

CHINA LETTERS

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INTRODUCTION

David Lin is a Chinese Christian who believes he is commissioned of God to carry the message of the soon-coming Savior to his countrymen. He was born in Manila. In infancy he was dedicated by his mother to be a preacher of the Gospel. He received his first three years of schooling in Canada. Then he studied in Java, Shanghai and Beijing. He graduated from Pacific Union College and completed his religious training in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Takoma Park, Washington, D. C. In 1946 he returned to China, where he spent 45 years in his calling. During those years he was for some time isolated from the church in America, but remained interested in its welfare. Soon thereafter he resumed contact with friends in America and started writing letters and articles to share his concerns.

David Lin's letters and articles appeared in various Adventist periodicals at a time when Desmond Ford's teachings were the center of attention in the Adventist church. Due to a revival of interest in him in recent years many readers have requested that Lin's analysis of Ford's theology be published in book form. A selection is here presented, set in chronological order, with the exception of two articles, which are written to acquaint readers with the author's life. These two articles are his biography: *My Own Story*, and *Gain That Is Loss*.

The other articles, deeply rooted in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, are a joyous affirmation of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The reader is filled with wonder at his penetration of the deepest inquiry and his joining together of the beautiful present truths. One is left with an exuberant faith in the old paths, and with a tearful recognition of our Saviour's love for us.

Contents

1	My Own Story.....	1
2	China Witness.....	8
3	Our Credentials.....	19
4	Let God Speak.....	26
5	Victory or Fiasco?.....	35
6	Is Adventism Patchwork Theology?.....	41
7	At the Crossroads.....	53
8	The 98% Solution.....	65
9	Confusion Confounded.....	79
10	Charming Clich,s.....	90
11	Pro and Con.....	100
12	The Proof-Text Method.....	112
13	The Grammatical Method.....	128
14	The Historical Method.....	149

15	The Hand of God.....	166
16	The Delusional System.....	178
17	Accountable to God.....	186
18	Cleanse the Camp.....	196
19	How God Works.....	208
20	On Van Dolson's Letter.....	215
21	Compromise with Error.....	223
22	Sin and Trespass Offering.....	233
23	The Two Goats.....	242
24	The Time Problem in Hebrews.....	252
25	The Sixth Plague.....	259
26	Thoughts on the Tamid.....	273
27	James White on the Daily.....	277
28	Heaven Open.....	279
29	God's Naked Word.....	285
30	God's Grand Strategy.....	290
31	The Word of the Lord.....	296
32	Gain that is Loss.....	305
33	Ellen G. White, The Theologian.....	307
34	Combating Doubt.....	326
35	The Christ-Image.....	337
36	Into All Truth.....	346
37	Hold Not Thy Peace.....	354
38	The Book of Enoch.....	358
39	On Godly Fear & Christian Courtesy..	369
40	Dives and Lazarus.....	372
41	Azazel.....	376
42	God's Triple Seal.....	379
43	A Gainsaying People.....	381
44	Past, Present and Future.....	385
45	God's Back Parts.....	388
46	The Sign of Jonas.....	391
47	The Faith Once Delivered.....	397
48	The Pride of Men.....	401
49	The "Daily" Riddle.....	406
50	The Adventist Contribution.....	411
51	The Flesh Profiteth Nothing.....	416
52	Nine Short Articles	
	Raised for Our Justification..	419
	Three Useful Texts.....	420
	The White Stone.....	421
	A Critical Conjunction.....	422
	A Fair Test.....	423
	A Real Danger.....	424
	The Daily Prayer Meeting.....	426
	Day of Love.....	427
	Quiz Corner.....	427

Chapter 1

MY OWN STORY

I was born in 1917 as the second son of Lin Bao Heng, a graduate of Columbia University, when he was serving as Chinese vice consul in Manila, P.I.

My mother, Pan Cheng Kun, had in her childhood attended a Christian school in Suzhou, Jiangsu. An American missionary, Miss Pyle, had taught her to pray, a habit she neglected for many years until after she was married and gave birth to my brother Paul and me. The trials of married life drove her to her knees. One day I ran a high fever and was rushed to a hospital. My worried mother knelt in prayer and promised God that if He healed me, she would bring me up as a preacher. Before the doctor had diagnosed my case, I recovered instantly. Since that day Mother drilled into my head that I belonged to God and would become a preacher.

In 1919 my father was transferred to Vancouver, B.C., Canada, where he served as Chinese consul. Mother, Paul, and I joined him in 1921, and from 1922 to 1925 we both attended the Magee school and went to the Baptist church in that city.

In 1925 we returned to Shanghai, then went to Soerabaya, Java, where Father continued to serve as Chinese consul. There Paul and I attended a private school run by an English lady, and learned to speak Malayan and also to walk on bare feet like the Java children.

In 1927, when Chiang Kai Shek came to power, Father lost his official position under the defunct Peking regime. We moved back to Shanghai, where Paul and I attended a school run by British schoolmasters in the British settlement. There we learned to sing "Auld Lang Syne" and "Good King Wenceslas."

In 1930 we moved to Peking, where Paul and I attended the Peking American School. I began in the sixth grade, taught by Miss Moore, the principal. One day she let the pupils say what they wanted to be after they grew up. When I said I was going to be a preacher, all were surprised, and after that I was regarded as an odd fellow.

On Sundays Mother took us to the Methodist church, where we made friends with Pastor and Mrs. Fred Pyke, whose children, James, Louise, and Ruth, were my schoolmates. In 1932, when Father moved to Hankow to work in the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Mother joined him and left me to stay with the Pykes. In Hankow there was no Methodist church, so Mother visited different churches in the city. One day a Seventh-Day Adventist missionary came to solicit for Ingathering. Father bought a subscription and conversed with him in English. Thereafter a Bible worker, Miss Abbie Dunn, visited us and invited Mother to attend the Hankow Adventist Church, where she was impressed by the reciting of the Ten Commandments by the church members. She recalled an instance when her brother-in-law, who was a lawyer, questioned her regarding the rules of the Christian faith. When she said that Christians lived by the Ten Commandments, he asked her, "Which ten?" She tried her best to recall them, but all she could repeat were nine precepts. The relative smiled and remarked, "You've been a Christian for ten years, and can't even recite the Decalogue correctly!" Mother was chagrined. Now in the Adventist church the emphasis on the Ten Commandments convinced her that they taught the truth.

During summer vacation I went to be with my parents in Hankow, and Mother explained to me the Sabbath doctrine. When I returned to Peking and the Pykes learned of my new belief, they tried to dissuade me. Meanwhile Abbie Dunn wrote to another Bible worker in Peking--Miss Lucy Andrus, who came to my school one day, introduced herself and invited me to study the Bible with her. Thus began a tussle which put me in a strait--to keep or not to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. In 1934 Mother came back to Peking and we attended the Adventist church together.

When I graduated from high school in 1935, Paul was studying in Park College near Kansas City, Missouri. One day he was killed while speeding on a motorcycle, and that left me the only son in our family. Relatives tried to dissuade me from my intention to study for the ministry, stating that I should strive for a more lucrative vocation in order to bear the family's financial burdens in the future, for preachers in China were poorly paid.

The Lord arranged for me to attend the China Training Institute in Chiaotouzhen, an Adventist junior college, where I majored in Bible. I happened to be the only ministerial student who paid my own tuition. All my classmates were beneficiaries of a scholarship set up to encourage young people to train for the ministry. Any student who could afford to pay tuition took either the pre-medical, the business, or the normal course. Only those who could not afford an education applied for the ministerial scholarship. In this respect I was again an "odd fellow."

When the Sino-Japanese war began in August 1937, the school closed down. I went to Hongkong, where I received funds from my parents to enable me to obtain passage to Pacific Union College, and to continue to study for the ministry. During the dreary war years my parents were safe in the northwestern city of Lanzhou, which was never occupied by Japanese troops. However, it was badly hit in a big air raid. All buildings around the house where my parents stayed were razed, but their one lone structure remained standing amid the rubble--a mute witness to God's loving watchcare.

The first summer in the United States I spent canvassing in Chinatown, San Francisco. Otherwise I worked in the college cafeteria, the machine shop, the bindery, or in the forest cutting cordwood, paying my way through in four years. After graduation in 1941 I studied at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Takoma Park, where I also canvassed for a living during my spare time. In the winter I worked in Danville, Virginia, as a colporteur. I began working on my Master's thesis, which was a study of the "Today" in Hebrews 3:13 and its connection with the "Sabbatism" of Hebrews 4:9. I did not complete it until 1946, when I received my degree. To acquaint myself with the use of Psalm 95 (where the "Today" occurs) in Jewish liturgy, I attended the services of a synagogue and befriended its rabbi. In the fall of 1942 I was called to teach Chinese at Pacific Union College. In 1943 I resigned and went to Honolulu to spend a year as a colporteur. I set a few sales records, gave Bible studies to a Japanese family and won them to the Sabbath truth.

In 1944 I was called to prepare Chinese Bible correspondence lessons at the Voice of Prophecy. Lacking Chinese type, I printed the lessons by hand and had them duplicated by offset. After peace was

restored, I returned to Shanghai with a group of missionaries in December 1946, and worked with Milton Lee in the Radio Department of the China Division. In 1948 the civil war in China was reaching a decision in favor of the Communists. The liberation of Shanghai was imminent. By December most of our missionaries had withdrawn to Hongkong, where a provisional China Division headquarters was set up. The Radio Department moved to Canton, functioned for six months, then moved to Hongkong in June 1949. I was appointed editor of the Hongkong edition of the Signs of the Times. In December 1949, the provisional office of the China Division turned over all duties to the Chinese staff in Shanghai, and I returned to Shanghai as Division secretary. Hsu Hua was Division president, and S. J. Lee was treasurer.

The Korean war broke out in June 1950. As American GIs fighting under the United Nations flag drove into North Korea, Chinese volunteer troops marched across the border to push them back. Meanwhile the U.S. seventh fleet was ordered to patrol the Taiwan straits to block any attempt by the Red Army to liberate Taiwan. China and the United States were at war. Since the Seventh-day Adventist mission was an American organization, its assets were frozen in December 1950. In time it wholly disintegrated. Politically active elements among our workers got the upper hand, and the Division officers were replaced by more suitable persons. That was December 1951.

From 1952 to 1954 some of us who were discharged got together to make slide rules for a living. At the same time we translated The Desire of Ages. The other volumes of the Conflict Series were eventually also translated. A group of young people of the Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist Church produced mimeographed copies of these books and distributed them.

In 1955 I quit making slide rules for a living to compile a book on servicing X-ray machines, and then wrote a condensation of Amateur Telescope Making. In April 1958, I was arrested on a counterrevolutionary charge, and in 1960 sentenced to 15 years. I was sent to a water conservancy project, where I pushed wheelbarrows, operated a power winch, and served successively as X-ray technician, power-station switch operator and tractor electrician on a State farm. In all these years I received humane treatment and at times I could so arrange my work as to keep the Sabbath fairly well. My children came to visit me several times, and on one occasion I baptized my son Roger in a moat. It has been said that I baptized some souls in prison, but that is not true. It was possible then only to tell others of the truth. On March 28, 1991, I was fully exonerated.

In retrospect, I praise God for His providential care in making all things work out for the good of all concerned. First, the years of trial have revealed many flaws in my character, stressing my need to overcome them. I can honestly say, "It is good that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Second, He who sees the end from the beginning put me in "cold storage" to tide over the perilous years of the "Cultural Revolution," when the whole nation went berserk. A labor camp warden observed that I was in an "air-raid shelter."

Only after many years did I realize that God had protected me from virtual disaster, for a political tornado struck our home in 1966. My

father had died in 1959; my mother, wife, son, and four daughters remained to brave the storm. If the Lord had not also miraculously preserved them in those trying years, they would not have come through alive.

The rumpus was started by the organizing of young people into "Red Guards" to protect Chairman Mao from "bourgeois elements" who, it was said, threatened to undermine the socialist system. Christians naturally became targets of attack. And because our oldest girl, Flora, had given her school much difficulty by her Sabbath "truancy," our home was the first one to be attacked when the Red Guards launched a city-wide onslaught on the bourgeoisie. Our home was searched six times through those tempestuous months. And they made it a point to come with their war drums on the Sabbath. All my books were piled in our alley and burned. A voice told my mother to go stay with her aunt in Tientsin. She was already 72, so the Lord arranged for a young niece to accompany her, and she stayed long enough in Tientsin to tide over the most dangerous months, during which my wife, Clara, was beaten, her hair was cropped and she was forced to stand on the street to be a public spectacle.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13. In the light of these words, in moral stamina my wife stands highest in God's estimate; for He suffered her to undergo the toughest trials, and though she faltered once and lost His presence, by His grace she finally overcame. As for Mother and me, God saw that we might not survive, and put us under shelter.

Another fact which speaks in favor of a high score for my wife is that she managed by God's help to bring up all five children in the nurture of the Lord. Every one of them kept the Sabbath during their school years and continued to keep it while employed in various capacities under the Socialist Regime. We must stress the fact that it was by the grace of God that they have witnessed for Him successfully. When our youngest girl, Angelina, was quizzed by a panel of grade school teachers, they asked her,

"Who taught you to keep the Sabbath?" "The Bible," she answered.

"Do you mean that you read only the Bible and not Karl Marx?" "I read the Bible and also Karl Marx," Angelina replied, "and will practice what is right."

That answer was unusual for a girl of eleven. We believe that such a wise rejoinder was not her own, but given her by the Holy Spirit. Yet in the last analysis, if her mother had not taught her to love the Lord and His Sabbath, the Holy Spirit would not have been with her in that crucial hour. My seminary teacher, Professor M.L. Andreasen, once remarked that when we dedicate ourselves to the Lord, He will see to it that we will find the right life companion. The many years of test and trial have proved the truth of these words. God saw fit to take me away from my family and to put the burden of educating the children on my wife. The result is for all to see.

However, the bringing up of children was not tearless. Clara too had her failures. The hot temper of our third child, Eva, proved a real challenge.

Clara resorted to beating, but it made things worse. Eva felt that any place on earth would be better than home, and signed up for the rustication program which was implemented in 1969, after all schools had been closed for three years, and the roaming "Red Guards" became a social problem. To go "up to the hills and down to the countryside" was Chairman Mao's call to the unschooled youth. Eva jumped at this chance to flee from home. Flora and Roger succumbed to the political pressure and also signed up to go; together the three went to the hills of Gweizhou. Life was tough, and only Roger, who could cut wood in the forests, made a fair living and helped his sisters tide over eight dreary years. After they came back to Shanghai, I, like Clara, failed to adjust properly to Eva's temper. Her behavior tried my patience, and I realized my inability to be Christlike under all circumstances.

But God did not forsake Eva. As she found work in a factory, she faithfully observed the Sabbath by relinquishing the bonus paid to workers who put in full hours. It meant a drastic reduction to her paycheck. The management, seeing that she was truly conscientious, arranged for her to finish her weekly quota in five days if she could improve productivity. The Lord gave her hands celerity of motion, so that she became the only worker paid a full bonus for working five days a week. After she was married, she urged her husband to pay a faithful tithe. In many ways she has proved to be honest in heart, generous to friends, and responsive to the love of God, who has shown more patience toward her than her parents.

How did my family fare financially during those years of trial? God arranged for a rich aunt to supply most of our needs. She entrusted her funds to my mother when she left China to be with her children in the United States, asking her to assist needy friends and kin. She later died in the United States. Apart from a savings account, she had some gold bars and silver coins deposited in a rented box in the vault of the Bank of China. Actually, the Lord was the real custodian. For when the notorious "Gang of Four" came to power and looted all the boxes in the bank vaults, the box containing Auntie's valuables was left intact. After the "Gang" lost out and we opened the vault, the bank clerks were amazed at the miraculous preservation of this one sole box. When communication with the outside world was restored, Mother notified her nephews in the United States to claim the assets of which they were the rightful heirs. Before this time, they had never known of these funds entrusted to my mother.

After my term was over, I was transferred from the State farm to a coal-mining company in Huainan, Anhui, to translate technical literature. There I worked for five years, earned regular wages and enjoyed Sabbath privileges. Now in retirement, I receive a pension and live in Shanghai, serving as one of the pastors in Mu En Tang.

As I review the past, the most precious remembrance is the example of Mother's prayer life. It was her prayer which dedicated my life to God. After that, when in Peking, she spent time on the porch praying and singing praises to God. One day my aunt invited her to a movie. Mother declined, having sensed in prayer that the scenes in the movies

were sinful. Since then her example has taught me also to keep close to God in prayer and praise. Yes, we all need to pray more fervently as the end draws near.

God wants me to be a man of prayer. Only thus can I finish my task. It was on his knees that Enoch walked with God; on his knees Jacob prevailed with God and with men. And on His knees the Son of man overcame the world and prevailed in the garden of prayer. If we are to receive the "latter rain," we must pray as never before.

Teach me the secret of prevailing with God;
Teach me the secret of prevailing with men;
Teach me the secret of o'ercoming the world--
Of fervent, effectual prayer.

Many are concerned for God's cause in China, being worried over the matter of religious liberty. Their attention needs to be directed to the greatest need of God's people today--to overcome the flood of worldliness which engulfs them. And this danger is most real in countries which boast of their "freedoms," among which the freedom to sin has become a plague, infecting even Christian institutions.

Insensibly the church has yielded to the spirit of the age, and adapted its forms of worship to modern wants. . . . All things, indeed, that help to make religion attractive, the church now employs as its instruments. *The Great Controversy*, 386

One visitor from the West remarked that Chinese TV programs are more decent than those in the United States. That is due to the Chinese authorities' aim for high social standards. Imported TV programs and movies are screened by a committee to cut out the obscenity and the violence. Think of it, a Communist government rejecting the filth from "Christian" countries.

Our great aim must be to possess and to exalt Christ. He promises that "the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:2). The magnificence of the crucified Christ will bring home the truth that God will actually dwell in a man wholly given to Him. Christ prayed, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." So today, when God dwells in man, man is glorified by His presence, and then only can a man glorify God.

Chapter 2

CHINA WITNESS

THE gospel of Jesus first entered China in the seventh century, when the Tang dynasty ruled the country. The early Nestorians, it is said, were well received by the Chinese court and given facilities to translate the Scriptures. The gospel message made progress for some time, but suffered persecution and failed to gain a lasting foothold in this country. However, a stone tablet remains in Xi-an to record what the early Chinese Christians believed and did. Subsequent efforts made by Catholic and Protestant missionaries to introduce the gospel into China are well told by church historians, so this article will not go into that background. We are mainly interested in the progress of the Adventist cause in China.

Adventist missionaries first landed in China in 1902, when she was shackled by a number of treaties which foreign imperialists had imposed on her by force. Missionaries who were "old China hands" assisted their governments in formulating treaties which provided for extraterritorial rights, whereby aliens enjoyed free access to the hinterland under government protection. These privileges were often abused by missionaries who pressured local magistrates to render verdicts in favor of Christian landlords in lawsuits over land tenure. In disputes between Christians and non-Christians the latter always lost. Adding to this source of aggravation, rights of consular jurisdiction, guaranteed by unfair treaties, provided that Chinese courts had no right to judge cases of felony committed by foreign civilians, who were legally responsible to their respective consuls. Foreign settlements in treaty ports likewise prescribed special privileges for aliens. One park in the British concession of Shanghai posted a sign, "No admittance to dogs and Chinese." Many other humiliating regulations beg enumeration.

It takes little imagination to see how such bullying practices caused widespread resentment, which accumulated with the years and bore fruit in 1900 in the "Boxer" uprising of patriots who aimed at driving out foreign aggressors and punishing the corrupt Ching officials. Mounting animosity against imperialist aggression was also at the bottom of the bourgeois revolution led by Sun Yat-Sen, who finally succeeded in overthrowing the Ching Dynasty.

The political background of missionary activities is not complete without recounting the influence of the Taiping revolution, which agitated China from 1850 to 1864. This movement left a dent in the history of the Chinese church as well as the nation, and is of interest to Adventists because of its observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Hong Xiu-Quan, the leading genius of the Taiping revolution, studied the Bible for himself, and created what he called the "Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom," which had for its aim the establishing of God's kingdom on earth through military conquest. A visiting missionary once asked his spokesman, "Do you keep the Sabbath?" "Yes," was the reply, "We observe the Sabbath. At midnight we offer prayer and praise. After peace is restored, we plan to enforce the Sabbath in earnest. Saturday is the Sabbath." See C. S. Gu, *Missionaries and Modern China*, 85.

Missionaries first admired Hong Xiu-Quan as a wonderful convert, but later despised him as a radical ignoramus, theologically speaking. Their opinion of him influenced the imperialist forces, who were already dissatisfied with his program of dealing with foreign powers on equal terms. They could hardly count on him to honor the treaties which they had concluded with the Ching Dynasty. Hence they decided to work with that government, who they knew would serve their purposes better, to suppress what they called the "Taiping Rebellion." No less a figure than Charles Gordon was enlisted to command the colonial forces to fight in coordination with the Ching army in its assault against Nanjing, the capital of the Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom. Thus the first

grand attempt by a Chinese convert to Christianize his country by force of arms was arrested before it could be tested on a nationwide scale.

Missionaries had rejoiced for a time in Hong Xiu-Quan's exploits, but in the end we witness "Christian nations" sending a "Christian general" to destroy a "Christian army" led by the first Chinese "Christian emperor"--all in the interests of foreign imperialism.

Years of missionary expansion also saw rapid gains made by colonial forces. Owing to imperialist aggression, China had deteriorated into a semifeudal, semicolonial country, with its economy strangled by alien powers, who engendered a "compradore class" in the church as well as in trade circles. Instead of Christian fellowship, a master-and-lackey relation arose between missionary and convert. Plans for gospel work were laid by the missionaries, who put little stock in what Chinese workers had to say. The guiding policy was, "He who pays the money decides how the work should be done." Mission funds from abroad gave the impression that an abundance of money was available, and the offerings of Chinese converts made little difference. Still, they gave their "widow's mite," not aware that one day God would remove the extra burden of the missionaries' salaries, and provide for the creating of a truly self-reliant indigenous church in China.

Adventist pioneers in China worked at the disadvantage of such a political and economic background, with which they were not familiar, and for which they were not responsible. First they had to learn a new language and strange customs; and then to reach the soul of the people and break down the wall of prejudice was a great challenge. Few of them considered to wisely dissociate themselves from the imperialist machine and win the people's confidence. Some missionaries resorted to offering material benefits to draw an audience. But the bait attracted only "rice Christians." Some wise missionaries lifted up Christ crucified, but the imperialist curtain obscured His image, and genuine conversions were few.

The Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. . . . God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Testimonies to Ministers, 300

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Zechariah 4:6

It is the conviction of many Seventh-day Adventists in China that developments in their church today reveal the simplicity of the means God is using to finish His work. At any rate, it certainly is not of human devising. Many years before foreign missionaries were forced out of the country upon the birth of New China, Chinese workers and members had dreamed of managing their own gospel work. In 1947, when foreign missionaries returned to China and the Division held its first constituency meeting, a Chinese worker presented a formal request to the Division president to turn over the Division administration to Chinese workers. The plan was rejected. In a large meeting the president stated that Chinese Adventists were spiritually immature and financially unable to assume the burdens of church leadership.

As that first serious attempt of Chinese workers to run their own church was squelched, the Kuomintang forces were facing disaster on the battlefield. The victorious Red Army was making speedy progress toward Shanghai. After another year the missionary leader who had declared the Chinese workers too immature for church leadership was arranging for all missionaries to withdraw to Hongkong to set up a provisional China Division Office. In December 1949, they turned over all responsibilities to a group of "immature" Chinese workers in Shanghai. Apparently, God

was taking the reins in His own hands, while new church leaders wondered what would be next.

When the Korean war began in October 1950, Chinese People's Volunteer forces confronted American troops fighting under the United Nations flag. As a church connected with an American missionary organization, the Chinese Adventists must choose their political allegiance. In fact, all Christian organizations in China faced the same choice. Most of them were accustomed to regard Communism as anti-Christian. Added to this was the alarm aroused by the closing of a number of churches and the confiscation of Bibles and hymn books in some cities liberated by the Red Army in their victorious advance southward. Hence many Christians were, in their hearts, scared by the "Red bogey."

Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, a team of Christian workers headed by Y. T. Wu and L. M. Liu visited a number of churches in various parts of China and then called on the new government to demand implementation of the "Common Programme" which guaranteed religious freedom. They requested the government to investigate cases of violation, and to post notices on all churches to assure the people of their freedom to worship.

Premier Chou En-Lai received this group of Christian workers and conducted three extended talks in company with responsible Party cadre on the policy on religious liberty. He explained that the country had just been through a tremendous shakeup, and might be likened to a patient recovering from a major operation. Church closure and Bible confiscation were just "side effects" which could be expected and remedied. But he pointed out that simply to post public notices would not effectively solve the problem. Chinese Christians must examine themselves for the cause of the animosity of the masses against Christianity. For more than a century Christianity had been looked upon as a foreign religion--an exotic plant. The people had painful memories of atrocities perpetrated by imperialist forces working hand-in-glove with Christian missionaries. In June 1950, to convince all concerned that they were not just being swayed by Red propaganda, American troops in Korea were pressing to China's border, and President Truman had ordered the U.S. navy to patrol the Taiwan straits to prevent the liberation of Taiwan. Where did Chinese Christians stand on this immediate issue? Were they friends or foes?

The visiting group of Christian workers got the point. They wrote the "Declaration for Reformation through Self-administration, Self-support, and Self-propagation," in which they clarified the issue confronting the Chinese churches, and called on all Christians who loved their country to stand on the right side. Thus was launched the program popularly known as the "Three-Self" patriotic movement. Its aim was not only to alter their exotic

complexion, but also to change the basically foreign essence of the Christian cause in China, so that the masses would no longer look upon it as an unwelcome intruder. As stated above, to build a truly indigenous church had long been an ideal cherished by many Chinese Christians, and by some farsighted missionaries as well. What Premier Chou presented was not a new idea, but an indication that conditions were ripe for adopting appropriate measures to convert a foreign proselyting agency into a truly Chinese religious cause, so that the masses might recognize the change and lend their support.

Forty years of experience have proved that the Three-Self patriotic movement was timely and needful. Despite developing pains and mistakes, it has met the expectations of its founders. It has assisted the government in implementing its policy on religion, and today Chinese Protestants on the mainland worship in some 6000 churches and 10,000 meeting places, and can freely purchase Bibles and hymnals; and the public regards

them as a part of Chinese society. No longer is it said, "One Christian more means one Chinese less," a remark which aptly described the suffocation of patriotic feelings among Chinese converts during semi-colonial times.

Some complain that the "Three-Self patriotic movement" smacks of union of church and state. A number of Chinese Adventists still refuse to have anything to do with it. They refer to Gospel Workers, 391, "Our Attitude in Regard to Politics." But we note that these words were written in 1899 to teachers and managers in our schools in America, where party politics created a situation of rivalry quite different from that in China today. The words in Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 533-534 are better applicable here. We read, "Many Sabbathkeepers are not right before God in their political views. They are not in harmony with God's Word, or in union with the body of Sabbathkeeping believers. Their views do not accord with the principles of our faith. . . . These brethren cannot receive the approval of God while they lack sympathy for the oppressed colored race, and are at variance with the pure, republican principles of our government."

Many forms of church-state relations exist in different countries, both today and yesterday. In the Dark Ages the only safety for faithful servants of God was to retreat to the wilds. In Daniel's day, he could only prayerfully adapt himself to the lot of a captive in Babylon. He was in it and had no way out. But God first taught him how to win the favor of the chief steward in order to abstain from unclean foods. Daniel was aware of the difference between outward and inward holiness. When King Nebuchadnezzar named him "Beltshazzar" after the pagan god Bel, Daniel made no protest, because objectionable though it was, it could not mar his character. When the king appointed him "master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers" (Daniel 5:11), he did not say, "I'll have nothing to do with Babylonian magic." Instead, he took advantage of this opportunity to witness for the truth. Daniel was also wise in following the customs of pagan courts as far as they did not conflict with the commandments of God. When King Darius cried, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" it would have been correct for Daniel to say, "Thank the Lord. Yes!" But instead, his first words were, "O king, live for ever." He observed rules of pagan etiquette even under such circumstances.

So it was with Ezra, Nehemiah, and Mordecai, pious Jews who made God first, but were wise in winning the confidence of men in power. They took full advantage of their positions of trust to do good to Israel. In Prophets and Kings, 628, we read,

Nehemiah, one of the Hebrew exiles, occupied a position of influence and honor in the Persian court. As cup-bearer to the king he was admitted freely to the royal presence. By virtue of his position, and because of his abilities and fidelity, he had become the monarch's friend and counsellor. The recipient of royal favor, however, though surrounded by pomp and splendor, did not forget his God nor his people. . . . Through this man, prepared by his residence in the Persian court for the work to which he was to be called, God purposed to bring blessing to His people in the land of their fathers.

Those Jews living in a heathen court often faced temptations to compromise principle. But God helped them to overcome without forfeiting their positions of trust. On the other hand, they did not allow scruples about church-state relationships to prevent them from occupying points of vantage, which enabled them to draw men to the truth by practicing it. But when required to worship an image, to stop praying, or to bow down to a human celebrity like Haman, they worked by the principle stated in Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 361, "It is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger."

Now to study the leading of Providence in China. Since it is true that "the church, enfeebled and defective though it be, is the only object on earth on which Christ bestows His supreme regard" (Selected Messages, Book 2, 396), then we should see His leading hand in all that is happening in the land of Sinim. Says the Lord to His own, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Isaiah 49:23

What many Christians regarded as a catastrophe has proved to be a blessing. When the People's Liberation Army defeated the Chiang Kai-Shek forces in the bloody battle along the Huai river and then crossed the Yangtse river to liberate the South, some Christians in Shanghai, frightened by anti-Communist propaganda, prayed that God would drown the hated Communists in the river. Now with the reconstruction of New China and the achievements of the past 40 years, Chinese Christians are convinced that socialist China has prospered under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

"God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11), and, "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). These scriptures lead us to believe that when the hour struck for a new order of things to prevail in China, God gave power to the Chinese Communist Party to govern this populous country. A brief introduction of her cultural background is now in order.

China enjoys a rich heritage. We believe God preserved this country for a purpose. In ancient times, when His people were rebellious, God told Jeremiah to invite the Rechabites for a demonstration of filial obedience. Said Jeremiah, "I set before the . . . Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, 'Drink ye wine.' But they said, 'We will drink no wine: for . . . our father commanded us, saying, "Ye shall drink no wine, ye nor your sons, forever . . ."' " Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed. . . . But although I have spoken to you . . . you did not obey me." And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before me forever." Jeremiah 35:5-19 NKJV

God highly regards moral values, especially filial obedience. The "first commandment with promise" requires us to honor our parents. Among ancient peoples of the world, China is the only one which possesses a book called Xiao Jing, whose contents are devoted to teachings on filial piety. Her folklore boasts twenty-four anecdotes on the meritorious acts of sons and daughters who honored their parents, to be taught to the younger generation. It is not by chance that China's days have been long upon the land which the Lord her God has given her. She is an abiding testimony to the faithfulness of God and His promises. Who knows but that God has preserved her for another demonstration of fidelity to Him in these last days? Although China did not enjoy the privilege of direct revelation like the Jewish people, yet she was not wholly ignorant of saving truths. Rays of the "true Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world" shone upon sages and teachers who wrote many books to educate the Chinese people. They told of Nu Wa, the progenitor of mankind, and Shen Nong and Fu Xi, patriarchs whose names coincide with "Shem" and the "phe-th" in "Japheth" ("ja" was lost in transmission because the Hebrew Yodh is a weak consonant. The Chinese Xi is pronounced "hsi", corresponding to the Hebrew "th," which Askenazic Jews pronounce like "s," vocalizing "Japheth" as "Yaphess"). Why Ham's name was not preserved, we are not sure. His disrespect for his father may be one reason why his name was stricken from the honor roll of China's patriarchs. At any rate, the preservation of the names of Noah, Shem and Japheth in China's folklore attests to the historicity of the record in Genesis 6-10.

The name Shang Di, the Chinese term for "God," corresponds to the Hebrew El Shaddai, "God Almighty." Chinese linguists affirm that the Cantonese dialect has preserved the ancient pronunciation of Chinese characters most accurately. Now the Cantonese pronounce the word for "God" as Sheong Dai, which is closer to the Shaddai than the Mandarin vocalization given above. Another corroboration of Chinese tradition with Genesis is found in the Yi Jing, the Book of Changes, wherein the symbol Fu, meaning "repetition," has the comment, "Seven days comes repetition." Then we read, "The early kings closed the gates on solstice: the merchants did not travel, and the nobles did not make their rounds of inspection." These words plainly point to the Sabbath which God instituted at creation. The Shu Jing, a classic which matches the Yi Jing in antiquity, is a collection of earliest documents. In it is a public adjuration made by the first emperor of the Shang dynasty named Tang, after he ended the reign of the wicked king of the Xia dynasty. He says, "Not that I would disturb the peace, but because the king of Xia is very sinful: Heaven orders me to slay him . . . I fear God (Shang Di); I dare not disobey." In Deuteronomy 9:4 we read, "for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee."

Emperor Tang reigned in the seventeenth century B.C., when a seven-year famine caused much suffering, and he sacrificed a goat to pray for rain. This account agrees with the record in Genesis 41:54, which states that the seven years of dearth in Joseph's day "was in all lands." China stands out as a living witness to the truthfulness of God's word: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." China does not claim to be a paragon of morality. She is afflicted with her share of social ills and moral decay. But when compared with other nations, she can shine as an example, like the Rechabites, to teach a lesson. We have cited her unique record of teaching her youth the virtue of filial piety, despite her ignorance of Holy Scripture. Examine the annals of Chinese history, and you will not find a single instance of the visitation of God's wrath on a Chinese city for moral depravity, as befell Sodom, Gomorrah, and Pompeii. In ancient Chinese art and sculpture one does not encounter pornography or naked female figurines like the goddesses uncovered in Near East and Middle East excavations.

What about modern China? When the Communists came to power in 1949, they hastened to clean up the brothels, the gambling joints, and opium traffic; and stringent measures have been taken to stop the white slave traffic. Recently the government launched a nationwide "Clean Sweep" campaign against the obscene literature, films, and video tapes, raiding the secret hideouts where these things were made. Results are gratifying, and even if these measures may not be thoroughgoing, such an ethical stance in itself puts the Chinese ruling Party on a higher moral plane than professedly "Christian" nations who collect taxes from licensed brothels and casinos. Recalling the Rechabite lesson, we pose this question: The Chinese Communist Party, insofar as it has practiced the best that is found in its national heritage, does it not put America to shame? We recall the parable of two sons told to go work in their father's vineyard. One professed to obey, but did not go; the other refused, but finally did his father's will.

On what grounds do certain foreign legislators grant legal status to homosexual "marriages"? How does America compare with China, which arrests and imprisons the gays and lesbians found within her borders? Many Chinese Christians have not yet heard the shocking news that homosexuals are knowingly accepted as students in some American seminaries. This fact alone is enough to cause so-called heathen nations to close their doors to American missionaries, lest they propagate a religion of the sodomite kind among their citizens.

This dilemma brings us again to the Three-Self movement. Now after forty years, we have added reason to insist that Chinese Christians study the Bible for themselves to

learn God's will. We must beware the theological casuistries which have led to the permissiveness seen in religious circles in the West. Chinese churches made a fortunate decision indeed when they broke their ties with foreign missionary societies and thus "quarantined" themselves from Western decadence. However, the full significance of the severing of their ties with foreign missionary boards is not limited to this instance alone. The major achievement lies in the fact that self-reliance contributes toward spiritual maturity. Chinese Christians learn to look to Christ, rather than to men, for power to finish the gospel commission.

Many friends overseas labor under the misinformation that the Three-Self Committee is a subsidiary government institution, but it is not true. It is a civilian organization which receives no stipends from the government, but operates on funds derived from church offerings and from rent on church property. Mu En Tang, the church in Shanghai where Seventh-day Adventist members worship, is supported wholly from offerings. Their sermons are not censored, and no government official sits in their committee meetings. Their minutes are not submitted to the Bureau of Religious Affairs nor to the police for inspection. They are free to preach all the cardinal doctrines of their faith. The same is true of the congregation which meets on Sundays in the same building. Adventists share the facilities with them in a spirit of mutual respect and cordiality.

The Chinese Christian Council is a nationwide organization in charge of the religious activities of all churches. Denominational names are discontinued, but their different beliefs and practices remain and are respected. The Shanghai Christian Council, with the Three-Self Committee, arranged for Seventh-day Adventist believers to worship in the centrally located Mu En Tang for Sabbath worship instead of meeting in separate homes. They worked out an agreement whereby Adventist services are conducted by Adventist pastors paid from Adventist tithe, while the free-will offerings go into a common pool for operating expenses. The first Sabbath service was held on February 18, 1989, and since then 230 converts have been baptized in three groups.

According to the present arrangement, the Seventh-day Adventists in Mu En Tang are recognized as Seventh-day Adventist believers (xin tu), not as the Seventh-day Adventist Church (hui). This last name would indicate the existence of a distinct ecclesiastical organization, which in fact does not exist. The China Division of Seventh-day Adventists, with its union and local missions, actually ceased to exist in 1958. Now the Mu En Tang satisfies the need of long-separated Seventh-day Adventist members to meet as a united body. The continued identity of their Seventh-day Adventist faith is still in harmony with the teaching, "The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind." Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 224

About 150 ultra-conservative Seventh-day Adventist members refuse to join the 450 who meet in Mu En Tang. Their objection is that the building is unclean; it is "Baal's altar." But true defilement, Jesus teaches, is not external, but internal (Mark 7:14). The sanctity even of His temple is not inherent, but depends on the spiritual state of the people in it. Said He to those who rejected Him, "Behold, your house [the temple] is left unto you desolate!" "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father . . . But the hour cometh . . . when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The Seventh-day Adventist workers who negotiated to share the church obeyed Christ's words to "Launch out into the deep." And, "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." Their concern was not outward sanctity, but where to find the highest "housetop" and to reach the widest audience.

In summary, China's political, economic, and cultural heritage has contributed toward the unique witness of the Chinese Christians. In the Middle Ages, Western civilization gained much from China through the introduction of paper manufacture, printing, silk, the magnetic compass, and gunpowder. Since then the center of gravity in world affairs has continued to move westward--from Babylon to Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, France, and England. Now America seems to be in center stage. May we expect some day to see the spotlight cross the Pacific back to China? Could it be that after the circle is complete, the "angel ascending from the East" (Revelation 7:2) will have something to do with the dramatic scenes of the grand finale? Perhaps God will yet show what wonders can be done by planting His seed in virgin Chinese soil relatively free from Western influence.

