glad for them, (that they are there,) and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as a rose. It shall blossom (saith He) abundantly,

and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, and excellency of our God."

And to support the weak from those fears that in those days will be pulling them down, he adds, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not. Behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

What say ye now, ye sons of God?...When we see these devils, foul spirits, and unclean birds in Babylon; yea, when we see good men leave her, and the vilest run in to her, then let us sing the angel's song, and say, "Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen!..." Ω



A condensation of chapter 4 of John Bunyan's *The Ruin of Antichrist* (Swengel, PA: Riener, 1970), 48-63. Bunyan lived from 1628 to 1688. This book was first published in 1692, four years after his death, titled *On the Causes of the Ruin of Antichrist*. Bunyan endured prison for his faith:

"Accordingly when the people were assembled with no weapons but their Bibles, the constable entered and arrested the preacher." *Life of Bunyan*. It was during his imprisonment that he wrote the well-known *Pilgrim's Progress*.



Satan's Agenda for Educating Our Children

Hector Torres

God's education plan is the only one that will safeguard our children.

In His mercy, God has revealed what the devil wants to do with every one of our children. In Daniel chapter 1 we see that it is Satan's strategy to give our children a Babylonian education.

Daniel was only eighteen years of age when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem (see *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 570) and took him and his friends to downtown Babylon, away from their parents, their culture, and their religion.

Ashpenaz was to take "of the king's seed, and of the princes." The king especially wanted the cream of the crop. Today, the devil is not concerned about those who are already in Babylon. He wants the children of the faithful people of God, those who profess to have present truth.

We don't know how many children were taken into Babylon, but we do know that only four were faithful. What happened to the others? Somehow they were shaken out. Four out of thousands? That's not very good odds! Fathers and mothers, we really need to take seriously the

high calling that God has given us to educate our children. Do we really love our children and care about their salvation? Or are we spiritually sound asleep while we're busy making money, going places, gaining degrees?

Today, more than three out of four of our children have left the truth by the age of thirty-five. That is way too many! I have a father's heart, and I have four children, and I want to see all four children in the kingdom of heaven—not just one of them.

The time is coming when we may lose the custody of our children. Could that happen here in America?

Remember what happened in World War II? Many Japanese and German families lost their children. They had committed no crime, but the children "needed" to be placed in a family where they would be raised as an "American."

We need to prepare for what could happen to some of us in the very near future.

The Bible doesn't tell us that Daniel and his friends ever saw their families again. Let us not be worried about that. If I don't see my children for a while, it will be difficult for this father to take, but it's okay, if I can spend eternity with them.

Separating the Family

Verse 4 says that the king wanted “children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace. . . .”

Why would Satan want to separate our children from us? He knows that faithful parents will fulfill their duties at home, but if he can separate our children from us, he has a much better chance of getting to their hearts.

What is happening today? A child is born, and often within a few weeks or months, Mother takes the child and says, “Grandma, aunt, neighbor, you take care of him; I need to work, to make a living.” Today, we have pre-kindergarten, from the age of three and up. (I’m not talking about single parents; they are doing the best they can.)

Especially in recent generations, parents and children are easily separated. We have counsel that our children should be by us, that we need to see what they are doing, and hear what they are listening to. But what happens when adults get together? We like to talk, to visit. That means that we must take special care to guide and protect our children.

We need to see and hear what our children are seeing and hearing. It takes only one single incident to ruin a life forever.

After church one Sabbath, two conservative families decided to have lunch together at one of their homes. After the meal, the parents decided to watch a present-truth video. In the meantime, the sixteen-year-old boy said to the younger boy who was visiting, “Let’s go upstairs to my room and talk.” Do you know what happened? The older boy introduced the younger boy to a lifestyle that, six years later, cost him his life.

In another place, a parent related to me, “You have no idea what happened between Sabbath school and the church service. My three children went to the bathroom, and another boy did something there that should have never taken place.”

We could continue with many more examples. Parents, I repeat, we need to see and hear what our children are seeing and hearing. It only takes one single incident to ruin a life forever.

Nowadays, we keep ourselves so busy that many times our children grow up and do not even know us. They want to play and go for walks with us; they want us to read to them, to put them to bed and pray with them before they go to sleep. All of that is true—and what a blessing! Are we willing to invest time and energy into binding our hearts together? Let’s not allow the devil to separate us from our children. By God’s grace, let us make them priority number one.

In the Palace

The king said, “Give me just three years, and those youth will be mine. I’m going to give them all the luxuries, conveniences, and comforts that they might ask for—and more.”

That’s the United States, isn’t it? We have so much more than we need that we don’t know what to do with it all. On Sundays, we shop one sale after another, hoarding more and more for ourselves while, many times, God’s work is lacking funds. Do we expect the world to believe us when we tell them that “Jesus is coming soon”?

Tragically, the prosperity that we enjoy today is killing our families physically and spiritually. Many of us have a 7-11 religion. We go to church on the 7th day, at 11 o’clock. In the afternoon, guess what? “Lay activities.” Then we wait for the Sabbath to be over so we can go out again and enjoy the “rat race.”

You are probably familiar with Sister White’s vision of the narrow way to heaven. How many of us are walking that narrow way? How far are we along? Are we loading the wagons with more, when we should be up farther on the path, ready to jump over to the other side?

Let us train our children to be thankful for the simple blessings that God provides, rather than demand the luxuries to which we are so accustomed. My wife and I were blessed as we read the fourth chapter of *The Great Controversy*, about the Waldenses. In that chapter we read of a people who were growing strong while the papacy was ruling the world. The children did better with less, not more. I urge you to read that chapter.

Entertainment

There was plenty of entertainment in the king’s palace. Are we being entertained by Satan? Yes. “Amusements are doing more to counteract the working of the Holy Spirit than anything else, and the Lord is grieved.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 281.

If we have all the amusements of this world and then on Sabbath morning the preacher opens the Word of God, what happens twenty minutes later? We yawn, saying “Yes” to everything he says. And then he dares to preach for forty-five minutes! We can watch a game—or whatever is coming out of that “Hell-e-vision”—and when it goes into overtime, we say, “What a game!” But how dare the preacher preach for forty-five minutes!