It is not possible for us fully to fathom the purposes of God. But as we review Chinese church history through the past hundred years, we exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give us an expected end.

March 30, 1991

Chapter 3

OUR CREDENTIALS

SEVENTH-DAY Adventists have a peculiar heritage. It inspires faith and courage, and calls for unreserved devotion. We belong to a succession of true nobility appointed of God to speak in His name.

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

The privilege of being God's chosen people once belonged to the Jewish nation. Said the inspired apostle, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Romans 3:1-2

What a high and holy privilege it is to be entrusted with the oracles of God! But as in the case of the priesthood, "no man taketh this honor unto himself." Hebrews 5:4. The honor of being the custodians of God's word cannot be assumed by anyone on his own initiative. Since antiquity many individuals have presumed to be spokesmen for God, but in the end they proved to be false prophets.

True and False Prophets

We can differentiate false prophets from the true by the nature of the messages they bear. The false prophet gains a popular following and is accepted by the world. On the other hand, the true prophet receives little worldly recognition. When Jehoshaphat went to battle, Ahab "gathered the prophets together, about 400 men," who gave him a favorable reply. Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?" Ahab replied, "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." 1 Kings 22:5-8

This incitement is an example of a popular majority versus an unpopular minority. But the "oracle of God" was entrusted to the latter. And Micaiah was hated because he pronounced God's judgments against the wicked.

The same situation prevails today. The messages God sends to His people to turn them away from worldly corruptions are not appreciated by those who would live in self-indulgence. They hate the modern Micaiah, and want to hear flattering words which give them a false sense of acceptance and freedom, so that they can say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations." Jeremiah 7:10

An Unbroken Succession

There has always been an unbroken line of chosen instruments entrusted with the oracles of God. When the Jews rejected their Redeemer and failed to fulfill God's purpose, He chose men from among the Gentiles to proclaim the message of salvation. Said Paul to the recalcitrant Jews: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46

This instance was the first marked transfer of the divine credentials from a line of Jewish prophets and apostles to the Gentile succession. The church of God is now an edifice built not as a racial entity, but on an ecumenical + (+ ecumenical. 1. Universal; worldwide. American Heritage Dictionary) basis, with the apostles as the foundation and Christ the cornerstone. Said Christ to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:18-19

Here Christ announced the divine purpose to transfer the privilege of administering the oracles of God to the ecumenical church of which Peter was a

representative. Ever since Creation, these oracles have laid down the conditions by which sinners are either admitted to or excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

The Church in the Wilderness

The Papacy has laid claim to the apostolic succession. But we note that the "keys of the kingdom" have unlocked the treasure house of prophecy to reveal that the true apostolic succession belongs to the people represented by the woman in Revelation 12, while the Papacy is symbolized by the dragon which attempts to destroy her. This symbolism, with the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 2 Thessalonians 2, all conspire to identify the Papacy as the antichrist, and whoever accepts this truth cannot consistently regard the Papacy as a valid part of God's church, despite the fact that she is counted as a part of Christendom from the historian's viewpoint. Our doctrinal understanding on this subject should keep our thinking straight and govern all our dealings with that power.

Thus the first transfer of trusteeship, as we may call it, is recorded in the New Testament as a historical event. A second transfer of this responsibility five centuries later, this time from the apostolic church to the church in the wilderness, is depicted as a prophetic event. The emergence of Balaam in Pergamos and of Jezebel in Thyatira, as opposed to "as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan" (Revelation 2:14, 20, 24) clearly indicates a process of differentiation during the Middle Ages which separated the chaff from the wheat.

The true church of God remained in the wilderness for 42 months, after which she emerged from seclusion to reconquer the world in the new evangelical upsurge.

The Remnant of Her Seed

Revelation 12 speaks of a "remnant" of the seed of the woman preserved in the wilderness. This appellation implies that it is the last body of saints to be victims of Satan's attacks. And since we recognize that the church in the wilderness comprised the Waldenses, the Albigenses, Huss and Jerome, Wycliffe, Luther, the Wesleys, and others, then we are faced with the task of identifying their "remnant"--the modern successors of this line of depositories of God's holy oracles. To aid us in our task, Inspiration has provided dependable clues to convince every honest inquirer that God is personally leading this great movement to its victorious climax.

(1) The first and most substantial clue is Revelation 10. Here the Millerite awakening, culminating in the Disappointment of 1844, is depicted in fascinating detail. The seven thunders represent that critical but obscure text which Miller misunderstood and thus became for all a test. In Scripture, thunder often is a figure for God's voice. See Job 37:4-5; 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 29:3-4. And seven signifies completion. Hence seven thunders symbolize a complete revelation. When God's voice spoke from heaven in answer to Jesus' petition (see John 12:28), men standing by said it thundered and knew not its significance. Jesus said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." John 12:30. Yet the men for whom God's message was meant heard only a nonintelligible rumbling. Likewise, the text Miller misunderstood was nonetheless a message to him from God. In the gospel narrative, John understood God's voice and wrote it for our benefit. He also understood the seven thunders of Revelation 10, but when he was about to write, he was arrested with the words, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." Revelation 10:4

Here we see a deliberate act of Providence temporarily to cover up the truth--withholding a full revelation--with the purpose of bringing about a great disappointment. We see in it a parallel to the blindness of the disciples when Jesus told them of His coming humiliation and crucifixion. "They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Luke 18:34. This blindness of the disciples resulted in a crushing disappointment which was soon followed by a thrilling manifestation of God's glory and the commission to "Go . . . and

teach all nations." And we note that both the disappointment and the subsequent rejoicing were exclusively the experience of the chosen few. The risen Saviour was manifest only to a select group which had undergone the sifting process of a great disappointment and defection.

Eighteen centuries later, the Millerite disappointment was a close reenactment of that first one. God has a special purpose in His providence. It pleased Him to bring His chosen people through the valley of blasted hopes and then make them to see new light in the sure word of prophecy. As Isaiah 53 and other prophecies of Christ's sufferings were to the mourning disciples, so were Revelation 10 and concurring prophecies to the faithful few after 1844. In both cases, "opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:45. In these Scriptures, the anchor of our faith is now securely moored.

Revelation 10 is our strongest mooring place because it accords with the Millerite experience in every significant detail--from the "little open book" to the command to "prophecy again" after a sweet-and-bitter experience. By way of human reasoning, the Advent movement, initiated by a man who is still regarded by many as fanatical, should have petered out, and no one would think of taking up the work where he left off. But the observation of Gamaliel is applicable here: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts 5:38-39. Ever since the Seventh-day Adventist church was organized, many men aided by evil angels have sought to overthrow it, but they were fighting against God. He has devoted a whole chapter in Revelation to identify us as His people. No other event in history comes near to a fulfillment of this chapter, which stands between the fall of the Ottoman Empire depicted in Revelation 9 and the events of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11.

Our succession to William Miller cannot in truth be denied. We have not the least cause for shame, but every reason to take pride. We should vigorously publicize The Great Disappointment as the God-given credentials of our great Advent movement.

Revelation 10 is the "open door" into which the wise virgins are admitted. It is also the "shut door" which keeps out the foolish virgins. This sifting process has continued to this day. All who see in the Millerite movement a fulfillment of Revelation 10 are admitted to the wedding banquet, while all who deny that Miller was led of God remain in outer darkness. Now it is a historical fact that all the Protestant bodies who tripped and fell over the Millerite stone of stumbling have made no progress in their understanding of the prophecies of Revelation since 1844. Their knowledge of Bible prophecy remains within pre-Millerite confines. He who has the key of David has shut the door in their faces, and no man can open it.

It is a remarkable fact that Ellen White makes a prophetic application of the parable of the ten virgins, but does not attempt to explain what the figure of the "dinner" (Matthew 22:4) of the wedding represents in reality. But we who are removed from the Midnight Cry by 137 years are now in a position to observe that this banquet is symbolic of the spiritual feast of good things provided through the writings of the gift of prophecy. He who promises to "come in and sup with" us has brought to every one who opens the door a veritable banquet of spiritual delicacies. All who with humble hearts step into the "open door" of the sanctuary truths which follow in the wake of the Millerite movement are thereby ushered into Christ's festal chamber and treated to the nourishment of the "testimony of Jesus," which is designed to build up His remnant church and to strengthen His people for the last great conflict with the prince of darkness. The contrast between those who enter the open door and those shut out is like the pillar of fire which came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. "It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." Exodus 14:20. "Because

it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matthew 13:11

God takes us into His confidence by the vision of Revelation 10, even as in the case of Sodom He confided in Abraham His friend. Leading to mastery of prophecy, Revelation 10 is a strategic door; they who balk here will never understand all that comes after 1844.

(2) Our second clue is found in Revelation 3:14-21. Again we see a close description of the Advent people. We recognize our own features delineated in this letter. Christ introduces Himself as "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." He says to us, "You keep the Sabbath to commemorate the creation of God. Now I am the Lord of the Sabbath, the Author of all creation. I am also the One speaking to you through the gift of prophecy." The voluminous "Testimonies" are a magnified projection of Christ's letter to the Laodiceans. The keynote of these testimonies is, "I know thy works. . . . As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." And now, as we near the grand finale, we see the fulfillment of the prophecies of the great shaking--whole congregations spued out of His mouth!

(3) The third clue furnished to identify the remnant church is found in Revelation 12:17, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." God foresaw that we would live in a veritable Babel of conflicting beliefs and practices, and that many of His children would be perplexed to know which body of professing Christians is the true remnant church. Therefore God gave us two clear and simple signs: The remnant "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." On the one hand they recognize God's authority by keeping His commandments; on the other hand God recognizes their sonship by speaking to them through the prophetic gift. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10

This reciprocal recognition is the unmistakable sign that the Seventh-day Adventist church is God's true church in modern times. Behold how sound and dependable are the tokens of God's grace! See how the sure word of prophecy gives firmest grounds for our faith!

It is not for any person or group of people to arrogate the role of trustees of the oracles of God. But can any one refuse this appointment when the Lord makes it? Said He to Gideon: "Go in this thy might . . . have not I sent thee?" Judges 6:14

To assign a human mortal to a mission on earth below, is the very highest honor that heaven can bestow. Like Esther and Mordecai in an hour of national crisis, who knows we are not come to the kingdom for just such a time as this?

In every time of crisis God has always had His Micaiahs to oppose popular prophets who preach smooth and pleasant things to the people. Thus did Elijah in his day. And in the first century God sent John to rebuke iniquity in high places. Then came the two witnesses who preached in sackcloth as the "woman" was nourished in the wilderness. Today the oracles of God have been committed to the "remnant of her seed"--the Seventh-day Adventist world communion. Here history witnesses the third transfer of this sacred trusteeship, of which we bear unmistakable credentials.

In the Book it is written of us; God has pledged to perform His word. His angel directs the movement to prepare the way of the Lord. God make us worthy to fill the place of John and Elijah's vacancy! They were men of like passions as we, but they prayed and preached so differently. They have passed from the stage of action, but

there must be action on the stage! God calls for a million Elijahs to meet the crisis of our age. Where is the God of Elijah? He's very close at hand--at the touch of the prophet's mantle Jordan's waters become dry land.

To confirm His gospel message God works signs and mighty wonders; for to all His faithful servants He gives not His Spirit by measure. The voice crying in the wilderness shall not have cried in vain; it must resound through the centuries to waken the millions of our day. Our work is to hold up the torch once held by the hands of John, and cry with passionate voice, "Behold the lamb of God!"

January 14, 1981

Chapter 4

LET GOD SPEAK

GOD'S people are undergoing an unprecedented spiritual shakeup. What lesson should we learn from this crisis?--We reap what we sow. We have sown to the flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption. Wherein have we sown to the flesh? In placing the wisdom of man above the wisdom of God.

One danger every student of the Bible faces is the subtle trend among modern theologians to climb on the critic's perch and pose as an authority on spiritual things. But Jesus asks the man who is accustomed to be respected as a teacher of His people: "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?" In his first encounter with Christ, Nicodemus could not readily set aside his self-esteem and critical attitude. He challenged the truthfulness of Christ's statement on the new birth: "How can these things be?" These words of a proud scholar epitomize the thinking of modernist theologians. They sit on the judgment seat to pick flaws in God's word and propound their own theories as something superior. They virtually say to God, "We know more than You do."

What Is True scholarship?

As we associate with the learned men of the world and become impressed with their learning, we may fall easy captives to the sophistries of science falsely so-called. It is fashionable and respectable to take a critical attitude and to assume the airs of a wise man. And there are always people who will admire such men, encourage them in their conceit, and contribute to their popularity. Under such flattering influences one gradually feels self-important, and thinks he deserves the deference and respect of his brethren. He gets into the habit of indulging in worldly chatter and empty philosophizing, and disdains simply to repeat what others have been teaching. He would make a name for himself by doing some "creative" thinking and shed "new light" on God's Word. He must be original to deserve an academic award.

God indeed expects all to develop the creative powers He has given them, but only to build up, not to tear down. We are indebted to those true scholars who have done real, solid research work to verify historical facts and to find scientific evidence to fortify the positions of our faith, which would otherwise suffer under the attacks of our enemies. In this age of advancing knowledge it behooves every one of us to keep abreast of all scientific research and to be ready to meet the questions of the sincere inquirer, as well as those of less sincere opponents. Thus every gospel worker must respond to the urgent need to acquire more knowledge as a sophisticated world makes increasing demands upon him. But he must never lose sight of the fact that he is a man of God, and that he is acquiring knowledge for the purpose of witnessing for the truth--not to idolize himself.

Worldly Honor Versus Divine Approval

It is a deplorable fact, however, that some of our scholars have forgotten their indebtedness to Christ, and try to win popularity by criticizing and repudiating vital passages of Scripture, thus destroying the foundations of our faith. What is the underlying motive? It is found in the words, "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." Psalm 49:18. It is the spirit of the world. A law of the unconverted heart is to love worldly honor and be ready to give it to others. Jesus summed it up in the words: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" "I seek not mine own glory, there is one that seeketh and judgeth. . . .If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: It is my Father that honoureth me." John 5:43-44; 8:50,54

Here our Lord contrasts worldly recognition with divine approval. For God works on a principle opposed to the spirit of the world. He says, "Whosoever exalteth himself

shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 14:11. Christ gave us an example of true humility. It consists not merely in modest, self-effacing manners. For sometimes a humble demeanor, courteous words, and a generous attitude can be a cloak for the most obstinate form of spiritual pride. True meekness is manifest in unswerving devotion to God's will, and fidelity in communicating His word--keeping self in the background and God's message in front.

Spokesman for God

The crux lies in the content of the message. Every preacher moved by spiritual pride strives to assert his ego. He must present something original to make a name for himself. Now hear what the Son of God has to say: "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John 7:18; 8:28. "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." John 12:49-50. In these words Christ was giving full proof of His Messiahship. His work was a precise fulfillment of God's promise: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren . . . and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him." Deuteronomy 18:18

Such a task appears slavish to the man who believes in asserting his individuality. It would seem that Christ had relinquished His personal identity to become nothing more than a public address system--an unthinking automaton with no ideas of his own. Is that so? No, definitely not! Here Christ is teaching us the only effective way to develop our God-given potentialities to the utmost. Man was made after the divine similitude, and it is only when he is fully integrated with, and absorbed in, the Word of God that he can attain to the full stature of a son of God. When we, like Jesus, are determined to LET GOD SPEAK through us, we become fully aligned with the mind of God, and His word flows through us unhindered, and thus Christ's saying will come true: "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38

The true servant of God yearns for the honor of bearing His message to the world. It was this motive which prompted Christ wholly to submerge His individuality and say, I don't have a word of My own--every word I speak is transmitted to you from My Father. Christ propounded no new theory, invented no new "ism," established no new philosophy. He came simply to be God's spokesman. And that is why God has given Him a name which is above every name.

Can we follow Christ here? Absolutely! In fact it was for us He set this example, to show us how to be a perfect servant. He wants us to know the supreme joy of serving God, so that we will pray, "Father, grant us the privilege of bearing Thy word for Thee." This joy in itself will be our exceeding great reward--a privilege which the angels enjoy--yea, which the Son of God enjoys. Father, deny us not this request.

Such a petition God cannot refuse. For in it He hears the voice of His only begotten Son, who once said to His disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24

The Son of man, who was equal with God, purposed to eradicate His own will that the word of God might be exalted and His law magnified. Who are we, that we should assert ourselves to gain man's recognition at God's expense? And why should we disdain to be a mere public-address system if it is in God's service? Isaiah was even proud to be a "polished shaft" in the quiver of the Lord (Isaiah 49:2), and we should covet the same honor. As we eliminate every trace of self from our work and offer ourselves as clear channels through which God can communicate to His people, we

shall witness a true revival of primitive godliness among us, and God's message will work wonders far and near.

Let God Speak to His People

Every minister possessing this spirit of Jesus is fitted to speak to God's people in His name. Before entering the pulpit, he waits patiently in God's presence to receive His blessing and instruction. In his preaching he will not flounder for want of something to say, nor will he feel he is there to entertain his congregation. Pity the poor preacher who must intersperse his sermons with silly witticisms to hold his audience, like a food vendor dashing on spices to cover up the smell of stale meat.

Humorous sermons in the pulpit, laughter in the congregation/ neutralize all spiritual gains and bring on a lukewarm condition. Whimsical words, the idle joke, facetious remarks, cheap anecdotes make worldlings to laugh, angels to weep/ spoil our worship by striking the wrong note.

Sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu put their incense on common fire. Pity the man who came to banquet smugly clothed in common attire. When you stand to speak in God's name, and His people are waiting to hear, know that holy watchers are present--choose your words in trembling and fear.

Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God

A noticeable trend among us has been the one-sided emphasis on justification to the neglect of sanctification. Coming to Christ for forgiveness is made the sum total of the message of Christ our righteousness. All people want, it appears, is His imputed and not His imparted righteousness. Why? Because, some say, it is not possible to be holy. By this answer they imply that God is expecting too much of us by saying, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Some even shy away from the words, "Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. They do not realize that the Lord justifies the penitent for the express purpose of sanctifying him. When probation closes, God will pronounce these solemn words: He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Revelation 22:11

The saved are righteous, and also holy. For an unjust penitent to be changed into a righteous man takes but a moment--God imputes to him the righteousness of Christ. Then begins the lifelong process of restoring God's holy image in the repentant soul--"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Only thus can Christ our righteousness become a living reality and not an empty slogan. Sanctification through faith in Christ is God's central message to the world today.

The restoration of God's holy memorial--the seventh day Sabbath--stresses sanctification. The ministry of our Lord in the Holy of Holies stresses sanctification. The Laodicean message as amplified in the Testimonies stresses sanctification.

When we really LET GOD SPEAK, He says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thessalonians 4:3

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Hebrews 6:1

Some try to make justification by faith the sum total of the third angel's message. They quote this passage: "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel." Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, 19. But what is the specific content of "the message of Christ's righteousness?" Is it what the popular revivalists preach--"Only believe, and you are saved?" No. Read the immediate context of this quotation:

The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Ibid.

All who attempt to set up righteousness by faith in opposition to the law of God, or as a substitute for keeping it, are making a grave mistake.

Why do some people willingly accept God's forgiving grace but not His sanctifying power? Because they want to go on sinning and be saved in their sins. They want God to give them a free ticket to heaven in spite of their incapacity to enjoy it. Thus they accept Christ as a good-luck charm that will guarantee their security irrespective of their moral condition. They do not really hate sin; so they cannot truly repent, and are far from being justified, let alone being sanctified.

Christ's victory over death was the result of an uninterrupted series of victories over sin in His life on earth. As He approached the last struggle with the prince of this world, He could say in triumph, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." John 14:30. So must it be with us. Christ has made full provision for us to live as He lived, fight as He fought, and win as He won. Would you know how anxious He is that we win as He won? He has made repeated promises to the overcomer.

Promises to the overcomer bespeak Jesus' dearest affection, telling us that He loves us truly, and works for our thorough conversion. All who overcome temptation, and in His name take pride, have a place in New Jerusalem, and are counted as His bride.

He owns them before the Father; they shall walk with Him in white, He will not blot out their names from the recorded Book of Life. On their stone is a new name written; they shan't be hurt by the second death. They may eat of the hidden manna, and have access to the tree of life.

He makes them a pillar in God's house, writes on them His Father's name, and whithersoever the Lamb goes, they shall follow in His train. As in Christ God gave His all, so Christ withholds no good from His own, no honor is too great for His bride--He gives her a place on His throne.

The Everlasting Gospel

Wherein does our teaching on "Christ our righteousness" differ from the gospel presented by the popular churches of our day? The difference lies primarily in the Sabbath truth. Ever since the law of God was proclaimed in its fullness--since 1844--the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been God's sole agency on earth qualified to present a full and complete gospel. In Revelation 14 it is called "the everlasting gospel," because only a full and complete gospel can be everlasting.

Is this an empty boast? No, we feel our weakness and inadequacy keenly, and dare make no rash assertions; but the truth remains, that whoever rejects the Sabbath cannot truly accept the Lord of the Sabbath, for that is Christ's mark of identification. He says to the last of the seven churches, "I am the beginning of the creation of God."

Today, as multitudes are assenting to the evolutionary origin of man, Christ appears before them as their Creator--the Lord of the Sabbath. Will you accept Christ? If so, you must accept His Sabbath. If you reject the Sabbath, you thereby reject its Lord and His righteousness. This equation is not of our inventing. Christ identifies Himself with the day He has sanctified, and to us He assigns the task of proclaiming this everlasting gospel: "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." Revelation 14:7

Any gospel that preaches only Christ our Saviour but omits Christ our Creator is a denatured gospel. Its

proponents virtually say to Christ: We love You and Your teachings--You are wonderful! But--Your Sabbath--we don't want it. So they are obliged to preach Christ as detached from, and in opposition to, His Sabbath, thus distorting, yea, even counterfeiting His

divine image. Hence their Christ is no longer what God's Word presents Him to be, but what they would prefer Him to be. In other words, they don't really know Christ, and in the end He will say to them, "I know you not."

But, some will argue, Paul "determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." God is proclaiming the everlasting gospel today precisely because the world has crucified their Creator and His Sabbath. Peter once said to the Jews, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36. Today we say to the world, "God has made the Sabbath, which you have trampled, His sign of sanctification." It is the divine purpose in this time of the end to resurrect the downtrodden Sabbath and make it the seal of perfection on the foreheads of all true servants of God.

Some Adventists who are impressed with the "dynamic" preaching of "dynamic" preachers of other churches wonder if we may not be too much concerned over "side issues," if we shouldn't drop these "minor points" and get back into the "mainstream" of modern Christianity. This attitude is typical of Adventists who have lost their vision of our historic task and the substance of the everlasting gospel.

The everlasting gospel is the gospel of Him who is the beginning and the end. It begins with the Creation, ends with the Judgment, and embraces all that is between. The Sabbath is God's memorial of the great beginning, and the sanctuary is the symbol of the final judgment. These are not minor, but principal issues, and all who proclaim the everlasting gospel are in God's mainstream.

Seventh-day Adventists are uniquely qualified to present a perfect image of Christ: Christ our Creator, the Lord of the Sabbath; Christ the Lamb of God slain as our substitute; and Christ our High Priest serving in the Holy of Holies. Our gospel is everlasting, embracing the past, the present, and the future, and freighted with gripping realities of the coming showdown between Christ and Satan.

Therefore: LET GOD SPEAK to His people through His Sabbath. "It is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exodus 31:13

LET GOD SPEAK to His people from His sanctuary. "Ye shall afflict your souls . . . For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Leviticus 16:29, 30

LET GOD SPEAK to His people in the Testimonies. All the talk about verbal and thought inspiration is enough. We need to take the books down from the shelf, blow the dust off and read carefully to hear Him say, "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 60

God Will Be Heard

The issue is clear enough. Satan's studied effort is to stifle God's voice. He has launched a three-pronged offensive against the investigative judgment, the Sabbath reform, and the gift of prophecy. And he seems to be having some success. His attack on our doctrine of the 2300 days is coordinated with a campaign to hush all talk on sanctification and perfection; he has convinced some of our scientists that the creationist positions are no longer tenable; then he tries to prove that Ellen White was a plagiarist.

In the face of the devil's rabid attacks, the forces of truth must not falter. We must unite under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel and push the battle to hell's gates. We must let God's voice shatter the conspiracy of silence on sanctification and say to His people:

"Be Ye Holy, for I Am Holy."

In the face of forbidding circumstances we will take courage. Remember Jesus in Pilate's judgment hall. Judas had betrayed Him. Peter had denied Him, and other disciples had fled in cowardice. The mob was crying, "Crucify Him!" He was soon to be

executed. But Jesus did not falter. He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. He that is of the truth heareth My voice." He never lost sight of His mission, and was sure that His voice would be heard. So too should we ground our faith on the certainty of our God-appointed task and know that we shall win. Wherever God's voice is heard, "he that is of the truth" will respond and obey. Our primary concern must be to LET GOD SPEAK.

David Lin

May, 1981

Chapter 5

VICTORY OR FIASCO?

THE Seventh-day Adventist system is slowly recovering from a major operation: the removal of a malignant tumor with attendant dangers of proliferation and metastasis. In one sense we may call it a victory, because at least we got rid of this festering sore which was poisoning the whole body. But we must also confess that we were not alerted in time, but had let it develop to dangerous proportions before taking action. We have therefore suffered serious losses, and the enemy exults. It is time we tally up the score.

What are some of the basic factors involved? Since this was an internal issue, we should examine ourselves for the cause of our failure. A government official in a certain country in the Far East once had a talk with a Seventh-day Adventist and made a concluding remark which hits the nail on the head. He said, "You Adventists are overly honest." He said this because, as he saw it, we actually believe everything the Bible says and behave accordingly. Such "naivety" is rare indeed in this crooked generation. And this peculiar Adventist trait accounts for the Glacier View fiasco.

Like Chess Players

We succeeded in removing a cancer. But the process which led up to it was an exposure of our naivety. The Chinese have a saying that in a game of chess, the onlooker has a better grasp of the situation than the contestants. It might be so in this case. On one side of the chess board was Desmond Ford, and on the other the committee of 120. And after the game was over, Ford exulted over the fact that his 120 antagonists had been pulled over to his side, because "the brethren had made tremendous progress in the past few days and that the church's position was closer to his than it had ever been before. He expressed the thought that if we have come thus far in four days, imagine how far the church will go in four years in changing its position." Ministry, October 1980, pg. 9

In this four-day tussle, Ford imagined himself acting Martin Luther's heroic part at the Diet of Worms. He stood his ground and declared staunchly, "Hier stehe ich; ich kann nicht anderes!" And as the curtain drops, Ford retains his championship title among his many followers who regard the General Conference leadership as having played the part of medieval inquisitors. "Hail the master of Adventist destiny Desmond Ford!" they shout. A "Giant" Tackles 120

Upon reading the Special Sanctuary Issue of the Ministry, one is impressed with the surprising extent to which our leading brethren leaned over in order to be agreeable. In addition to being overly honest, they were overly gracious. Moreover, the much ado, long delay, and heavy financial outlay in arranging for an imposing array of scholars and theologians to tackle the problem seemed out of proportion to its magnitude. Their published reply added nothing substantial to what had already been said by the papers published by diverse parties in Australia and the United States in refutation of Ford's glaring heresies. The mustering of such a strong task force to engage a foe who was in fact already beaten polemically served only to strengthen him in his obstinacy and to lend new luster to the puffed-up image of Desmond Ford. "Behold," his rooters exclaimed, "our champion can tackle 120 men single handed!"

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

On October 27, 1979, at a meeting of the Association of Adventist Forums a wolf, who had passed as a sheep among us for some 30 years, at last cast off his sheep's clothing and bared his fangs. And yet strangely enough, our leading brethren would not believe his open challenge, but would give him time and help to write out his erroneous views and make sure he did not agree with us. "Let us examine you carefully," said the shepherds to the wolf. "Are you a wolf indeed?"

Kindness or Naivety?

Now it is clear that the six-month "incubation" period played into the hands of the Fordites, who took advantage of this period of indecision to engage in extensive barnstorming, while the anti-Ford forces were handicapped by the fact that he still retained his credentials. By the end of this period he had improved his strategic position and his forces were mobilized for action, while we found our own morale weakened by the unrealistic desire to win him over by being sweet and kind. We expected him to give in on a few points and "accept counsel" in a brotherly spirit. But to our dismay he was unrelenting and aggressive. Why? Because he had already mustered a formidable backing among our ministry and laity, and was confident of victory. He was not at all in a negotiating frame of mind, but determined to force his errors upon us and to remake the church after his image. For he was already flying in the dizzy heights to which his supporters had exalted him: the only man who could save Adventism! Throughout the conflict he was on the offensive and we were on the defensive. He had much to gain regardless of the outcome, and we had just as much to lose.

Should We Cover Heresy? Or Divulge It?

The reluctance of our leaders to treat Ford as an open foe even in the face of his bold attacks against the fundamentals of our faith may be attributed in part to sentimental reasons. Old friendship ties blinded their eyes to his true identity. As we overdid ourselves in being honest, generous, and fair, it eventually dawned on us that he was employing the double-dealing tactics of the arch-deceiver. But hence we can recover some of our lost ground: We owe it to our constituency to unmask the real "Des"--to give wide publicity to all his underhand doings and foul play. This tactic will help to convince his deluded followers of their wrong course more effectively than scholarly dissertations on the meaning of "tsadak." Because many people still think he is an honest man.

Secret Supporters?

Another probable cause of our excessive concessions to this dangerous apostate in giving him time and help to disseminate his heresies before withdrawing his credentials, is that his sympathizers and secret supporters in the General Conference Committee could have deliberately agitated and engineered decisions in his favor to contribute toward his success.

Deceived by Appearances and Public Charisma?

A third cause of our reluctance to remove this cancer before it had grown to frightful proportions is that we were deceived by appearances and worldly considerations, supposing that his "magnetic personality," scholarly attainments, and speaking ability were indispensable assets to the denomination. We forgot our dependence on the Spirit of God for true success. We admired this talented personality and allowed our admiration to benumb our sense of our duty to defend the purity of our faith. Many yielded their judgment to his, assuring themselves with the thought: "Such a learned and powerful preacher can't be wrong!"

A First-Rate Actor

Are we too harsh in our judgment? No. We are just putting the right tag on the right man. John did so when he called Judas a thief. John 12:6. Jesus stated the truth by calling him the "son of perdition." John 17:12. And we may truly call Desmond Ford a first-rate actor. He has acted the orthodox Adventist admirably for thirty years and gained so many fans that he now feels it is to his advantage to cast off the Adventist guise and play the part of an opponent. He can thus gain the applause of the popular churches in addition to the adulation of his Adventist entourage, and ascend another rung on the ladder to fame.

Admits His Duplicity

This assessment is no exaggeration. Ford himself admits he has been acting all along. He didn't believe the sanctuary truths as we do when he applied for baptism, nor ever

afterwards. "In his Pacific Union College presentation Des noted that beginning in the 1950s he had said as much about these ideas as he could and had published a few articles that touched on this problem. But he knew, he said, that "if I was very frank it would never be published." Ministry, October 1980, 5. Then for about thirty years he deliberately avoided giving voice to his true thoughts, and practiced hypocrisy to win popularity. He well knew what a good Adventist should believe and say, so he carefully acted his part and waited for the opportune moment to change costumes. Anyone who doubts this assertion need only to compare the books he wrote before October 27, 1979 with his open attacks against our fundamental beliefs since then. Before 1979 he played Dr. Jekyll. Now he is Mr. Hyde. That is the reason we say he is a good actor.

But the strange thing is that after he had publicly declared himself to be our enemy, we still took him to be our friend. We still flattered him with such words as, "Please come with us, Des. For the sake of the church and its people and for your own sake. Your ministry is of great value to the church." Ministry, October 1980, 9. "Des, I know you are a man of integrity. . . . Our great desire is to see you preserved for the ministry." Ibid, 10. These words would have been appropriate before he made his open challenge. But after he has denied the doctrinal positions he held when he acted the orthodox Adventist and has demonstrated to all that he worked under an Adventist camouflage and duped us all those years, how can we still believe in his moral integrity and want to retain him in the ministry?

Look at this spectacle: one hundred and twenty men meeting in earnest, to discuss theology with a man who did not even seriously believe in God--at least not in the God we know. His "god" is a poor frustrated being whose prophecies have fallen through. The second advent of his "Christ" has been strangely delayed for 19 centuries and perhaps forever. The four-day session failed to make this "Adventist" infidel budge one inch, but only helped further to publicize his legend: "One man wins the tug of war against a hundred." "Yes," he triumphs gleefully, "I pulled them over this far in four days. Think what will happen after four years!" Can't you see the fiendish glee behind his dove-like smile?

Because we still took Ford seriously and believed him an honest man, he felt encouraged in his fraudulent course, and despite that he had openly denied many orthodox views once published under his own name, and thus laid bare his naked dishonesty, he still had the nerve to say that he must "be true to his conscience. He could not lie." Did you hear that? A liar said he could not lie! Yes, but he was acting.

We come back to the game of chess: When one contestant follows all the rules of the game and the other violates them at will, then the honest man is bound to lose. That is what happened at Glacier View. Most of us had been fooled by Ford's superb acting and labored under the impression that he was a man of integrity. The words of The Desire of Ages, 719, are fitting here: All this was done by Judas in such a way as to make it appear that he was conscientious. . . . Thus in a very religious, and apparently wise way he was presenting matters in a different light from that in which Jesus had given them, and attaching to His words a meaning that He had not conveyed.

Because we treated a wolf as though he were a sheep right up to the end of our encounter with him, he artfully performed the part of a sheep. Hear this wolf actor bleating: Again he expressed his regret and sorrow for the trouble he had brought to leadership. He ventured the opinion that the relationship between himself and the church was not greatly sundered and declared he would do what he could to prevent rupture. Ministry, October 1980, 9

How kind of him! But what were his true feelings? He flattered himself that he enjoyed a big following; he took pride in his academic awards and despised the church administrators who, he thought, were poor theologians. He was planning not only for rupture, but for a sweeping takeover! His appetite was voracious.

Mourning for Absalom

When David wept for Absalom, everybody was sure he loved his son, but his love was misplaced. He should have loved God and His people more. Joab set his thinking straight with these words: Thou hast shamed this day the face of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life and the lives of thy sons and daughters . . . in that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. 2 Samuel 19:5-6

Desmond Ford was a typical Absalom, drawing away the hearts of God's people. His charisma was employed for selfish ends, and if it had continued to develop, the results would have been catastrophic. His departure was not to be lamented. We should rejoice that this cancerous growth that threatened our very existence has been removed. On the other hand, we must regret that our leading men did not detect and treat this malignancy before it had made such disastrous inroads into our system.

More Trouble to Come

The analogy with Absalom is not, after all, applicable in every detail. Desmond Ford is not dead, but very much alive and doing his best to draw away more disciples from among our ranks. This second phase of our struggle is bound to be protracted and distracting. We must put forth intensive effort in the work of disinfection.

We need to ascertain the extent of the influence of Fordian heresies within our ranks. Why have we given Desmond Ford grounds to say that our statement of "Fundamental Beliefs" voted by the church at Dallas showed a definite shift away from Ellen White's interpretation in the area of the sanctuary? And he observed that the statement on the sanctuary voted at Dallas says nothing about two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary. Was this a deliberate concession on our part to accommodate the Fordian heresy and preserve an appearance of unity? Does this apostate still have sympathizers and secret agents among our leading men?

Our struggle with Desmond Ford reached its climax at Glacier View. Who knows there will not be an anticlimax? And even a succession of climaxes?

June 1981

Chapter 6

IS ADVENTISM PATCHWORK THEOLOGY?

THE April 1981 issue of the *Sligoscope* published an article entitled "Can We Trust Our Theologians?" by James Londis. It represents a reaction to what he calls "the present dilemma in Adventism vis-a-vis Des Ford."

This article is unique in three respects. (1) It explicitly denies but implicitly affirms the existence of "an elite corps of theologians" in the church who comprise an "expertise" in matters of faith and doctrine. (2) It claims that "Ford's right to raise questions and offer solutions without fear of reprisal is an important one for most scholars." (3) It deplors the present state of Adventist theology as "only adequate for a certain level of discussion, the level at which Jehovah's Witnesses and fundamentalists do their work," asserting that "If we do not, so to speak, get our act together theologically, many scholars believe that Adventism will not be a viable option in the twenty-first century for anyone but the most simple-minded. Like the Amish we will be a curiosity with interesting practices that few take seriously."

A Snobbish Scholar Is No Scholar

Londis claims to speak for Adventist scholars, but we believe that the majority of truly learned men among us do not accord with his attitude toward conscientious Adventist youth and our brethren in administrative posts. He speaks disparagingly of "students wet behind the ears theologically and intellectually." He says, "Many church administrators do not feel at home discussing theological issues because they have not had the education preparing them for such discussion." The natural conclusion is, Our young people should keep their mouths shut on theological issues, and our church leaders should submit their decisions on doctrinal questions to our "experts" for final approval. Londis says, "On these occasions when a confrontation with the accuser does not settle the matter, church leadership must arrange for a hearing involving a scholar's peers. People out of their depth in these matters should not be deciding what to do; judgment must be reserved for one's peers and it is up to church leadership to respect and trust such a judgment."

Anyone reading these words cannot help being struck by Londis' academic pride and absolute contempt for his less-educated brethren. This attitude is not the hallmark of a true scholar. The Chinese have a saying that a full canister makes no sound, but one half-full will rattle. And the loudest rattle is this concluding remark: "Give trust and freedom to our scholars, and the uniqueness of Adventist thought may yet shine in all its brightness."

An Imaginary Situation

Londis labors under two misapprehensions: (1) that our scholars have no freedom and are not trusted, and (2) the "uniqueness of Adventist thought" has heretofore never shone in all its brightness, but the new elite corps of modern Adventist theologians, if given trust and freedom, will make it shine at last.

He is talking of an imaginary situation. For Adventist scholars have always been free to choose between truth and error. If any one thinks that Adventism is not the truth, he is free to repudiate it and openly to denounce it, but he should not then call himself an Adventist, or receive Adventist pay to teach non-Adventist doctrines in Adventist schools. Secondly, the "uniqueness of Adventist thought" (this is Londis' nomenclature for what we call the third angel's message) has been a shining light ever since the inception of our movement, but if any man is blinded to its light by a worldly outlook and imagines himself sinking to the depths of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Amish, then we advise him to abandon ship before his fears come true. Face-lifting Adventist theology won't save him.

Londis is most articulate in depreciating the Adventist faith, dubbing it "a patchwork theology that is inappropriate for the main work of the church." He compares it to a "patchwork rug" that fits only in the recreation room. The implication is that this useless article should be scrapped and our theological experts should undertake the "creative, constructive theological task" of weaving a new rug that will fit in the parlor. Just how beautiful this new rug will be is a matter of conjecture, but we can get an inkling of its pattern in these words:

Many scholars will agree that Ford has raised important questions (and he was not the first to do so) that must be addressed with openness and candor, but they will also agree that the theological task arising out of these questions has barely begun. Some believe Ford's proposals are inadequate, even misplaced at times, both in areas of righteousness by faith as well as the sanctuary. They believe that the creative, constructive theological task is in the embryonic stage and that if we don't lose our nerve, Adventism's greatest days of proclamation are in the future.

From these words we gather that, if given opportunity, Londis and his like propose to base their "creative, constructive theological task" on the "important questions" Ford has raised, make up for the "inadequacy" of his proposals, replace the "misplaced" ones and thus break out of the embryonic stage. Not a word is said about combating Ford's errors, because Londis apparently sees no errors in Ford's proposals. On the contrary, they will probably form the embryo of the new Adventist theology and eventually lead up to "Adventism's greatest days of proclamation." By that time the antiquated "rug" we now have will be relegated to the rubbish heap--if Londis' dream comes true.

What Is Theology?

Londis informs us what theology is and what it is not. It is not "merely proving a collection of doctrines from texts of Scripture." (All who do this are simpletons, not theologians.) "Theology is the task of interpreting the will of God for the whole of human existence as we experience it." (This interpreting is the task of experts; and because our pioneers did not have the benefit of such expertise, they failed to interpret the will of God for the whole of human existence as we experience it. The best they could do was to sew a patchwork rug.) Londis says, "Detailing the ritual and furniture of the sanctuary is not theology; it is biblical history. Only when we show how the symbolism of the sanctuary service helps us understand God's will for us now, helps us grasp the reality of his purposes for the whole cosmos, does the work of theology begin."

Impressive verbiage and scholarly, to be sure, but not a word about the three angel's messages and the investigative judgment. (These are just unsightly patches in that old rug.) Here Londis gives us a sampling of what we will be confronted with when and if he and his peers begin "doing theology" for us. We will have to grapple with such vague abstractions as "the whole of human existence" and "the reality of God's purposes for the whole cosmos." A liberal spate of such sophisticated verbosity will perhaps impress other theologians that we are their equals, but the third angel's message will be swamped and finally liquidated by this flood of "words of wisdom."

Who Is Ignorant?

Londis continues his snubbing of the less educated in these words: "It may be possible that the smoke of dissatisfaction is coming from the fires of ignorance." And, "the only reason so many can assume we have all the answers is that they have never heard all the questions!" We call this mystification. And we ask him in return: "Have you heard all the questions? If so, please initiate us into one of them and tell us your answer."

"No," he would say; "if I told you, you would not understand. It is beyond your depth. You are not my peers; I discuss theology only with my peers."

To be frank, we feel chafed and humiliated. But our curiosity will not rest. He has whetted our appetite, so we must probe into these profound questions known only to experts. We insist on discovering just how mystifying they are. Are we indeed so hopelessly ignorant? Yes, Londis says, we should trust our theologians to tackle these problems, "simply because they deal with issues many do not understand." But the more he harps on our ignorance, the more eager we are to try our teeth on what the elite alone claim to comprehend. Doesn't he also say that "theology is the task of the whole church"? How then can the whole church do theology if we are barred from taking part?

Since Londis' remark about "a hearing involving a scholar's peers" has reference to Desmond Ford, we conclude therefrom that he regards himself as one of Ford's peers. For he appreciates the "important questions" Ford has raised. Here we should discover some of the matters too deep for common Adventists to comprehend.

Ford's Depths Plumbed

Scanning through the October 1980 issue of Ministry, we come across a word which strikes us with awe--"apotelesmatic," the "apotelesmatic principle." Indeed, this looks like a term reserved for experts--out of our depth. The magazine explains that "This principle simply means that any given prophecy can have two or more different fulfillments in history." Now let us see how Ford employs it. On page 32 we read:

The above quotations allow for about a dozen possible fulfillments of Daniel 8:14, demonstrating that this text, according to Dr. Ford's manuscript, has come to mean everything from a revival of true religion among the Israelites to the New Jerusalem of the new earth. Its meaning thus becomes so general, and can be reapplied so many times in so many ways, that it can signify almost any good thing in the history of Israel and throughout the history of the church until the end of the millennium! The one exception that Dr. Ford excludes from the apotelesmatic application is a beginning of the investigative judgment in heaven in 1844. The imposition of such a restriction seems quite unwarranted in view of the tolerant attitude toward virtually all other possibilities.

How much true scholarship is manifest in Ford's application of this principle is self-evident. It does not take a "scholar's peer" to recognize the complete lack of sound, honest reasoning in Ford's wild guesswork. We are sadly disappointed. Here we see no wisdom, only folly; no depth, but shallow, irresponsible thinking. Any college sophomore who has read enough history can apply the apotelesmatic principle simply by giving full rein to his imagination and thus become an easy peer of Desmond Ford, or even excel him.

Perhaps we were looking in the wrong place. Let us continue our search for the "important questions" Ford has raised. It is known that he denies that the heavenly sanctuary has two apartments. This is indeed an important question. But strangely enough, in the very next breath he asserts that the "anchor of the soul" of Hebrews 6:19 enters into the second veil. But how can there be a second veil if there is only one apartment? Perhaps he would explain that it is a figurative veil. Yet we read, "whither the forerunner is entered, even Jesus." Jesus is a real person having entered a real veil. Did He enter the first or second veil? Let Ford extricate himself. We can't help him.

Again we are disgusted with the slipshod thinking of this "peer" of Adventist theologians. If Londis, who was present at Glacier View, would seriously consider all the cases of poor methodology in Ford's use of sources, his wild, sweeping assertions and purposeful falsification of evidence (as best exposed in Ralph Larson's "Reply"), Londis would blush to own him as his peer, much less express sympathy for his lost cause. In his zeal to win recognition for the new generation of Adventist theologians, Londis has chosen a poor specimen. When we first stepped into the water to wade across this "Ford," we were fearful of being drowned in its depths, but now we know that we were intimidated by Londis' attempt to magnify the office of our "experts." Actually, the

profoundest thoughts Ford can present are ankle-deep. Who knows Londis hasn't something better up his sleeve? But, I dare say, we'll be no better impressed when and if he ventures to conjure it up.

Too Much Freedom

The fact that many Adventist scholars are still blind to Ford's glaring deceptions proves that it is not safe for our church leadership to trust their judgment in all cases. Are we being too harsh? No. We can easily publish a book to prove our point--by binding in one volume Ford's monumental work on Daniel and his equally monumental 990-page paper attacking Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, and entitle it, "Ford versus Ford." Therein will be portrayed a unique phenomenon--a proud "Adventist theologian" arguing against himself. "What does Ford believe?" you ask. We answer, The 990-page document reveals his true self. His book on Daniel was written by Ford the hypocrite.

The maturing of this super-charlatan among us is the result of too much freedom, not the lack of it. When Ford finished his studies in the University of Manchester in 1972 and placed a copy of his doctoral thesis in the Avondale College library, it contained these words: We have also noticed that many things can be said with certainty regarding what Antichrist is not. He is not any past personage. He belongs to the future and not to history. p. 246

We have noticed also that the lawless one appears only at the end of time." p. 242

Therefore, any interpretation which applies this passage to an individual of past history, or to a succession of such, misses the mark. p. 238

In 1978 Pastors Kent and Burnside published a document entitled "Man of Sin" exposing these false teachings. But the president of the Greater Sydney Conference condemned this document and banned the two pastors from preaching in the churches of his conference. After that the majority of our church leaders were more anxious to guard the reputation of Desmond Ford than to defend the purity of our faith. This attitude resulted in a continued spread of error over two continents.

Experience and history tell us that we should be less indulgent toward scholars who introduce specious errors among us, and give more heed to the voices of warning raised against them. Today it is clear that the church leaders who guaranteed the freedom of Ford to teach error, and denied the freedom of Kent and Burnside to warn our people, were thereby forwarding Satan's cause. If they had lived close to God and were keen to detect error and prompt to combat it, they could have saved themselves the agony of facing the hisses and the boos of Fordite rowdies in 1980 (when the Glacier View decision was announced), and God's people would not be so badly torn asunder.

Obviously Londis' plea for more freedom for our scholars is emphasis misplaced. The most pressing issue we face today is not academic freedom, but doctrinal purity. We need to heighten our vigilance and contend more earnestly and effectively for the faith once delivered to the saints. Any man among us--be he scholar, crackpot, or charlatan--who would attack the fundamentals of our faith should meet with prompt repudiation. We must not give our scholars freedom to attack us and deny ourselves the freedom to counterattack. On the contrary, enemies of the truth who hit us must be hit back and hit hard. The activities of Ford's sympathizers among us must not proceed unchallenged.

To all who appreciate the beauty of the truths entrusted to us, the Adventist faith is a pearl of great price. The value of a pearl lies in its natural beauty. Any attempt to embellish it artificially will only mar its luster. We say, "Hands off!" We will have our pearl just as God gave it, and will fight with tooth and nail to protect it from adulteration.

Toleration Out of Place

A common trait of most scholars is academic tolerance. It is their credo to be objective and to judge everything from a detached viewpoint. This stance may be

required in scientific research, but it is a fatal attitude for those preaching the gospel of salvation. We cannot detach ourselves from our message and take a neutral stand in matters of doctrine. Some of the men who took part in the Glacier View meeting apparently adopted this "scholarly" attitude and even now hesitate to say that Ford is in error, though many of his falsehoods are so glaring that any Adventist layman cannot help seeing them.

It is precisely this tendency to be tolerant which benumbs the sensitivity of many scholars to the encroachment of dangerous errors among us. Their contact with philosophies of every shade has the subtle effect of confusing their senses so that they say with Pilate, "What is truth?" In the halls of higher learning a firm stand on any point of religious belief is often regarded as bigotry, and our scholars take care to avoid this stigma. Before they are aware, they are sipping the wine of Babylon and find it actually exhilarating. They become adept at verbal embroidery which often serves to obscure the truth instead of clarifying it. They feel ashamed of the simplicity of the Advent message. They itch for a chance to revamp our theology and make it more presentable to the great theologians of popular churches. And because Des Ford was actively working along this line, they deplore his dismissal. It is this viewpoint which unfits many scholars to be dependable judges of their peers. Hence our church leaders must not wholly trust them in making their decisions.

Yet in the meeting at Glacier View our church administrators did arrange for a hearing involving a scholar's peers. Most of the 120 committee members were highly competent scholars, and the contents of the October 1980 Ministry were prepared by able theologians. Moreover, since none of the church leaders who participated in this confrontation were "out of their depth in these matters," they had every right to decide what to do. Judgment cannot be reserved for a scholar's peers; these decisions should be made by the men appointed by our constituency to make them.

Save Our "Rug" or Change It?

We repudiate Londis' assertion that "right now we have a patchwork theology that is inappropriate for the main work of the church." He calls on us to be learners in theological matters and not presume to know it all. He says, "Humility is a virtue even in theology." But the example he gives us is not humility, but rank conceit, proving thereby that his brand of theology has failed to cultivate this virtue in him. However, he is quite humble when confronting the "giants" of Methodist theology, before whom he feels like a grasshopper. Hear him rave about them: "I venture to say that those holding such an opinion have never discussed Adventist beliefs with a well-trained, thoroughly informed non-Adventist biblical scholar."

Londis draws a sharp line between what he calls the "theological community" and "church leadership," thereby denying that there are theologians among our church leaders, who he thinks "should not be deciding what to do," because they are "people ill-equipped." Probably his idea of a well-equipped person is a theologian like Desmond Ford, and it would have pleased him well if Ford had won the bout and taken over church leadership.

It is disturbing to see this new development among us. Thirty years ago there was no talk about constructing "a truly comprehensive, adequate Adventist theology." Londis implies by this suggestion that our beliefs at present are neither comprehensive nor adequate, because our predecessors knew nothing of theology, so we have been shifting along all these years with a "patchwork theology" that bears no comparison with the highly sophisticated theology of larger denominations. Consequently Londis and his like, who are the only ones equipped to overhaul our theology, propose to give us a new look of respectability, so that when we step into the twenty-first century we will be found in good company.

We beg to advise this dear brother that his concern for the future of Adventism is ill-founded. A man so embarrassed with our shameful "rug" had best forsake this "Amish" curiosity altogether and waste no more time vainly imagining how he might make improvements on God's handiwork. For "Every word of God is pure. . . . Add thou not unto His words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Proverbs 30:5-6. Whoever is enamored with the erudition of worldly scholars is free to prostrate himself before them and be their disciple. But we will pray for power to deliver God's message just as He gave it: not in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. We care not what men of the world may think of us. Our only concern is to carry Christ's gospel to all the world, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us.

Says the apostle, "Having begun in the Spirit, are we now made perfect by the flesh?" Can modern scholarship remake Adventism into something better than the Holy Spirit has fashioned? We think not. In fact we know that events will work out in line with God's purpose to choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

God works through those who hear and obey His voice, those who will, if need be, speak unpalatable truths, those who do not fear to reprove popular sins. The reason why He does not oftener choose men of learning and high position to lead out in reform movements, is that they trust to their creeds, theories, and theological systems, and feel no need to be taught of God. Only those who have a personal connection with the Source of wisdom are able to understand or explain the Scriptures. Men who have little of the learning of the schools are sometimes called to declare the truth, not because they are unlearned, but because they are not too self-sufficient to be taught of God. They learn in the school of Christ, and their humility and obedience make them great. In committing to them a knowledge of His truth, God confers upon them an honor, in comparison with which earthly honor and human greatness sink into insignificance. The Great Controversy, 455-456

Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Ibid

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. Ibid.

More Smoke to Rise

Events are shaping up as the prophetess has foreseen. Men honest enough to declare themselves no longer able to agree with us leave our ranks of their own accord. Then there are those who no longer believe the Advent message but have no prospect of striking roots outside our organization. They are worried over the "smoke of dissatisfaction" which hangs like a cloud over their heads. In the wake of the Ford crisis, it appears to them that a "witch hunt" is under way, and they might any day be ferreted out as "heretics." Hence this complaint about "students wet behind the ears" writing letters about questionable college professors, thereby placing them in "a precarious

position." "Or pastors, attending the Seminary for the first time after years in the field, feel like fish out of water and conclude there must be something wrong with the water rather than the fish." In this way Londis writes at length about "complaints from the field," "teachers left defenseless," "a place as important as the Seminary," and demanding that a professor be "allowed to face his accusers." We get a picture of an energetic "field army" aroused by the Ford crisis engaged in "mopping-up operations."

All this agitation and unrest is quite understandable after what took place at Glacier View. It is not as Londis would have it. His idea is to have an elite corps of theologians at the helm of the boat as "resource persons to help the church do theology." He calls them "servants of the church" who "deserve appreciation for their expertise." But they talk a professional language not understood by the laity, whose part, therefore, is to sit at their feet and admire their "broader conception of theology." Then "there would be a clear understanding of where the theologians are in relationship to the present dilemma in Adventism vis-a-vis Des Ford." You see, the Ford issue is a dilemma as yet unsettled, and will be resolved only when we all learn to "do theology." The intimation is, after we have done theology, this dilemma will be settled in quite another way--apparently to the satisfaction of Ford's peers.

But now Londis deplures that things are working against him. The Ford "dilemma" is becoming his dilemma and the dilemma of all who lament Ford's departure. The youth, laity, and pastors who should submit meekly to these theological "experts" are most disrespectful, and are misbehaving. Londis calls it "lack of appreciation for theology," and he says it "grows partly out of our ignorance of what it is." Again it is our ignorance! You can almost hear him muttering in exasperation, "This people who knoweth not the law are cursed!" John 7:49

Yet the historical fact is that, generally speaking, the so-called "experts" in our institutions of higher learning represent the least sensitive sector of our church. By this we mean sensitivity to doctrinal errors. As pointed out, this insensitivity is concomitant with their scholastic approach and tolerant attitude toward the various schools of thought encountered in years of academic training. They are in the habit of thinking objectively and are conditioned to coexist peacefully with many conflicting "isms."

On the other hand, what is the most sensitive sector? History tells us that it is the men and women in the field. Years before any of our church leaders had any suspicion that Des Ford was teaching error, many voices were raised here and there to warn God's people against this wolf in sheep's clothing. Did any of these voices come from the Seminary or any of our institutions of higher learning? The officially appointed watchmen on the walls of Zion were not the first to sound the warning. Slowly and phlegmatically, they eventually responded--but only after much damage had been done. In Australia our buglers flurried to change the tune from "taps" to "reveille," when all were already up and stirring.

History continues to speak: the least sensitive sector is also the most seriously infected. "Birds of a feather flock together." Des Ford called himself a theologian, and some of our theologians still own him as their peer. Londis' article is an example. The fact that such an article can be published in Takoma Park and applauded by many readers, indicates the seriousness of the situation.

Where then does the hope of our church lie? It lies with all who live close to God and trust not in their own wisdom and learning. They may be "students wet behind the ears;" they may be a group of retired workers living in obscurity; they may be a few lone missionaries in some distant field. They are bold to speak up in God's name against the errors endangering His church. These do not hesitate to throw a "javelin" at the Zimris and Cozbis (Numbers, chapter 25) who are bold to defy God and work folly in Israel.

They represent a positive factor in our work on which God can count to initiate a much needed reform.

"Let Them Return unto Thee"

Londis complains that Adventists appear arrogant, because we claim to be God's true remnant people. Now in order not to be "arrogant," shall we relinquish this claim? No, that would be a denial of God's Word, for "in the book it is written of" us. We are God's commandment-keeping people and bear the seal of sanctification--His holy Sabbath. God says to us, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them." Jeremiah 15:19

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is chosen of God to be as His mouth. But He tells us first to "take forth the precious from the vile." Our theology must be pure--free from the vile embellishments of worldly chatter. And when in watchful prayer we are assured that God is with us and is speaking through us, we will stand our ground and make no concessions to please the wise men of the world. God has commanded: "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them." And they will return to us, if we obey God's voice.

Conscientious souls in the popular churches will respond to our call to "come out of Babylon" when they see that God is with us. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Zechariah 8:23

Yes! Our all-consuming desire is--to have God with us!

David Lin

August 12, 1981

Chapter 7

AT THE CROSSROADS

ADVENTISM is at the crossroads. Ever since its inception, the Advent movement has been the object of attack by enemies without and foes within. And now the struggle is headed for a dramatic but heartrending showdown. In our church there have always been divergent roads. In faith and doctrine one road leads to obedience, the other to rebellion. In institutional policy one road adheres to the divine blueprint, the other copies worldly patterns. In church administration one road follows God's counsel, the other trusts to human devising.

Downward Trend

It is a historical fact that though we have grown in numbers, we have veered away spiritually from the upward road toward the downward one. In the day of small beginnings we were warned against building mammoth institutions and centralization. But we acted against the heavenly counsel, and today we derive a false sense of prosperity and respectability from our material wealth and physical dimensions, which tends to blind us to our spiritual poverty. We were also warned not to follow worldly policy in our educational system, but our efforts to comply with popular academic standards have eclipsed the original emphasis on restoring in man the image of his Maker. The seed sown through the years is now yielding a harvest of modernist thinking in our theological departments. For all this deviance we as a people are collectively responsible, and need to repent and to mend our ways. Otherwise we cannot expect to receive the full blessing of God promised to the obedient. And in our efforts to defend the gift of prophecy against the attacks of our opponents we find ourselves in a disadvantageous position in that we must confess our failure to follow its counsel.

One Redeeming Factor

It has been observed that the development of our history has followed the pattern of all religious movements--each new generation departing one further step away from the standards of their fathers. But we note one redeeming factor in our history--the guiding and steadying influence of the gift of prophecy. The result is a decided reaction against departing from our standards. Many men and women refuse to compromise the principles of our faith, resulting in a clash of thought, and the great shaking foretold by our prophet.

The writer has before him two examples of this clash. One is the item in the Canadian Union College student news (November 15, 1980, issue of Aurora) reporting the Kinship Kampmeeting of Seventh-day Adventist homosexuals graced by the presence of six official representatives of the Adventist Church. The other is an article on page 9 of the July 1980 Signs, which says: "Have you heard of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? Homosexuality was so openly practiced in both of them that judgment could no longer be delayed."

Two opposite stands on homosexuality in our church! If Seventh-day Adventist leadership indeed endorses this crime (we hope not!), then the Signs editor will be dismissed. By that time we shall have parted at the crossroads; and we may be sure judgment will not be long delayed.

The Devil's Tactics

In developments of the past we can trace the devil's war tactics. He employs many schemes to defeat the purposes of God. Here we name five:

Worldly Inundation. This tactic has been effective ever since the first century. James 2 rebukes the church for showing deference to the rich and despising the poor. 1 Corinthians 5 is Paul's reproof to the church for being indifferent to "fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles."

Worldly influences are more powerful today than in early centuries, because the attractions in our modern playgrounds are more enchanting. Every faithful shepherd of God's flock must guard our youth against corrupting influences by teaching them to trust God for power to resist temptation. Pastors themselves must first gain the victory over the subtle influences of the world, and then do their best to turn the attention of our youth to heavenly realities and organize them to work for lost souls. They may thus realize the promise, "He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Modern sex education for adolescents has produced a generation of sex-hardened youth who know more than is expedient. The sensitive minds of teenagers are often defiled by early knowledge of all forms of sex crimes so as to make a healthy spiritual experience difficult if not impossible to attain. There has been an overemphasis on the "sublime" significance of procreation and a following after the Freudian philosophy of free association as opposed to sex repression, resulting in abnormal preoccupation with sex among the youth. We should teach them that sex is primarily an animal instinct always to be kept subordinate to spiritual interests. If we reverse the two, we will drop to the level of rats and guinea pigs, who live only to eat and reproduce. But we must strive to rise above the animal nature and to develop our spiritual potentialities. For in the image of God were we made. Therefore the pastor's work is to teach our youth to pray effectually, and to hold up before them such noble examples as Joseph and Daniel, and to use such simple illustrations as the water lily growing out of the mire, to encourage the young to lead unsullied lives in the midst of moral corruption.

We should not follow sex education programs of men who know not God. Our philosophy holds that man in his fallen state must cope with perverted appetites, including abnormal sex urges, which must be held in check by an intelligence educated in Christian standards of purity. Self-respect, and honor for the opposite sex call for the constant exercise of self-control. This struggle is lifelong. Said God to Cain, "If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." To fill the mind with God's Word, to persist in earnest prayer, and to put our energies to the work of soul-saving is the best way to develop self-mastery.

Lullaby Sermons. Sermons in our pulpits and publications should not gloss over disagreeable facts and ignore pressing issues. We must face every problem candidly and seek God's counsel. The present state of ferment in our church causes disquiet among our leaders. Fearing to aggravate the situation, they try to hush things up. But the truth, however unpleasant, must not be concealed. God's command in every time of crisis is to "meet it" and work for a showdown by issuing the cry, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Exodus 32:26. Every man must take his stand for or against.

The first great showdown occurred in heaven. When Lucifer rebelled, God did not simply excommunicate him. No, He threw the matter open for debate until every angel saw the issue clearly and took his stand on the side of his choice. The time came when every one stood up to be counted. Then "there was war in heaven." God did not hide the truth and let things glide. No, He let every angel face the facts and take part in the war. Today, now that the struggle has begun, let every man and woman study the facts, search the Scriptures, know the truth, and fight in its defense. Our participation in the conflict will develop our characters and fit us for greater trials to come. Then quit you like men and fight the battles of the Lord!

Shifting Sands. The devil leads thousands away by helping them build their houses on the shifting sands of popular preachers. Robert Brinsmead is an example. In the days of the "wakening" (circa 1960) many pious souls responded to his message and received a blessing. Since Brinsmead was apparently sincere and loved the truth, he gained a good following. But like King Saul of old, the subtle influence of being flattered by a

throng of admirers had the effect of making him trust his own wisdom instead of the Holy Spirit. This drift in a preacher's thinking resulted in a shift in his theology. His attempt to shed new light on old truths by incorporating "original sin" into his interpretation of the sanctuary rites led him away step by step from the foundations of the Advent message. But few saw where he was drifting. As late as 1972, in his book, *The Battle for the Mind*, he still wrote on page 75: "The church's first great sin was to reject the law of God and the truth of the Bible Sabbath." Now in 1981 he himself commits what he once called a "great sin"--a complete about-face in nine years. We call this "shifting sands."

Let all therefore be careful about admiring any man "of pleasing address" and "godly mien" without judging the content of his messages. Today many Adventists still believe in Desmond Ford despite his open attacks on our fundamental beliefs because, they say, he is a "Christian gentleman." "See how forgiving he is!" They admire him even though he has, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, drawn thousands of children away. Can it be that more will be lured into perdition? Are we so easily charmed by "magnetic" personalities as to swallow any doctrine they teach? If so, our feet are planted on shifting sands, and if we do not wake up in time, we will go down with Ford in a landslide.

Disorganization. Satan is determined to bring confusion and division into our ranks. Many centrifugal forces are already at work, threatening to disorganize God's work. We who love the Lord and are jealous for His honor should not voluntarily leave His organized church, much less set up another organization. But we should speak up for the truth, and not suffer sin and error to exist among us. If we cannot effectively right the wrongs in our church, we should at least sigh and cry in protest to put ourselves on record as abhorring our own sins and opposed to the abominations committed by others. If we are indolent and give mute assent to iniquity, the Lord will hold us guilty. And it is our duty to pray. Said Samuel to the people, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way."

Defeatist Messages. A man's actions are directed by his thoughts. When a soldier enters a battle expecting defeat, then he will certainly lose the fight. For he has already lost his morale--the will to fight. Today some of our preachers are destroying the morale of our people by delivering defeatist messages. They assume a "realistic" stance and say it is hopeless to strive for perfection. They virtually tell the tempted soul to yield to Satan's power. They ask, "Who can truly keep God's law?" "How many of us here are perfect?" "Who reflects the image of Jesus fully?" These questions coming from the lips of Adventist preachers echo the devil's taunts, like Rabshakeh's speech by the walls of Jerusalem, shaking the faith of the people in God's power to deliver from sin.

That was not the way Jesus preached. His was always a positive message: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Likewise, Paul taught us to leave the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" and "go on unto perfection." In every congregation there are souls hard pressed, struggling with discouragement, passion, and doubt. They expect help from the preacher, whose sermon will tip the scales for victory or for defeat. If he tells them it is no use struggling against sin because they can't be perfect anyway, then these souls will capitulate to the tempter, but their blood will God require at his hand. If he repeats the promises of God and encourages every struggling soul to lay hold on His strength, that will be just what is needed to revive the fainting soul and encourage him to fight on in God's strength.

God forbid that any of us should unwittingly become the devil's assistants! Let us always speak courage and draw with Christ. True, none of us can boast of perfection, but these words of our Lord must be our constant incentive: "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his throne." Ellen White encourages us with these words: "We can overcome. Yes, fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome

every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him." Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 144

Why not? When Jesus made those promises to the overcomer, was He expecting us to do the impossible? If so, then we may say with Satan that God makes unreasonable demands. But no! Whatever God commands, He gives us strength to obey. "All His biddings are enablings." Let us not dwell on the unrelenting struggle between the flesh and the Spirit and stop with the words, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The defeatist harps on this verse as an excuse for self-indulgence. But the aggressive Christian takes hold of Paul's positive conclusion: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." Galatians 5:24 NIV. "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

In studying the epistles of Paul we must catch the contagion of the aggressive spirit of this Christian warrior. He recognized the perverted character of our sinful nature and said, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Romans 7:18. He did not give in to this fallen nature, but made war with it. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Corinthians 9:27

What was the secret of Paul's power and success? Was it his academic training under Gamaliel? No, he repudiated that in the words "What was gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." Paul was successful in his struggle with sin only as he gave himself unreservedly to the work of God. He was constantly sustained and empowered by the Holy Spirit to fight on in the face of mounting odds. He flinched at nothing, for God's impelling might was in him. "Whereunto I also labor," he said, "striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Colossians 1:29. Only such mighty workings of the Spirit can enable us to preach, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Colossians 1:28

"New Light" from Old Sparks

Desmond Ford claims to have new light. But since it is contrary to the light we already have, it is not light but darkness. An examination of Ford's writings will reveal a mixture of incongruous statements which are mutually exclusive and defy systematic study. We cite three examples:

Ford denies there are two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary, but asserts that the "anchor of the soul" of Hebrews 6:19 enters the second veil. Now if there is a second veil, there must be a second apartment. But no, he says, there is only one apartment. That is the unique logic of his "new theology."

Ford says that God's original plan was for Christ to return in the first century, and then let Antichrist appear in or after the twentieth century. Here are his own words: "The whole weight of New Testament testimony is that God's ideal plan was that Jesus should return in the first century A.D. . . . This is clearly taught from Matthew to Revelation." Ford MS, 295. Then in his doctoral thesis of 1972 he wrote that Antichrist "is not any past personage. He belongs to the future and not to history." Now all are agreed that Antichrist, as foretold in 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12 by Paul, was to appear before the second advent of Christ. But since Ford says the Advent has been delayed for nineteen centuries, then it would be natural to suppose the coming of Antichrist will also be postponed till after the thirty-ninth century. Or does Ford mean to say that the Advent which was originally planned by God for the first century was put off until the twentieth century so as to make it occur after the appearance of Antichrist whose coming will not be postponed? Thus we have this ray of "new light:" The devil arrives on time, but Jesus is late by 2000 years. Ford will perhaps complain we are "wresting" his words. Then

please let him make himself clear--why God originally planned for Christ to return in the first century, and Antichrist to appear 2000 years later. Or perhaps 4000 years later?

V Ford repeatedly quotes the words of Ellen White in support of his erroneous views, then turns around and says, "Ellen G. White is not our authority." Ford MS, 623. And he tries to show how she was mistaken, thus pulling the planks from his own platform. It is indeed strange to see this doctor of theology blowing hot and cold at the same time. In his latest book (published in 1980), *Physicians of the Soul*, he writes a whole chapter on his "Encounter with a Modern Prophet." Then in his 990-page paper he presents many arguments to prove that Ellen White was not a prophet. And so on.

In summary we can confidently say that Ford's purpose is not to work out an orderly system of theology, but simply to destroy the Advent faith. And in this vain attempt he has thrown himself into confusion. Is it not strange that there are sane and sensible people today who still believe that Ford has "new light"? Says the Lord, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." Isaiah 50:11

The Outstretched Rod

Exodus 17 recites the battle of Israel with Amalek. Moses stood on a hill with his rod outstretched. "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." This lesson is for our leaders. They must keep their hands stretched out in prayer, or we will lose our battle against the forces of sin. Aaron and Hur represent our working force who must hold up the arms of our leaders.

What is the mystic but very real connection between the outstretched rod and the battlefield? It existed then, and it exists today. When leadership is possessed by the spirit of prayer and supplication, the forces of "Amalek" are pushed back, but if leadership forgets to seek the Lord and is content to thrash out every problem in committee sessions, we will suffer defeat. Pray then, my brethren; ask God for the gift of prevailing prayer. Yes, the Spirit that intercedes for us by unutterable groanings is itself a gift from God. It is symbolized by the outstretched rod which brings victory.

Any church leader who thinks that he can work without agonizing in prayer is inviting defeat. He is living on a spiritual plane lower than many lay members. How then can he lead them? This sobering truth came home to the writer when he met a sister who lived a truly abundant prayer life. She knew her Lord because she ceased not to pray, and in time of crisis she spends a whole night on her knees praying for others. Today there are many intellectual giants among us, but most of them will realize they are but spiritual dwarfs when they come into the presence of a real praying saint. We should also realize that God can always use a praying saint who may be unlearned, but He has no good use for a learned man who does not pray.

For Their Sakes

Moses' rod was outstretched with but one goal in mind--that Israel might prevail. This fact recalls the words of Christ: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth." To have a holy people, leadership must first be holy. The converse is also true: If leadership is not sanctified in the truth, the people they lead cannot possibly be sanctified. That is why Christ did everything "for their sakes." When the Spirit takes these three words and drives them home to the hearts of our leaders, they should realize anew the tremendous weight of responsibility resting on them and fall down on their knees to plead with strong crying and bitter tears. When in persistent prayer we climb the heights of Rephidim and get a full view of the battlefield--the

advances and the setbacks of God's people in their life-and-death struggle with Amalek-- we will never let go the arm of the Lord until total victory is won.

God is testing us today to see who will come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Not that He is in need of assistance, but "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:35. He did it in heaven; He is doing it now on this earth.

Pity the Stragglers

"Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary." Deuteronomy 25:18. This tactic is another of the devil's devices. And who are the "hindmost" and the "feeble, faint, and weary" ones?

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. . . . When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. . . . 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. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 707

When the shaking comes by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. Testimonies to Ministers, 112

There are some, who having served all their lives in the Advent cause, take their faith for granted and suppose they know the truth, but because they do not prayerfully search the Scriptures for a firsthand knowledge of our beliefs, they are easily shaken-- they do not see anything wrong with Ford's "new theology," and even think it is the truth. Such stragglers will easily fall under "Amalekite" attack. Even now in the midst of the crisis these "hindmost" ones still take no time or thought to examine all the scriptural evidence cited against the modernist errors, but are content with general impressions and friendly sentiments. "Ford is a good man; I like him." "Ford's preaching is super; I'll bank on him any time." "He takes a beating in such a sweet spirit--impresses me as a real Christian." "You shouldn't say those nasty things of him." Such surface readers will even stand up in defense of the devil himself and admire that "angel of light."

A church member who is too indolent to search the Scriptures prayerfully, but willingly yields his judgment in favor of a preacher who impresses him as a dependable authority on gospel truth, is committing the same error as the Catholic devotee who invests his eternal interests in the person of the priest. Let us be reminded that Jesus is our great High Priest, and every Seventh-day Adventist should be a priest, for we are a "royal priesthood." Only as a Seventh-day Adventist acquaints himself with the present truth and can explain it to others, has he any chance of coming through safely in the great shaking that is taking place among us.

Open War

It is now clear as daylight that the Brinsmead-Paxton-Ford-Rea coalition is out to destroy our church and the truth we love. Can any of us still be deceived by their honeyed words, sophisticated jargon and rabid tirades? Some well-meaning souls feel we should not mention names when speaking of our enemies. It is not charitable, they say. But Paul mentioned Hymenaeus and Philetus by name, "who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." 2 Timothy 2:18. John the Beloved wrote of "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them . . . prating against us with malicious words." 3 John 9-10. We mention our enemies by name and declare open war with them, not because we have any personal grudge, but because they attack the truth we love. To spare the Lord's

enemies is to betray His cause. We must not only love what He loves, but also hate what He hates. Said the psalmist, "Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." Psalm 139:21-22

Our enemies certainly have no scruples about mentioning us by name, nor about calling Ellen White a liar. Why should we fear to mention them by name? It is our duty to unmask all the deceptive practices of these agents of the archdeceiver, so that none of our people will continue to cherish sentimental feelings for them.

We are in the war which began in heaven and will be finished on this earth. Its far-reaching consequences outweigh the combined effects of all the military engagements in world history, because it decides the salvation or perdition of millions of souls for eternity. The French have a saying, "la guerre comme la guerre." A war ought to be fought as a war. We are warriors engaged in a life-and-death struggle, not children playing a parlor game.

Says our fighting prophet, "What a battle I am obliged to fight! . . . All the oppositions or gainsaying to make my testimony of none effect only compels from me, by the urgency of the Spirit of God, a more decided repetition, and to stand on the light revealed with all the force of the strength God has given me." MS 25, 1890. "I am to meet the danger positively, denying the right of anyone to use my writings to serve the devil's purpose to allure and deceive the people of God. God has spared my life that I may present the testimonies given me, to vindicate that which God vindicates, and to denounce every vestige of Satan's sophistry. One thing will follow another in spiritual sophistry, to deceive if possible the very elect." MS 126, 1905. "The greatest tirade may be made against me, but it will not change in the least my mission or my work." MS 29, 1897

Surprises to Come

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. . . . God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins into His own hand. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Testimonies to Ministers, 300

This prophecy is now being fulfilled in this part of the world. Stories of child preachers here and there recall the days of the Advent awakening in Scandinavia. Another story tells of three maidens who banded together to evangelize the countryside, strictly following Jesus' instruction, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat." They had received no formal training, yet they preached the gospel with power, raising up many companies of believers in the villages as they travelled on foot.

An Adventist grade-school teacher who knew only the rudiments of the gospel message had a dream in which she saw the three angels' messages appear in shining words. Upon awaking, she told her son to turn to the text and see if she had it right, and to his surprise she repeated the whole message without a hitch! She had never memorized this text before, but now the Lord branded it on her mind and sent her out to proclaim it. Yes, in the absence of doctors of theology God can use grade-school teachers to spread His word. "Simple means" to make us wonder. When you simply and solemnly repeat the words, "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," this message has a powerful effect on all who hear it, because the Spirit of God attends its proclamation. You do not have to embellish it with learned expositions. Every word pierces the heart like so many bolts from Heaven. Yes, God

designed it so. And when time comes to preach the second and the third angels' messages, the shaping of events will provide the needed background so that a simple explanation will make the sincere seeker for truth obey God's voice.

Another woman once dreamed of being gored into the water by a horned beast. When she was about to drown, a man rescued her and told her his name was Lee Ho. She woke up and went around looking for a man named Lee Ho, but he was not to be found. One day she met an old woman called Aunt Lee, a vendor of ice suckers who rested on Saturdays. She asked her why she rested on Saturdays. After giving her a simple answer, Aunt Lee sent her boy to call Aunt Ho, who could explain the truth from the Bible. The woman then knew that the Lord had led her to find these two old women--Aunts Lee and Ho--to teach her to keep His Sabbath. So she gladly obeyed. Another "simple means" which tells us that God is taking the reins into His own hands.

So you see, God will use old women, grade-school teachers, young maidens, and even children to finish His work, bypassing all who are too worldly-wise to be useful. Let us remember that Seventh-day Adventists exist for the purpose of proclaiming the three angels' messages. Our work is not to invent some new theological system or try to match our wisdom against that of the wise men of the world. Like John the Baptist, we are to be a voice in the wilderness calling the world to obedience. We must never lose sight of this mission. May God's Sabbaath truth be branded on our minds in words of fire and issue from our mouths like polished shafts into the hearts of men. For it is God's message for this hour.