“The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 293.

If you don’t think you have ever been hypnotized, try seeing if you can turn off your television set (if you have one) at the end of the game—or whatever program you are watching.

Education

Verse 4 goes on to say that the king aimed to teach the Hebrew youth “learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” Satan says, “I’m going to teach you my philosophy, my culture, my traditions, my opinions.” That’s why God gave us an

educational blueprint plan. Whether we are sending our children to church school or educating them at home, we need to make sure that we are following God's blueprint, not Satan's agenda. Don't forget, the book *Education* tells us that the work of true education and redemption are the same work.

Let us train our children to be thankful for the simple blessings that God provides, rather than demand the luxuries to which we are so accustomed.

The king was going to teach them the language of the Chaldeans. Who were the Chaldeans? They were a high class of the priests.

Do we have a language as a people? We have the sanctuary message, sealing, shaking, close of probation, early rain, Sunday law, latter rain, Second Coming, Spirit of Prophecy, state of the dead. That's our language.

What happens if we don't teach our language to our children? They can't share what they don't have. Our children know about sports, but can they preach the message?

They need to get into the Bible; it will stand forever. Our youth can be kept pure only through the Word of God. That's one of the reasons why our family worship time in our home in the morning and evening is very important. When we walk, when we are in the house or with relatives, we need to be training our children that this is our language, our message.

The King's Food

Verse 5 says, "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king."

In Genesis 1:29, God appointed a diet for us. Now the king tried to take the place of God and appointed a new diet to the young men. He probably had the best cooks. (Do we feed our children the "best" of the "Golden Arches" and KFCs?)

What did Daniel and his friends say? "Thank you, but no thank you. Give us vegetables and water for just ten days."

The king was thinking of three years, but they said, "Ten days." They determined that they would follow God's appointed diet. That's it. And God honored their choice.

Changing the Names

Verses 6 and 7 tell us that the king was going to change the names of these Hebrew boys. When we talk about names, what are we talking about? Character. So he was hoping to change their characters.

What happened? The king changed Daniel's name to Belteshazzar, but the Scripture refers to him as "Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar." The change was only on the outside; his heart was still the Lord's. The same is true of his three friends.

But someone did change. Did you know that Nebuchadnezzar is going to be in the kingdom? The boys took him to school, and he didn't know it.

Young people, you have no idea what your testimony can do for other people. When people see a small child or youth being faithful and loyal to God, that impresses the heart of people like nothing else can.



Keys to Success

Why were these young men successful, by the grace of God?

#1 - They prayed. In Daniel 2 we see that when they got into a difficult situation, they prayed for help, and God answered their prayer.

#2 - They were diligent students of the Bible and prophecy. In Daniel 9, Daniel was studying the prophecy of Jeremiah. He wanted to go home.

#3 - Daniel was a prophet, and they paid attention to "the testimony of Jesus." (Revelation 19:10)

#4 - They did not compromise one single time. When we compromise, even in "little" things, we have no idea how we hurt ourselves and lose the confidence of those who are watching us.

Is the devil succeeding in his plan to conquer our children? If "yes," will we go on, business as usual, or will we determine that, by the grace of God, we will do all that we can to prepare our children to be in the kingdom of heaven—even "if it kills me"? As Joshua said, as for me and my house, we **will** serve the Lord. Ω



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“Parents, **Help** the Children.”

Ellen G. White

We are not told at what point very young children become accountable to God for themselves, and speculation is pointless. We know only that godly parental molding of their characters is critical:

“[In the home], influences are exerted whose results are as enduring as eternity. More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be victorious or vanquished in the battle of life.” CG 202.

Lawful Prey

“... Children are the lawful prey of the enemy, because they are not subjects of grace, have not experienced the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, and the evil angels have [are permitted] access to these children; and some parents are careless and suffer them to work with but little restraint. Parents have a great work to do in this matter, by correcting and subduing their children, and then by bringing them to God and claiming his blessing upon them. By the faithful and untiring efforts of the parents, and the blessing and grace entreated of God upon the children, the power of the evil angels will be broken, a sanctifying influence is shed upon the children, and the powers of darkness must give back.” RH, September 19, 1854.

The counsel above assures us that the prey may be taken from the grasp of the predator, but parents must strive for the souls of their children. Very much, therefore, depends upon a sanctified selection of a spouse, particularly for the sake of children born to the union. Negligent parents may bring condemnation upon their offspring much as Adam did upon humanity.

“We are living in an unfortunate age for children. A strong tide is setting downward to perdition, and it needs more than childhood’s experience and strength to press against the current, that would bear them down. All who have a desire to yield their hearts to God and obey his requirements, Satan will try to perplex, and overcome with his temptations, that they may become discouraged and give up the warfare.

“Parents, help the children. Watch continually to cut off the current, and roll back the weight of evil which is pressing in upon them. The children cannot do this of themselves. Parents can do much. By earnest prayer and living faith they may bind their children upon the altar, and thus secure the watch-care of guardian angels; the guiding hand of God will lead them through the perils of the last days, and bring them off victorious over every foe.” ST, February 26, 1880.

In fact, “every Christian should labor to press back the tide of evil and save our youth from the influences that would sweep them down to ruin.” CT 544.

A Precious Promise

“The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, ‘Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.’ Isaiah 49:24, 25.” DA 258. Ω



HISTORICAL
PRECEDENTS
REGARDING

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Jean Handwerk

John Bunyan observed that “this is the way of the wisdom of God, namely, to bring his people out of a city or place, when he intends the ruin of that place. When God was about to destroy the old world, he put Noah into an ark: when God was about to destroy Sodom, he sent his Lot away thence to Zoar: when Christ was about to destroy Jerusalem, he bid his disciples flee from that city.”¹

Regarding the ruin of the latter city, Ellen White wrote that “not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given his disciples warning, and all who believed his words watched for the promised sign. ‘When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,’ said Jesus, “then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.” (Luke 21:20, 21.) After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces, without the least apparent reason. But God’s merciful providence was directing events for the good of his own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was afforded for *all who would to obey the Saviour’s warning*. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army, and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety,—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.” GC88 30, emphasis added.