The Great Divide

"Behold, this is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." Luke 2:34. The destiny of every soul will soon be decided for life or for death--by his own choice. We must solemnly warn our people that whoever follows this deceptive "new light," will sink deeper and deeper into darkness and end up outside the gates of the holy city with "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Standing now at the Great Divide, we say with Joshua: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Chapter 8

The 98% Solution

FOR a Seventh-day Adventist minister to claim that he has new light for our people is exciting to say the least, and every Adventist interested in God's Word should investigate the validity of such a claim. The present writer has made a preliminary study of Desmond Ford's teachings based on his recorded talk of October 27, 1979, and his summary, "Daniel and the Day of Atonement," as published in Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2. A number of papers refuting Ford's position have also been consulted.

High-Pressure Salesmanship

The first impression one gains after hearing Ford's address is that he is a high-power salesman trying to sell you his ideas by employing all the tricks of his trade. His is not the cautious approach of a scholar, but the authoritarian style of the dogmatist, using the familiar address of the man on the street. He tells you that a point he has made is "plain as the nose on your face," and that the way some people make use of Ellen White's writings "would make her hair stand on end."

He is cocksure, because he seems to feel that the thirty years' prestige he has built up will see him through any difficulty his questionable views may lead to, and most of his hearers will be gullible enough to swallow every word he says. He apparently did not expect that such people as Ralph Larson and William Shea would take pains to check a few facts and show how he has been bluffing.

Friend or Enemy?

Desmond Ford speaks and writes in yeas and nays, making us wonder whether he is friend or foe. We may liken him to a man who says to his wife, "Darling, you are perfectly wonderful, but I regret that I don't love you any more. Yet don't misunderstand me--I love you just the same."

Now if his wife is in her right mind, she will put no stock in his profession of love, but will be alarmed by his expressions of estrangement. A truly enthusiastic lover just does not talk that way.

In like manner, Ford first cites an imposing array of prominent Adventists who have expressed their doubts regarding the investigative judgment. This gambit puts us on the alert: Is Ford a sympathizer of Ballenger et alii? We begin to wonder. But then he pauses to avow his loyalty to the Church. He says,

Let me state my convictions, my personal convictions, before I go any further. I believe in a pre-advent judgment with every man's destiny settled before the coming of Christ. I believe the Day of Atonement has a special application to Christ's last work as prefigured by the work in the second apartment. I believe the Seventh-day Adventist movement was raised up in 1844 by God to do a special work, and that to it was restored the gift of prophecy in the person of E. G. White.

This statement is quite reassuring; our apprehensions are dispelled, and we settle down in our pews to listen to the words of an "orthodox" Adventist preacher. We are again in a receptive state of mind, so that Ford can begin his next barrage of attacks against basic Adventist beliefs. Having affirmed his faith in the gift of prophecy, Ford now proceeds to use Ellen White's writings to "prove" that "The New Testament knows nothing about a veil in the heavenly temple." He cites a passage from her writings and says,

And please note that Ellen White here and in many other places is a rebel. The greatest rebel we've ever had among us was Ellen White. Praise God! No other Adventist writer would have dared to write some of the things she wrote. I'm glad she wrote them. . . . I marvel at the way Ellen White goes right against Adventist traditions, right against some things apparently she had written herself.

After professing faith in the gift of prophecy, Ford tries to place Ellen White on his side in opposition to Adventist traditions. She was the "greatest rebel;" therefore he is justified in being a lesser one. Moreover, she was guilty of going against some things she herself had written; therefore he can naturally do the same.

Coming back to the illustration of the double-minded husband, we must say that we are not deceived by Ford's professions of loyalty, because a truly loyal Adventist just does not talk that way. We can see that Ford's attacks against our fundamental teachings represent his true self. All his sweet words are mere eyewash. Thus we conclude that he is not our friend, but our enemy.

Deceptive Tactics

The Chinese have a saying that deception is acceptable in warfare. That is true in military science. But in the war between Christ and Satan, the devil alone practices deception; Christ employs only honest tactics. He cannot deny Himself. When a professed Adventist resorts to deception to propagate "new light," we may thereby conclude that he is not sent of God, but is an emissary of the evil one. Now let us proceed to examine a few more deceptive methods employed by Ford to prosecute his warfare against the "they" Adventists, as he often calls us in his Forum talk.

We are indebted to Ralph Larson's paper, My Reply, for some examples of falsification of evidence found in Ford's presentation. Larson rightly concludes that Ford is a creator of theological fiction which meets the appetite of some readers.

In an attempt to demolish the entire structure of William Miller's calculation of Daniel's 70 weeks, Ford says, "The date of 457 B.C. for the seventh year of Artaxerxes (is) still a matter of considerable dispute." Dr. Shea points out, however, that "the date of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I is not a matter of considerable dispute. It has been fixed through four lines of chronological evidence." And then he proceeds to cite them. It is another example of Ford trying to palm off false statements on his audience under the assumption that they will not take the trouble to check on their truthfulness.

A third instance of Ford's dishonest theology is found in his treatment of Josiah Litch's interpretation of Revelation 9:15. He says: But, my friends, Josiah Litch was wrong. The day he chose to begin the prophecy was years out; he forgot about the dropping out of days in the calendar change. He didn't understand what the text was saying anyway. The text in Revelation spoke about the hour, day, month and year. It's not a period at all; it's a point and every Greek scholar in the world knows it. And The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary knows it too, so they put a special note in the Commentary saying, "Because of difficulties in the Greek, and our smallness of space, we will not enlarge upon the problem" (laughter). Now I've caricatured it a little and hope you'll read it for yourselves. Ellen White's endorsement of Litch was not correct. Litch was wrong, absolutely wrong.

Here we have an outstanding example of falsification, bluffing, and arbitrary denunciation, employed to enhance Ford's image as an authority on theology and to downgrade Ellen White's role as a messenger of God. Deliberate falsification is evident in Ford's attempt to create the impression that The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary knows that Litch was wrong and is so embarrassed as to refrain from elaborating on it on the pretext of lack of space. Is that true? No, that is not true.

The Commentary devotes more than a full page of special comment on Revelation 9:15, totalling some 1000 words, presenting the details of Litch's interpretation, and closing with the words, "Generally speaking, the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets, particularly as touching the time period involved, is essentially that of Josiah Litch." It does not even mention the view advocated by Ford, but admits the existence of divergent interpretations in these words:

It should be made clear, however, that commentators and theologians in general have been greatly divided over the meaning of the fifth and sixth trumpets. This has been due principally to problems in three areas: (1) the meaning of the symbolism itself; (2) the meaning of the Greek; (3) the historical events and dates involved. But to canvass adequately these problems would carry us beyond the space limits permissible in this commentary.

A perusal of this passage gives us an impression quite different from what Ford tried to make it to appear. Why did he venture to make this sweeping denunciation of Litch's interpretation and seek to enlist the aid of "every Greek scholar in the world" and The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary? Because he was bent on exploding the year-day principle and putting Ellen White in the position of having endorsed an "absolutely wrong" view. The laughter which followed his remarks about The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary being embarrassed by Litch's "wrong" view reveals that his malicious caricature had the desired effect.

We must point out that for a dignified doctor of theology to stoop to such mean tactics is a denial of his sacred office, and incompatible with the spirit of true scholarship. We state further that a truly conscientious scholar is usually reluctant to employ absolutes and superlatives in denouncing the views of others, especially when he himself has nothing better to offer in their place. To say that Litch was absolutely wrong, Ford should come up with an absolutely right view; otherwise he would reveal himself to be a mere wrecker, not a builder.

Was Josiah Litch Really Wrong?

Ford has prepared a book, yet unpublished, on Revelation. We presume he has therein written what he believes to be the right view on Revelation 9:15. But judging from the remarks just quoted, we can already gain a fair idea of his position. He maintains that the "hour, day, month and year" refers to a point, not to a period of time. He says, "Every Greek scholar in the world knows it." By this he implies that every Greek scholar in the world supports his view. The converse would be all who disagree with him are not Greek scholars. Here is another example of the methodology of this "great" theologian--always thinking and talking in absolutes.

But we point out that this is all that can be said of this alternative interpretation. It is an isolated point in time--that is all--a point dangling in empty space, contributing nothing to the interpretation of Revelation 9. We have checked The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, and found that it says nothing about this view because, no doubt, there isn't much to be said of it. As for "every Greek scholar in the world," neither Ford nor we have the means whereby we may effectively consult them. In the end Ford has produced no tangible evidence to prove that his own view is absolutely right.

In contrast to this view, Litch's interpretation has undergone the pragmatic test in a spectacular way, and was a positive contribution to the Millerite awakening. "Litch's prediction was a great stimulus to the missionary zeal of the Millerite movement. Years later a participant commented that it was to 'the Advent movement what the power of steam is on the machinery of the railroad locomotive. So from the eleventh day of August, 1840, the Advent cause and message, or angel, careered on its way with greater power than ever before.'" Damsteegt, P. G., Foundations of the SDA Message and Mission, 29

That is precisely why Ford is so furious in his attack. You see him slashing away at Litch and even rudely pushing down Ellen White in the process. Litch must go, and (with no apologies whatever) White too must go, Ford tells us. He makes two authoritarian assertions to prove his point:

The day he [Litch] chose to begin the prophecy was years out; he forgot about the dropping out of the days in the calendar change.

Ford's first argument is a strange one. He has just said that Revelation 9:15 speaks of a point, not of a period in time, so there really is no need to argue when this period should begin. Nevertheless, Ford claims to know the "correct" starting point for this span of time which he just said did not exist. What then is the correct date? Ford does not tell us, but simply says that Litch was "years out."

We first quote a passage from page 212 of The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia to clarify the matter of the calendar change:

The calendar currently in use in most nations, the Gregorian, is the result of a calendar reform in 1582 that corrected two erroneous suppositions of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since 45 B.C.--namely that the year contains exactly 365.25 days and that 235 lunar months exactly equal 19 solar years. That revision corrected an accumulated error of ten days and stopped the calendar from slipping farther out of line with the seasons.

With these facts in hand, we are ready to answer the question: How does the calendar change of 1582 affect Litch's interpretation? We note first that in 1582, October 4 was followed by October 15, thus adding 10 days to make up for the time slippage through the past 1627 years. That is, all dates after October 15, 1582 are corrected dates, and all dates before that date should be correspondingly shifted so as to be in step with the seasons.

Assuming that one day should be added for every 162 years (approximately), then the July 27, 1299, date Litch used for the beginning of the fifth trumpet should be updated eight days, thus bringing the end of the sixth trumpet to August 19, 1840--eight days after the historic words "provision had been made" were announced to the Sultan of Turkey by the four imperial powers on August 11, 1840.

Inasmuch as this incident marked the loss of independent power by Turkey, any political incident happening eight days later could only be a further advancement of this crucial situation--bringing Turkey's dependence on foreign imperialism to greater maturity, thereby verifying Litch's prediction more clearly. Instead of proving that Litch was absolutely wrong, this inclusion of eight days into his reckoning would take in eight more days of ripening developments to make the fulfilling of his prediction more convincing. On the other hand, Litch's failure to add eight days did not materially impair the accuracy of his prediction.

We see then that Ford has not proved that Litch was absolutely wrong. He fails to give conclusive proof that Revelation 9:15 refers to a point in time; while Litch has demonstrated that it refers to an exact calculable period, and current history has dramatically proved the correctness of his calculation. He was not "years out," but precisely accurate. And Ellen White was not mistaken in her endorsement of Litch's prediction. Yet in spite of all these facts, Ford has a way of making people believe he is right. That is why we must give him credit for good salesmanship. He has the knack of making up for his shortage of factual evidence with a spate of vehement assertions. And the power of his persuasion lies in his vehemence.

Hilarious Interlude

Incidentally, Ford also has the gift of entertaining his audience with an occasional play on words to impress us with his wit. Hear him run into a caper as he shifts to high gear:

Ellen White would have been burdened above all measure if she thought she was supposed to know everything about everything. We don't know anything about anything (laughter). Everything is related to everything else, so that we can't know anything about everything or know everything about anything" (laughter again). By this time we are again relaxed, and sink into our pews for another tirade

Attacking Our Foundations

Ford's attack on Litch's interpretation of Revelation 9:15 is aimed chiefly at the year-day principle on which it is based. To endorse Litch's interpretation is to endorse the year-day principle. And since Ford's basic premise is that the year-day principle is not explicitly taught in the Bible, he feels justified in repudiating it, thereby junking all the prophetic calculations based on this principle.

Now we must begin our study of this problem by taking Ford seriously, assuming that he is a painstaking scholar searching for truth. He wants "explicit" evidence, to make sure that he will not be mistaken in his calculations. He is so honest that without an explicit statement by God that a day stands for a year in all symbolic prophecies he will not be guilty of presuming that it does. "I note that Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 do not yield the day-year principle," says Ford, "nor is it to be found contextually in either Daniel 8:14 or 9:24." Spectrum, 32. It is presumption to apply this principle without an explicit "thus saith the Lord." By his stance Ford impresses us that his is the scientific approach, and we, with William Miller, are mistaken and deluded.

But this problem is simply solved--just the way we proved Litch to be right. There are but two alternatives. In the case of Litch, we had to choose between the point and the period. In this case we have only to choose between the year-day principle and literal time. Those who take the "2300 evenings and mornings" to mean 1150 days apply

this period to the desecration of the temple in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. This span of time is about 3 years and two months, thus making of none effect the angel's words, "Shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days," and "For at the time of the end shall be the vision." Daniel 8:26, 17

Using literal time, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation lose all significance for us who live in "the time of the end," and all the time prophecies related to Christ's first advent and the history of the Church (that is, the 3 times and a half, 42 months, 70 weeks, and 1260 days) also fall to the ground.

We conclude therefore that these symbolic time prophecies cannot refer to literal time, and the only alternative is to apply the year-day principle and see whether we get better results. William Miller's chart of the 70 weeks and 2300 days, plus Josiah Litch's calculation of Revelation 9:15 make up a convincing answer: the year-day principle works out perfectly. This test is called pragmatic, and is as "explicit" as any honest scholar would expect.

And if we use Ford's favorite tactic of calling other scholars to his aid, we can cite a formidable host of Reformers and scholars who employed the year-day principle in their study of the symbolic prophecies. Such great minds as Martin Luther and Sir Isaac Newton are on our side. Seventh-day Adventists are not alone here, and the burden of proof rests with Ford to produce a more plausible system of prophetic interpretation exclusive of the year-day principle.

True or False?

It is becoming increasingly clear that Ford's chief interest is in picking Adventism to pieces, not in working out a harmonious system of theology. Some may disagree. One veteran scholar still expresses admiration for Ford in these words:

Only a dedicated Seventh-day Adventist could make statements such as these:

"I fully believe in 1844 and that God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist church.

"I believe in the year-day principle. . . .

"I believe that God spoke to Ellen White miraculously. . . . Of course she has teaching authority." Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 20.

Careful analysis of this profession of loyalty (which Ford makes repeatedly) will reveal that it is worth no more than a traitor's kiss. For in the next breath Ford deals the death blow to 1844, the year-day principle, and Ellen White. And yet some will still admire him for his "intense personal dedication to truth." The thirty-nine signatories to the "Open Letter" state:

Church administration has apparently rejected Dr. Ford's willingness to cooperate in restoring church unity. We understand you would not accept his assurance to teach only that which was approved at Glacier View. Instead the impossible demand has been laid upon him to repudiate his conscientious convictions. Ibid. 62-63, italics supplied

There are many honest scholars who truly believe that Ford is willing to cooperate in restoring the church unity which he has just destroyed. They might as well expect a weasel to help restore peace and order in a chicken coop it is raiding. They also believe in Ford's assurance to teach only that which was approved at Glacier View, but he must not be demanded to repudiate his conscientious convictions. They did not consider, however, how a man can teach what he does not conscientiously believe. That too is an "impossible demand."

Yet the historical fact remains--and it should be clear to all--that for the past thirty-odd years Ford has been overtly preaching Seventh-day Adventist doctrines against his own convictions and covertly inculcating his objections against Seventh-day Adventist doctrines in the minds of his students. The Chinese definition of such a character is: "A

man with honey in his mouth and a sword in his belly." His profession of conscientiousness is the honey; now watch out for the sword.

Like his forerunner, Robert Brinsmead, Ford is preparing "conscientiously" to junk every distinctive truth Adventists hold. The replacing of the "Seventh-day" with the word "Evangelical" prepares the way for abolishing the Sabbath. It is naive then, to suppose that Desmond Ford has any truly conscientious convictions. We quote William Shea's words to stress this point:

This dramatic reversal in interpretation has occurred in a period of less than two years since Ford's book on Daniel was published. When Elder Parmenter questioned Ford on this point from the floor of that conference, Ford replied that he stood by 98 percent of what he had written in Daniel. Elder Parmenter objected that the difference between Daniel and the present manuscript was considerably greater than two percent. I agree that Ford's figure represents a gross underestimation of the differences involved. If there is just a two percent difference between these two works, it surely is a critical two percent which has shifted Ford from one school of prophetic interpretation into another. Ibid., 41

This dramatic reversal in interpretation lays bare the dishonesty of this reputedly honest doctor of theology whom many still admire. And because they have been deceived by this camouflage of honeyed professions, they are dismayed at the way the General Conference has dealt with Ford. We thank God that our church administrators are better students of human nature than the majority of our scholars. They detected a loophole in this statement by Ford: In harmony with its [consensus statement] essence as I understand it, I can gladly teach and preach such to the same extent as the majority of my fellow teachers present at Glacier View. Ibid., 77

As all can see, this and other conditional statements in his letter are very loose promises indeed, leaving him virtually unhampered to continue disseminating his errors among us. And even if we stopped up all the loopholes and worked out a water-tight agreement with him, Ford will have no scruples about breaking it. We cite an example of his failing to live up to a promise he made in public: I am not a Seventh-day Adventist by birth, but by conviction; and the moment that ceases to be so, I will hand in my credentials as an Adventist minister. (Forum talk)

But after Ford had by his 990-page paper demonstrated that he was no longer a Seventh-day Adventist by conviction and the church leaders gave him the opportunity to hand in his credentials, he refused to do so. Why? Says Ford, "My desire is to do all I can to help changes come from within." Clear enough! And the changes he wants to come from within will no doubt shift in his direction--away from Seventh-day Adventism. That will be the certain result of his promised cooperation.

"Progressive" Fordites, Fast and Slow

Desmond Ford has quite a following among Seventh-day Adventists, even after he has been defrocked. Some of his followers call themselves "progressives" as distinguished from non-Fordite "traditionalists." We disagree with their claim to progression, because the Fordian philosophy really represents a retrogression--back to pre-Millerite theology. But if Ford thinks himself to be progressive and his followers call themselves that, we can do nothing about it. We should point out, however, that there are two classes of "progressives" among the Fordites--fast and slow ones.

By the slow ones we mean those who live in the backwoods of Australia and some remote parts in the U.S. who have not kept up with the times. They believe in Desmond Ford and will stand by 100 per cent of what he has written in his monumental work on Daniel. But because they have not heard his Forum talk and have not read his 990-page paper, they do not yet know that he now stands by only 98 per cent of what he wrote in

that book, because he has made a dramatic reversal and repudiated what Shea calls the "critical 2 per cent," changing from a traditionalist into a modern "progressive." Now in order to be precise, we should call these slow followers of Desmond Ford "traditional Fordites," and the fast ones "progressive Fordites," because they actually belong to two schools of Fordite interpretation.

Now to the honest-hearted slow followers of Ford we recommend that they seriously consider whether or not they should make such fast progress. For if they stay put for a few years Ford might decide to make another dramatic about-face in his "conscientious" convictions and come back to where he started.

But that is just one wild guess about an unpredictable genius. It is more likely that Ford's followers will all catch up with his progressive pace and continue to accelerate as he repudiates more and more of what he wrote before 1979. They may eventually come to the place where they would wish they had never followed him. Because after being frightened by his charges that Seventh-day Adventists were placing Ellen White above the Bible, they hastily threw away her books and renounced Adventism, only to realize in the end that they have lost their way because they had then placed Desmond Ford above the Bible and made him their infallible guide.

The Apotelesmatic Principle

Let us now point out another instance of dialectical legerdemain practiced by Desmond Ford to deceive the simple. After proposing that we junk the whole system of interpretation worked out by William Miller et alii, he makes haste to assure us that we will lose nothing substantial, but can still salvage much of our faith by employing the apotelesmatic principle. In Ford's thinking this wonderful principle is a magic wand. He uses it first to explode the year-day principle. He says, "But, according to the apotelesmatic principle, there is no biblical basis for the year-day principle." Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 32

Now the present writer must confess lack of acumen to understand exactly how this magic principle disproves the year-day principle. Be that as it may, we are, fortunately, much relieved by Ford's assurance that the apotelesmatic principle will also solve the problem he has just created. On this point we are indebted to Dr. Shea for a penetrating analysis of Ford's use of this magic principle:

The ultimate irony in the controversy that Ford has raised in this way is that he offers the apotelesmatic principle to the Church as the solution to the problem he sees in Daniel 8:14. It is actually his own refusal to employ his own principle that has created this problem. This is particularly the case in two important and linked instances. In his thesis, Ford did not use what he now calls the apotelesmatic principle to interpret the prophecy of Mark 13 so that it might apply to both the generation of the apostles and our modern generation. For him, Mark 13 was intended to have occurred in the first century and the first century only. No interpretation of it, apotelesmatic or otherwise, can allow it to apply to a time beyond then. . . . This has led to the second problem not solved by the apotelesmatic principle: Ford's refusal to apply it to Daniel 8:14 in such a way as to accept the pioneers' interpretation of it. Daniel 8:14 can be applied to a preaching of the gospel at any time between Daniel's time and our time, or it can be applied to the establishment of the church in the New Earth, but it cannot be applied to an investigative judgment that began in heaven in 1844. Thus it is Ford's failure to apply his own apotelesmatic principle to Mark 13 and Daniel 8:14 that has created the very controversy which he says he has proposed it to solve. Ibid., 42-43

You see again that Ford is not really searching for the truth, but is cunningly trying to steal it away from us. To allay our fears and give us some consolation, he creates the illusion that the doctrine of the investigative judgment still stands by virtue of

the apotelesmatic principle. But upon closer inspection, the illusion fades into thin air. He has robbed us of everything.

This fact brings out the unique composition of Ford's presentations. Every thrust against our basic beliefs is invariably balanced by comforting assurances of his loyalty to Adventism. These are just so many shock-absorbers to soften the impact of his punches. At the same time, in the hands of his supporters his empty professions make useful quotations for proving Ford's dedication to the Advent cause. All these extravagant declarations have a common character of vagueness and ambiguity. Take the words, "I fully believe in 1844, and that God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist church." This statement can be understood differently. To "believe in 1844" can mean much, and it can mean nothing. Then he says, "I believe in the year-day principle." This barefaced lie is a smoke screen typical of much of Ford's propaganda, intended to confuse his hearers and provide his admirers with favorable arguments. They can say, "Who said that Ford doesn't believe in the year-day principle? See, here are his own words in black and white."

Ford himself will deny he has lied and say, "Of course I believe in the year-day principle! I only refuse to apply it to certain prophecies in Daniel and Revelation." Ford has also said many favorable things about Ellen White, but again, they simply serve as compensators for his many negative remarks about her. The general effect and end result of all his statements regarding Ellen White is to tear down your faith in the gift of prophecy and build up your faith in Desmond Ford.

The Fox's Tail

Chinese folklore abounds with stories about fox spirits who are bent on luring men into sin and ruin. The most common tactic employed by these evil spirits is to convert themselves into beautiful maidens to seduce unwary males. But their transformation is never complete--a fox is changed into a girl, yet its tail remains. So it must keep its tail hidden beneath her skirt.

Whenever you approach such a converted fox spirit, you will see a charming "phantom of delight"--a most appealing young lady. But if you are still in your right mind and will take care to examine this creature carefully, you will discover an ugly bulge beneath her skirt in the back. Then if you are bold enough publicly to unmask this evil genius, you will not hesitate to grab that woolly growth and hold it up for all to see. The fox may turn around to bite you, but you've won the game anyway. The purpose of this paper is to grab the fox's tail and hold it up for public inspection. However, we don't claim the credit for discovering it. Other people (some of Ford's peers among them) discovered it long ago. As we have seen, Elder Parmenter first demanded of Ford an explanation for the glaring contradictions between his 990-page document and his book on Daniel published less than two years earlier. Ford was put on the spot.

How did he try to deliver himself? He said that he stood by 98 per cent of that book. Can any honest man believe that? No. This doctor of theology who is always so authoritarian in his pulpit manners couldn't get away with such a glaring lie no matter how vehemently he uttered it. All could see that it was a clumsy attempt to cover up his telltale tail. Elder Parmenter did us great service to grab it; Dr. Shea has made excellent comments on it, and this paper insists on flaunting it openly until all who still think Desmond Ford is a man of integrity will recognize his true identity.

Some may say that we are engaged in mud-slinging. No, we are engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the host of darkness. Our adversary is intent to destroy the foundations of our faith and thereby bring ruin to the remnant church on which God bestows His supreme regard. Every servant of God is duty-bound to discharge his responsibility as a watchman on the walls of Zion and sound the warning at the approach of the enemy.

On that day when each of us must render an account for things done in the body, we trust that God will not censure us for identifying a fox when we see one. And He will commend our leading brethren for driving out the foxes which are spoiling His vine.
November 25, 1981

Chapter 9

CONFUSION CONFOUNDED

A Second Analysis of Desmond Ford's "New Theology" +
DESMOND Ford states that Ellen White, in writing on the sanctuary in her book *The Great Controversy*, copied entire passages from Uriah Smith, including an error. What was it? Ford says: Uriah Smith taught that when an animal is sacrificed, the blood went, for the common people, into the holy place and registered there the sin. Now that never happened for the ordinary person. It only ever happened if the High Priest sinned or the whole congregation. But Ellen White has even copied that error.

Now we turn to *The Great Controversy*, 418, for the passage in question. Here we find no mention either of the high priest, the congregation, a ruler, or of the common people (the four categories listed in Leviticus 4), but simply the term, "repentant sinner," which obviously can represent the high priest. Here we see a conscious attempt of the writer to simplify and generalize the topic so as not to burden the reader with too many details. After describing how the sacrificial blood was sprinkled before the veil, Ellen White continues:

By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." Leviticus 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.

+ Based on material in four cassette recordings dated 3/2/1979; April 1980 Radio Interview; 9/6/1980; and Part I of 3/7/1981. Quotations in this paper are not separately indicated.

Note again the use of "the penitent" as a general term, and especially the remark that "in some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest." This particular applied to the ruler and the common people who sinned. These points make it clear that the writer was aware of the fact that the blood of the sacrifice offered by the common people was not taken into the holy place. We see here that Desmond Ford is just trying to pick bones in a piece of tofu (bean curd), as the Chinese put it.

If Ellen White indeed copied this passage from Uriah Smith, we have no objection, because we are chiefly interested in having the truth, of which the ultimate source is the true Light which lighteth every man

Confusion Confounded

Jerry Fuller posed this question to Ford: "In your opinion, what did happen in 1844?" Here is Ford's reply: In 1844 God in His providence raised up a people to warn that the world was going to get worse, and that we need to get ready for the second coming of Jesus. He raised up a people to draw attention to the sanctuary where there were the emblems of how to get ready for Jesus' coming; to look at the law and see that it condemns us, to look at the sacrifice and the blood and the priesthood and realize that a right relationship to those saved us, even though we were faulty, imperfect, erring in speech and action. So God raised up a people to draw attention to the Most Holy Place where the emblems of law and gospel were found. That's what happened in 1844.

This paragraph is an interesting specimen of confused thinking, proving that Ford is not really sure of what happened in 1844. For all know that he categorically denies that Christ entered the Most Holy Place in that year. Now we ask, If Christ did not enter the Most Holy Place in 1844, what actually took place in that year so as to "draw attention" to that place? His answer is that in 1844 nothing new happened in the heavenly sanctuary. But on earth the Great Disappointment happened. And the disappointed Adventists invented the doctrine of Christ entering the Most Holy Place to save face,

Ford believes. But if this face-saving device was a hoax, how could it effectively draw attention to the Most Holy Place? Any attention it could draw would have been of a negative character--scorn and derision, not faith and godly fear. We see that Ford's explanation falls apart, unless he admits that something vital actually occurred in the sanctuary in 1844.

To clarify this point, we carry our logic one step further: since Ford says that the Adventists, a people raised up in 1844 by God, succeeded in drawing attention to the Most Holy Place by a "face-saving device," then in order to continue drawing attention to the Most Holy Place, Ford should do his best to uphold this "face-saving device" lest it be exploded by somebody and attention be no longer drawn to the Most Holy Place. But no, on the contrary, Ford himself is engaged in exploding what he agrees to be "the greatest face-saving device in history." Thus he is actually drawing attention away from the Most Holy Place. Using a term from Ford's vocabulary, his account of what happened in 1844 is "confusion confounded."

But he imagines that his "new theology" will eventually replace the concept of "heavenly geography, celestial furniture, ethereal architecture, and dates." He wants us to junk all these concrete items and accept his vague generalities. But in fact his statement is essentially an abstract of our traditional tenet and not an original theory. Since he does not believe that Christ entered the Most Holy Place in 1844, his account of what did happen should not have anything to do with the Most Holy Place, otherwise his is not a "new" theology in its own right. He has merely garbled the issue to avoid a showdown. For in other instances he dubs the doctrine of the investigative judgment a "doctrinal quirk" and an "oddity," and now to be consistent, he should come right out and say so. But no, this time he is considerate of his Adventist audience. He wouldn't be so rude as to say, "1844 is a big hoax; you all are a deluded bunch of simpletons." Instead he says something about God's calling attention to the Most Holy Place, but fails to explain how God could do so by staging the whole drama on a false premise. For he denies there are two apartments in heaven.

The fact remains that it is the geography, the furniture, the architecture, and the dates which set the stage for the mediatorial service of Christ, as taught in Hebrews 9. They may be likened to the skeleton which supports the body. You can't reject the skeleton and retain only the anatomy, which would then be only a shapeless pile of flesh.

What is our conclusion? Ford's account of what happened in 1844 is a clumsy attempt to invent a new theory which in fact still requires recognition of the basic facts of our traditional view. Otherwise it is not supportable.

Antichrist in Abstract

Desmond Ford's sermon on Antichrist should be judged not by what he has said, but by what he has left unsaid. Never once in his long discourse does he even make passing mention of the Papacy being the Antichrist. He makes only one brief reference to the "medieval apostasy" without comment. From this we conclude that Ford denies the traditional Adventist teaching on this topic. But to veil his denial, he adopts the main strategy of "negation by omission," and resorts to four different tactics:

- Diversion. Ford diverts our attention to other religious systems and movements which he says are antichristian. Commenting on the beast of Revelation 13, he says, "Any religion that is creature-centered is antichrist." He cites the modern charismatic movement as an example. We expect him to say something about the counterfeit Sabbath as the mark of the beast, but no, not a word is mentioned in this connection.

- Diffusion. After diverting our attention from the true Antichrist, Ford proceeds to diffuse the target into something universally present. At first there were "many antichrists," now antichrist is everywhere. "Antichrist is in every one of us--in every

church." "Not Pope Paul, but Pope Self." Here is another definition: "The main diabolical trick of antichrist is to take something very good and put it in the place of the very best." "It has many religious forms in every church."

- Inversion. The last remark implies that Ford assumes a neutral stance. But he is not really neutral. For he turns around to attack the very church which he professes to love, by trying to put the dunce cap on us. "Oh, no, that can't be true!" you say. Let us cite his own words. Hear how he aims his gun at the "legalists"--his favorite designation for traditional Seventh-day Adventists. He says, "The most subtle error of antichrist is not antinomianism, but . . ." Here he takes a round-about course and ends up denouncing "legalism." He equates it with antichrist thus: Antichrist takes the holy law and puts it to a wrong use--swings to the left--the pleasures of this world--antinomianism. Or he can swing it to the right--that's the religious one (legalism implied, in antithesis to antinomianism). They're both forms of the Antichrist.

So also with "perfectionism," which Ford says is a well-known manifestation of "legalism," and is identified with antichrist. He says,

This is antichrist--concentration on self, getting to heaven by one's own efforts. How are they going to do it? By mud. "Let us go to and bake clay and make us a tower to heaven." They take heaven as so low. That is what perfectionists do with the law. The only way a perfectionist could succeed is to reduce the law till it only covers conscious sins. The Babel builders thought heaven so low they thought they could reach it with their tower. The perfectionists make the law so small--God's commandments only have to do with the things we know about, only conscious known sins. That's bringing heaven down so low that with my mud I can easily get up there. That's Babylon.

Here the people who keep God's commandments are identified by Ford as antichrist and Babylon. This tactic is Ford's way of turning around and firing on his own people. Or are we his own people?

- Twisting. Ford accuses certain people (Adventists again, presumably) who engage in "twisting and turning." But he himself gives us the best example of twisting in this bit of logic: He first refers us to 2 Thessalonians 2:3, where Paul speaks of the "man of sin." Then he quotes Daniel 7:25, which speaks of the power which "thinks to change times and laws"--both familiar texts relating to antichrist. Then Ford speaks of the man of sin as the "lawless one." Here we expect him to elaborate on how the Papacy abolished the second commandment and changed the fourth. It is the straight Adventist interpretation. But no, he veers away from the straight path to twist and turn into the proposition that Antichrist is the "lawless one" because he parodies Christ in putting an end to the law. Ford quotes Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Ford does not say which one of his many antichrists is guilty of parodying Christ, but simply uses this means to play up the words, "Christ is the end of the law."

Any one who has debated with Sunday advocates knows how they cite this text to oppose Sabbath-keeping. They try thereby to prove that the law of God is abolished. But what is the true meaning of this verse? The margin of the New American Bible gives "goal" as an alternate rendering for "end." Christ is the goal of the law; the law leads us to Christ.

Any attempt to use this verse to prove that the law is abolished is based on a misconception. Yet Ford uses this wrong interpretation to attack the "legalists." Then he quotes more texts, every one a favorite with anti-Sabbatarians, to charge the "legalists" with trying to gain acceptance with God by keeping the law. In the past this charge was levelled at us only by our opponents. Now this "Adventist" theologian uses it to harangue Adventists from the rostrums of Adventist churches.

Perfection and Perfectionism

Since Ford directs his talk on antichrist at the "legalists" and "perfectionists," and we know he is referring to the people who keep the commandments of God, we will accept his challenge and venture a reply.

We must begin with a canvass of the various definitions and connotations of "perfectionism." In the Scriptures the word "perfect" is used in its absolute sense as well as its relative sense. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" is an example of the former (other examples in Luke 6:40, Colossians 1:28). "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect," is an example of the latter, where spiritual maturity is meant. (Other examples in Philippians 3:15, 1 Corinthians 13:20 margin, Hebrews 5:14-15 margin.) Ford is wrong in asserting that in the Bible "perfect" is always used with reference to spiritual maturity and never in the sense of sinlessness. Matthew 5:48 must be understood in the sense of sinlessness. Of course, it does not denote a spotless life record, but it points to the ultimate attainment before translation in the life of a true saint, as implied in Revelation 22:11.

Apart from these two distinct uses of "perfect" in the Bible, there have been two different definitions for "perfectionism" among Adventists. The earliest use of it by Ellen White is in *Early Writings*, 101, where she says, "God will not entrust the care of His precious flock to men whose mind and judgment have been weakened by former errors that they have cherished, such as so-called perfectionism and Spiritualism." Here "perfectionism" is called an error, but is not defined. We presume it refers to the teaching that the Christian is perfect at rebirth, and thereafter his every impulse is holy. This teaching is based on a misinterpretation of 1 John 3:9.

The present use of "perfectionism" among us, which has gained currency in the last 20 years, refers to the call to strive for holiness, particularly in this time of the investigative judgment. The Adventist who truly believes he is living in such a solemn time will live in daily watchfulness and self-denial, looking to Jesus to plead his case. His attention is drawn away from the world to the heavenly sanctuary where his destiny is being decided. But if he loses sight of his Lord, and the mediatorial work is to him no longer a vital reality, he dislikes hearing admonitions to strive for holiness. Ford puts it thus: "Many Adventists . . . have felt that their own destiny hung in the balance until they managed to squeeze through the intense scrutiny of the investigative judgment, where the use of every moment, cent, and opportunity, and time would be taken into account."

This concept is what many refer to by the term "perfectionism." They say that it has been a stumbling block to many, who after striving for a while, despair of ever reaching the perfect standard, and give up Christ altogether. Since Ford blames all this confusion on the teaching of the investigative judgment, he rejects this basic Adventist doctrine and attacks "perfectionism" at every opportunity. His argument is that the law requires perfection, which we cannot attain in this life. He says that since only Christ was perfect, His life as well as His death must count for ours.

Ford's error lies in denying the power of Christ working in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The correct formula is here stated: Christ came because there was no possibility of man's keeping the law in his own strength. He came to bring him strength to obey the precepts of the law. *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 180

Note the words, "in his own strength," which are always missing in Ford's formula. He simply says that it is impossible for man to keep God's law, period. Here is a great difference. It casts aspersions on God the Lawgiver, virtually charging Him with despotism. For only despots make laws which are impossible to keep. This vital part of the gospel--the converting power of Christ--is not given its rightful place in Ford's "new theology." He says very little if anything about Christ living His life in us. His preaching is designed to relieve us of every "unpleasant" exercise of the soul, because he can't bear seeing us trying to "squeeze through" the investigative judgment. He tells us the good

news that there is no investigative judgment and that we need not afflict our souls, but should rejoice in the salvation freely given. What's wrong with that? Isn't that good news?

Hear what God has to say: "Whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 23:29. Is this bad news?

It is a matter of order. There can be no rejoicing for the sinner if there is no weeping. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." Psalm 51:8. The Bible teaches us to find the joy of forgiveness through brokenhearted repentance. And repentance calls for a return to obedience to God's law. We can appreciate God's love and be motivated by gratitude only to the extent we are convicted by the vision of Christ crucified, abhor our own sinfulness, and determine to overcome in His strength. The doctrine of the investigative judgment is designed to point us to the cross of Christ and His mediatorial work for all who truly "afflict their souls." Any attempt to place the cross of Christ in opposition to the judgment is gross error.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God . . . and of eternal judgment. Hebrews 6:1-2

This text tells us that repentance, faith toward God, and judgment are the basic principles of the gospel, from which we are to "go on unto perfection"--spiritual maturity. And Philippians 3:8-15 gives us a picture of a mature Christian: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death . . . Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

Beginning from the first principles, a Christian goes through a transition from self to Christ. Repentance, justification, and judgment all concern the sinner--his attitude toward sin, his deliverance from guilt, and his standing before God. But perfection centers on Christ. Christ captures the entire being; He fills our horizon, and we say, "Christ shall be magnified in my body. . . . For to me to live is Christ." He is not in the remote past, but a present reality. We know where He is and what He is doing. And He keeps us informed. When He first left us He said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Later He told the church that He was ministering for them in the heavenly sanctuary. In 1844, "Jesus regarded with the deepest compassion the disappointed ones who had waited for His coming: and He sent His angels to direct their minds that they might follow Him where He was." Early Writings, 244. These people had their eyes on Christ. Since they had waited for His coming, Christ would not leave them in sorrow but gave them new light, and they kept their eyes on Him. This faith is true spiritual maturity. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith"--faith in the living Christ as revealed in God's written Word.

This is the righteousness that works by faith. Before we can see with our eyes Christ coming in glory, we must first learn by faith to see Him coming into the Most Holy Place. By faith we must see there the ark of the testament and the tables of the law. But the only tangible thing we can see on earth is the written Word of God, and if we really believe it, we will act on it. The world may scoff and say, "Yours is a blind faith." "No," we reply, "we have the Word of God." Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9:8-9 tell us that Christ entered the Most Holy Place in 1844; Isaiah 58:12-14 says that the breach made in the

law of God must be repaired; Revelation 10:11 commands us to continue heralding the second advent of Christ. What is righteousness by faith? It is to act on God's every word because we believe it--this is the third angel's message in Truth and verity.

Now we come back to our theme. People complaining about too much "perfectionism" probably have been too long obsessed with the question, "What must I do to be saved?" which has been drummed into their ears too often. Christ our substitute is the only Christ preached to them; Christ our example and "Christ in you, the hope of glory" is practically banned from many pulpits. When people think that once they accept God's forgiveness they are saved, what need have they for perfection?

Seventh-day Adventists are uniquely qualified of God to preach perfection, for we are equipped to present to the world a perfect image of Christ. In this Laodicean age Christ introduces Himself as the "beginning of the creation of God." Revelation 3:14. He has always been the "Lord of the Sabbath." Among all the denominations in existence, only true Sabbathkeepers can wholeheartedly introduce Jesus as the "Lord of the Sabbath." Other churches shy away from these words, and some would fain expunge them from God's Book. The Christ we preach is the truly modern Jesus. We alone can present an undistorted image of our Redeemer.

Another facet of this perfect image is Christ our great High Priest. The remnant church alone is entrusted with the truths about His entry into the Holy of Holies in 1844, when the ark of the testament in heaven was seen, and the "perfect law of liberty" was revealed as the standard by which the world will be judged. But there is a breach in the law which must be repaired. Seventh-day Adventists have been given this assignment--to restore the sign of sanctification to God's people. For this reason we are best fitted to talk on perfection. Every true Seventh-day Adventist is unashamed and unafraid of that word, for it is God's upward calling. Impossible? "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me."

God's plan of redemption takes in more than the salvation of man. Its ultimate aim is the exaltation of Christ and the glory of God. Philippians 2:9-11 says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hence every perfect Christian always thinks first of God's honor. Joseph overcame with the words, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Daniel and the three worthies also stood for the right when God's honor was at stake, and considered not their own safety. Jesus taught us to turn from thoughts on self to think only of God's glory when He said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name!"

His prayer, "Father, glorify thy name!" brought immediate response. Peals of eloquent thunder announced God's great purpose.

Four brief but meaningful words comprise a perfect prayer, moving the arm of Omnipotence to wield His miraculous power. The glory of God is bound up with the happiness of all His creatures; for when man sinned and came short of the glory of God, the shadow of decay fell upon all creation, and only when God is fully glorified by the restoration of His perfect image in man through the merits of Jesus Christ will all creation be redeemed.

Some who see only the problem of how to be saved make it the sum total of God's plan of redemption. They are short-sighted, for much more is at stake. When the Israelites rebelled at Kadesh-barnea, the Lord said to Moses, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." God was testing Moses. Would he think only of himself? No, his first thought was the honor of God's name and the welfare of God's people. He said to the Lord, "If thou

shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."

Today we are faced with the same issue. When God demands perfect obedience, what is involved? Our salvation? Yes, but much more--God's honor and the security of the universe. God has been dishonored by all who have trampled His Sabbath in defiance of His authority. Just so today, as the great controversy reaches its climax, God will magnify His law and make it honorable. The Son of God has saved us from the power of sin by paying the penalty for our transgression, and now He would enlist us to join Him in vindicating the authority of God's law. Satan has accused God of despotism, because, says he, it is impossible to keep God's law. Christ gives strength to every child of God to live in obedience to His commandments and thus prove Satan to be a liar, and that God's law can be kept. The last great test concerns the Sabbath commandment, and every true soldier of Christ must stand firm to the end, always praying that perfect prayer, "Father, glorify thy name!"

The Father was glorified by the obedience of His Son and all His saints in past ages. So will He glorify His name again through all who overcome in His strength today. For He has said, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Isaiah 49:3

Such is the true perfection God expects to see in every saint. They are not so concerned for their own salvation as they are for the glory of that name which is above every name. They are perfect, because they have the mind of Christ, and say with Him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." And it is the burning of this zeal which consumes our dross and strengthens us to overcome as He overcame.

David Lin March 12, 1982

Chapter 10

CHARMING CLICHES

A Third Analysis of Desmond Ford's "New Theology" +

THE Bible has dynamic as well as static truths. The existence and attributes of God, the nature of man, and the laws of the universe are static truths. The plan of redemption as related to the great controversy between Christ and Satan is a system of truths which unfold progressively. We call them dynamic truths, because they are in motion and connected with time. If we are to keep in step with God's providences, we must grasp these dynamic truths and recognize the waymarks of prophecy as they appear.

Many holy men of old had to do with time. Noah had a 120-year schedule to work by. Abraham was given a 400-year prophecy. Jeremiah recorded a 70-year prophecy, and when time was up, Daniel prayed for its fulfillment. Gabriel delivered to Daniel the prophecies of the three-times-and-one-half, the 70 weeks and the 2300 days. When Jesus began preaching, His message was, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Paul wrote, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." John recorded the prophecies of the 1260 days, 42 months, and three-times-and-a-half. It behooves us to study these time periods and fully grasp their significance. They have to do with God's purpose for His church and the destiny of mankind. Only thus can we identify ourselves with God's great plan and act our part intelligently.

Desmond Ford's principal error is to drop out from the march of time. In denying the true interpretation of the 2300 days, he has joined the foolish virgins stalled at the door of the wedding hall. Like a man who has missed the train, all he can do is to mark time on the platform of static truths, denying himself the privilege of viewing God's strategic plan as illuminated by the light of the Midnight Cry. That is why the content of Ford's talks is substantially the same as sermons preached by Dwight Moody, Gypsy Smith, and Billy Graham. Though different in style, their theologies all belong to the pre-Millerite era, because the time element is absent. They can preach on the height, the depth, and the breadth of God's love, but not on its length, because they are willingly ignorant of His timetable.

+ Based on the same material as the previous chapter. See footnote, page 79.

The Everlasting Gospel

Such self-imposed blindness is evident in Ford's sermon on "The Everlasting Gospel." He defines this term by quoting Jude 3 (RSV): "Contend for the faith which was delivered to the saints once for all time." From there he sidetracks into his favorite theme of free grace and the dangers of legalism as against antinomianism. He does not even take the trouble to read, much less to explain, the content of the everlasting gospel as proclaimed by the first angel, which is definitely based on time. To make up for his omission, we will devote a paragraph to this important theme. The text reads:

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. Revelation 14:6-7

The preaching of this message is accurately timed. The world is warned to fear God and worship the Creator because "the hour of his judgment is come." It is the everlasting gospel because it embraces the entire gospel message from beginning to end. The Creation is the beginning; the judgment is the end. Where is Christ in this picture? He is in His Sabbath, and also in the sanctuary, where the judgment is in progress. Our great High Priest is the central figure in the day of atonement, as He sprinkles His own blood on the mercy seat. Ford says a lot about the blood of Jesus, but

not a word about the investigative judgment, where the blood of the Lamb of God is the decisive element. He also talks of justification which, being a forensic term, is intimately connected with the judgment. But no, says Ford, the investigative judgment is a "doctrinal oddity" invented by the Adventists to save face. Thus Ford preaches not the everlasting gospel, but one truncated by lopping off head and tail. In this sermon he says nothing about worshiping the Creator by keeping His Sabbath, nor does he mention the judgment hour which began in 1844. Since these two great truths are the only ones specified by the first angel, we are correct in saying that by lopping off head and tail, Ford has in fact cut the gospel in pieces and then thrown them all away.

Our Substitute and Example

On the question of Christ our substitute and our example, Ford's position shows up as indefensible. Having asserted that the humanity of Christ was virtually immune to sin, he finds it hard to answer the question, "How can Christ be our example?" He then adopts the tactic of committing himself in three steps: First a reassuring statement: "Of course, Christ is our example." Next he qualifies it: "But He is not our example primarily." And then, after some argumentation, his real answer: "Christ is not our example." Here are his arguments:

1. "If He was primarily our example, He wouldn't have died at 33; that's no example for you and me!"
2. "If He was primarily our example, we wouldn't find the Scriptures majoring on His soteriological works, His salvation works, His forgiveness of sins. You and I can't do that! His raising the dead, we can't do that!"
3. "The story of His life is nothing compared with the story of His death." Ford compares the number of pages the Bible devotes to the life and death of Jesus respectively. He uses the tadpole as an illustration: the head represents Jesus' passion story, the tail His life.

We leave it to the reader to decide on the plausibility of these arguments. (Pardon me, but that first argument is really an insult to human intelligence.) We should point out, however, that to regard either Christ our substitute or Christ our example as primary or secondary is a wrong approach. It virtually puts the two in opposition to each other. For Christ our substitute and Christ our example are in fact inseparable. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Here the life and death of Jesus are closely integrated. For both in life and death Jesus is our example. "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:15. "He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3:16

The Word Made Flesh

The topic of Jesus our example is directly related to the debate over the human nature of Christ. Answering a question on this topic, Ford says: The Bible certainly teaches that Jesus was sinless in state, nature, as well as behavior. You said the right thing when you said, He took our human nature; you didn't say He took our sinful nature, because sin is no part of true humanity. Sin is an invader; sin is an intruder. God, when He made human nature, did not put sin into it. Sin has come in since. Now Jesus took human nature, that's why He was born of the Holy Spirit. That's one of the reasons. "That holy thing that shall be born of thee," it was said to Mary. And how? "The Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee." So Christ's birth was miraculous. You and I, born in the natural course of nature, were born without the Holy Spirit. That's why we are sinful, we do not have the righteous nature that the indwelling Spirit gave to Adam. You know, when Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the garment of light that was a symbol of the indwelling Shekinah. The Holy Spirit, who had controlled their behavior, then had gone. But Jesus was not born without the Holy Spirit. He was called "that holy thing." You and I

were born in sin. So Scripture says, "In Him was no sin; He knew no sin; without spot or blemish; separate from sinners, higher than the heavens." He was perfectly human. You and I are inhuman to the same extent as we are sinful.

These words are sufficient to show that Ford believes that Christ took on the nature of Adam before the Fall, which is different from our fallen natures. The question follows: "How could He be our example?" Ford fails to face up to this question. He sidesteps the issue by asserting that Christ is not our example primarily. Thus he still admits that Christ is our example. But the fact is, the Christ he describes could not be our example at all. His assumption of a nature radically different from ours would defeat the very purpose of the incarnation. For then the Bible could not say that He was "in all things" (in every way, cf. NEB, NIV) made like unto His brethren.

If Christ was not made in every respect like other human beings, then He would be mocking us by saying, "Follow me." If He in His earthly sojourn enjoyed any spiritual advantages over other men, then He would have forfeited the right to be called the "Son of man." His encounter with the devil in the wilderness would have been a mock temptation, and His victory a mock victory, because He ran no risk of failure. Thus, when we are brought before God's judgment bar, we would be able to say, "Lord, you don't know how hard it is for a fallen human being to live in this world. If you were in our position and had to cope with life's difficulties under our circumstances, you wouldn't be sitting on that judgment seat." But no, we won't be able to talk that way to our Lord. For the Father "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:27. The Bible tells us that He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15. "Wherefore in all things (in every way) it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." Hebrews 2:17

Desmond Ford says, "Jesus took human nature; that's why He was born of the Holy Spirit." This is an erroneous statement in that it confuses the two natures. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit had to do with Christ's divine nature, not His human nature. Said Gabriel to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. Then this Son of God called himself "the Son of man" by virtue of the body of flesh He received from the virgin Mary, as it is written, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." Galatians 4:4

As for the term "that holy thing," it cannot be used to prove that Jesus possessed a supernatural human nature. For in the Bible the word "holy" is in many instances applied to other men who were not in their natures different from ordinary human beings. In this domain the theologian can easily slip into many pitfalls. And Ford does not realize that he is dangerously close to the papal error of the Immaculate Conception. This Catholic dogma holds that in order to provide an immaculate womb for Jesus, Mary herself was born immaculate. Then how about her mother, and her grandmother? If we followed this reasoning to its logical conclusion, the whole line of Jesus' maternal ancestry should all be immaculately conceived. And what is the significance of this dogma? It minimizes the power of the Holy Spirit because it makes Mary's womb--female heredity--the primary source of holiness for "that holy thing," Jesus Christ. The Bible does not teach that Mary was different in nature from other women; hence her virginity had no power in itself to cause the human nature of her child to be in any way different from that of other human beings. To say that Mary had to be immaculately conceived in order to give birth to an immaculate baby, is to say that Christ is holy because Mary was holy, thus confusing the natural with the spiritual, whereupon Mary can rightfully claim to be "mother of God." That is as blasphemous as blasphemy can be. The Holy Spirit is totally eclipsed by a super goddess who is higher than God Himself.

That is where this teaching of a made-to-order sinless human nature of Jesus leads. "Ave Maria" drowns out "Hallelujah."

Ford will no doubt deny that he believes in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but his teaching on the nature of Christ is really a close kin to it, in that it confuses the human and the divine natures of Jesus Christ, causing him to make the following statement: The cross of Calvary reminds us that we murdered our Creator; the teaching of the gospel is to convince us all of deicide--murder of God--and suicide, because to kill God is to kill the source of our own life. Such a daring foray into holy precincts may perhaps pass for the only new thing in Desmond Ford's "new theology."

Ellen White, though lacking formal theological training, was always careful to avoid such dangerous theological pitfalls in her teachings on the nature of Christ. She made these observations on the blending of the two natures in Christ: The Godhead was not made human, and the human was not deified by the blending together of the two natures. Selected Messages, Book 3, 131

Man cannot overcome Satan's temptations without divine power to combine with His instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ, He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God's Holy Law, and in this way He is our example. . . .

The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency.

It was not God that was tempted in the wilderness, nor a God that was to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself. Ibid., 140 When we keep this distinction of the two natures in mind, we will not fall into the error of calling Mary the "mother of God," or say that we "murdered God." Nor will we attribute supernatural powers to the virgin's womb and imagine the human nature of Jesus was different from ours.

The merits of Jesus Christ inhere in the fact that He overcame sin and redeemed Adam's failure under conditions far more trying than Adam's. For He took on human nature after it had fallen and undergone more than

4000 years of dissipation and degeneration. But the more trying the circumstances, the more meritorious His great feat is proved to be. To win the game of life in our behalf and as our example, He must abide by all its rules. And in order to qualify as Champion of our race, He must endure greater hardships than any mortal can know, deriving His strength through the only channel open to us all--the channel of persistent prayer and Bible study. All these considerations require that Jesus start out with not a whit more "capital" than what each of us must start with--a fallen nature.

From Mary's womb Jesus received a body of ordinary stature and appearance, so that Judas had to give His captors a sign--the traitor's kiss--to identify Him among His disciples. And before Jesus met the tempter in the wilderness His physical stamina was strained to the limit in a forty-day fast. Gnawing pangs of hunger told Him that He was as frail as any child of Adam, and just as dependent on His daily bread, deprived of which He was now almost dead. Under such extremely trying conditions, Jesus confronted the adversary. The devil challenged Him to prove that He was the Son of God by working a miracle to relieve His hunger, but the meaning of the Scripture Jesus quoted is--You doubt that I am the Son of God; I know I am the Son of man, and as man I will live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, to demonstrate how all men can live and overcome through faith in God's written Word. Thus Christ revealed the truth that "the just shall live by faith." Through those grim days of fasting He ignored the clamoring of fleshly appetites and found pleasure in the Word of God and unceasing prayer. By His own experience He proved the truthfulness of His words, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth,

the flesh profiteth nothing." With His own example He taught us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," trusting God to give us our daily bread.

That is how Christ imparts strength to His followers. He teaches us to draw our weapons from God's armory--make the Bible our arsenal. In answer to every attack of Satan Christ countered with "It is written." That was His established practice, always turning to the Word of God for an answer. When He said to His disciples, "Follow Me," He wanted us to learn this tactic and enter fully into the spirit of His consecration. In a word, to live in closest unity with Him. He left on record these sayings to help us catch the contagion of His zeal:

I must be about my Father's business. Luke 2:49

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34

I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Luke 12:50

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. John 18:37

I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting. John 12:49-50

This last line comes very close to us. The Lord of life is talking like a human mortal, and seems to forget that He is Himself "the resurrection and the life," for He is thrilled to think that He as the Son of man has the honor to execute His Father's will. He exclaims, "I know that his commandment is life everlasting!"

It was for us He said those words. For He knew that every time we thoughtfully repeat them, the power which attended His ministry will also vitalize our souls, so that we can exclaim with Paul, "whereunto I also labor, striving according to the working which worketh in me mightily." And every child of God He brings to glory will utter these words with all the enthusiasm He first put into them: "His commandment is life everlasting." Glory to God!

These precious sayings bring out one basic truth: perfection cannot be sought for its own sake, but is attained only through lifelong devotion to the cause of God. Jesus knew what He was fighting for, and nothing could turn Him from His purpose. His burning passion was to finish His assigned task--"My Father's business," "the will of God," "His work," "His commandment," and "the truth." It was in pursuit of these objects that He set us the example of a perfect servant.

"Flesh" Defined

The Bible term for "human nature" is "flesh," or more graphically, "flesh and blood," often placed in antithesis to "spirit," e.g., "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Wherever this term is used in the Bible with reference to human nature, it refers to the nature we now possess. And whenever it is applied to Jesus, there is no indication that it undergoes a change of meaning. When it says, "The Word was made flesh," no modifier is added to make it read "holy flesh," or "purified flesh," or "sanctified flesh." Therefore we are correct in taking this verse to mean that Christ took on the human nature which all men have in common. Another text emphasizes the identity of Christ's human nature with ours in these words: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Hebrews 2:14. The apostle John made an issue of this truth when he wrote, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist." 1 John 4:3

Ford's sermon on the Antichrist ignores this important text, but quotes 1 John 2:22, "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." There are many professed Christian churches which do not deny the Father and the Son, but they say that Christ is

come not "in the flesh," but in holy flesh. This error, which is distinctive of antichrist, Desmond Ford has incorporated into his theology. In his talk on antichrist he tried to prove that it was "legalism" (which he habitually uses to refer to Adventism).

Conclusion

In the post-Glacier View question-answer program Desmond Ford spoke of his repeated warnings to the leading brethren about a coming storm over the sanctuary question. In the end it turned out that he himself made this forecast come true. We have discovered, moreover, that Ford's hurricane came close to sweeping away not only our sanctuary doctrine and the investigative judgment, but also our teachings on the Antichrist, the Incarnation, obedience to God's law, Christ our example, and the third angel's message. No wonder that when he mentioned the Adventist "package deal," he specified only three items: the Sabbath, the Second Advent, and our health doctrines. But calling to mind his tirades against "legalism," we are prepared to hear him abolish the Sabbath some day; and what he has said about Christ originally scheduled to return in the first century gives good grounds for postponing it another twenty centuries. Then what is left of our "package"?

It is now clear that Desmond Ford is bent on destroying Seventh-day Adventism. But because truth is not on his side, he is doomed to fail. We know he is a learned man, but no amount of learning can turn a single error into truth. How is it then he has such a following? It is because he artfully mingles truth with error. He says many pleasant things about the cross of Christ and His atoning sacrifice. His fertile mind turns out some charming clichés which have a way of sticking in the memories of his listeners after all other remarks have faded. He intersperses his attacks against "legalism" with brief compensating quotations, such as "O, how love I thy law!" But in the end it is his vehement blasts against basic Adventist truths that leave most lasting impressions, and people go away repeating, "You can't be saved by any good deed; you can't be lost by any bad one," and, "It is easier to be saved than to be lost."

Many people believe in Desmond Ford because they are not well grounded in the teachings of God's Word. We note that one adult participant in the above-mentioned extemporaneous question-answer program asked Ford in all sincerity when the millennium will begin, and it was apparently the first time she learned that it would begin at the Second Advent. This lady happened to be an Adventist (we suppose) residing in Takoma Park. Too many people don't take time to study the Bible themselves, but simply believe everything the preacher says, because he is learned and eloquent. We must remember God's injunction: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20

March 18, 1982

Chapter 11

PRO AND CON

A Fourth Analysis of Desmond Ford's "New Theology" + + Based on the same material as a previous chapter. See footnote, page 79.

BY this time we have become familiar with a favorite tactic employed by Desmond Ford in his efforts to undermine basic Seventh-day Adventist beliefs: He reasons from both sides of the fence. We first encountered this in his Forum talk, where he tried to overthrow Josiah Litch's interpretation of Revelation 9:15. His arguments were: (1) The text refers to a point in time, not to a period; (2) The time Litch began his calculation of this period was "years out."

These two arguments are contradictory. If Revelation 9:15 indeed refers to a point in time, then there is no sense in arguing when the period should begin; and if it is a period, then the assertion that it is a point is false. This inconsistency illustrates Ford's arguing from both sides of the fence. It reveals that Ford has no definite convictions as

to what is truth. He is bent only on disproving the truth, and would grasp at any argument serving his purpose, with no regard for consistency. We don't think he is suffering from insanity, but his mode of reasoning is definitely schizophrenic.

A second example of his ambivalence is found in Ford's position on the year-day principle. He maintains that it is "not explicit in Scripture." Hence he feels justified in junking all our prophetic calculations based on that principle. Then he will jump over the fence and argue about when the 2300 and 1260 years should begin. With a show of authority he refers to his book on Daniel and his method of giving these periods a staggered beginning and a staggered ending. Evidently Ford believes in the year-day principle and he does not.

Lest anyone should think that we are making a mountain out of a molehill, we will tabulate a few examples of Ford's schizophrenic reasoning to show that it is a habitual practice. We list eight more sets of contradictory arguments under "pro" and "con" headings:

(3) Pro: "The veil in Hebrews 6:19 refers to the second veil."

Con: "The New Testament knows nothing about a veil in the heavenly sanctuary."

(4) Pro: "Christ entered the Most Holy Place (within the second veil) directly upon His ascension."

Con: Away with "heavenly geography . . . celestial furniture . . . books, angelic witnesses" and all such "trappings." Comment: The claim that there is a Most Holy Place in heaven is necessarily based on "heavenly geography." Evidently Ford himself cannot very well dispense with what he ridicules.

(5) Pro: "Ellen White had a vision of the Father and Son going into the Most Holy Place."

Con: "The Bible doesn't teach anything about the Son being separated from the Father for 1800 years, with one in the Most Holy Place and one in the holy place, and in 1844 there was a union."

Comment: The "pro" statement proves that Ford was aware of the fact that Ellen White saw both Father and Son go into the Most Holy Place. Yet in the same breath he fabricates a false vision: the Father and Son separated for 1800 years and then uniting in 1844, which is not in the vision, and is thus a false charge.

(6) Pro: "There are some that think this is God's way of drawing our attention to the Most Holy Place,

Con: rather than trying to give a demonstration of a heavenly change in geographical location, which is impossible in view of the omnipresence of God."

Comment: Ford apparently agrees with the "some" that think . . ., then he argues that "a heavenly change in geographical location is impossible in view of the omnipresence of God." Here Ford creates a difficulty for himself, for if he can use the omnipresence of God to deny a change in geographical location, he must also deny any location of God whatsoever. He has really proved too much, for he believes God is in the Most Holy Place.

(7) Pro: "In 1844 God raised up a people to call attention to the Most Holy Place."

Con: The investigative judgment (closely connected with Christ's entry into the Most Holy Place) is a "face-saving device." Comment: Ford pictures God as resorting to a "face-saving device" to draw attention to the Most Holy Place--basing a truth on a false premise. Does God ever do that?

(8) Pro: Ford offers the apotelesmatic principle as a solution to the Daniel 8:14 problem.

Con: The apotelesmatic principle fails to solve the Daniel 8:14 problem because Ford says it applies to every imaginable thing except Christ's entry into the Most Holy Place in 1844.

(9) Pro: God originally intended for Christ to return in the first century.

Con: The Antichrist of prophecy points to a personage yet to come. (cf. Ford's doctoral thesis written at Manchester University.) Comment: Thus Ford creates an anomaly: God planning for Christ to return in the first century and Antichrist to appear twenty centuries (or more) later.

(10) Pro: Ford devotes forty pages in his MS lauding Ellen White, but

Con: ninety pages of the same MS concentrates on overthrowing what she wrote regarding the sanctuary truths, thus trying to prove that what she wrote was false and that she was not a prophet.

Now we ask you, our readers, to examine the evidence presented above and draw your conclusions. Have we falsely charged Ford? Has he not laid bare his own dishonesty? Yes, indeed! O Error, thou hast destroyed thyself!

Scholastic Bluffing

Ford takes advantage of the fact that most people have not studied biblical languages and chronology, and tries to get away with false arguments simply by bluffing. His academic awards, his prestige as a theologian, plus the earnest intonation of his voice and his "conscientious" attitude all serve to convince listeners that he can't be wrong. But what does Christ say? "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." How? By examining the content of Ford's talks. Here we present a passage in which he makes three false statements in less than three minutes:

It is not a biblical datum, but it is a providential provision. Insofar as when the parousia--the coming of Christ--was delayed, then what could have fulfilled in days is now fulfilling in years. . . . As for 457, there's no possible way of proving that as the beginning of the 2300 days; it's quite impossible. It never says in Ezra 7 that the decree of 457 was to restore the city. It had to do with the temple. In Ezra 6:14 it puts that among the temple decrees. The one who gave the decree to restore the city was Cyrus, and that wasn't in 457. I pointed this out in my Daniel Commentary. I made it very clear that 2300 days should have a staggered beginning and a staggered ending, not a precise one. I quoted Taylor Bunch, that we must begin this period in 536.

So the year-day principle was a providential datum. Daniel 9 doesn't really use it. The word used for "week" just means a "seven," and all the early scholars in the early church and modern scholars agree it means in this place seven years. They never used the year-day principle. It's not saying, "Seven days--now turn them into years."

"Providential Provision"

Ford states, "The year-day principle is not a biblical datum, but a providential provision. Insofar as when the parousia--the Second Coming of Christ--was delayed, then what could have fulfilled in days is now fulfilling in years." We ask, Is this explanation a biblical datum? Is it explicit in Scripture? No. Ford gives no scriptural proof that "what could have fulfilled in days is now fulfilling in years." Nor does he say what it was that could have fulfilled in days. We presume it was the parousia, and he refers to the 2300 days. If Christ could have returned 2300 days after His ascension, that would have been in October A.D. 37. Was that possible? And how is it now fulfilling in years? No answer.

Since this thesis is not explicit in Scripture, perhaps it receives some support from non-Adventist theologians, whose opinions weigh much with Ford. He says that no non-Adventist theologian has ever been impressed by our doctrine of the investigative judgment. Then pray tell, are they impressed by his thesis of the "providential provision?" Mark you, this is not an invention of ignorant Adventists, but the brainchild of

a noted Adventist theologian. Surely his theory should make some impression with non-Adventist theologians. But no, we fear not. Because it is not much different from the "face-saving device" which they have already rejected. Ford has simply picked it up, labelled it a "providential provision," and given it back to us for our consolation. If non-Adventist theologians were to be consulted for an appraisal, they would no doubt call his explanation a second-hand reconditioned face-saving device, definitely inferior to the original one because the first half of the proposition is wholly fallacious--2300 days cannot possibly fit a first-century parousia. Here our conclusion is summarized:

The "providential provision" theory is not explicit in Scripture.

- No non-Adventist theologian has ever been impressed by it.

- It is at best a reconditioned, inferior face-saving device.

- It is a vague hypothesis without any basis in calculable figures and historical facts.

- Desmond Ford is absolutely wrong.

The 457 B.C. Date

Ford says, "It never says in Ezra that the decree of 457 was to restore the city . . . The one who gave the decree to restore the city was Cyrus." Here Ford is either ignorant of the facts or is purposely telling a lie. Whichever happens to be the case, his image as a noted Adventist theologian loses much of its luster.

To those who imagine that this polemic war is for scholars only, may we point out that it is for laymen as well, who should have discovered by now that it does not take much learning to detect the glaring fallacies and inconsistencies in Ford's new theology. As for this particular question, all you need to do is to open the Bible to Ezra 1 and read Cyrus's decree. Is there any mention of restoring the city? No, not a word. Only an edict to rebuild the temple. Mark Ford wrong on this point. Then turn to Ezra 7:25-26. Here Artaxerxes empowers Ezra to "set magistrates and judges . . . And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment." Thus the ruling power of God's people in Jerusalem is formally restored. Desmond Ford is again wrong. Seventh-day Adventists are right.

Sheba And Shabua

Ford says, "So the year-day principle was a providential datum. Daniel 9 doesn't really use it. The word used for 'week' just means a 'seven,' and all the early scholars in the church and modern scholars agree it means in this place seven years. They never used the year-day principle. It's not saying, 'seven days--now turn them into years.' "

Again, Ford is either a poor Hebrew student or is deliberately trying to palm off a false statement on us. But even laymen who have never studied Hebrew can check up on him. Is it true that the word used for "week" in Daniel 9 just means "seven"? No. That is not true. Go to Young's or Strong's Analytical Concordance and look up "week." You will find that it occurs six times in Daniel 9 as Shabua. It occurs twice in Daniel 10:2-3 as "I Daniel was mourning three full weeks . . . till three whole weeks were fulfilled." Then look up "seven." The Hebrew word given is Sheba or Shibah.

Note that the vowel marks of these two words are not only different from Shabua, but Shabua has the additional consonant Waw. The Hebrew for "week," and "seven," are related but different words which are not used interchangeably in Scripture. They are two distinct words purposely jumbled together by this unscrupulous scholar who is bent on refuting the truth of the third angel's message. Then after he has uttered his lie, he proceeds to enlist the support of all the early scholars and modern ones as well. What do they teach? He says, "They agree it means in this place seven years." Good enough! That clinches the year-day principle. Ford has fallen into the pit he has dug.

Thus we have seen how Ford can blandly utter three falsehoods in a row within less than three minutes. We have also shown how a layman can expose his lies and sharpen spiritual scent, learning to "try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1

An Axiom Revised

Desmond Ford quotes this cliché: "All are right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny." He explains that here "all" denotes three schools of prophetic interpretation: the preterist, futurist, and historicist schools.

Ford is very tolerant, saying that every prophecy can have three applications. "It can fit here, and here, and here. It fits all three." But we are mainly interested in our Adventist position. We are historicists, and are flattered to know that we too are right. But no, Ford corrects us, "Adventists are wrong." What? But you've just said that all are right in what they affirm. No, Ford insists that Adventists are wrong in a number of respects. To be precise, we should revise the axiom to read:

"All except Seventh-day Adventists are right in what they affirm." Now we come to the second clause: "All are wrong in what they deny." Fordism claims to be a school of thought in its own right. Let us apply this axiom: Ford is wrong in what he denies, and since he denies the basic beliefs of Adventism, he must be wrong. "No," he says, "I am right." Again, in deference to this noted theologian, we must revise our axiom to read

"All except Desmond Ford are wrong in what they deny."

Thus Ford's cliché, is improved and perfected. Though we are a bit peeved at his lack of academic tolerance toward Adventists, we can at least claim to be more exact in our rhetoric than he.

Glacier View Retrospect

Almost two years have passed since Glacier View, and we are in a position to make some assessments. In the first place, was the meeting warranted? Now that we have analyzed some of Desmond Ford's teachings, it is clear that our leading brethren took him too seriously. That is, they assumed that his claim to "new light" might be valid. But now we see that Ford has no truly honest convictions in the sense we understand that term. His teachings are an incongruous mess of falsehoods aimed at destroying the Advent faith. In order to decide on the worth of his views, a much smaller number of investigators working over a longer period of time would have produced more satisfactory results than a large number of investigators skimming the surface for just a few days. Ford himself observed that most of those who came to Glacier View had not thoroughly studied his manuscript. And here we can get a clue to Ford's strategy in his war against Seventh-day Adventism.

In the first place, the decision to give Ford six months to prepare a manuscript gave him a great advantage. Practically speaking, his Forum talk on October 27, 1979, contained sufficient evidence of what he really believed, and the leading brethren could have based their decision on it and taken action, thus saving our cause the extra outlay in funds and heartaches.

Of course, we understand how our leading brethren felt about dismissing such an influential worker. Since they thought of it as a loss to our denomination (when in fact he had shown himself to be a destructive factor), the policy at the time was to "act redemptively" and try to save a fellow worker. On the other hand, Ford's strategy during that incubation period was to (1) extend his influence over as many Adventist congregations as possible, and (2) prepare a ponderous manuscript to swamp his investigators. Developments prove this observation to be correct.

For all practical purposes, a 100-page document would have sufficed to present Ford's views. But it would not have been to his advantage to let all participants get a comprehensive grasp of his arguments, for he knew that many defects would show up

under close scrutiny. The best way then was to inundate them with a flood of words. Such a bulky document could by its very size discourage church administrators, making them feel not equal to the task, and inclined to take a back seat and let Ford's peers tackle the job.

The present writer must confess ignorance of how the consensus document actually came into being. But anyone can see that to write such a document and then put it through a vote in an assembly of 120 men within four days is a thorny task. In fact, even the need for such a document is open to question. Must we recompose a new statement of our beliefs every time they are challenged? Anyhow, here Ford thinks he made the greatest gain. He points out that though the Consensus Document condemned his manuscript, yet it incorporated some of his major views. He poses as the epitome of doctrinal comprehension and congratulates the brethren for having made such a great "advance" as to be "miles ahead" of previous commitments. But not all administrators were aware of this "advance." One was chagrined when he learned of it and said, "I wouldn't have voted for it if I had known that!" Ford fairly chuckled as he remarked, "They're not used to looking for such things."

Thus we see how pro-Ford scholars took advantage of the rush to get out a consensus document and exerted their influence to railroad a hastily considered version through before all delegates were aware of what it actually contained. In other words they pulled a "fast one" on the administrators. But pro-Ford scholars and Ford himself also had an unpleasant surprise when the General Conference Committee asked him to hand in his credentials. They reproached Brother Wilson for having said Ford was not "on trial." But obviously, after Glacier View, our leading brethren saw the need to rid the camp of an accursed thing. They were probably alarmed more by the widespread defection of pro-Ford pastors and congregations than by his doctrinal aberrations. Anyhow, the decision was made.

The game ended in a draw. Both sides gained something and lost something. The majority of scholars complained of having been used. The administrators, on the other hand, realized that pro-Ford scholars had stolen a march on them. Ford smarted from the loss of his credentials, but gloated over his success in having "pulled" the brethren over so far.

We on the sidelines trust that the majority of our leaders, workers and laity accept only the Bible as their creed, and are not bound by the Consensus Document or even the Dallas Statement of Beliefs, to which Ford points with satisfaction as having shifted in his direction. For it is silent on the two apartments. Who knows in what direction it will shift in the next revision? All who tamper with the truth will have to answer for it before God's judgment bar. But we will continue to tell the world that in 1844 Christ our High Priest entered the Second Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the investigative judgment has begun. That is the message delivered to us by God, and we will proclaim it. Woe be to him who would stop us!

The name of Desmond Ford stands for an unprecedented crisis in the Advent movement. The tragic results of nurturing this apostate for so many years are manifest in a great falling away among our people, especially in Australia. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the harm done to our church by Ford is greater than the combined effects of all past apostasies, because of the duration and scope of his influence, and because many of his supporters are still entrenched in our institutions. Every truly dedicated Seventh-day Adventist must take up the work of disinfecting the church. Let no one think it is not his business. It is our Father's business, and every true child of God must make it his own. Let us uphold the hands of our leaders in taking resolute action against all teachers of falsehood. Now is the time to obey our Master's injunction to pluck out the right eye and cut off the right hand if they offend, and cast

them from us for the sake of survival. Now is no time to talk about letting the tares grow with the wheat, which parable has to do only with members who are not living in open sin. The offending "eye" and "hand" represent workers in responsible positions blatantly teaching false doctrine and poisoning the minds of thousands of our people. Let the youth in our schools and members in our churches stand up in bold protest against teachers and pastors who continue disseminating Fordian errors after our church leadership has clearly pointed them out. We must be so articulate as to create an overwhelming consensus to drown out the voices which are still trying to speak for Desmond Ford. Now is the time for us to glow with the zeal which prompted the Lamb of God to vent His wrath. Have we ever seen a lamb get angry?

Now is the time again to sweep God's house. We will not entreat false teachers like Ford to remain at their posts and hold their erroneous views "in abeyance and not discussed unless at some time in the future they might be found compatible with the positions and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church." We don't need teachers who will remain silent on such important subjects as the sanctuary service and the investigative judgment. We need, yea, God needs men and women who are so burdened and on fire with the message that nothing can stop them from preaching the Heaven-sent warning to "fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come." That is the everlasting gospel, and the angel flying in the midst of heaven is in charge of it. Nobody--no matter how learned and influential he may be--is going to stop it. And no matter how unlearned and unnoticed we may be, if we give ourselves wholly to God to spread this message, He will give us the power to do it.

The Honor of His Presence

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique in that it is blessed with the honor of God's presence. Even as Moses prayed, "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." Exodus 33:16. Moses knew what he wanted. He coveted only one favor--the continual presence of God, and pleaded earnestly until the Lord graciously granted his request. In like manner let us plead today. For God is a rewarder of all who diligently seek Him. And what is the reward? It is the honor of His presence. There is no greater boon. Paul aspired to it in these words: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Indeed, the value of this reward--the abiding presence of God--is so exceeding precious, that in contrast all else appears as worthless dung. Then let us strive for this reward, and our Father will bestow it, for it is His pleasure to be with His people, even as our Lord has promised, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him . . . and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." John 14:21-23. This experience is a personal one, and also a corporate one. For God always has a people He recognizes as His own. As indicated in this text, they are those who have His commandments and keep them. And what does He do in return? He loves them and abides with them. This love is more intimate than His love for the world in general. For therein is realized the closest rapport between Christ and His own, even as He has said, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." John 17:9. Fellowship with God is what Moses yearningly sought; we will also long for it when the Holy Spirit reveals to us the magnificence of Jesus.