Destruction of Cities

Sodom and Gomorrah, Zoar, and Jerusalem were not the only wicked cities receiving the forecast of doom from Christ. In Matthew 11:20-24, the Bible says, “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

The Galilean city of Capernaum in Jesus’ time had 30,000 inhabitants. It was “exalted unto heaven” because Christ dwelt there more than anywhere else during His ministry, teaching

and healing in its environs. Less than forty years after Jesus’ pronouncement upon it, it was destroyed by the Romans.

Jesus explicitly says that had He done in Sodom what He did in Capernaum, Sodom’s inhabitants “would have repented.” But neither city changed its course. Just as Sodom was destroyed for its sins, and “woes” came upon Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, so sin destroys cities and nations today, too. Modern cities which reject God and enjoy sin will share a similar fate.

Every City Shaken

Ellen White wrote of the judgment of the world’s cities. “The end is near and every city is to be turned upside down every way. There will be confusion in every city. Everything that can be shaken is to be shaken and we do not know what will come next. The judgments will be according to the wickedness of the people and the light of truth that they have had.” 1MR 248 (1902).

In at least one instance, she spoke of more than “shaking.” She called it “destruction:” “O that God’s people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost given to idolatry.” Ev 29 (1903).

That these events are judgments is confirmed in this statement: “The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments.” Ev 29 (1910); LDE 111.

The Comparison Made, But . . .

Referring to our time and our future plight, the prophet wrote, “The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation, in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath, will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.” 5T 464-5; ChS 161.

That was written between 1881 and 1889. We know that the Blair Bill for a national Sunday law, introduced in 1888, did not pass. Since that time period, however, warnings to leave *all* cities were numerous and urgent. The reasons were several, but the remedy was always the same:

Great Effort Needed; God Will Help

“More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so. Many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way. . . .” RH, Sept. 27, 1906; CL 24.

“More and more, as time advances. . . .” “For years. . . .” There was urgency in the prophet’s statement back in 1906, and it is evident in this next statement, too, as she writes “again and

again.” How many times must the warning be given, before we heed it? Is it not given by God for our benefit? Given the current conditions nationally and globally, we can see prophecy fulfilling before our eyes. “Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one.” AH 141. This counsel refers to all cities, not just the large ones. “Into the country” is where God’s prophet would have us go.

Those who accept the words of the prophet without caviling will obey, and we have the promise that “God will help His people to find such homes outside the cities.” MM 310 (1902); CL 24.²

Could It Be?

Even before a Sunday law, great upheavals will take place in the natural world. Nowhere will the effect be as severe as on the populous cities, which by their very environment tend to be centers of sin. In destroying them, Satan can destroy many souls. “In accidents and calamities by land and by sea, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hail-storms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes,—in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. The visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast.” RH March 14, 1912.

In Matthew 24:7-9, Jesus answered his disciples’ question about signs of his coming and the end of the world. He said, “. . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Just the beginning of them.

Those disasters were not the more intense sorrows to be expected. Note in the next verse what Jesus considers the *real* sorrows, the sign of the even closer end: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”

The “famines and pestilences and earthquakes” that have been increasing in severity and frequency are the warning signs we’re given today. We are in that stage of earth’s history now, because the next and last event Jesus mentions as preceding His coming is the persecution of Sabbath-keepers. That is yet to come; we have experienced but faintly what that will become.

God’s people in ancient Israel were given a sign by which they would know to leave Jerusalem. In the late 1800s, God’s people were bidden to “leave the large cities” without delay at the passing of a Sunday law. Later, as the plans of God and Satan progressed, His prophet counseled believers to “leave [all of] the cities” as soon as feasible.

Could it be that the prophetic judgments warned about through Ellen White’s pen are about to fall on the cities? One cannot deny that iniquity and godlessness has been increasing rapidly. Soon the cities’ cups of iniquity will be full. How very

important that our people take advantage of this “opportunity . . . afforded for all who would to obey the Saviour’s warning.” GC88 30.

As Bunyan wrote, “This is the way of the wisdom of God, namely, to bring his people out of a city or place, when he intends the ruin of that place.” Since “not one Christian” was lost before Rome’s final overthrow of Jerusalem, we may expect that no believer escaping the cities will perish in their prophesied destruction, either. We have been given the “more sure word of prophecy.” Will we heed the prophet’s warnings?

Merciful Counsel

How very important, also, that our hearts be drawn out to the people in those cities. While we have the counsel to leave the cities, we also have this compassionate directive: “. . . But until it is possible for them to leave, so long as they remain, they should be most active in doing missionary work, however limited their sphere of influence may be.” RH, Sept. 27, 1906; CL 24.

Once we are out of the cities, “the cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes; not by God’s people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.’” Letter 182, 1902.

Let us heed our Father’s warning, and be about our Father’s business. Ω



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Endnotes

- 1 John Bunyan, *The Ruin of Antichrist* (Swengel, PA: Riener, 1970), from a condensation of Chapter 4. This book was first published in 1692, four years after his death, and was then titled *On the Causes of the Ruin of Antichrist*.
- 2 We urge the reading of Ellen White’s book *Country Living*, and also refer readers to Pastor David Westbrook’s website (<http://outofthecities.info/assets/OutOfTheCities.pdf>) for his study called *Out of the Cities!*



Photo © Paul Williams

“The Beasts Shall Teach Thee”

Job 12:7

**The camel, at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain
To have his burden lifted off
And rest to gain.**

**My soul, thou too, should'st to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let thy Master lift thy load
And grant repose.**

**Else how could'st thou tomorrow meet,
With all tomorrow's work to do,
If thou thy burden all the night
Dost carry through?**

**The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load
Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.**

**So thou should'st kneel at morning's dawn
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that He no load too great
Will make thee bear.**

Ann Temple Whitney



Shall Not God Avenge His Own?