Note that God's relationship with His people is manifest in two ways: (1) their obedience to His commandments and (2) His communicating with them through His Spirit. Christ prayed, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me

out of the world. . . . I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them." Yes! Communication between God and His own--this is the mark of our sonship. It was so in Christ's day; it is so in our day. God's people still keep His commandments, and God still communicates with them.

The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire . . . out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee . . . For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Deuteronomy 4:12, 36, 32-33

The same may be said of God's remnant church today. Did ever people receive so many visions and instructions as the Seventh-day Adventist church? Did ever people rejoice under such a flood of light? Wherein shall it be known that we have found grace in God's sight? Is it not in that He communicates with us and is among us? So shall we be separated from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

In warfare, a battle is lost when the enemy succeeds in cutting our line of communication. That is why Satan attacks God's messenger unremittingly. He wants us to lose faith in the Testimonies and break our connection with God. We must resist his every inroad.

The fact that God has communicated directly with the Seventh-day Adventist church places us under solemn responsibility. We are to present Christ to the world as "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." The testimonies of His Spirit and His holy Sabbath comprise the sacred legacy which distinguishes us as God's people. On Sabbath--the day of His appointing--only those who observe it are prepared to respond to His knock and let Him in. They alone are privileged to enjoy the feast He provides in the gift of prophecy. Sunday-keepers lag behind by one day, always missing the divine appointment, and like the virgins arriving late, are stalled at the door which is shut and no man can open. They are strangers to the joy of supping with Jesus.

Here we see an analogy with the scene described in a vision wherein those who failed to follow Jesus by faith into the Most Holy Place were bowed before an empty throne, and "Satan appeared to be by the throne trying to carry on the work of God." Early Writings 56. Some may think that this vision stigmatizes other churches. But if we believe it is of God, we should recognize it as His portrayal of modern church history. It is in accord with the second angel's message, which calls the churches "Babylon" who reject the Advent message of 1844. This sharp cleavage between those who serve God, and those who serve Him not, is the result of their own choice. The word of God is positive on this point. All who would cover up this distinction for sake of improved public relations will befuddle their philosophy of history and lose their bearings. This reasoning led Ford astray in his interpretation of Antichrist and Babylon, and some of our scholars are also ready to reject this vision in exchange for worldly approbation. Says Jesus, "They have their reward." But we will hold on to the truth as God has given it.

About a century ago some of our publishing men agitated for a popularly oriented editorial policy--to have less said about the distinctive truths of our message. What was God's reply? The Salamanca vision. It warned us against such a trend. What God wants of us is not popularity, but peculiarity. Not in the sense that we are to be a society of odd fellows, but that we should lift high the banner of "the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus." These distinctive points of our faith have a mysterious way of drawing the honest in heart to Christ, even as He has told us, "My sheep hear my voice: `Come out of her, my people!'"

April 30, 1982

Chapter 12

THE PROOF-TEXT METHOD

IN his article, "Daniel 8:14 and the Day of Atonement," Desmond Ford says, "I follow the 'grammatical-historical' method as the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of Scripture." Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 30 In the same issue of Spectrum Raymond Cottrell's article, "The Sanctuary Review Committee and Its New Consensus," contains the following passages:

Use of the historical method by the decided majority of our Bible scholars, and of the proof text method by most non-scholars, has been responsible for practically every theological difference of opinion over the past 40 years, including that posed by Ford. The traditional Adventist interpretations of Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9 were formulated by the proof text method. Prior to about 1940, a very few Adventists--among them A.F.Ballenger, W.W.Prescott, L.R. Conradi and W.W.Fletcher--had begun to use some elements of the historical method; it was this that made them aware of some of the problems of exegesis of our traditional interpretation, and precipitated their individual crises.

The proof-text method of Bible study consists essentially of a study of the Bible in translation (English for instance), of reliance on the analogy of Scripture on the verbal level with little if any attention to context, of giving, at best, inadequate attention to the historical setting of a statement or message and what it meant to the people of its own time, and of permitting subjective preconceptions to control conclusions arrived at deductively.

By contrast, the historical method consists of a study of the Bible in its original languages, of accepting the literary context of every statement and message as normative for its meaning, of determining what the messages of the Bible meant to the various reading audiences to which they were originally addressed, in terms of the intention of the inspired writer and the Holy Spirit, of accepting that original meaning as a guide to an accurate understanding of their import for us today, and of reasoning inductively, arriving at conclusions on the basis of the evidence. Ibid., p. 18

"The Only Valid Means"

The contention that the historical method is "the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of Scripture" cannot be supported by facts, because we can cite many instances of competent scholars using the historical method who hold widely divergent opinions regarding the translation of certain Bible texts, proving that this method does not guarantee accuracy and unity in Bible interpretation. On the other hand, a study of the methodology of New Testament writers who cite Old Testament proof texts reveals that these texts are almost invariably applied out of context. We present three examples:

Matthew 1:23 quotes Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child. . . ."

Matthew 2:17-18 quotes Jeremiah 31:15, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation . . ."

Matthew 27:9-10 quotes Zechariah 11:12-13, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver . . ."

We can imagine that when the apostles quoted these texts to prove that the birth and betrayal of Jesus were foretold by the prophets, the scribes and Pharisees who opposed them could have used the historical method to deny the validity of their claims. "No," they would have said, "you are using these passages wholly out of context. Your proof-text method is not acceptable."

There are scholars in our day who use the same argument to ridicule the arbitrary use of these texts by the gospel writers. They maintain that Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled in Isaiah's day, Jeremiah 31:15 was fulfilled in Jeremiah's day, and Zechariah

11:12-13 was fulfilled in Zechariah's day. They agree with Ford's assertion that "prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed." But we contend that prophecy did not always have direct relevance for the people first addressed. We cite three more examples:

Isaiah 9:6. Unto us a child is born. . . . His name shall be called . . . the mighty God.

Micah 5:2. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall he come forth . . . whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Isaiah 53:1-12. Who hath believed our report? . . . he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

These three Old Testament texts did not have direct relevance for the people first addressed (though it is true that they were eligible for a share in the salvation proffered), because they did not fully understand their meaning and witness their fulfillment. Only when the Holy Spirit opened the eyes of Christ's disciples after their fulfillment did the truths hidden in these texts shine forth.

The prophet Daniel admitted that he did not comprehend all the visions he recorded for our benefit. And Peter said, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." 1 Peter 1:10-12

Therefore we conclude that the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of Scripture and prophetic passages in particular, is to depend on the illumination of the Spirit who inspired them. Ever since antiquity the Holy Spirit has held the key to Bible interpretation, and every student who has tried to depend on scholarship alone has come short of a clear understanding of God's will, and has at times even been led astray.

A Method Acceptable to Atheistic Scholars

We do not mean to reject the historical method, but maintain that it is inadequate for a correct understanding of what the Holy Spirit originally intended. The Bible is not just another ancient historical document. If we treat it as such, we will arrive at the same conclusions as many atheistic scholars. Take the book of Revelation: Friedrich Engels (close colleague of Karl Marx) studied it as a historical source document. (See Complete Works of Marx & Engels, vol. 20 under "Revelation," and vol. 22, under "History of the Early Church.") He concluded that it was written circa A.D. 67-68, most probably by John the apostle. The beast of Revelation 13:1-10, he believed, referred to Nero, and he even demonstrated how the number 666 is found in the title of this emperor. Engels followed the grammatical-historical method of Bible interpretation, but he did not grasp the prophetic message which God put there for His people. Why? Because he left the Holy Spirit out of his reckoning. Like all modernist interpreters, Engels believed that "prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed," so all the prophecies of Revelation had to do with events occurring in the first century of the Christian era.

If Adventist Bible scholars think they have a wonderful method of Bible interpretation in the historical method and that it is adequate for a correct understanding of Bible prophecy, they are sadly mistaken. They imagine they are in good company. But upon closer examination they will discover that in spite of the church affiliation of many modernist theologians, they are in their very core atheist and infidel. "God is not in all their thoughts." The Bible is to them just another ancient document of bygone days.

They have no use for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Any mention of the Holy Spirit having a part in directing their search for truth is just so much superstitious nonsense. Their historical method is the only correct method to follow. Yet in the end the scholars who use this method are just as hopelessly divergent in their views as nonscholars who use the proof-text method.

The Decisive Element

Men who confine their methodology to either the proof-text method or the historical method overlook the most important and decisive element. If we indeed believe that the Bible was written by God through men inspired by His Spirit, then we must recognize that this Book is radically different from other historical documents. God Himself reveals one unique principle followed in His revelation of truth.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Luke 10:21

Jesus tells us that (1) God's revelation is selective: He chooses to reveal the truth to a certain class of people and at the same time to hide it from another class. (2) The "wise and prudent"--those who trust to their own scholastic ability--are denied the privilege of comprehending His truth. (3) The "babes"--those who are teachable and obedient--are given this privilege.

And the fascinating thing about this revealing and hiding is that it is all done through this one same Book. In it one reader sees the truth and exclaims, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." Psalm 119:162, while another one says, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" John 6:60

We have a modern example. Desmond Ford is a learned man with two top scholastic awards, having studied in two universities of the world. He may be classed among the "wise and prudent." Now what particular truth has God hidden from him? Let Ford tell us. He says, "There is no biblical basis for the year-day principle." Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 32

How can this wise man make such a positive assertion (and incidentally, many other wise men agree with him)? Because God has hidden this key to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation from him. God could have followed the conventional method of writing algebraic formulas and clearly stating in the context what abc and xyz stand for. But He chose not to be so explicit, so that Ford can find the pretext he wants. Yet God did give us Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. Even then Ford will close his eyes and say, "I note that Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 do not yield the day-year principle." Thus God has hidden a truth from the wise and prudent: by purposely making it not explicit enough to satisfy them. But the honest searcher finds sufficient evidence for a solution of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

As a matter of fact, Ford is not as blind as he pretends to be, for he has presented sane and sound arguments in favor of the year-day principle and has applied it to all the time prophecies of Daniel in his book on that subject. Now for some untold reason he has decided to turn traitor to the Advent cause in joining our enemies in fighting the truth. "Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isaiah 6:10. There is no man so blind as he who will not see. And there must be a hidden sinister motive behind this pretended blindness.

Prophetic Outcrops

The New Testament writers followed Christ's method of explaining the Scriptures. We shall now try to discover the peculiarities of His method. In the three prophetic texts quoted above we recognize from their context that they pointed primarily to incidents

which occurred within a few years of the time these prophecies were uttered. For instance, Isaiah 7:16 says, "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." These words were spoken to King Ahaz, and the fate which was to befall Rezin and Pekah was to come within a few years after the birth of the child mentioned. The other two prophecies were all historical incidents recorded in the past tense. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit cited these texts as applying to (1) Christ's virgin birth, (2) the slaying of the children of Bethlehem, and (3) the betrayal of Christ by Judas.

Because of the historical nature of the context, and because these contextual details were not a part of the later and final fulfillment of the prophecies quoted, we may call them "outcrops" of seams of prophetic ore lying beneath the topsoil of Old Testament history. These words quoted out of context represent a second fulfillment. The first fulfillment is primary in time; the second fulfillment is primary in significance. And because of their significance, we may presume that even if the Spirit had not directed men to quote these Old Testament texts, later readers of the Old Testament would have noticed the striking correspondence of these words with incidents in the life of Jesus and recognized their prophetic import.

Yet without specific quoted references in the New Testament, no modern expositor would dare affirm that these texts and others of similar nature were intended by God to refer to the life of His Son. Here we have clear instances of the Holy Spirit directly authorizing such applications of Old Testament Scripture in violation of the requirement of the historical method to confine the bounds of interpretation within contextual limits.

Prophetic "Nuggets"

Prophetic "outcrops" require direct reference by inspired writers for authorization. But prophetic "nuggets" are so clear, even to the casual reader, that they cannot be mistaken. Isaiah 53 is one "super nugget" that continues to amaze every true child of God with its striking description of the crucifixion, and at the same time confound the infidel with its uncanny accuracy. Orthodox Jews forbid their children to read this chapter, for even a ten-year-old can see that it is speaking of Jesus Christ. But if you insist on adhering strictly to the historical method, you can argue, with Ford, "prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed," and so should look in the eighth century for some personage Isaiah is talking about in chapter 53. After all, you can not ignore the context. But no. The Holy Spirit has always inspired men to write words of eternal significance foretelling events due to take place in the distant future. These words stand out from their context like so many nuggets encased in the soil. Here again we see how the historical method alone comes short of helping us arrive at a full understanding of Bible prophecies.

Prophetic Allegories

In John 1:51 and 3:14 Jesus explains the prophetic significance of Jacob's ladder and the brazen serpent. We presume that Jacob was enlightened by the Holy Spirit to grasp the meaning of his dream. But we know that that dream also had direct relevance for all generations before and after Christ's crucifixion. As for the brazen serpent, we may be sure that only those who know of Jesus' comment can fully appreciate its significance. It is true that this allegory had direct relevance not for the people first addressed, but for the people of the New Testament period. Before Christ, its symbolism was misunderstood. As late as the eighth century the Israelites still burned incense to the brazen serpent. See 2 Kings 18:4. And to this day Jews who reject the New Testament testimony can give no plausible interpretation for that Old Testament miracle. So again, dependence on the historical method alone would not yield the truths Jesus drew from these two historical incidents.

Prophetic Enigmas Without the help of the Holy Spirit certain prophetic enigmas will keep men forever puzzled. Yet one hint from the inspired pen solves the riddle. Desmond Ford capitalizes on the fact that the year-day principle is not given contextually in Daniel. So, says he, we are not justified in applying it to the 2300 days. Here Inspiration comes to our aid. Jesus tells us the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet will "stand in the holy place" before the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke 21:20 simply says, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." These words refer directly to Daniel 9:27, which follow the prophecy of verse 26, "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

What problem do these words solve? They clinch the year-day principle for the prophecy of the 70 weeks. Daniel 9:25 gives the starting point: "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." Daniel 9:27 gives the finishing point of the 70 weeks--the destruction of Jerusalem marking the "consummation" some time after the seventieth week. Here we can skip the prophetic details in between, pin down the beginning and the end of this span of time, and ascertain that the 70 weeks cannot be 490 days, but must be 490 years. This prophecy is an example of an inspired statement in the New Testament contributing to the solution of an Old Testament time prophecy. It also proves that Daniel 9:25-27 did not have direct relevance for the people first addressed. The fact that the beginning point of the 70 weeks is the only beginning point found in Daniel 8 and 9, plus the familiar demonstration that the 70 weeks are "cut off" from the 2300 days, justify our applying the year-day principle to the latter span of time. The evidence presented here is as plain as any honest scholar can expect.

The disappointment which overwhelmed the Millerite Adventists following October 22, 1844, made the solution of many prophetic enigmas supremely urgent. Ellen White wrote: "I saw that Jesus regarded with the deepest compassion the disappointed ones who had waited for His coming; and He sent His angels to direct their minds that they might follow Him where He was." *Early Writings*, 244. Picture the Lord of inspiration so concerned for His people! At this crucial moment He heard the weeping of His disappointed children. Hiram Edson wrote:

We wept, and wept, till the day dawn. I mused in my own heart, saying, My advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experiences. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden home city, no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hope and expectation of these things? Damsteegt, P. G., *Foundations of the SDA Message & Mission*, 99

We may be sure the Lord would not let His people long remain in darkness. The Paraclete, who was promised to guide them into all truth, brought light to the grieving saints. The very next morning Edson saw the light. He wrote: After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, "Let us go and see, and encourage some of our brethren." We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth. That He came to the marriage at that time, in other words, to the Ancient of days to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for his return from the wedding. *Ibid.*, 117

Edson also saw that the experience of the Millerites was a fulfillment of the sweet-and-then-bitter experience described in Revelation 10. He said, The seventh

angel had begun to sound; we had eaten the little book; it had been sweet in our mouths, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. Ibid., 105

Thereafter, in February 1845, the Holy Spirit gave Ellen White a vision to confirm the truth regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary, first revealed to Edson, and then elaborated upon by O.R.L. Crosier in the Day-Star, Extra, February 7, 1846. She wrote: "I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that Extra to every saint." Ibid., 125

Thus in the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist movement the Spirit of inspiration was actively engaged in molding our theology, using men and means according to God's choosing. Some have made light of the idea of a man receiving divine illumination in a cornfield, as though it were more becoming for God to communicate with men in the halls of higher learning. But God does not need men to be His advisers. He spoke to Elijah by the brook Cherith, to Paul on the road to Damascus. Why can't He speak to Edson in a cornfield?

During those first years of Adventist church history there were several divergent views regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary, and its relation to the investigative judgment was not developed until several years later. If the people of God were left to thrash out their problems without the aid of the Holy Spirit, they would very likely have split into several groups, and no one group would have possessed the harmonious system of truth with which the Seventh-day Adventist church is blessed today.

We are what we are by the grace of God, because He has given us direct guidance in His Paraclete--the gift of prophecy. This gift was particularly needed in the formative years of our church. For then was laid the foundation of our beliefs. Ellen White had just received her call to be the Lord's messenger; she was young, frail, and timid. She had received no theological training, and would have been the last to open her mouth in public and debate on Bible doctrines with her elders. That was exactly why God chose her to speak in His name. "That the excellency of the power may be of God," not of her. She wrote: In the early days of the message, when our numbers were few, we studied diligently to understand the meaning of many Scriptures. At times it seemed as if no explanation could be given. My mind seemed to be locked to an understanding of the word; but when our brethren who had assembled for study came to a point where they could go no farther, and had recourse to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God would rest upon me, and I would be taken off in vision, and be instructed in regard to the relation of Scripture to Scripture. These experiences were repeated over and over again. Thus many truths of the third angel's message were established, point by point. Selected Messages, Book 3, 38

Coming back to the question of the two methods of Bible interpretation, we note that when knotty problems are encountered in the study of prophecy, neither method is adequate for arriving at a unified and consistent solution. The active guidance of the Holy Spirit is the indispensable element. We should be sobered by the thought that the Lord has blessed our church with the living testimony of His promised Paraclete to guide us into all truth and to reveal to us things to come. We are indeed a favored people, unworthy though we may be!

Decision by Majority Vote

But, sad to say, not all Adventists appreciate this gift. They have forgotten how the Lord has led us through a maze of erroneous theories to arrive in His sanctum of present truth. Instead, they are anxious to discount the past and to find fault with the faith once delivered to the saints. On page 29 of Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, we read,

The second question that Wilson treated was, What does one do if twelve theologians agree on a biblical interpretation against Ellen White's interpretation of the same biblical material?"

First of all we should point out that the wording of this proposition is not clear enough. The "twelve theologians" should be modified to read, "twelve Adventist theologians" to exclude theologians of other persuasions. Then we should further modify the word "Adventist," because there are all kinds of Adventist theologians today. If Ford is still regarded as an Adventist theologian, then you can muster eleven of his sympathizers, call them all theologians and have them vote against Ellen White. We call it "decision by majority vote." On the other hand, we can also find twelve theologians who will vote in favor of Ellen White. That is why we say the hypothetical question is not very well worded.

After all, is it safe to decide on doctrinal issues by majority vote? They did so in the Jewish Sanhedrin when they silenced a voice of dissension with the words, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." John 7:52. They did so in the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 to ostracize Nestorius for opposing the use of the term "Mother of God" in honor of the Virgin Mary. Today if some think they can gather a group of theologians to overthrow a doctrine which God has explicitly affirmed through the gift of prophecy, they are sadly mistaken, because God is always a majority. If our theologians make issue of the fact that Ellen White was unlearned and should not be taken as an authority, they overlook the fact that God is not limited in His choice of media. He can, when He pleases, use an ass to rebuke His servant. At times some of us, like Baalam, need to be thus humiliated. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people." Isaiah 28:11

To be realistic, we should recognize the present controversy as a split over the authority of the writings of Ellen White. It is not a case of twelve theologians pitted against one "unlearned" woman. It is rather a case of one group of Adventist theologians who repudiate the authority of Ellen White's writings opposed to another group who accept them. The split likewise pertains to our lay members. What will be the outcome? The ship which has struck the iceberg head-on will shiver from stem to stern, and then sail right ahead on its chartered course, while the iceberg will shatter into many pieces, float apart and melt away.

The Living Testimony

Doubters always raise the question, "How can we know Ellen White was inspired of God?" This question has been answered in many earlier publications, and we need not repeat. Suffice it to affirm that God is not restricted in His freedom of communication after the canon of the Scriptures has been declared closed. We must not commit the error of the Jews who said, "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." John 9:29. It is good to profess faith in the Scriptures, but we must not tie God's hands and limit the Holy One of Israel. We must not deny the possibility of His speaking to us through a modern agent. Since Ellen White's work has undergone the test of 70 years and is proven to be that of a messenger of God, then we should no longer regard her academic training as bearing any weight in our consideration of the message she brings, any more than the schooling of a postman would influence the contents of the letters he delivers.

Coming back to our subject of Bible interpretation, we see that the part played by the living testimony in solving exegetical riddles is exemplified in the reference to Isaiah 66:24 by the angel as follows: "I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. . . . Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, "the worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon." Early Writings, 294

This comment gives food for thought, and fills a gap in our eschatology, bringing us one step closer to a better understanding of last-day events. God's justice is

vindicated as we comprehend His plan to requite the wicked for the suffering they have caused others by meting out their punishment in the duration of their own suffering. This helpful pointer given by the angel is worth more than the learned dissertations of 120 theologians, and we dare say that if they studied Isaiah 66:24 by their grammatical-historical- semantical method, not one of them would conclude that the "worm" in this text means "the worm of life." Thus we have a case of 120 theologians disagreeing with Ellen White. In fact you can muster all the theologians in the world--maybe there will be 120,000--to cast a vote against Ellen White. But we who believe in the active agency of the promised Paraclete are bold to say, All those theologians who cast that vote are wrong; Ellen White is right.

The Correct Approach

Raymond Cottrell makes this comment on the question of the correct approach in Bible study: In the thinking of the majority at Glacier View, Adventist tradition was the norm for interpreting the Bible, rather than the Bible for tradition.

Dr. Leslie Hardinge aptly described this approach when he said to the full assembly Wednesday afternoon, "I search the Bible for evidence that our message is true." This comment elicited a loud chorus of "Amens." In contrast, a majority of the Bible scholars present would have said: "I search the Bible to hear what it is saying, in order that my presentation of our message may be true to the Bible." Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 18

Let us first ascertain the source of Adventist tradition. Earlier we quoted a statement by Ellen White telling us that Adventist tradition sprang from intense Bible study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If it were not for this guidance, the pioneers could not have worked out the harmonious system of truth which we now possess. True, we should rediscover it for ourselves--not take it for granted and assume that no more light will come, or that every detail is immutable. On the other hand we should not suppose that we must begin over again and start from zero, thinking we have more wisdom than our fathers and can lightly reject what the Holy Spirit has already revealed.

Cottrell's proposition that we search the Bible to hear what it is saying, in order that our presentation of our message may be true to the Bible, seems to imply that he starts out with some misgivings about our message being true to the Bible. Nevertheless he still feels we have a message to present. His proposition is not as objective and unbiased as it appears to be, for like Hardinge's proposition it also starts out with a belief that our message is true, otherwise he wouldn't want to present it.

To be strictly scientific in our approach, we should say, "I search the Bible to hear what it is saying, in order that I may know if what I believe and teach is true; and if it is not true, the sooner I find out the better."

Then there is the infidel's approach of searching the Bible with the express purpose of refuting the truth. Of this Thomas Paine gives us a good example.

Finally, the fifth, is Desmond Ford's approach: searching the Bible for arguments to refute the truth under the pretext of seeking for truth.

The first four approaches--be they truly objective or not--are honest approaches. Only Desmond Ford's approach is dishonest and most damaging. A man reading Paine's Age of Reason knows that the writer is an avowed infidel. But many readers of Ford's publications take him to be an honest Seventh-day Adventist. Paine's books are properly labelled. Ford's are sugar-coated poison.

Coming back to Hardinge's approach, we feel it has its merits. He starts out with strong faith in the certainty of our message. He has through years of service tasted of God's goodness and knows he is on the right track. He is not starting from zero, but has such a rich background of study and experience that now he studies the Bible with the

assurance that he will find new light to add to his treasure of old truths. Ellen White's faith is in these words:

Think you that my faith in this message will ever waver? Think you that I can remain silent, when I see an effort being made to sweep away the foundation pillars of our faith? I am as thoroughly established in these truths as it is possible for a person to be. I can never forget the experience I have passed through. God has confirmed my belief by many evidences of His power. Selected Messages, Book 3, 38

The chorus of "Amens" which greeted Hardinge's words indicate that many share this conviction, and from that we gather courage. Cottrell's advocacy of what he calls the approach of "the majority of Bible scholars present at Glacier View" reveals that he takes pride in belonging to the "elite," but we can detect in him a corresponding lack of the conviction in the Adventist message which we expect of our leaders, including our scholars. They should be standing in the forefront in our encounter with the enemy, but instead we see some standing on the brink of skepticism, wavering between truth and error, and even pleading for the reinstatement of a super apostate. How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold tarnished!

Rhetorical Sleight-of-Hand

Cottrell makes another statement which calls for study. He says, Let it be clear that Adventist Bible scholars using the historical method all accept the validity of 1844, Christ's day-of-atonement ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, an eschatological "restoration" of the heavenly sanctuary to its "rightful state" (or "vindication"), and a pre-Advent judgment, but they reject the proof text method reasoning on which these tenets of Adventist belief were originally based. Dr. Ford's apotelesmatic principle for interpreting Daniel 8:14 is one of the several that have been proposed in an attempt to build a bridge between a valid historical understanding of these passages, and the objective realities to which the traditional Adventist interpretation points. Before we criticize Ford's proposed solution to the exegetical problems, we have an obligation to offer a better one. Spectrum, Vol. 11, No. 2, 18

A casual perusal of this passage gives one the impression that Ballenger et al., using the "right" method of interpretation, ended up on the wrong side of the fence, while the Advent pioneers who used the "wrong" method ended up on the right side. Furthermore, Adventist Bible scholars using the historical method all accept the validity of the truths discovered by men using the "wrong" method, but insist on rediscovering the truths by using the "right" method.

We are perplexed, and ask, Since Advent pioneers discovered the truth by using the proof-text method, does that not show that this is the right method? And if Ballenger et al. made shipwreck of their faith by using the historical method, does that not reveal that it is a wrong method?

A careful reading of Cottrell's words reveals that this is not what he is saying. His statement that "they reject the proof text method reasoning on which these tenets of Adventist belief were originally based" is misleading, because the "tenets" he refers to are not the basic truths of Adventist tradition, but the four points he has listed. He deliberately avoids saying that our scholars all accept the validity of traditional Adventist beliefs, and yet tries to convey such an impression with the words, "Let it be clear that Adventist Bible scholars using the historical method all accept the validity of . . . but they reject the proof-text method of reasoning on which these tenets of Adventist belief were originally based." One who overlooks the words omitted in this quotation would gain the impression that "these tenets" refer to traditional Adventist beliefs. But no, they refer to four specific points which appear to be traditional, but are essentially something quite different:

(1) "1844" Just a bare figure. What does 1844 stand for? It can stand for much, and it can stand for nothing.

(2) "Christ's day-of-atonement ministry in the heavenly sanctuary." No mention of the critical question of the two apartments.

(3) "An eschatological 'restoration' of the heavenly sanctuary to its 'rightful state' (or 'vindication')." No

the heavenly sanctuary to its 'rightful state' (or 'vindication')." No mention of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

(4) "A pre-Advent judgment." No mention of the investigative judgment.

Therefore the words, "Let it be clear that. . ." are a misleading introduction to a faithful repetition of Des Ford's erroneous doctrines. Cottrell tries to create the impression that the scholars he is speaking for are loyal Seventh-day Adventists, but in the end we discover that they are Ford's disciples. Cottrell's claim that these "tenets" were originally based on the proof-text method is also misleading, because these tenets are errors introduced by men using the historical method. But he tries to ward off all suspicion by assuring us that the historicists will not tamper with the "tenets of Adventist belief," but only wish to change the method of arriving at them. Who is aware that in the very wording of his assuring statement he has deftly substituted contraband merchandise for the true?

It is quite clear then that the wares Cottrell is selling are typically Fordian; his style of presentation is likewise Fordian--rhetorical sleight-of-hand. And he goes on defending Ford with the challenge: "Before we criticize Ford's proposed solution to the exegetical problems, we have an obligation to offer a better one." Cottrell's enthusiasm for Ford is worthy of a better cause. In answer to his challenge we need only say that the problems Ford has raised are of his own creating, **so no one else is obliged to offer any solution whatever.** Moreover, as Dr. Shea points out, Ford first proposes to solve his problems with the apotelesmatic principle, but in the end he tells us that this principle cannot apply to these problems. When will Cottrell wake up to the fact that the man he admires is making a fool of him?

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Chapter 13

THE GRAMMATICAL METHOD

A study of the Old Testament proof texts quoted by New Testament writers reveals that they may be classed into two categories. One represents a second fulfillment of prophecies that apparently had an earlier fulfillment (e.g. Isaiah 7:14f) or were a historical episode having prophetic significance (cf. Zechariah 11:12f). Another category comprises prophecies which could not have been fulfilled earlier and were not fully comprehended by the men who heard, read or even wrote them, but were understood only after they were explained by men inspired by the Holy Spirit after the prophesied events had occurred. One example of such a prophecy is Psalm 16:8-11.

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

This text is central to Peter's sermon on Pentecost. We note that he used the proof-text method plus a logical appeal to reason. The persuasion in his sermon lies in Peter's explanation that (1) this passage could not have applied to the writer of this psalm, but (2) it finds fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ. He says:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Acts 2:29-35

The enlightening power of the Holy Spirit was no doubt abundantly present. But it was not then that Peter first perceived the significance of this psalm. For he and the other disciples had been with Jesus, and He had opened "their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." He had explained to them that "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44f. We note, moreover, that even before His resurrection Jesus had quoted Psalm 110:1 in reference to the Messiah. Peter is therefore using Jesus' method of interpretation, and long before he preached that powerful sermon, the Holy Spirit had already prepared his mind for its delivery. And he spoke not in a trance--like Balaam against his own will--but was in full possession of his mental powers as he reasoned with thinking men and women. God also worked this way in the Millerite awakening, and continues to work this way with us today. It is His proven method--prophetic proof texts logically explained to the satisfaction of our mental faculties. He does not want us to accept an arbitrary dogma on the force of His authority alone, but He gives scriptural evidence to convince the minds of His creatures.

We do not reject the historical method of interpretation, but maintain that for prophetic Scripture it is not applicable. If we insist with Ford that prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed, and try to discover what Psalm 16:8-11 meant to its readers in 1000 B.C., we will get nowhere. We must recognize that the people first addressed did not comprehend these words. In fact, even 1000 years later nobody in that throng addressed by Peter understood this text until Peter explained it. Note also that this important prophecy was explained by the mouth of an unlearned fisherman, not by the scholarly Gamaliel, who was Peter's contemporary. In fact, if Gamaliel had been asked, "Is Peter right?" the professor would have lifted his brows and

said, "I fear not. What can an illiterate fisherman from Galilee know about this profound text? After all, he's not a theologian."

What should we gather from this? The secret of arriving at an understanding of prophetic Scripture does not lie in methodology alone, but depends on the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's Methodology

Now let us turn to the apostle Paul. What was his method of interpreting prophetic scripture? In Acts 13:33-37 he uses the same psalm quoted by Peter and also Psalm 2 as proof texts for the resurrection of Jesus. Paul argues in similar vein: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption." This repetition of Peter's logic shows that Psalm 16:8-11 was a classic argument used by the apostles to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

We note also that Paul has no scruples about lifting proof texts out of their original context in violation of the historical method. For instance, he ends his sermon with the words of Habakkuk 1:5: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Turning to the context, we read, "For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation . . ." However, Paul is not speaking of the Chaldeans, but about Christ's resurrection. Then in his next sermon he quotes Isaiah 42:6, commonly understood to refer to Christ, as God's command to the apostles, saying, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, 'I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.'" Acts 13:47. Paul's use of this text shows that he understood "My servant" to refer to Christ and His representatives, not to any person in the days of Isaiah. This fact again refutes Ford's thesis that prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed.

Another example of Paul's proof-text method of interpreting Old Testament prophetic Scripture is his quotation of Psalm 68:18, "When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Ephesians 4:8. Unlike Peter's interpretation of Psalm 16:8-11, which was evidently learned from Jesus, Paul's application of this text could only have been received by direct unction of the Holy Spirit, for this particular truth became clear only after Christ's ascension. Again we take note of the fact that this text in Psalms 68 did not have direct relevance for the people first addressed.

James' Methodology

Now we turn to a third apostolic witness for the methodology approved of God. James, presiding at the council in Jerusalem, quoted Amos 9:11 in regard to the conversion of the Gentiles: And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Acts 15:15-17

The historicist would say, this prophecy written by Amos in the eighth century, pointed to the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. In this sense it had relevance for the people first addressed. But the second clause regarding "all the Gentiles" seeking after the Lord was not fulfilled until the time of the apostles in the first century. The complete realization of this prophecy was not witnessed by the people first addressed, but by those who lived 800 years later. Yet by that time the Lord had already pronounced the doom of the temple in Jerusalem, so this prophecy of building again "the tabernacle of David" apparently pointed beyond its fulfillment in the

days of Ezra to the inauguration of the mediatorial work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

Summing up the evidence, we may safely say that in the exposition of Old Testament prophecies extending to New Testament times the historical method is not applicable. The very nature of such prophecies precludes their acceptance as historical material. Now we shall turn to Daniel 8:14.

Desmond Ford et al. hold that Daniel 8:14 points to the restoration of the temple services in Jerusalem after they were suspended by Antiochus Epiphanes. That accounts for their insistence on the historical method of interpretation as "the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of scripture." If this view is credited, it would naturally follow that the book of Daniel should be regarded as a historical document written in prophetic style; the planks would be pulled from under the platform of our faith, and Seventh-day Adventists would thereby forfeit their *raison d'être*.

Thank God for His assurance that the book of Daniel is not merely a historical, but is primarily a prophetic book. Where can we find this assurance? In Mark 13:14, where Jesus said, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand), then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.

Christ tells us that Daniel was a prophet and that the events foretold in Daniel 9:27 would extend to the first century after Christ, indicating that the time prophecies of Daniel are not numbered in terms of years, but rather in hundreds of years. Furthermore, the fact that the visions of Daniel 2, 7, and 8 all extend to the end of the world, gives us grounds for determining the general dimensions of the time periods in Daniel, assuring us that the 2300 days are in fact so many years, and deal with an event occurring not in ancient times, but in the "time of the end."

"This Generation Shall Not Pass"

Desmond Ford maintains that "the New Testament does not contemplate 20 centuries after Christ. . . . Christ could have come back in the first century after the cross." What evidence does Ford have for this assertion? He quotes Mark 13:30, "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done."

Ford capitalizes on the word "all." "All these things" refers to everything Christ said about the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world. So, using Ford's way of driving a point home, it seems that there's no way out, round, or through it. When Christ said "all," He meant "all." But we propose that there is a way out, round, and through it. We point out that the word "all" has an absolute sense and also a relative one, just as the words "eternal," "everlasting," and "forever" have their absolute and relative applications. Ford himself knows that "eternal fire" does not mean a perpetually burning hell. In similar vein we may argue that when Christ said, "this generation shall not pass till all these things be done," He was using "all" in the relative sense, referring only to the first cycle of events culminating with the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a foreshadowing of the end of the world. Christ used this word in the relative sense also in the statement, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Here the "all men" refers only to those who look to Him by faith. We quote a few more examples:

"And so all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11:26 (Except those who will not be saved.)

"[He] told me all that ever I did." John 4:39 (Except what He did not tell.)

"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Philippians 2:21 (Except those who, like Timothy, seek the things of Jesus Christ.)

"These all died in faith." Hebrews 11:13 (Except Enoch, who was translated.)

"When He saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him." 1 Corinthians 15:27

In his attempt to bolster his theory of God's planning for the Second Advent in the first century, Ford presents an array of Bible texts which seem to support it. But a close examination reveals that he is willfully ignorant of their correct applications. One text reads, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matthew 16:28. Here is a purposeful misapplication of scripture. A theologian of his caliber cannot plead ignorance of the widely accepted interpretation of these words of Jesus as referring to His transfiguration. Peter, James, and John were the "some" who stood in His presence when He spoke to them, and what they saw a week later was a miniature preview of the Second Advent. Moses represented the resurrected saints, and Elijah the translated ones. "Practically every Bible commentary in the world," including the Seventh-day Adventist, takes cognizance of this view. Now Ford thinks he can hoodwink his audience by applying these words of Christ to His second advent in reality. Are they indeed so gullible?

After all, did God really plan for His Son to return in the first century? No. Absolutely not. When after the resurrection the disciples asked the Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" He answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts 1:7. Why didn't Christ say, Before this generation shall pass? Because that was not God's intention. It is true that some did look for the parousia in the first century. But John and Paul wrote specific messages to counter this view. John wrote, Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? John 21:23

Paul wrote: Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand . . . for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

The events spoken of here envisage a gradual development that would entail centuries of time. The "falling away" and the appearance of the "man of sin" sitting in God's temple suggest a protracted unfolding of events. And we have reason to believe that Paul had scriptural basis for his prophetic utterances. The horn speaking great words against the Most High in Daniel 7:25 is obviously the power Paul calls "the man of sin." Paul must have understood what the "time, times and dividing of time" stands for. We see then that both the Old Testament writings and the New speak of the great medieval apostasy that is to bear sway for many centuries before Christ returns to destroy this wicked power. How then can we say that He was planning to come again in the first century? Ford's rationale, which refuses to see the relative sense in the word "all," and his taking symbolic time for literal, reveal that he is either rigid and unimaginative in his thinking, or is purposely indulging in theological sophistry to undermine our faith.

"Something Wrong Here"

Desmond Ford's chief argument against the traditional Seventh-day Adventist teaching on the sanctuary service is, "The book of Hebrews distinctly teaches that Christ went directly into the Most Holy place at His ascension. There's no way out, round, or through it."--Forum Talk, October 27, 1980. Ford adds that he has held this view from his early years, even before his baptism. He was reading Hebrews 9, and discovered that there was "something wrong" with Seventh-day Adventist teachings on the sanctuary. He says many other Adventist scholars also noticed this problem and challenged the church on it. He calls Albion Ballenger "a man of undoubted integrity and spirituality," implying thereby that he must have been right. We pause to remark that even if we grant that Ballenger was a man of integrity and spirituality, that does not necessarily mean that he was right. There are men of integrity and spirituality in some parts of the world who

don't even profess Christianity. Then there are men today who say that Ford is also man of integrity and spirituality. On this we have evidence to the contrary. It is a well-known fact that Ford's book on Daniel follows the traditional line of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. His 991-page paper openly challenges these beliefs. By this inconsistency Ford demonstrates that he has been practicing duplicity all these years. On October 27, 1979, he came out in the open to attack the sanctuary truth, supposing that he had enough backing among Adventist scholars and was popular enough among the laity to withstand any opposition he might stir up. But he miscalculated. All his profession of loyalty to Adventism failed to cover up the fact that he is dedicated to the work of destroying Adventism.

The Sanctuary Defiled

Ford's advocacy of the historical method is aimed at supporting his claim that it is the "little horn that defiles the sanctuary, not the sins of the saints." His hermeneutic confines the fulfillment of Daniel 8:11-14 within the space of 1150 literal days. In this period Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple, and at the end of this period Judas Maccabeus restored the temple services. Thus, Ford claims, Daniel 8:14 has nothing to do with the sanctuary in heaven.

Here is our reply: (1) Mark 13:14 proves that the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 extend to the first century after Christ, thus validating the use of the year-day principle in Daniel. (2) Pertinent details show that the "little horn" of Daniel 8 is identical with that of Daniel 7, which prevails for "a time and times and the dividing of time." This period of 1260 years cannot possibly apply to a person, thus disqualifying Antiochus Epiphanes as the antitype of the "little horn." (3) "Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," does not necessarily mean that the sanctuary will be trodden underfoot for the same length of time. Evidently there is a connection between the treading and the cleansing, but this fact does not prove that the sanctuary needs cleansing only because it has been trodden. (4) Our scriptural basis for believing that the sanctuary in heaven is defiled by the confessed sins of the saints is as follows: In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. Leviticus 16:16 NIV

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Hebrews 9:23. NIV

From these texts we gather that the heavenly as well as the earthly sanctuary is defiled by the sins of the saints, and must be cleansed on the day of atonement.

Here again is a question of methodology. The historicist is reluctant to see any real connection between Daniel and Leviticus or Hebrews. Since the writing of these books is separated by many centuries, any reference in them to the same subject is regarded as a coincidence of little import. The modernist theologian denies the supernatural element in the writing and redacting of the books in the Bible. But Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is its Author, and He has scattered the truth "here a little, there a little" for the diligent searcher to discover in its time, but worldly-wise readers will "fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." Isaiah 28:13. Our proof-text method of quoting one text from Leviticus and another from Hebrews to clarify our interpretation of Daniel 8:14 may be rejected as unscholarly. But it is God's way of explaining Scripture with Scripture. Moreover, the historical method, be it ever so scholarly, is not applicable here, because Daniel 8:14 had no direct relevance for the people first addressed. Daniel himself failed to understand this vision. See Daniel 8:27.

The Bible theme of the church being the true temple of God (cf. Ephesians 2:20ff) suggests that the cleansing, restoration, and vindication of the sanctuary in

heaven has a corresponding fulfillment in the Sabbath reformation and purification of the church beginning in 1844. Both processes involve growth and development, even as the investigative judgment must occupy a certain length of time. This fact justifies our belief that the cleansing of the sanctuary was not completed on October 22, 1844, but commenced on that day, even as 1 Peter 4:17 declares that "judgment must begin at the house of God." A beginning naturally connotes progression and a conclusion. It cannot be instantaneous.

The Downtrodden Sabbath

As to the "little horn" treading the sanctuary underfoot, we should look for its most significant aspect. Where is the most sacred part of the sanctuary? It is the Most Holy Place. What is the most sacred object in the Most Holy Place? It is the tables of the Law of God. What is the most sacred part of the Law of God? It is the fourth commandment. Here is Ellen White's testimony:

I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious--a halo of glory was all around it. Early Writings, 32-33 The treading down of the sanctuary is directly associated with the down-trodden Sabbath, and reminds one of the words, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath . . ." "thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 58:13, 12. Thus we see that the work of ceremonial cleansing in the heavenly sanctuary is paralleled by the work of repairing this breach of God's law on earth. This restoration is very real and basic, because it has to do with the most vital part of the sanctuary.

The fourth commandment has been trampled upon; therefore we are called upon to repair the breach in the law, and plead for the downtrodden Sabbath. The man of sin, who exalted himself above God, and thought to change times and laws, brought about the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. In doing this, he made a breach in the law of God. Just prior to the great day of God, a message is sent forth to warn the people to come back to their allegiance to the law of God which antichrist has broken down. By precept and example, attention must be called to the breach in the law. I was shown that the third angel, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message and raise the voice of warning to the world, to keep the commandments of God as the apple of the eye, and that in response to this warning many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord." Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 76-77

Interconnection Between Daniel 8 and Hebrews 9

Desmond Ford's strategy is to use his exposition of Hebrews 9 to overthrow our interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Our procedure is to use Daniel 8:14 as the key to interpret Hebrews 9. When he said, "There's something wrong here," he meant that our interpretation of Daniel 8:14 was wrong, because, says he, Hebrews 9 teaches that "Christ went directly into the Most Holy Place at His ascension." Therefore we must study Hebrews 9 closely to decide who is right.

To begin, we reiterate that we are not starting from zero. We start from the light we already have on Daniel 8:14. We have demonstrated that the time prophecies of Daniel are measured with the century yardstick, and Miller's exposition is basically correct. But so far our study has been based wholly on human reasoning. Do we have divine confirmation? That is the vital question. Yes, just when we needed it most, God gave us His confirmation in the first vision seen by Ellen White. We read,

At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were travelling to the city, which was at the

farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. Early Writings, 14

The Midnight Cry was based on Miller's view of Daniel 8:14. Here it is confirmed by God as the correct starting point for all our prophetic studies. We are on the right track. Some would quibble, but the angel says, "None of the wicked shall understand." Daniel 12:10. Then let them quibble. Here is God's methodology: He lets men search the Scripture first. After they have found the correct interpretation, He confirms it through His Paraclete. We praise God for His guidance.

Now for the second starting point. It is the meaning of the words, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The Midnight Cry is correct in principle--the October 22, 1844 date and the call, "The Bridegroom cometh." But the meaning of "come" needs restudy. It does not refer to the Second Advent of Christ, but that He will "suddenly come to His temple." Malachi 3:1. More specifically, Christ came to the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary. This point was first seen by Hiram Edson the morning after the Disappointment, later presented in a systematic study by O.R.L. Crosier in the February 7, 1845, issue of the Day Star Extra and finally confirmed in a vision seen by Ellen White.

These two points--the October 22, 1844 date and the entrance of Christ into the Most Holy Place to commence His work of cleansing the sanctuary--comprise the keystone to the arch of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Knock out this keystone, and the arch will collapse. That explains why our enemies have always made this doctrine the target of their attacks. That is why we must fully comprehend these basic truths and know that Adventist traditions stands on soundest scriptural evidence.

Tradition must be judged by its source. Jesus condemned the rabbinical traditions which violated God's law (cf. Matthew 15:1-9), while Paul taught the saints to "hold the traditions which ye have been taught." 2 Thessalonians 2:15. Inasmuch as Adventist traditions are the fruitage of prayerful Bible study confirmed by prophetic visions, they are part of the faith for which we must contend.

The Bible Only

Our enemies attack our doctrine on the sanctuary not only because it is our keystone, but also because they think it is our most vulnerable spot. Since it appears to have a minimum of scriptural support and a maximum of confirmation by the Spirit of Prophecy, they challenge us to prove this doctrine with "the Bible and the Bible only," and imagine we will fail.

As far as the 2300 days is concerned, the year-day principle and the 457 B.C. date can both be verified on the basis of Bible evidence and historical facts. As for Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place in 1844, we trust the scriptural proof is strong enough to stand by itself even with the Spirit of Prophecy "prop" removed. This evidence is found in one of the texts used by Ford to overthrow this basic Adventist tenet. And working on the principle of "the Bible and the Bible only," we will show that what he thinks is our most vulnerable spot has in fact been fortified with an explicit declaration by the Holy Spirit.

A comparison of various translations of Hebrews 9:1-10 reveals that there is a wide difference of renderings, which reveal the inadequacy of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation which Ford et al. think is the only correct method to follow. Moreover, since Bible translators are all men of learning, how is it that, using this supposedly correct method of interpretation, they cannot agree as to the meaning of this text?

In Chapter 12 we met the hypothetical proposition of twelve theologians disagreeing with Ellen White. Here we have a real case of more than twelve theologians

disagreeing with each other. For us this situation is in fact favorable, because the disparity of different translations of this one text is an indication of its obscurity, and leaves the field open for further exploration. Since so many scholars (mostly non-Adventist) fail to agree on the meaning of this passage, there exists no strong consensus to hinder our advance, and our exposition, be it ever so original, may at least stand on a par with other versions to vie for acceptance.

In presenting our interpretation of Hebrews 9:1-10, we propose to use the grammatical-historical method plus the proof-text method, with our chief emphasis on grammar, because we note that a number of translations, including KJV, deliberately alter the grammatical form of certain key words, thus highlighting the critical part played by grammar in this text. We list below seven major points of difference in the translation of Hebrews 9:1-10.

1. The identity of the "first tabernacle" in vss. 2, 6, and 8.
2. The rendering of "ta hagia" in v. 8.
3. In v. 8, "this signifying" as against "thus signifying."
4. In v. 8, "is" versus "was not yet made manifest."
5. In v. 8, "is yet standing" versus "was yet standing"
6. In v. 9, "present time" versus "time then present"
7. Identification of "the time of reformation" of v. 10.

Now let us tackle the first six problems in their order:

1. Some make the "first tabernacle" of v. 8 refer to the entire sanctuary, as opposed to the same word in vss. 2 and 6, which means the first apartment. They are wrong on two counts: (a) The word in v. 8 is identical with the two words in vss. 2 and 6. A complete change of referent of two identical words in such close proximity is wholly unwarranted and irrational. The burden of proof rests with those who make it. (b) The earthly sanctuary is nowhere else referred to as the "first tabernacle," because it is in fact second in order, being a model copied after the true sanctuary in heaven, which existed before it and is truly "first" both in time and importance. It is certain that the "first tabernacle" of v. 8 means the first apartment. Moreover, the context discusses the layout of the first and the second apartments, hence it is only logical to understand v. 8 as also speaking of these two apartments.

2. Having determined this point, we submit that the KJV rendering, "holiest of all" is the correct translation of "ta hagia" in v. 8, because it stands in antithesis to the first apartment.

3. Some violate the grammar of the original text by changing "this signifying" to "thus signifying" in v. 8. "This" is in the accusative case, hence it cannot mean "thus." We make it an issue because "thus" causes the sentence which follows to be understood as merely a product of human insight, while Inspiration tells us that the Holy Spirit is declaring a truth which cannot be discovered by human insight alone.

We pause here for a brief study of the word "deloo," rendered "signify" in v. 8. A canvass of the seven instances of the use of this word in the New Testament reveals that in the KJV it is translated "declare" three times, "signify" three times, and "show" once. The more exact word for "signify" is *semaino*, which is rendered "signify" in all cases. Hence we are justified here in translating "deloo" as "declare," and the passage in question as follows:

The Holy Spirit is declaring this: that the way into the holiest place is not yet disclosed while the first apartment is still valid, which symbolizes the present time.

The truth revealed here cannot be arrived at by human insight alone. No man can gather from a study of the Levitical rites and the layout of the sanctuary furniture that the first apartment is a figure of the "present time" at the time of the writing of Hebrews. Hence it was necessary for the Holy Spirit to make a specific declaration. That is why we

should accept this text as a revelation of an important truth connected with the sanctuary.

Points 4 to 6 need no elaboration. Any one familiar with the Greek can check and see that the rendering of the KJV, changing the perfect tense to pluperfect, and supplying the word "then" in the phrase "the time then present," are all arbitrary and unjustifiable alterations. Our rendering restores the original Greek tenses. And we challenge Desmond Ford and "every Greek scholar in the world," to whom he often appeals for support, to find grammatical or semantical errors in the rendering produced above.

Inasmuch as Ford bases his thesis on an erroneous version of this text, our clarification of its original meaning takes the wind out of his sails and leads to the collapse of all his arguments on the sanctuary question.

Ford's Thesis Refuted

Scholarship alone, studying Hebrews 9 in isolation, cannot arrive at a consistent and unified interpretation. Many scholars to this day feel free to change the grammatical forms of the Greek to suit their private views. Another class would not tamper with the grammar, but interpret "the present time" to mean the Old Testament period, taking as their excuse the ignorance of the Christian Jews in continuing to practice Levitical rites after the crucifixion. But that is a paradox. It is evident that Hebrews was written with the purpose of dispelling the ignorance of the Christian Jews with regard to the expiration of the Old Covenant and the establishing of the New. Hence the theme in Hebrews could not possibly be built on the erroneous understanding which it is seeking to correct, and it would contradict itself by referring to the Old Testament period as "the present time." Now Ford's theory of the sanctuary is built on the false premise that the first apartment symbolized the Old Covenant and the Second Apartment the New. We say to him, Since you claim to follow the grammatical-historical method, produce grammatical evidence. Every Greek scholar in the world knows that *ton kairon ton enestekota* means "the present time"--when Hebrews was written within the era of the New Covenant. No amount of human reasoning will help you "out, around, or through it."

Daniel 8 Applied to Hebrews 9

Hebrews 9 teaches that the first covenant had an earthly sanctuary, and the second covenant a heavenly one. But scholars like Desmond Ford violate Greek grammar four times in rapid succession (in vss. 8 and 9) in order to establish their false view of a divided sanctuary--the first apartment on earth and the Second one in heaven. Do these grammatical changes materially affect the meaning of the text? Yes. The gulf of difference is as wide as are truth and falsehood apart. The false rendering buries the truth completely, while the correct translation reveals the truth. But what led the translators of the KJV and others to make such changes?--They were trying to resolve the contradiction between the open and the closed ways into the Most Holy. For how can one say that the way into the Holiest (*ta hagia*) is not yet manifest when it plainly says in Hebrews 10:19, we may "enter into the Holiest (*ta hagia*) by the blood of Jesus?" In order to make Hebrews agree with itself, these scholars thought they would help God out by changing the tenses of His words, but in fact they did Him a disservice. And in attempting to resolve an obvious disparity they inadvertently created a new one, and have upset the symbolism of the Levitical rites. In such an arrangement Christ would have no priestly work to perform in the first apartment, and the offerings of the daily service would have no counterpart in the mediatorial work of our Lord. In fact, the idea of a divided sanctuary obviates the need for a heavenly one, because it sees the Second Apartment as "heaven itself." We see how the grammatical changes made in Hebrews 9:8-9 involve serious consequences, virtually destroying the correspondence of the heavenly sanctuary with its earthly model.

Adventist scholars stand on vantage ground. We should first lay aside the above-mentioned contradiction and tackle Hebrews 9:1-10. For we possess a key which will unlock the mystery of what the Holy Spirit is declaring here. Daniel 8:14 is that key. Only in the light of this text can one fully understand Hebrews 9. Circa A.D. 64 the Spirit tells us: "The way into the Holiest is not yet disclosed while the first apartment is still valid, which symbolizes the present time." Clear enough! But does the "present time" extend to our day? Verse 10 gives the answer: "which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

Here we learn that the service in the first apartment occupied a span of time within the New Testament period--obviously beginning with the cross and ending at "the time of reformation." Most commentators take this "time of reformation" to refer to the first advent of Christ, as the next verse says, "But Christ being come . . ." But no. We have just noted that the first apartment is a figure of "the present time" within the New Testament period. Since this period commenced at the crucifixion, it cannot possibly also end at that time.

Here Daniel 8:14 provides the solution in that much-mooted word *tsadaq*. The KJV translates it "cleansed," others add that it means "justify," "set right," "restoration," or "vindication." Very good. Here is an array of terms agreeing very closely with *diorthosis*, which is translated "reformation" in the KJV. This event commenced in 1844, marking the close of "the present time" of Hebrews 9. Thus the *tsadaq* key opens the *diorthosis* lock.

Three Interconnected Seals

Adventists have always sought some indication in Hebrews of the two-apartment ministry of Christ, but have been disappointed. The best they could make of the situation was to conclude that Hebrews neither teaches nor denies this doctrine.

But is that really the best we can make of it? If we indeed believe that God has revealed this truth, then we have reason to expect that He would have given some indication of it in Hebrews. But we must also recognize that because God instructed Daniel to seal up the vision until the time of the end, He did not intend that His people should understand it until then. If He should give any intimation of this truth in Hebrews, it must also be sealed in such a way as to prevent readers from comprehending it before the seal in Daniel 8:14 is broken. Otherwise it would give the secret away prematurely. Yet the seal must not be too tight, so that it can be opened in its time. Is there such a seal in Hebrews? Yes.

In the first place, we note that the writer of Hebrews deals with the truths of redemption only in their generality, not in their specificity, speaking only of their eternal significance, not of their temporal sequence. The phrase, "of which we cannot now speak particularly," Hebrews 9:5, appears to be more than a casual dismissal of the subject. We believe the Spirit restrained the writer from a systematic analysis of the typology of the sanctuary for the reason given in v. 8, which implies that the writer himself did not know when "the way into the Holiest" would be disclosed. But that does not mean that the specific application of the types will never be understood. For the thesis stated in Hebrews 8:5 is clear enough: every detail in the earthly sanctuary should have its antitype in the heavenly one.

Another fact made plain is that Christ is both Priest and Sacrifice: Hebrews 9:12. The yearly cycle of offerings and feasts under the Old Covenant symbolized the one true cycle of events in the heavenly sanctuary performed under the New Covenant; v. 25f. Furthermore, Christ could not commence His work in the first apartment before His crucifixion, because His blood had not been shed. Hence the first apartment could not have validity (stasis, v. 8) in the Old Testament period.

Christ's ministry in the first apartment could therefore commence only after His ascension--in the New Testament period. Because all the rites of the Old Testament were symbolic of services performed in the heavenly sanctuary after the crucifixion. Nothing in the sanctuary services in either the earthly or heavenly tabernacle symbolizes anything belonging to the Old Covenant. Old Testament rituals all point forward to the realities of redemption in Christ, who said, "They are they which testify of me." John 5:39

With this point made clear, the words, "imposed until the time of reformation" can be correctly understood: In the yearly cycle, the daily services were imposed until the Day of Atonement. In the antitype, the daily ministry of Christ in the first apartment terminated with the true Day of Atonement. Therefore it is clear that "the time of reformation" is the Day of Atonement in both type and antitype. It cannot mean anything else.

In light of these facts, Ford's thesis is seen to be an anomalous product of the imagination wholly alien to the teaching of Hebrews. At the same time we see that God has indeed given us corroborative evidence in Hebrews in support of Daniel 8:14 in the form of a text that matches it in obscurity, so that it would be fully understood only after the complete unsealing of Daniel 8:14.

At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be settled. We turn to a third witness--the seven thunders. This obscure text can be elucidated by Daniel 8:14. The sealing of Daniel (cf. Daniel 8:26, 12:9) refers chiefly to the vision of the 2300 days, which was not to be understood till "the time of the end." The angel said to John, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." Revelation 10:4.

After the Great Disappointment Hiram Edson first noted that "the seventh angel had begun to sound, we had eaten the little book; it had been sweet in our mouths, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being." (Damsteegt, Foundations of the SDA Message and Mission, 105). Since Revelation 10 depicts the Millerite disappointment, it is not hard to see the identity of the sealing up of the seven thunders with that of Daniel 8:26. First, it was Miller's failure fully to comprehend Daniel 8:14 that caused the Disappointment. In Revelation 10 we have it symbolized--the sealing up of the seven thunders followed by a bitter experience, and then the command to "prophecy again," implying that God's people would recover from the Disappointment and again proclaim the Second Advent. The parallel between these visions identifies the sealing up in Daniel 8:26 and 12:9 with the one in Revelation 10:4.

Two Complementary Aspects of the Truth Now we seek the Bible solution to the problem of the open and the closed ways. How can the Holy Spirit say in one place that the way into the Holiest is not yet disclosed and in another place call on us to "enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus"? We should face this question and admit that there is a contradiction. But the way to resolve it is not arbitrarily to twist the Greek tenses. Rather, we should note that it is a typical case of the truths of redemption having always their temporal as well as eternal aspects. Daniel 9:26 reads, "after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." Here is the temporal aspect of the death of Christ. Then in Revelation 13:8 we read of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This is the eternal aspect of the death of Christ. The two aspects appear to be contradictory, but are in fact complementary.

To prove that the writer of Hebrews was aware of such a dual application of the truths of redemption, we quote the context: "By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Hebrews 10:20. Now this verse seems to contradict Hebrews 6:19-20, which speak of Jesus entering a real veil. How to conceive of Him entering a veil which is His flesh? Can we use this to prove that there is no real veil in heaven?

The point we wish to make is that if the writer of Hebrews can speak of the real veil in chapter 6, but figuratively in chapter 10, then he can also speak of the way into the Holiest as closed in Hebrews 9:8 and declare it to be open in Hebrews 10:19. Because the temporal and the eternal aspects of the truths of redemption run parallel, and are equally valid. The way into the Holiest has been open since the foundation of the world, when the Lamb of God was slain. Yet the way into the Holiest would not be disclosed as long as the first apartment is valid. Ellen White's treatment of many details of the plan of redemption also takes cognizance of their complementary aspects. For instance, she adopts the wording of Hebrews 10:19-20 in *The Desire of Ages*, 757, thus:

The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the Holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. . . . "By His own blood" He entereth "in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 10:7; 9:12

It is clear that when Ellen White wrote these words she did not thereby revoke what she wrote on the sanctuary truths in *The Great Controversy*. But Desmond Ford thinks she did, and would quote more passages to prove that she was a "rebel" and went directly "against Adventist traditions," and so on; but in the end it is the rigidity of his logic which prevents him from finding a way "out, round, and through" the problems he brings up to confuse us. His false thesis is based on four grammatical errors in the KJV, and we have employed his boasted grammatical-historical and "the Bible and the Bible only" methodology to prove him wrong.

People ask: What is the Ford controversy all about? It is this: Ford is trying to tell us that Seventh-day Adventists are a deluded lot, and our sanctuary doctrine is a theological makeshift--a "historical necessity"--invented to keep us happy in our delusion. But as a matter of fact, Ford's teaching on the sanctuary is proved to be a hopeless anomaly--with the first apartment on earth and the Second in heaven--and Christ having no work to do in the first apartment, which then becomes a meaningless superfluity, and the daily sacrifices and offerings lose all significance. In the end it is Desmond Ford who is really deluded, and his 991-page paper was written to keep himself happy in his delusion.

Our Foundation Truths Vindicated

Philippians 3:19 speaks of people "whose glory is in their shame." We will now speak of those who are ashamed of their glory. Let us ask, What is our glory? Christ says in His prayer, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." John 17:22. In what way was this glory given? Christ says, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." And Christ prayed, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me." John 17:8. To entrust a human mortal with a message from God above, is the very highest honor that Heaven can bestow. Even as it is written, "unto them were committed the oracles of God." Romans 3:2

The one substantial gift that Christ gave to His disciples was words. The Paraclete was sent for the express purpose of bringing "all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." "He will guide you into all truth, . . . and He will show you things to come." John 14:26, 16:13. The glory which the Father gave the Son was His word of truth. And the Son has given this glory to His chosen people by entrusting them with the sanctuary truths, thus giving us light far in advance of the churches who rejected the Midnight Cry.

No Time for Cowards Now

But there are men among us who are ashamed of our sanctuary teachings. They are embarrassed by Desmond Ford's slurs about "heavenly geography" and "celestial furniture" and are not sure of the truth. They talk no more of the two apartments, but adopt the more euphemistic term, "two phases," whereupon Ford is gratified in having

pulled them over thus far. No doubt he will continue to pull, to make them ashamed even to talk about the "two phases" and again change their vocabulary to suit his taste.

He is flattered to see that he can keep Adventists jumping--busy covering up this and that ugly spot in their "patchwork rug." Are Adventists indeed so impotent? No! We have every reason to be proud of the oracles of God which He has entrusted His people. It is a token of His confidence in us, and we dare not betray His trust. We will pray, "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart." "For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psalm 119:111; 138:2

The sanctuary doctrine is an integral part of the everlasting gospel. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." Romans 1:16. In Roman times the cross was an instrument of torture and a symbol of humiliation, but Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6:14. Today we should glory in this truth which Satan is making an object of ridicule. The more Desmond Ford rants about "heavenly geography," the more we will proclaim that the way into the Holiest was disclosed in 1844 when Christ entered the Second Apartment to finish His work of atonement.

Now is the time for us to lift up the sign of sanctification--the holy Sabbath which is being trodden under foot by men--and announce that the investigative judgment has begun. This grand work of restoration and reformation is to repair the breach made in the Law of God. "In the fullness of time," He who knows no haste or delay has given this truth to His people. In Daniel's day Gabriel said, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." Daniel 10:21. But now "these things" are entrusted to us who are sent to proclaim the everlasting gospel. Is any man ashamed and cowardly among us? "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early." Judges 7:3. But we will fight the battles of the Lord and lift high the banner of truth. For it is our glory.

Conclusion

We have seen that the apostles used proof texts quoted from the Old Testament to prove their points. They did so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Adventist pioneers likewise used the proof-text method, making holy Scripture its own expositor. But when they had done their best and could not arrive at a consensus, the Holy Spirit confirmed the correct interpretation by prophetic vision. This confirmation was imperative in the case of a conflict of different views, all claiming to be based on the Bible. Then there is a case on record regarding early Sabbatarian Adventists trying to determine the correct time to begin Sabbath observance. They prayed for light, but no light came by vision. Why? Because the answer is in the Bible. They finally found it in Judges 14:18. From this incident we learn God's way of working. When men bring up a medley of interpretations all supposedly based on the Bible and cannot find their way out of their confusion, God will give direct guidance. But when the light we need can be found in the Bible, God will not necessarily repeat it by prophetic vision.

Now we come to this question: Today we have no living prophet among us. How can we receive confirmation by the Holy Spirit when we disagree on points of doctrine? If we take the writings of Ellen White as the norm for judging doctrine, do we not virtually set the bounds for our faith and put an end to progress? To this question we reply, The writings of the gift of prophecy contain much light that has not yet been appropriated. If there are any bounds here, they are always wider than the limits imposed by our own self-complacency. Our chief concern should be, Are we by our callousness and lethargy limiting the Holy One of Israel? Have we seen and accepted all the light God has graciously given?

Would we ask for another living prophet? Hear what God has to say: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the

dead." Luke 16:31. The Testimonies of the Spirit of Prophecy are a veritable gold mine awaiting our exploration. Yet we are as men having eyes who see not. The people of God have not appreciated the value of His gift, and some are even ashamed of it. "They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear." Zechariah 7:11. Because we close our eyes to light already given, how can we expect the Lord to give more light? Let us awake and repent, and apply ourselves to the rich store of present truth with which the Lord has favored us. Let us study the visions not in a spirit of idle curiosity, but in reverent awe and humility.

For God has said, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Isaiah 66:2. Only when we have fully exploited the treasures hidden in this "gold mine" will the Lord grant us additional revelations. "Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'" Isaiah 30:20f NIV

Today, as Ford, Rea, and Company, bent on the work of demolishing Seventh-day Adventism, try to wreak havoc with their rabid tirades, we will give tit for tat, announcing to all the world, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." And here is the promised Comforter--the third Person of the Godhead--speaking to God's people in His name. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

For this is our glory.

David Lin

January 6, 1982

Chapter 14

THE HISTORICAL METHOD

IN Chapter 12 we studied the use of the proof-text method of Bible interpretation by the apostles; in Chapter 13 we used the grammatical method in studying Hebrews 9:8-9, and now we shall proceed to use the historical method in dealing with an important passage in Hebrews.

Hebrews is peculiarly adapted to the needs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We have seen how Hebrews 9:8-9 is related to Daniel 8:14. Then in the Disappointment of 1844, Hebrews 10:35-38 was a source of courage to God's people.

That this admonition is addressed to the church in the last days is evident from the words pointing to the nearness of the Lord's coming: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." And it is plainly implied that there would be a seeming delay, and that the Lord would appear to tarry. The instruction here given is especially adapted to the experience of Adventists at this time. The people here addressed were in danger of making shipwreck of faith. They had done the will of God in following the guidance of His Spirit and His word; yet they could not understand His purpose in their past experience, nor could they discern the pathway before them, and they were tempted to doubt whether God had indeed been leading them. At this time the words were applicable: "Now the just shall live by faith." As the bright light of the "midnight cry" had shone upon their pathway, and they had seen the prophecies unsealed, and the rapidly fulfilling signs telling that the coming of Christ was near, they had walked, as it were, by sight. But now, bowed down by disappointed hopes, they could stand only by faith in God and in His word. The scoffing world were saying: "You have been deceived. Give up your faith, and say that the Advent movement was of Satan." But God's word declared: "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." To renounce their faith now, and deny the power of the Holy Spirit which had attended the message, would be drawing back toward perdition. The Great Controversy, 408

The Sabbath Theme

The central topic in Hebrews is the sanctuary. Two other topics are faith and the Sabbath rest. In harmony with the passage quoted above, we take the discussion both on faith and on the Sabbath rest as also specially addressed to the church in the last days, namely the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The entire eleventh chapter is a commentary on the words quoted from Habakkuk 2:4: "The just shall live by faith." It is the seeming delay of the promised parousia that requires God's people to walk by faith and not by sight. Since much has been written on this topic elsewhere, we shall confine our present study to the Sabbath theme.

We note that Hebrews opens this theme with the words "The Holy Ghost saith." Considering the fact that the writer never lightly invokes the authority of the Holy Spirit, but always follows such an invocation with a solemn and important truth, (cf. Hebrews 9:8-9 and 10:15) we should therefore give special attention to the passage quoted from Psalm 95. Here the historical background of this psalm must be studied.

We see first that Psalm 95 is well adapted for use in public worship. The first half is evidently meant to be chanted by the congregation:

O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. . . . The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture.

We note the repeated mention of the creative power of God, stressing the purpose of Sabbathkeeping. Because of this feature, this psalm has been incorporated into the liturgy of both the Greek and the Latin churches, in medieval as well as in modern times.

The second half of this psalm addresses the second person plural, saying, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways, unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

This change in the person addressed is the second peculiarity of this psalm. And the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 3:7-11) tells us that the Holy Spirit is here speaking to God's people, and he places special emphasis on the word "Today." The first application he makes of this word is in Hebrews 3:13, as follows:

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. NIV

We note this rendering of the NIV follows the KJV closely, apparently ignoring the fact that in the Greek the article before the feminine word "Today" is neuter, which indicates that here "Today" does not refer to time, but represents the quotation. For the custom of referring to a scripture passage by its opening word is a common practice among the Jews. For instance, the first and third books of the Pentateuch are named after the opening words, "B'reshith" and "Vayikrah," and each of the other three books is named after the first prominent word in the opening sentences: "Shemoth," "Bemidbar," and "D'varim." Practically all Jewish songs and chants are referred to by their opening words. Psalm 95 as sung in the modern synagogue is mentioned by its first two words, "Lechu Neranano," which is now the recognized title of this psalm. Likewise, the Latin churches refer to the same psalm as the "Venite" (Latin for "Come"). Since the writer of Hebrews follows this common practice in speaking of the "Today," the readers of his day understood that he was referring to this quoted passage of Psalm 95. But most modern translators, not aware of this historical usage, thought the writer was speaking of time, and hence ignored the definite neuter article. They did so in 1611 when they produced the KJV; they did it again in 1973 when the NIV New Testament appeared. The fact that both translations capitalize the "T" in "Today" fails to bring out the meaning of the original. In keeping with the Greek text, a correct translation must retain the definite article: "the 'Today.' "

Another mistaken translation is found in rendering *achris* "while" or "as long as." In most translations of the New Testament, Hebrews 3:13 is the only place where this preposition is given the linear meaning, "as long as." It really means "until." The Greek word for "while" or "as long as" is *heos*.

A third error in translation is the impersonal form, "it is called." The correct rendering, "is called," makes the clause read, "until the 'Today' is called." Here is the most rational translation for this portion of Hebrews 3:13.

This then is a rare instance of three errors in translation occurring in one brief passage. Why were they committed and perpetuated? For the simple reason that the translators--every one a good Greek scholar--did not know the historical background of these words. Since the words, "until the 'Today' is called" made no sense to them, they felt free to make alterations to obtain what they thought was a sensible clause. But just how sensible is the clause, "as long as it is called Today?" Can it be conceived that some other day is coming which will not be called Today? Most readers are familiar with this saying on account of its venerable age, for the KJV has popularized it since 1611, and they understand it to mean, "while the present opportunity lasts," or, "as long as probation lasts." It may perhaps be gained as a general impression, but the clause itself defies definition, as it is a wrong rendering.

Some may contend that the right translation also defies comprehension. What is the meaning of "until the 'Today' is called"? Here is our explanation: *KaleŒtai*, passive

voice of kaleo, third person singular, meaning "is called," refers to the "calling out" or "sounding forth" of the "Today" passage by the cantor on the rostrum during Sabbath worship. We have seen that the division of Psalm 95 marks it as designed for antiphonal reading--the first portion by the congregation and the second by the cantor. Such an actual use of this psalm has continued from early centuries right down to our day. This custom is followed by many Ashkenazic and Yemenite Jewish communities. Some Sephardic congregations recite Psalms 95-100 inclusive. This general practice in Jewish liturgy can be traced to early years when Jewish traditions were first committed to writing. We have good reason to assume that this use of Psalm 95 prevailed in apostolic times.

On the force of these three facts: (1) the use of Psalm 95 in public worship on the Sabbath; (2) the presence of the neuter article before the feminine word "Today," and (3) the use of the preposition "until" (achris), we conclude that the "is called" in Hebrews 3:13 refers to the antiphonal response of the cantor after the congregation has read the first part of the psalm. Actually, the "Today" passage is called out by the Holy Spirit, who exhorts us to "Encourage one another daily, until the 'Today' passage is again proclaimed."

Some may object to our translation of kaleo (is called) as somewhat strained. Perhaps so, if we confined our study to the uses of this verb in the New Testament and classic Greek literature. But we must keep in mind that the writer of Hebrews was a Jew writing to Jewish readers--all men of Semitic habits of thought and speech. We are therefore justified in understanding kaleo in the broader sense of the Hebrew word qara, which sense was no doubt dominant in Jewish thinking in the first century. In fact, qara is the ancient root from which the Greek kaleo was derived. Now in the Old Testament text of the KJV, qara is translated "call" 425 times, "cry" 94 times, "proclaim" or "make proclamation" 37 times, "read" 36 times (cf. Young's Analytica). In view of these facts we are not straining the sense when we take the kaleo of Hebrews 3:13 to mean the "calling out" or proclaiming of the "Today" passage by the cantor.

Now to further reconstruct the historical background. From Acts we learn that in the first century most Jewish Christians continued to worship in the synagogues. Taking due account of the connotation of Hebrews 3:13, we know that the early Christian Jews were familiar with the use of the "ha-yom" (Today) psalm in their liturgy. This fact furnished the basis for this exhortation in Hebrews. God would here impress His people with the need to be sensitive to the movings of His Spirit--not to be indifferent to His repeated admonitions. For we are in danger of being gospel-hardened, after hearing it preached again and again. He therefore wants us to encourage each other daily, until the "Today" message is again sounded in our ears. It is only in this historical setting that the neuter article before "Today," the "until," and the "is called" in Hebrews 3:13 can be understood in their natural sense. Otherwise, the article must be ignored, the "until" must be changed, and the "call" must be understood in the sense of "regard."

One may argue that there is no explicit evidence that the Jews to whom Hebrews was first addressed were using Psalm 95 regularly in Sabbath worship as indicated above. We reply that the internal evidence in Hebrews 3:13 is itself the strongest proof of this point. Because only such a historical setting can account for the use of the neuter article, the "until" and the "is called" in such a combination. On the other hand, if we reject such a historical background, as do most translators, the verse must undergo the alterations indicated.

Hebrews 3:13 is the key to a better understanding of the repeated use of "Today" in this discussion of the Sabbath theme. When it is properly translated, the sabbatical nature of the theme stands out clearly from the start. The first impression received by the early Jewish readers of this epistle was that the writer was employing a very familiar

passage (as familiar as the Lord's prayer to modern readers) to bring home an important admonition. He tells them that every time they hear the "Today" message uttered, they should recognize that it comes directly from the Holy Spirit. Do not treat it lightly. The very fact that it is repeated every Sabbath emphasizes the urgency of its message.

Here we pause to reconstruct a yet broader historical background. When Hebrews was written, more than 30 years had passed since the Lord's ascension. Many of the saints had gone to rest, yet the Lord had not returned. There was danger that the zeal of the second generation of believers should wane under the trials of disappointment, persecution and doubt. Jesus had said that He had gone to prepare a place for them, but just how and for how long, they did not know. The Holy Spirit, which was promised to lead them into all truth, was addressing them in this book, to tell them what Jesus was doing, and that He would come as promised, but that they must live by faith. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees . . . Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

A picture of a church languishing in weakness and worldliness makes up the general background against which we should view this epistle to the Hebrews. It is in this setting that the author elaborates on his Sabbath theme. Various commentators have pointed out that the Jewish Christians continued to keep the Sabbath after their conversion to the new faith, and there was no need to teach them to observe it. That is very true. The writer is not teaching the Jews to observe the Sabbath. Rather, he is admonishing them to strive to "enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The issue at hand was not whether they should keep Sabbath, but whether they will appropriate the rest promised to the faithful on that day. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest." Hebrews 4:2-3

Some commentators put the appropriation of God's promised rest in the future, comparing the bliss of heaven with the entrance into Canaan by the people of Israel. They point to the concluding remark, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Now we heartily accept this hope of a future rest, for it is a fact that the saints will enjoy true rest in the earth made new. And Hebrews 4:9 can be understood to point to such a rest. But in view of what we have studied respecting the Sabbath theme introduced by the "Today" Psalm, we ask, "What was the author's original purpose in writing this passage on the Sabbath, and what is the exact meaning of his words in Hebrews 4:9?" The margin of the KJV gives "keeping of a Sabbath" as an alternative reading for "rest" in this verse. The NIV renders it, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God," which is representative of the majority of translations. But we must differ, for grammatical as well as for logical reasons.