Ellen G. White

Christ had been speaking of the period just before His second coming, and of the perils through which His followers must pass. With special reference to that time He related the parable in Luke 18:1-8. . . . The judge here pictured had no regard for right, nor pity for suffering. The widow who pressed her case before him was persistently repulsed. Again and again she came to him, only to be treated with contempt, and driven from the judgment seat. The judge knew her cause was righteous, and he could have relieved her at once, but he . . . wanted to show his arbitrary power, and it gratified him to let her ask and plead and entreat in vain. But she would not fail nor become discouraged. Notwithstanding his indifference and hardheartedness, she pressed her petition until the judge consented to attend to her case. "Though I fear not God, nor regard man," he said, "yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." To save his reputation, to avoid giving publicity to his partial, one-sided judgment, he avenged the persevering woman.

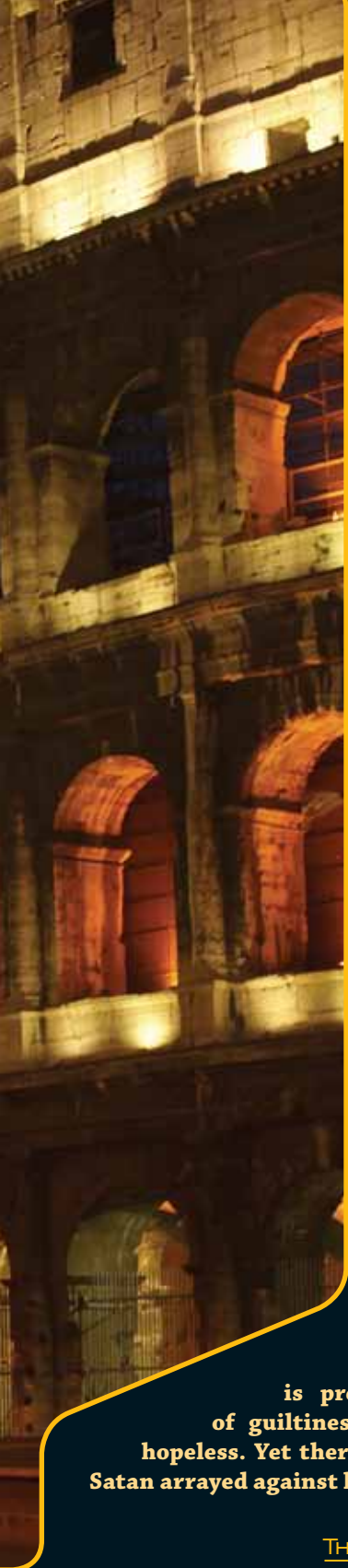
A CONTRAST PORTRAYED

"And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Christ here draws a sharp contrast between the unjust judge and God.... How different is the attitude of God toward those who seek Him. The appeals of the needy and distressed are considered by Him with infinite compassion.

The woman who entreated the judge for justice had lost her



husband by death.... So by sin, man lost his connection with God. Of himself he has no means of salvation. But in Christ we are brought nigh unto the Father. The elect of God are dear to His heart. They are those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, . . . to shine as lights amid the darkness of the world. The unjust judge had no special interest



in the widow . . . yet in order to rid himself of her pitiful appeals, he heard her plea, and delivered her from her adversary. But God loves His children with infinite love. To Him the dearest object on earth is His church. See Deut. 32:9, 10 and Zech. 2:8.

The widow's prayer, "Avenge me"—"do me justice" (R.V.)—"of mine adversary," represents the prayer of God's children. Satan is their great adversary. He is the "accuser of our brethren," who accuses them before God day and night. (Rev. 12:10.) . . . And it is for deliverance from the power of Satan and his agents that in this parable Christ teaches His disciples to pray.

The prophecy of Zechariah brings to view Satan's accusing work, and the work of Christ in resisting the adversary of His people. . . . The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, . . . hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God's people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. **Satan**

is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him.

THE ACCUSER

The work of Satan as an accuser began in heaven. This has been his work on earth ever since man's fall, and [moreso] as we approach nearer to the close of this world's history. . . . He is angry when he sees a people on the earth who . . . have respect to the law of Jehovah. He is determined that they shall not obey God. He delights in their unworthiness, and has devices prepared for every soul, that all may be ensnared and

separated from God. He seeks to accuse and condemn God and all who strive to carry out His purposes in this world in mercy and love, in compassion and forgiveness.

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. . . . He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. . . . He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.

OUR ADVOCATE

The Lord's people cannot of themselves answer the charges of Satan. . . . But they appeal to the divine Advocate. They plead the merits of the Redeemer. God can be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. With confidence the Lord's children cry unto Him to silence the accusations of Satan, and bring to naught his devices. "Do me justice of mine adversary," they pray; and **with the mighty argument of the cross, Christ silences the bold accuser.**

"The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" When Satan seeks to cover the people of God with blackness, and ruin them, Christ interposes. Although they have sinned, Christ has taken the guilt of their sins upon His own soul. . . . By His human nature He is linked with man, while through His divine nature He is one with the infinite God. Help is brought within the reach of perishing souls. The adversary is rebuked.

"... And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. . . ." Then with the authority of the Lord of hosts the angel made a solemn pledge to Joshua, the representative of God's people: "If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by"—even among the angels that surround the throne of God. (Zech. 3:3-7.)

Notwithstanding the defects of the people of God, Christ does not turn away from the objects of His care. He has the power to change their raiment. He removes the filthy garments, He places upon the repenting, believing ones His own robe of righteousness, and writes pardon against their names on the records of heaven. **He confesses them as His before the heavenly universe.** Satan their adversary is shown to be an accuser and deceiver. God will do justice for His own elect.

SATANIC EARTHLY ADVERSARIES

The prayer, "Do me justice of mine adversary," applies not only to Satan, but to the agencies whom he instigates. . . . Those who have decided to obey the commandments of God

will understand by experience that they have adversaries who are controlled by a power from beneath. Such adversaries beset Christ at every step. . . . Christ's disciples, like their Master, are followed by continual temptation.

The Scriptures describe the condition of the world just before Christ's second coming. James . . . pictures the greed and oppression that will prevail. . . . "Go to now, ye rich men. . . . Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:1-6. This is a picture of what exists today. . . .

"Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, . . . and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Isa. 59:14-15. This was fulfilled in the life of Christ on earth. He was loyal to God's commandments, setting aside the human traditions and requirements which had been exalted in their place. Because of this He was hated and persecuted. This history is repeated. . . . Those who are true to God's commandments suffer reproach and persecution. Christ . . . was accused as a Sabbathbreaker and blasphemer. . . . In like manner His followers are accused and misrepresented. Thus Satan hopes to lead them to sin, and cast dishonor upon God.

UNJUST JUDGES AND A HEAVENLY WITNESS

The character of the judge in the parable, who feared not God nor regarded man, was presented by Christ to show the kind of judgment that was then being executed, and that would soon be witnessed at His trial. **He desires His people . . . to realize how little dependence can be placed on earthly rulers or judges in the day of adversity.** Often the elect people of God have to stand before men in official positions who do not make the word of God their guide and counselor, but who follow their own unconsecrated, undisciplined impulses.



In the parable of the unjust judge, Christ has shown what we should do. "Shall not God avenge His own elect . . . ?" Christ . . . did nothing to vindicate or deliver Himself. He committed His case to God. So His followers are not to accuse or condemn, or to resort to force in order to deliver themselves. . . . However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. . . . We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. . . . While the world is progressing in wickedness, none of us need flatter ourselves that we shall have no difficulties. But it is these very difficulties that bring us into the audience chamber of the Most High. We may seek counsel of One who is infinite in wisdom.

NEITHER ALONE NOR WITHOUT RECOURSE

In Ps. 50:15 He invites us to present to Him our perplexities and necessities, and our need of divine help. He bids us be instant in prayer. As soon as difficulties arise, we are to offer to Him our sincere, earnest petitions. . . . We give evidence of our strong confidence in God. **The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications.**

Often those who suffer reproach or persecution for their faith are tempted to think themselves forsaken by God. . . . To all appearance their enemies triumph over them. But let them not violate their conscience. He who has suffered in their behalf, and has borne their sorrows and afflictions, has not forsaken them.

The children of God are not left alone and defenseless. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. . . . We shall know

what it means when we hear the reports of the martyrs who died for their faith—"turneth to flight the armies of the aliens." Heb. 11:33, 34.

If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His

voice, clear and distinct, is heard . . . in John 14:6 and Ps. 72:12 as our deliverer and provider.

“THEM THAT HONOR ME . . . ”

The Lord declares that He will be honored by those who draw nigh to Him, who faithfully do His service. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” Isa. 26:3. . . . Go forward, the Lord says; I will send you help. **It is for My name’s glory that you ask, and you shall receive. I will be honored before those who are watching for your failure.** They shall see My word triumph gloriously. . . . Matt. 21:22.

Let all who are afflicted or unjustly used, cry to God. Turn away from those whose hearts are as steel, and make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. . . . They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. **Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises . . . to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.**

You who feel the most unworthy, fear not to commit your case to God. . . . Rom. 8:32. Will He not fulfill the gracious word given for our encouragement and strength?

TRIALS CLEANSE

Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan’s power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. When His purpose . . . is accomplished, “He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” Ps. 37:6.

There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer.

GIFT OF DETERMINATION

The Saviour manifested divine compassion toward the

Syrophenician woman. His heart was touched as He saw her grief. He longed to give her an immediate assurance. . . ; but He desired to teach His disciples a lesson, and for a time He seemed to neglect the cry of her tortured heart. When her faith had been made manifest, He spoke to her words of commendation and sent her away with the precious boon she had asked. The disciples never forgot this lesson, and it is placed on record to show the result of persevering prayer.

It was Christ Himself who put into that mother’s heart the persistence which would not be repulsed. It was Christ who gave the pleading widow courage and determination before the judge. . . .

UNSEEN WITNESSES

In this speck of a world the whole heavenly universe manifests the greatest interest, for Christ has paid an infinite price for the souls of its inhabitants. The world’s Redeemer has bound earth to heaven by ties of intelligence, for the redeemed of the Lord are here. . . . Amid the busy activity of our great



cities, . . . the people act as if business and sport and pleasure were all there is to life, where there are so few to contemplate unseen realities—even here heaven has still its watchers and its holy ones. There are invisible agencies observing every word and deed of human beings. In every assembly for business or pleasure [or] worship, there are more listeners than can be seen with the natural sight. . . .

We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angel visitants. . . . Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength . . . stand at His right hand. . . . Heb. 1:14. By these angel messengers a faithful record is kept of the words and deeds of the children of men. . . .



BE CONFIDENT; BE PATIENT

“Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb. 10:35-37. “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7, 8.

MERCY PERSISTS, BUT JUSTICE AWAITS

The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner. . . . “The Lord is slow to anger;” but He is “great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. . . .” Nahum 1:3.

The world has become bold in transgression of God’s law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in

oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” Ps. 73:11. . . . The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. . . . The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.

In Noah’s day, men had disregarded the law of God until almost all remembrance of the Creator had passed away from the earth. Their iniquity reached so great a height that the Lord brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and swept away its wicked inhabitants. . . . When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself, and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan’s plans. With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made manifest that there is a God in Israel who will maintain His law and vindicate His people.

THE LORD WILL INTERVENE

. . . The last great crisis is at hand. When the defiance of God’s law is almost universal, when His people are oppressed and afflicted by their fellow men, the Lord will interpose.

The time is near when He will say, “Come, My people,

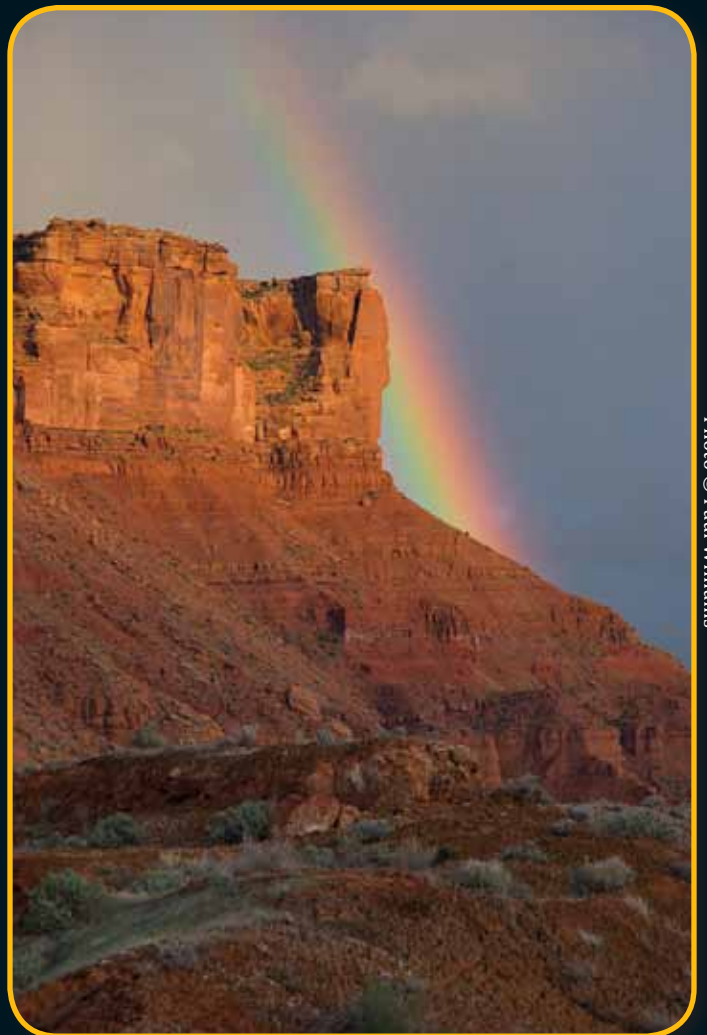




Photo © NASA

enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. . . .” Isa. 26:20, 21. Men who claim to be Christians . . . may indulge their Satanic hatred because they cannot control the consciences of God’s people, but for all this God will bring them into judgment. (See James 2:13.) Not long hence they will stand before the Judge of all the earth, to render an account for the pain they have caused to the bodies and souls of His heritage. . . . For every pang of anguish, every tear shed . . . God will reward them double for their sins.

From . . . the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption, . . . by a sea of fire that cannot be quenched by any human devising. . . . Dan. 12:1.

. . . Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when “God is judge Himself.” (Ps. 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. “The rebuke

of His people shall He take away.” Isa. 25:8. White robes will be given to every one of them. (Rev. 6:11.) And “they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.” Isa. 62:12.

Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, whatever losses they have sustained, whatever persecution they have suffered, even to the loss of their temporal life, the children of God are amply recompensed. “They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.” Rev. 22:4. Ω

This article was condensed from *Christ’s Object Lessons*, chapter 14, pages 164-180.



Ellen G. White (1827-1915): The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that when the tests of a true prophet are applied to Ellen White, they confirm beyond doubt that God bestowed upon her the promised gift of prophecy. That gift is one of two prominent characteristics of His church in the last days (Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:10), and indeed, her prophetic gift was instrumental in the establishment of Seventh-day Adventism. Her inspired writings continue to clarify and uplift the Word of God, as well as provide invaluable health counsel.

The Authority of Scripture in the Church

Eric Betts

The Problem

The time has come in the history of the church, where every faithful follower of God's Word is at a crossroads. In many religious and denominational bodies, Scripture is being laid aside in favor of worldly principles. This is happening even at the highest levels of the various denominational structures. What happens if, after close examination of the Scriptures, the majority seems to be headed in the wrong direction? What should one do? Should one surrender what he or she believes to be right in order to be in harmony with "the body"? Could it be that what one has concluded to be right is actually wrong, if it appears the majority hold another viewpoint? It has been the official position for many years of one denominational body that the problem is not that the majority are departing from truth. The problem to them is when one has taken it upon himself to interpret Scripture contrary to the interpretation of the rest of the body.

The Counsel

"The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. . . . We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A 'Thus saith the Lord' is not to be set aside for a 'Thus saith the church' or a 'Thus saith the state.' The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates." AG 59.

Thus Saith the Church

Not all today are in agreement with this concept. It is widely believed in many circles that a "Thus saith the church" is a "Thus saith the Lord." Notice the following:

"Although acknowledging that the Church has a God-given authority, _____ and associates do not consider the authority of the Church to be final in the community of believers. It is the Seventh-day Adventist position that the Church was formed when a group of believers voluntarily, and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, accepted a common gospel, a common lifestyle, and a common mission, understood to be based on the authority of the Scriptures. This community was vested with authority by Christ (Matt 18:15-18). Decisions made by the properly appointed representatives of the Church community are binding on all members who, in order to preserve the unity of the Church and to facilitate the fulfillment of its mission, are willing to set aside personal opinions and/or practices to follow the decisions of the body. But if elements of that community break the common bond that unites it, by developing a judgmental attitude against

the authority of the community, the result is confusion and insubordination. _____ and associates appear to have taken the position that their interpretation of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is the final arbiter over the Church, to determine whether its decisions are correct or not. If, in their judgment, a decision is not correct, they reject it and proceed to believe and act as they think best, while at the same time claiming to be loyal members of the Church. That attitude is consistent with the spirit of schism and, at the present time, contributes to undermining the authority of the Church."¹

From this statement one will be led to believe that only the ecclesiastical councils have a right to interpret Scripture. This is a Roman Catholic concept at best. The Catholic Church teaches that she is infallible, and that only the clergy have a right to interpret Scripture. It appears that one must stifle their convictions of duty in order to be in harmony with "the church," because whatever "the church" says is binding. Unity is made to appear more needful than loyalty to Christ Himself. The idea is that whenever it appears that the church is out of harmony with truth, it is because one's independent judgment is flawed and must be surrendered.

Why do I say this is a Roman Catholic concept? Because it is the very foundation of their prosperity and advancement in the world:

"The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church." GC 596.

The people were taught to reject everything that was promoted by those operating outside of the bounds of the official position of the clergy. Therefore there was no need to open the Bible, even if they were allowed to possess one.

Can it be possible that one can be in harmony with the church and out of harmony with the Scriptures? Can it be possible that one can be in agreement with the higher leadership structure and out of harmony with Christ Himself? Should we consult the decisions of church councils after we have uncovered the plain reading of the Bible?

What Saith the Lord?

"But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence

for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord in its support." GC 595.

Not only should one not come into agreement with the church that is acting contrary to Scripture, but we should demand a "plain" word from Scripture before accepting any man-made ideas, no matter how spiritual they appear.

Why Jesus Was Rejected

Let us now consider why it was that the Jewish people rejected Christ as Messiah. It was indeed because the people consulted the rulers and religious leaders after witnessing for themselves the evidence of his Messiahship:

"The life of Christ was filled with words and acts of benevolence, sympathy, and love. He was ever attentive to listen to and relieve the woes of those who came to Him. Multitudes carried in their own persons the evidence of His divine power. Yet after the work had been accomplished, many were ashamed of the humble yet mighty teacher. Because the rulers did not believe on Him, the people were not willing to accept Jesus. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They could not endure to be governed by His sober, self-denying life. They wished to enjoy the honor which the world bestows. Yet many followed the Son of God and listened to His instructions, feasting upon the words which fell so graciously from His lips. His words were full of meaning, yet so plain that the weakest could understand them. . . ." EW 160.

"They [the soldiers] also heard Him, in a voice of authority, rebuke the power of Satan and bid his captives go free. They listened to the words of wisdom that fell from His lips, and they were captivated; they could not lay hands on Him. They returned to the priests and elders without Jesus. When asked, 'Why have ye not brought Him?' they related what they had witnessed of His miracles, and the holy words of wisdom, love, and knowledge which they had heard, and ended with saying, 'Never man spake like this man.' The chief priests accused them of being also deceived, and some of the officers were ashamed that they had not taken Him. The priests inquired in a scornful manner if any of the rulers had believed on Him. I saw that many of the magistrates and elders did believe on Jesus; but Satan kept them from acknowledging it; they feared the reproach of the people more than they feared God." Ibid.

Following the Leaders

These scenes will be very familiar to any who have been involved in any reform efforts since Christ's day. The people were not willing to follow Jesus, because the rulers stated that he could not be the Messiah, even though many of those rulers believed he was indeed the divine Son of God. They would not admit it, because it would be a shameful thing to do so. They did not want to be held accountable to such a one. They did not want to come up to the standard that He set. They feared the church more than they feared God. This is the condition of many would-be reformers of today.

Why didn't the many people who believed in Noah's message board the ark? It was because the religious leaders of the day didn't agree with Noah. They thought, "If his message

were true, surely the leaders would follow."

Others feared ridicule. They decided that it would be better to walk in lock-step with the church than to appear different and suffer ridicule. They perished.

"They continued their festivities and their gluttonous feasts; they ate and drank, planted and builded, laying their plans in reference to advantages they hoped to gain in the future; and they went to greater lengths in wickedness, and in defiant disregard of God's requirements, to testify that they had no fear of the Infinite One. They asserted that if there were any truth in what Noah had said, the men of renown—the wise, the prudent, the great men—would understand the matter." PP 97.

True Protestantism

Protestantism is founded on the principle that the same Holy Spirit that aids the clergyman in the reading of Scripture can also aid another. Churches err, committees err, but Scripture never ever errs.

We can depend upon God's word. Ω



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Endnotes

- 1 Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, August 2000. See <http://www.remnant-prophecy.com/topic-Library/Advent-history-Issues/General%20Conference.pdf>



On Gardening in Eden

EGW Compilation

*I*t is God Himself “who planted for our first parents a beautiful garden in Eden.” . . . Why? “It was the design of God that man should find happiness in the employment of tending the things He had created, and that his wants should be met with the fruits of the trees of the garden.

“To Adam was given the work of caring for the garden. The Creator knew that Adam could not be happy without employment. The beauty of the garden delighted him, but this was not enough. He must have labor to call into exercise the wonderful organs of the body. Had happiness consisted in doing nothing, man, in his state of holy innocence, would have been left unemployed. But He who created man knew what would be for his happiness; and no sooner had He created him than He gave him his appointed work. The promise of future glory, and the decree that man must toil for his daily bread, came from the same throne.” AH 27.

“It was the work of Adam and Eve to train the branches of the vine to form bowers, thus making for themselves a dwelling from living trees covered with foliage and fruit.” PP 47.

We remember that after the fall, “Adam was driven out from that beautiful garden to till the earth from whence he came.” But did he till the ground beforehand? Yes! Behold:

Adam Tilled the Ground

“No line of manual training is of more value than agriculture. A greater effort should be made to create and to encourage an interest in agricultural pursuits. Let the teacher call attention to what the Bible says about agriculture; that *it was God’s plan for man to till the earth; that the first man, the ruler of the whole world, was given a garden to cultivate; and that many of the world’s greatest men, its real nobility, have been tillers of the*

soil. Show the opportunities in such a life. . . .” CG 356, italics added throughout.

Even more clear is this statement: “God gave to our first parents the means of true education when *He instructed them to till the soil* and care for their garden home. After sin came in, through disobedience to the Lord’s requirements, the work to be done in cultivating the ground was greatly multiplied, for the earth, because of the curse, brought forth weeds and thistles. But the employment itself was not given because of sin. The great *Master Himself blessed the work of tilling the soil.*” 2SM 355.

In addition to the institutions of the Sabbath and marriage, then, there was at least one more God-ordained activity that originated in Eden: that of useful agricultural labor.

After the Fall

Note, too, that before Adam and Eve fell, they were told to “be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” That was in addition to their having dominion “over every living thing that moveth.” Eve’s bearing of children before the fall would have been a joy, but afterward “in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.” Adam’s post-fall tilling was similarly to be less joyful. “In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread,” for “cursed is the ground for thy sake.” He then had to labor amidst thorns and thistles growing among the “herbs of the field,” from which he took the “bread,” the “herb bearing seed” that they ate.

Cain tilled the soil, as his father before him, but Abel was “a keeper of sheep.” The fall had created a need for clothing, as well as for sacrificial animals. “The Lord gave Cain and Abel directions regarding the sacrifice they were to bring Him. Abel, a keeper of sheep, obeyed the Lord’s command and brought a lamb as his offering. This lamb, as it was slain, represented the Lamb of God, who was to be slain for the sins of the world. Cain brought as an offering the fruit of the ground, his own produce. *He was not willing to be dependent on Abel for an offering. He would not go to him for a lamb.* He thought his own works perfect, and these he presented to God. . . .” CTr 35.

Advantages of Working the Earth

“He who earns his livelihood by agriculture escapes many temptations and enjoys unnumbered privileges and blessings denied to those whose work lies in the great cities. And in these days of mammoth trusts and business competition, there are few who enjoy so real an independence and so great certainty of fair return for their labor as does the tiller of the soil.” CG 356.

“In the cultivation of the soil the thoughtful worker will find that treasures little dreamed of are opening up before him. No one can succeed in agriculture or gardening without attention to the laws involved. The special needs of every variety of plant must be studied. Different varieties require different soil and cultivation, and compliance with the laws governing each is the condition of success.” CG 56.

“The attention required in transplanting, that not even a root fiber shall be crowded or misplaced, the care of the young plants, the pruning and watering, the shielding from frost at night and sun by day, keeping out weeds, disease, and insect pests, the training and arranging, not only teach important lessons concerning the development of character, but the work itself is a means of development. In cultivating carefulness, patience, attention to detail, obedience to law, it imparts a most essential training.” Ibid.

“The constant contact with the mystery of life and the loveliness of nature, as well as the tenderness called forth in ministering to these beautiful objects of God’s creation, tends to quicken the mind and refine and elevate the character; and the lessons taught prepare the worker to deal more successfully with other minds.” Ibid.

“Those who combine useful labor with study have no need of gymnastic exercises. And work performed in the open air is tenfold more beneficial to health than in-door labor.” FE 73

Garden of Eden

“The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the divine glory was revealed. Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. Here they renewed their vows of obedience to that law the transgression of which had banished them from Eden. When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. . . .” PP 62.

A Glorious Restoration

“. . . In the final restitution, when there shall be ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ (Revelation 21:1), the Garden of Eden] is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning.” PP 62.

“In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in *garden and field.* . . .” PK 730.

“. . . Through the work of the atonement, Adam is reinstated in his first dominion. Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight—the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer. . . .” GC 647-8. Ω

The Holy Spirit has given us wisdom regarding the care of our body temples: “Our God is a God of order, and He desires that His children shall will to bring themselves into order and under His discipline. Would it not be better, therefore, to break up this habit of turning night into day, and the fresh hours of the morning into night? If the youth would form habits of regularity and order, they would improve in health, in spirits, in memory, and in disposition.” CG 112.

“In regulating the hours for sleep, there should be no haphazard work. Students should not form the habit of burning the midnight oil and taking the hours of the day for sleep.” CG 363.

“... At night they depend upon artificial light; ... when, had they properly employed the early hours, there would have been no need of late hours. ... They will say, ‘There are things that I must do before I can retire for the night.’ Would it not be well to break up the habit of turning the precious morning hours into night, and turning the hours of night into day by the use

Reader’s Digest, May 2009, 75-6.)

For all ages and occupations, then, “there is nothing gained but much lost” by not going to bed at least two hours before midnight.

In Other Health News:



Health Reform Vindicated Once Again

of artificial light?” YI Sept. 7, 1893.

“Physicians should practice what they teach. They should teach that by studying after nine o’clock, there is nothing gained but much lost. . . .” Letter 85, 1888, 9; 8MR 330.

“I know from the testimonies given me from time to time for brain workers, that sleep is worth far more before than after midnight. *Two hours’ good sleep before twelve o’clock is worth more than four hours after twelve o’clock.* . . .” 7MR 224, italics added.

Modern research has corroborated the words of the Holy Spirit: “One [study] from Israel’s University of Haifa (2009) analyzed satellite measurements of nighttime light and cancer rates in 164 countries. The most brightly lit had the highest rates of prostate cancer, more than double those in the dimmest nations. [A previous study showed a similar correlation to breast cancer. The greater the exposure to nighttime light, the greater the risk of the cancers.] Meanwhile, Harvard researchers who tracked more than 18,000 postmenopausal women reported that those with the lowest nighttime levels of melatonin were about 60 percent more likely to develop breast cancer.

“It’s known that light suppresses the brain’s production of melatonin. The hormone may play a role in immunity or help slow the growth of cancer, according to . . . a coauthor of the Israeli study.” (“Spotlight on a Hidden Cancer Risk,”

Mobile phones (cell phones, portables) are the “biggest health risk since tobacco.” Brain cancers have increased proportionately to increase in cell phone use. Surgeons note an increase in malignant brain cancers in children, heretofore almost unknown. See the related *Sixty Minutes* segment at <http://sixtyminutes.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=797215>.

“No pandemic in earth’s history has ever evolved divorced from major socio-economic and political upheaval.” Dr. Leonard G. Horowitz, *Emerging Viruses* lecture, 1996.

Obesity can contribute to Alzheimer’s and other cognitive disorders. “Researchers at UCLA studied the brain images of 94 people in their 70s over five years. They found that clinically obese people had 8 percent less brain tissue, and overweight people had 4 percent less brain tissue. Apparently their brains even looked 16 years older than those of normal-weight people. . . . Most of the lost tissue came from the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain—the area responsible for decision-making and memory.” William Campbell Douglass II, MD: realhealth@healthiernews.com, Sept. 9, 2009.

Critical: Avoid all processed, prepared foods. They usually contain excitotoxins, which cause obesity, food addiction and brain-cell death. Excitotoxins are found in many packaged foods, salad dressings, soups (canned or dry mixes), meat substitutes used by Adventists, prepared vegetarian food,

snack foods, and bottled drinks, including some fruit juices. *Read Labels!* Beware of MSG, monosodium glutamate, yeast extract, autolyzed yeast, aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), hydrolyzed anything, textured vegetable or soy protein (TVP or TSP), and “natural flavors.” Ω



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**"WHEN IN FAITH WE TAKE HOLD OF HIS STRENGTH,
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