First to discuss the logic of this theme. We see that the author of Hebrews does not draw an analogy of the entrance of Canaan by Israel with the entrance of the saints into heavenly rest. This analogy can only be inferred from Hebrews 4:9 as rendered by most translators. The Holy Spirit simply warns us not to harden our hearts when we hear God's voice. The entrance into His rest which the Israelites failed to realize when they entered Canaan, we may now experience through faith. "For we which have believed do enter into rest." This is definitely a present, not a future entrance. How is it realized? Simply by keeping our hearts tender and sensitive to the impression of the Holy Spirit as He speaks to us in Holy Writ. "Today--on the Sabbath--if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts." In those days the Jews had no Bibles in their homes, but they heard the voice of God regularly on Sabbaths as the Scriptures were read from the pulpit. See

Luke 4:16-20. This fact is implied in Hebrews 4:11, whose context associates the entrance into God's rest with the word of God: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful." That is, in order to enter into His rest, you must obey His voice, which speaks to you every Sabbath. That is the theme in a nutshell.

Some might object that the Sabbath is an intermittent rest which cannot be compared with the lasting rest of which God speaks in Psalm 95. Moreover, the Sabbath rest existed already in the days of Joshua, and the people could have entered it then, thus the "another day" in Hebrews 4:8 could not be the Sabbath. This objection overlooks the fact that Hebrews is emphasizing God's spiritual rest in contrast to rest from warfare which Joshua gave the people, as in Joshua 21:44: "The Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers." Then the words of Hebrews 4:8, "If Joshua + + (Editor's note: KJV has "Jesus:" many modern versions have "Joshua." Our Saviour's given name, in Aramais, was Yeshua, which is translated Joshua in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, it is transliterated into Greek, Iesous, and translated Jesus.) had given them rest," refer to spiritual rest, which is appropriated on the Sabbath. The Israelites could have entered it in Joshua's day, but they did not. In Psalm 95 God spoke of another day in contrast to the Joshua's time. The "another day" contrasts Joshua's "rest" with the Sabbath rest to be entered "Today." Since David composed Psalm 95 for Sabbath worship, it was only from his time that the call, "Today if ye hear His voice . . ." was heard by Israel. Whoever argues that the "another day" is not the Sabbath must give evidence to prove it. The word "limit" or "set" (horizo) indicates that the day is a specific day, not any and every day, nor endless days through eternity.

"Today" Identified with the Sabbath

Hebrews 4:6-7 clearly identifies the "Today" of Psalm 95 with the Sabbath: "Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today. . ." The P46 papyrus omits the "day" and makes the "Today" the direct object of horizei (limit, or set), thus, "Again, He limiteth a certain 'Today'. . ." That is, the day called "Today" is the day set by God for the appropriating of His rest. And having established the historical background and liturgical usage of this psalm, we are now in a position to affirm that the "certain day" set by God is none other than the Sabbath. Incidentally, in the NIV the present tense of horizei is changed to the past tense. It should read, "God again sets a certain day, calling it today." The Holy Spirit is not talking about David's time, but the present Sabbath day when the people are gathered for worship. The present tense means that God sets every arriving Sabbath day as the time for entering into His rest. All facts we have given conspire to affirm that the "Today" of Psalm 95 refers to the seventh-day Sabbath.

More Corroborative Evidence

If it was indeed every Sabbath that the Jewish worshippers heard the "Today" psalm publicly read, then it would not have required special insight for them to associate the "Today" with the Sabbath, and the words "Encourage each other daily, until the 'Today' (message) is proclaimed," would have been intelligible to them. Now we can go a step further along this line of reasoning and surmise that if the liturgical use of this psalm was very general, then not only Christian Jews, but even non-Christian Jews might have associated the "Today" with the Sabbath. If we can find such documentary evidence, then it would constitute a forceful corroboration of the point we are making.

Extant Jewish writings yield two significant quotations which associate the "Today" of Psalm 95 with the Sabbath. A statement by Rabbi Levi, who lived about A.D. 300, is recorded in the Midrash Tehillim, vol. 2, 92, as follows: As soon as they (the Israelites) observe one Sabbath according to directions, they will be redeemed, as it is written, "Today, if ye will hear His voice," and it is said, "observe the Sabbath."

Since R. Levi is one of the early rabbis from whose lips the Jewish traditions were first transferred to writing, it is highly probable that this association of the "Today" with the Sabbath had its origin before the second century. Another passage from the Midrash Rabbah, vol. 25, 315, bears out this probability. Rabbi Johanan, who lived one generation earlier than R. Levi, is reported to have said: The Holy One, blessed be He, told Israel, "Though I have set a definite time for the millennium, which will come at the appointed time whether Israel returns to Me in penitence or not, still if they repent, even for one day, I will bring it before its appointed time." Hence, "Today, (redemption cometh) if ye would but hearken to His voice"; and just as we find the son of David will come as reward for the observance of one Sabbath day, because the Sabbath is equivalent to all the commandments.

R. Johanan did not connect the "Today" with the Sabbath as directly as R. Levi, but there is an association nevertheless, and this additional testimony implies that this association not only existed in more than one Jewish mind, but was also generally recognized. The writer of Hebrews then was not introducing a wholly strange and novel point of view, but used a familiar text as a ready implement to drive home his exhortation. He knew that if he merely composed his own words of admonition, they would soon be forgotten. But this psalm was often read, and with each reading his words would re-echo in the ears of his readers.

One may object that if the author of Hebrews understood "Today" to mean the Sabbath, he would have been more explicit, such as to say in Hebrews 4:7, "God again appoints the Sabbath, calling it "Today." Why did the writer say, "God set a certain day"? Such a complaint is equally if not more applicable against the view of a future entrance into God's rest, which is the only alternative to a present entrance. If Hebrews 4:7 is speaking of a future entrance, it should read, "God again set a certain day, "Tomorrow." No, God says, "Today," and every time this word is uttered publicly, it is the Sabbath. The Hebrew Christians must have understood this well. On the other hand, the writer was not explicit enough for his Gentile readers, because he was writing to Jews, and assumed their familiarity with Jewish traditions. Only when one reclaims these lost traditions is he able to understand whereof the author speaks.

Despite all this however, a truly open-minded student should be able to see the close connection between the "Today" of Psalm 95 and the Sabbath, even though he may not possess any knowledge of the use of this psalm in Jewish liturgy. He can gather from Hebrews 4:5-6 that the writer is equating the "rest" of Psalm 95 with the seventh-day Sabbath. Here is the passage according to the NIV:

For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh-day in these words, "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

Then after v. 7, which we have already discussed, we come to v. 8, which says, "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day." Now if we follow the context closely, v. 7 has just quoted the "Today" passage for the third time, making it very clear that this "another day" is the "Today" of Psalm 95, namely, the seventh-day Sabbath.

The objection may be raised that such reliance on Jewish traditions denies the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. For since the Bible was written for all ages and peoples, God could not make the knowledge of Jewish traditions a prerequisite to the understanding of Scripture. Yet that is exactly what Inspiration has done. Instead of being a mass of ideas from heaven having no connection with things earthly, the Bible abounds with divine thoughts clad in human vesture and closely related to everyday life--pieces of dirt, as it were, mingled with the spittle of Christ to anoint the eyes of the blind. For this reason history, archaeology, geography and the natural sciences all conspire to

clarify the Word of God. It is therefore consistent with the divine purpose that thorough use be made of Jewish traditions in studying this epistle to the Hebrews. For only when one becomes familiar with the Hebrew mind does he better begin to understand the words addressed to a Hebrew reader. In addition to studying what the author wrote, we must study what he assumed as well-known and did not write.

The Sabbathkeeping that Remains

From Hebrews 3:7 to 4:8, the writer confines his discussion to Psalm 95, and its relation to the seventh-day Sabbath. But not a word has been said about the future rest. Yet strangely enough, many translators and commentators take Hebrews 4:9 to refer to a future rest. Here we must use the argument of logical sequence and contextual evidence to prove that the writer was not thinking of a future rest, but was simply making an incidental observation after his exhortation for the saints to exercise faith in God's Word and enter His Sabbath rest. His observation was this: since God has appointed His Sabbath as the day in which His people are to enter His rest, therefore it is natural that Sabbath observance remain with them, while the Mosaic ceremonies have passed away. This argument of logical sequence takes v. 9 as an incidental affirmation of an important fact.

Second, the context in v. 10, reads, "For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his." This text is virtually a verbatim repetition of the reason for Sabbath observance given in the fourth commandment. Hence we say: A truly unprejudiced student of these passages cannot escape the conclusion that the writer is not speaking of a future rest, but is confining his discussion to the Sabbath rest mentioned in v. 4 and clearly implied in the "Today." On the other hand, proponents of a future entrance into rest must explain why no reference whatever is made to it throughout the discussion. Logically speaking, that would be a non sequitur. They must also explain how the context in verses 4 and 10 can fit the view of a future rest.

Now to study the grammatical evidence. Hebrews 4:9 presents two grammatical problems and a semantical one. We first tackle the meaning of the word, sabbatismos. It has been translated "a rest," "a Sabbath rest," "a keeping of Sabbath." A few simply render it "a sabbatism." Some adopt "Sabbathkeeping" with no article. S.T. Lowrie renders it "keeping the Sabbath day" and "observance of the Sabbath." He argues: It is not conclusive that sabbatismos, because it is not found in LXX, Philo, or Josephus, was an unusual word to his readers. It is as regularly formed as heortasmos, baptismos. Its use by Plutarch proves that it was a current word with only an ordinary meaning. It is quite gratuitous to suppose our author coins it. (Against Bleek) In Christian writers it is of common enough occurrence, and used in its simple meaning only, except in comments on our text, and then its (supposed) extraordinary sense is only made plain by amplifications. Justin uses it interchangeably with sabbata phulassein and sabbatizein (Sabbath observance). S.T. Lowrie, *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 114, footnote

The Indefinite Article

Assuming that we have the meaning of sabbatismos straight, the insertion of the indefinite article remains to be studied. Use of this article is so widely accepted that it is seldom disputed. But it is obvious that "a keeping of Sabbath" has a future reference as distinguished from the present practice of Sabbath-observance. This word is critical, and calls for careful study.

Since there is no word in Greek corresponding to the English indefinite article, it must be decided in each case whether its use is warranted. One authority says, It would have been very easy if the absence of the article in Greek always meant that the noun is indefinite, but we have seen that this is not the case. The anarthrous noun may

per se be either definite or indefinite. A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the NT in the Light of Historical Research, p. 796

The generally accepted rule governing the use of the indefinite article with anarthrous nouns is that of necessity and fluency. That is, if the noun can be translated intelligibly without it, it is not used, and has a definite meaning. Examples of anarthrous nouns employing no article in the English and having a definite meaning may be found in I Corinthians 13:13 and Hebrews 6:2. And since "Sabbath-keeping" can be read intelligibly without the article, the burden of proof lies with those who insert it.

An example of the deep-seated influence of the traditional use of the indefinite article in this text is seen in a comparison of the definition of sabbatismos with that of baptismos in G.R. Berry's Greek Lexicon. There baptismos is defined as "the act of cleansing," while sabbatismos is defined as "a keeping of sabbath, sabbath rest." To be consistent, this lexicographer should either define baptismos as "an act of cleansing," or sabbatismos as "the act of keeping of sabbath, the sabbath rest." Here we have a clear case of a preconceived idea overriding grammatical rules.

The Logical Sequence

The objection often raised against "Sabbath-observance" as a translation of sabbatismos is that Jewish Christians kept the Sabbath regularly, and there was no need to persuade them to do it. Any argument to prove the validity of the Sabbath institution would be pointless. Yet the same objection holds against the view of a future rest. Many promises and prophecies form a firm basis for the belief that all the saved will enter heavenly rest. What point is there in proving that it remains for the people of God?

We should ask: What is the main thrust of this dissertation on the Sabbath? Is it exhortation or argumentation? We say, It is exhortation, not argumentation. Yet there is a logical sequence. This sequence comes clear only as we comprehend the true referent of the "Today" and the meaning of Hebrews 3:13.

The entire passage from Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11 begins with a psalm read on the Sabbath and ends with an admonition to "labour to enter into" that Sabbath rest. To do so in practice is to humbly receive God's Word as it is read every Sabbath, and continue to encourage one another daily, until God's Word is again sounded in our ears. Hebrews 4:9 then is not the logical conclusion to an extended argument, but an incidental remark that Sabbathkeeping remains with the people of God after all the other ceremonies have passed.

Something Left Behind

The translation, "remains for the people of God," and the use of an indefinite article with "Sabbathkeeping," both have a future connotation. That is, this rest that remains is to be appropriated in the future, and any effort to enter it is simply to strive to be saved. That is not the sense of the original text. Here the word for "remain" is *apoleipo*. It is the word for "leaving behind" or "remain behind." Paul used this word in his letter to Timothy: "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus . . . bring with thee." 2 Timothy 4:13. This text also gives the right preposition. The Greek preposition here, as well as in Hebrews 4:9, is absent, but implied in the case form of the suffix of its object. The translator then must use his judgment as to what preposition to supply. In the Greek text, the suffixes of "Carpus" in 2 Timothy 4:13 and "people" in Hebrews 4:9 are both in the dative-associative case. These cases take the same form, so the translator must decide what Greek preposition is implied and then supply its English equivalent. Most translators of *apoleipo* in Hebrews 4:9 supply the preposition "for," many supply "to." But if we used "for" in 2 Timothy 4:13, the text would read, "The cloke that I left at Troas for Carpus . . ." Thus the sense would be altered. We think Paul did not leave it for Carpus, or he would not reclaim it. We believe the preposition "with" (for *para*) is the right one to

use, not only here, but also in Hebrews 4:9. Now we have our correct translation: Then Sabbathkeeping remains with the people of God.

This phrase is not a logical conclusion to an extended argument, but an incidental remark after an extended exhortation. The writer is not trying to persuade the people of God to keep the Sabbath, but simply pointing out the reason for continued Sabbathkeeping. Lowrie (op. cit., p. 131, footnote) says, "It is obvious that the rendering we have given verse 9 involves the most important consequences concerning the observance of the Sabbath. It makes our verse the most pointed New Testament proof text for the perpetual obligation of the Fourth Commandment."

Conclusion

The assertion that the proof-text method employed by our pioneers and the historical method used by our scholars "has been responsible for practically every theological difference of opinion over the past 40 years" is not supported by facts. The crux lies not wholly in methodology, but in the subjective desire of the human agent to know and practice the truth. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." The two methods are not mutually exclusive. Each has its proper place in the study of Scripture, but neither of the two is foolproof, unless one is aided by the Holy Spirit. Christ's promise to send the Paraclete to guide His people into all truth is realized today in the gift of prophecy manifest in the writings of Ellen White, who had an active part in laying the foundations of our faith when our pioneers were puzzled by a babel of explanations all claiming to be based on the Bible.

The historical method is not applicable to the study of Bible prophecies extending to our day, because in treating prophecies as historical material, it looks for their fulfillment in the time of the writers. We have shown that many prophecies had no direct relevance for the people originally addressed. We have also cited instances where New Testament writers quoted Old Testament passages out of context as primary fulfillments of Messianic prophecies, proving that the proof-text method is used by God to reveal prophetic truths.

Desmond Ford's attempt to undermine our faith is based on this strategy: "Use Hebrews 9 and the grammatical-historical method to overthrow the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14." We have given him tit for tat, using Hebrews 9 and the grammatical method to prove him wrong. His thesis is based on a version of Hebrews 9:8-9 incorporating four grammatical errors. A correct translation renders this text a companion to Daniel 8:14. The two are equally obscure, but when elucidated point to the same thing--Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place. We have noted that as the vision of Daniel 8:14 was sealed, just so the corresponding text in Hebrews must also be sealed to prevent a premature disclosure.

This sealing in Hebrews is indicated by the words, *mepo pephanerosthai* ("has not yet been disclosed," wrongly changed to pluperfect tense in most versions). The seven thunders of Revelation 10 are seen to correspond to these two sealed texts. These three texts may be likened to the three lenses in a refracting telescope, which if aligned properly, bring to view distant objects.

The question is asked, "If Christ had been officiating in the first apartment all through the 18 centuries before He entered the Most Holy Place, how is it His people were not definitely informed of this until 1844?" The answer is that all spiritual truths are revealed progressively, as in the proportioning of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. The first five seals are briefly recounted, but the sixth seal is dwelt upon at length. The first four trumpets also take up little space, but the fifth and sixth occupy much space. This placing of the center of gravity in the end of time is a characteristic of all important prophecies. For it was in the mind of God to follow the natural laws of growth in His revelation of truth: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in

the ear." The full corn is what counts. The disclosure of the sanctuary truths followed this order. Hebrews views the entire sanctuary service as one accomplished act, and refrains from a precise analogy of all details. A literal rendering of Hebrews 9:5 is "of which now is not (the time) to speak particularly." When Hebrews was written, the final stage of the "full corn" was yet future, but when time came for the way into the Holiest to be made manifest, the seal on Daniel 8:14 was opened, "There was seen [by the people of God] in His temple the ark of His testament," and the Midnight Cry has illuminated our path to this day.

Repudiation of the supernatural is the essence of modernism. Its manifestation among Adventist scholars is evident in the embarrassment some evince at the very mention of the Spirit of Prophecy. The thought that God would communicate directly with His church in modern times smacks of fanaticism, and "dignified" men of learning would stand at a distance from the "lunatic fringe." But we call their attention to this manifestation of the supernatural in two passages of Scripture written six centuries apart. It is God's provision to confirm our faith, so that we can point to these texts and say, "In the Book it is written of us." We can prove our unique identity sola Scriptura.

We have used the historical method to clarify two obscure passages in Hebrews 3 and 4. The "Today" in Hebrews 3:13 is not used adverbially, but is the catchword for the quotation from Psalm 95, and refers to the Sabbath on which this psalm was regularly chanted. The sabbatismos of Hebrews 4:9 is the gerundive term "Sabbathkeeping," and the use of an indefinite article is not justified. Psalm 95 indicates the prospect of a present entrance into God's rest. Thus Hebrews 4:9 becomes a companion text of Revelation 12:17 and 14:12 to identify the true people of God and to confirm the perpetuity of the Sabbath.

All efforts of the enemies of truth to destroy us will fail. Every method of Bible interpretation, when rightly applied, will serve to prove that we possess the faith once delivered to the saints. When studied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Bible will continue to yield evidence to reinforce the two great pillars in the temple of Truth--the seventh-day Sabbath and the Midnight Cry based on Daniel 8:14.

Seventh-day Adventists are a people greatly beloved. How do we know it? Because the Lord has given us abundant light. It is God's way of showing favor. Concerning Abraham, the "friend of God," the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Genesis 18:17; 22:5. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." Psalm 147:19-20. To Daniel the angel Gabriel said, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee. . . . Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days. . . . I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." Daniel 10:11-21. What a glorious privilege to be admitted into the confidence of the Most High! Said Jesus to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." What intimate communion God holds with His own!

We repeat: God is selective in His revelation of truth. "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." After Christ rose from the dead, He appeared "not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God . . . and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Acts 10:41-42. Today God works in the same fashion. He recognizes the commandment-

keeping people as His own, and sends His angel to explain to them the visions which Daniel was told to seal. Thus the greatly beloved man Daniel sealed up the vision for the greatly beloved people in the last days to unseal. Here is God's formula: He chooses them who obey His voice and keep His commandments to be His people and entrusts them with His Word of truth; He sends them forth to preach this Word to all the world. Every step in this process is a manifestation of God's wonderful grace: It is He who works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is He who honors us with the knowledge of His Word and again it is He who sends us out to proclaim it.

In the execution of God's plan for the redemption of our race, He counts on the contribution of intelligent men and women acting on their own initiative. The ample provisions of God's grace call for our conscious cooperation, as it is written: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Only as the human will acts in concert with the divine, is the prayer answered,

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

David Lin

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Chapter 15

THE HAND OF GOD

THE distinguishing feature of the Bible is that on every page God comes through. The hand of God in human affairs stands out and reminds us of His words: "My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure." From beginning to end, we see that the truths of the kingdom are not the products of human wisdom, but of divine revelation. Paul was an outstanding New Testament writer, but like other Bible writers, the message he bore was received from God. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward," writes he, "how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." Ephesians 3:2-5. It is this divine origin of Bible truth which accounts for the power which attends its propagation.

We Seventh-day Adventists believe in the third angel's message because we know it comes directly from the throne of God. We believe that His hand has been leading a people from all walks of life to unite on a common platform of Heaven-sent truth. If we did not believe this, we would not have joined this organization in the first place. We believe in the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy also because we know they are not the product of human wisdom, but of divine revelation. Again, the one distinctive trait of these writings is that God comes through. We are particularly interested in what is said of the beginnings of our movement. Regarding the first angel's message we read:

Those who proclaimed this warning gave the right message at the right time.

But as the early disciples declared, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," based on the prophecy of Daniel 9, while they failed to perceive that the death of the Messiah was foretold in the same scripture; so Miller and his associates preached the message based on Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:7, and failed to see that there were still other messages brought to view in Revelation 14, which were also to be given before the advent of the Lord. As the disciples were mistaken in regard to the kingdom to be set up at the end of the seventy weeks, so Adventists were mistaken in regard to the event to take place at the expiration of the 2300 days. In both cases there was an acceptance of, or rather an adherence to, popular errors that blinded the mind to the truth. Both classes fulfilled the will of God in delivering the message which He desired to be given, and both, through their own misapprehension of their message, suffered disappointment.

Yet God accomplished His own beneficent purpose in permitting the warning of the judgment to be given just as it was. The great day was at hand, and in His providence the people were brought to the test of a definite time, in order to reveal to them what was in their hearts. . . .

With these believers, as with the first disciples, that which in the hour of trial seemed dark to their understanding would afterwards be made plain. When they should see the "end of the Lord" they would know that, notwithstanding the trial resulting from their errors, His purposes of love toward them had been steadily fulfilling. The Great Controversy, 352-354

Note how throughout this development the hand of God is seen in accomplishing His will. Mark the words, "the right message at the right time," "both classes fulfilled the will of God," "God accomplished His own beneficent purpose," "in His providence the people were brought to the test," "the disappointment . . . was to be overruled for good," "the end of the Lord," "His purposes of love." Thus The Great Controversy presents a picture of perplexity and disappointment on earth, but of wisdom and certainty in heaven. Through the play and counterplay of human instrumentalities God consistently comes through as the great Arbiter of destiny.

We must never lose sight of this basic philosophy of history. To overlook the leading hand of God in our movement means to lose our bearings and eventually to fall "off the path down into the dark and wicked world below." This is the way God presents the situation. The first vision He gave the Advent people depicts a class of people who "denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far." This class "fell off the path." And it is even now taking place. Some among us doubt the validity of the Midnight Cry and do not believe God is leading us. They attribute our past wholly to human factors. This change in perspective will have serious consequences.

The article "The Pre-Advent Judgment" by Edward Heppenstall, published in the December 1981 issue of the MINISTRY says: The morning after the Great Disappointment, Hiram Edson claimed to have received new insight and correction regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary. His message? The sanctuary referred to in Daniel 8:14 is in heaven. Its "cleansing" involved what has come to be known as the "investigative judgment" of the

saints, beginning October 22, 1844, and terminating at the close of probation. This appeal by the early pioneers to the heavenly sanctuary was to determine the entire doctrine of the antitypical day of atonement and the pre-Advent judgment.

This article written by a professor of theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and addressed to Adventist ministers adopts the strictly objective approach. It tells us that Hiram Edson "claimed to have received new insight," but does not say whether his insight was correct or not. Now one man's insight is not as good as another's, and a modern scholar's insight is generally recognized to be more dependable than that of a nineteenth century layman. The impression we gain from this statement is that the writer does not attach much weight to Edson's claim, much less believe that he received a divine revelation. The position of the Adventist pioneers is said to be the result of their "appeal" to the heavenly sanctuary, and the doctrine of the investigative judgment is declared to be a "limited" view in contrast to what the writer proposes as a "wider scope" of the pre-Advent judgment.

Before proceeding to consider this "wider" view, we pause to evaluate the writer's basic attitude toward this critical period of our history. In all fairness to him, it should be recognized that he makes many references to God's activities. He says:

Here God actively pursues the right in passionate concern for His people. . . . God gives Himself time to work out and complete His purposes in both redemption and judgment. . . . God is now doing this incredible thing for His people the world over and in every church. . . . God must direct us from His sanctuary if final victory is to be achieved.

And so on. But all such statements are general truths having no direct bearing on the vital question we must solve today--"Is our sanctuary doctrine (like the baptism of John) from heaven, or of men?" No matter how many complimentary things we say about God's hand in human affairs, if we waver on this point, our whole theological system will eventually collapse.

We pin down this question: Was Hiram Edson's view of Christ entering the Holy of Holies merely a product of human insight, or was it a revelation from God? Is the teaching of the investigative judgment simply the result of an "appeal" by the early pioneers to the heavenly sanctuary, or is it something that is now actually taking place in heaven? There must be no equivocation here. Let every man seek a clear-cut answer, for it has to do with our eternal destinies. If we have been fooled all these years, the sooner we find out the better. But if we have the truth, what is the evidence?

The evidence is in the Bible. God put it there to confirm our faith, for He foresaw that our message would be challenged. God always provides sufficient scriptural

evidence on which His people can build their faith, even as Christ confirmed the faith of His disciples with Bible proof after His resurrection. We have three lines of evidence:

1. The direct fulfillment of Revelation 10
2. The parallel between the crucifixion and Advent disappointments
3. The harmony of numerous texts related to the investigative judgment

(1) The fact that on the morning following the Millerite disappointment Hiram Edson perceived that Revelation 10 had been fulfilled in their experience, proves the divine origin of the movement as well as of the prophecy. No other event in history will fit into all the specifications of this vision. Its precise fulfillment in every detail convinces us that the Midnight Cry was indeed foreseen and ordained by God. The realization that we are the successors of that movement places on us the responsibility to carry on the work begun by the pioneers under God's leading, and we may be sure that what God has begun He will finish, in spite of all opposition.

In our study of this basic Adventist tenet as first understood by Edson, Crosier, et al., we should view the sanctuary service in the light of Revelation 10, wherein the seven thunders, sealed at the command of the angel, indicate that Miller's failure fully to understand Daniel 8:14 was in the providence of God, even as the disappointment of the early disciples resulted from their failure to understand Christ's words, "The Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." "They understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not." Luke 9:45

(2) We come to the next point--the close parallel between the experience of the Millerites with that of the early disciples. Ellen White observes, "The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past." The Great Controversy, 343. She writes: Thus the death of Christ--the very event which the disciples had looked upon as the final destruction of their hope--was that which made it forever sure. While it had brought them a cruel disappointment, it was the climax of proof that their belief had been correct. The event that had filled them with mourning and despair was that which opened the door of hope to every child of Adam, and in which centered the future life and eternal happiness of all God's faithful ones in all ages. The Great Controversy, 348

Ellen White ably demonstrates how in every significant aspect the experience of the disciples was repeated in the disappointment of the Millerites. We note the way God works for the blessing of His people. We are convinced that the Millerite movement was as much ordained of God as was the crucifixion event.

(3) The third assurance we have of the guiding hand of God in our message and movement is found in the wonderful harmony of all relevant texts on the judgment. The teachings of many Protestant as well as Catholic scholars on the judgment does not go beyond a general idea of, "after death, the judgment." Many of them even fail to present a systematic account of events connected with the millennium. On the other hand, the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment embraces a host of texts which fit into a harmonious sequence. One is thrilled with the interlocking of these texts to form what may be described as an orderly display of jewels in a golden casket. Many texts which in themselves bear no indication of their place in the order of eschatological events, find their respective places in this scheme. For instance, the parable of the king who first forgave his servant his great debt, but, after the servant failed to show mercy to a fellow servant, rescinded his pardon and required the servant to repay the debt that had once been forgiven, finds its antitypical counterpart in Christ's service in the sanctuary. Regarding His service in the first apartment we read:

A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead, but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law,

confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. The Great Controversy 420, italics supplied

In other words, the sinner is forgiven on probation. He is given a chance to demonstrate that God's goodness has changed his heart. Then the life of the forgiven "debtor" is investigated after his death (in most cases). If the record shows that he has truly repented of his sins and forgiven his fellows just as God has forgiven him, his debt is finally blotted out. Some who deny the investigative judgment by quoting the text, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," (Micah 7:19), do not know that this text has an appointed time for fulfillment--after God has blotted out our sins, not before. For Christ has said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:15

People ask; "Why two apartments in the sanctuary?" Or simpler still, "Why a sanctuary at all? Why not just have Christ die on the cross and finish the whole business of forgiving sinners without all that ritual?" Well, the two apartments were given to teach us that we are forgiven on condition that we also forgive. If we fail to respond to God's grace and do not reveal the same love toward our fellows, our sins resting in the sanctuary will not be blotted out. Many who say "Lord, Lord" will be cut off in the end.

That applies to all who die before the Second Advent. But for the last generation of living saints, their cases must be reviewed while they are still living. And after that blotting out, they must not commit another sin. That is what is meant by our having to stand before God without a mediator. See Malachi 3:2-4; Ephesians 5:27; Song of Solomon 6:10. When we work the scheme out systematically, all these conclusions appear reasonable and inescapable. The remnant church has come into possession of these truths because she enjoys the advantage of the light of the Midnight Cry. It contributes toward a harmonious interlocking of many texts which in themselves appear to be unrelated to the investigative judgment. Ordinarily we do not think of Matthew 6:15 as having a place in the judgment scheme. In fact all texts having to do with God's complete forgiveness, such as Micah 7:19, Isaiah 43:25, Jeremiah 31:34, belong after the final blotting out of sins, not before. Ezekiel 33:13 is an example of forgiven sins recalled at last and not blotted out. These texts find their theoretical basis in the services of the sanctuary, and are brought out clearly only when studied in the light of the two apartments.

In a previous article we demonstrated how the correct rendering of Hebrews 9:2-10 can be comprehended only in the light of Christ's ministry in the two apartments of the sanctuary. Hebrews 9:8-9 is an important corroboration of Daniel 8:14, and its true meaning is "The Holy Spirit is declaring this: that the way into the holiest of all is not yet disclosed while the first apartment is still valid, which is a figure for the present time." The harmonious interlocking of these two texts provides a firm basis for our doctrine of the investigative judgment. That is why Satan tries so hard to destroy the sanctuary truths. Without them, the plan of redemption becomes hazy and nebulous. As we now have it, the investigative judgment is like a letter rack in the post office sorting room, where every relevant text finds a pigeonhole.

Facing the Challenge

Concerning our traditional teaching on the sanctuary Heppenstall writes: This interpretation has been challenged recently. Briefly stated, it is now pointed out that:

1. The words translated "cleansed" in both Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8 are not the same Hebrew word. In Leviticus 16 the Hebrew word *taher*, the common word for cleansing. In Daniel 8:14 the word used is *tsadaq* meaning to justify or restore. . . . Therefore it is argued that the two words do not mean the same thing, and in any case, it is undesirable to build an interpretation or doctrine on a single word.

2. The contexts in both chapters deal with two completely different situations. In Leviticus 16 the sanctuary issue is between God and His people Israel; in Daniel 8 the issue is between God and the apostate horn, the antichrist." MINISTRY, December 1981

The first point raised above does not constitute a real challenge. Several forceful explanations have been published to show that *taher* and *tsadaq*, as well as *sakah*, are synonymous and often used interchangeably in the Old Testament. Examples of the couplet form of Jewish poetry in Job and the Psalms are given to prove this point. The rendering of the LXX, using *katharizo* for *tsadaq* in Daniel 8:14, is also strong justification for the KJV choice of "cleanse." We may dismiss this challenge as invalid.

The contention that the contexts of Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8 deal with two different situations is not supported by facts upon close analysis. We take Leviticus 16 to be a figurative representation of the true day of atonement in heaven. We agree that "the issue is between God and His people Israel." But mark that it was ancient Israel, not the triumphant Israel of Revelation 7. Ancient Israel embraced more than "the saints." To be exact, she included hypocrites, apostates, and strangers--the "mixed multitude."

So will it be in the true day of atonement. Speaking of the investigative judgment, Ellen White states that "All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny." "Names are accepted, names rejected." The Great Controversy, 486, 483

The Wider Scope

If we take the teachings in The Great Controversy as a correct presentation of the view of the early pioneers, then it is clear that they did not understand the investigative judgment to be limited to the saints. In the Bible "the saints" consistently refers to God's elect, as it is written, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Psalm 50:5. They stand apart from the hypocrites and apostates, who like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram formed a part of Israel, but were eventually rejected. Then too, there will be a class of people who have never heard the name of Christ--the pious heathen.

Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality. Yet they will not perish. . . . Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. The Desire of Ages, 638

When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. The Great Controversy, 491

Hence all these worthy heathen will no doubt also come up for examination and be listed among the saved of earth. Thus we see that the names coming up for scrutiny during the investigative judgment will cover a wide range--from apostates and hypocrites on the one hand to doers of good in heathen lands on the other. What about antichrist? That apostate power certainly comes under the definition of "all who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ," so it must be included, if not as an institution, surely as people making up the body. To be accurate, we should say that the investigative judgment embraces saints and pseudo-saints all together.

Coming back to the second "challenge" in Heppenstall's article, we can now see that Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8:14 deal essentially with the same issue--the investigative judgment--wherein the sins of the saints are blotted out and the sins of apostates are retained. What appears to be two opposing positions is in fact an imaginary contradiction. Like the first challenge of *taher* vs. *tsadaq*, this second challenge is likewise proved to be invalid. The writer's attempt to meet it by playing up the pre-Advent judgment as pronounced "in favor of the saints" against the antichrist tends only to detract from the force and urgency of the warning message we are to bear--"The hour of His judgment is come."

A Shift of Emphasis To regard the doctrine of the investigative judgment as the result of an "appeal" by the Advent pioneers to the heavenly sanctuary is a tacit way of denying its divine origin. The theme of a pre-Advent judgment "in favor of" the saints against the antichrist represents a shift of emphasis. A startling alarm gives way to a comforting assurance: No judgment from His sanctuary can put the saints in jeopardy. . . . Thus the pre-Advent judgment reveals to God's people the coming of better days, based on their vindication before the angelic host and all of God's creatures around the universe. . . . So remarkable and trustworthy are the contents of the heavenly records, which speak of divine judgment in their favor and against their enemies, that the final triumph of the saints and their reception of the kingdom when Christ comes is already guaranteed. MINISTRY, December 1981

This note of complete optimism is premised on the word "saints" (holy ones) and divine judgment in their favor. Every statement is very true, provided we make the proper application. Now in this article "the saints" are equated with "God's people Israel." But, as we have just noted, the Bible has two referents for "Israel." "Not all descendants of Israel are truly Israel." Romans 9:6, NEB. The typical Old Testament Day of Atonement concerned ancient Israel--Jacob's natural descendants. But spiritual Israel, "children of the promise," are "the called, and chosen, and faithful"--the "holy ones" of God. Revelation 17:14. "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Romans 9:27. In short, "the saints" of Scripture consistently refers to spiritual Israel, not to Jacob's natural descendants.

If we fail to make this distinction, then in taking the next step of applying Daniel 7:22, God's judgment will be understood to be pronounced in favor of all the natural descendants of Israel, making no difference between the "wheat" and the "tares." If you try to explain that the antichrist is the "tares," then those who are in between--all who say Lord, Lord, but do not His will--are still left mingled with the "wheat."

This distinction is what we mean by a shift of emphasis. The "jeopardy" involved in the investigative judgment is shifted from Israel to the antichrist. Thus one virtually emasculates the judgment hour message, changing it from an urgent warning to a soothing lullaby. Since Adventists have always understood ancient Israel to be a figure of God's people today, then to call them saints and assure them that God will pronounce judgment in their favor, will certainly put them all to sleep. Some will quote Revelation 14:12 to prove that the Bible calls Seventh-day Adventists "saints." But no. They who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are finally confirmed as saints only after they "die in the Lord" or endure the final test of the mark of the beast. See context. Profession alone does not identify a true saint. Inspiration foretells that many of our people will fail to weather the storm and will fall off the narrow path. If Daniel 7:22 indeed says that "judgment was pronounced in favor of the saints of the most High," then we maintain that this verse can apply only to the martyrs slain by the "horn" that made war with them, not to us who live in the time of the investigative judgment, when "names are accepted, names rejected." The Great Controversy, 483

For this reason, all those flattering assurances of salvation guaranteed cannot be conscientiously appropriated by us. We who are to be weighed in the balance need to be alerted by these words: How solemn is the thought! Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. Angels have registered both the good and the evil. . . . Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn. . . . Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face.

How important then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days. *The Great Controversy*, 486-488

The importance of the sanctuary service lies in the central issue of God's holy Sabbath. Ever since creation God has declared the seventh day as holy, and that declaration was written on stone and deposited in the most sacred part of the sanctuary. As far as sacred objects are concerned, no other article on earth can compare with the tables of stone on which God has engraven the words which distinguish His law from all man-made laws: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. The ark was merely a receptacle for the tables of the law, and the presence of these divine precepts gave to it its value and sacredness. When the temple of God was opened in heaven, the ark of His testament was seen. Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined--the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai and written with His own finger on the tables of stone. . . . In the very bosom of the Decalogue is the fourth commandment, as it was first proclaimed: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . ."

The Spirit of God impressed the hearts of those students of His word. The conviction was urged upon them that they had ignorantly transgressed this precept by disregarding the Creator's rest-day. They began to examine the reasons for observing the first day of the week instead of the day which God had sanctified. They could find no evidence in the Scriptures that the fourth commandment had been abolished or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the seventh day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of His law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy. *Ibid.*, 433-435

This development was recorded by a participant in that Bible study which gave birth to Sabbatarian Adventists. We note that the pioneers at this time had overcome the "trauma of their disappointment," and were coming upon a new discovery--yea, a new revelation. Mark that the deciding factor here was their recognition of God's authority and their determination to do God's will. This mark has always been distinctive of God's own people, and continues to identify them today. In the end it is only those who seek to know and to do God's will who will continue to keep His Sabbath and to preach the third angel's message. Thus we see how intimately interrelated is the sanctuary truth with the true Sabbath. They stand and fall together.

None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgement of the claims of God's law, and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Men sought to close the door which God had opened, and to open the door which He had closed. . . . Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place; light was shining from that open door of the sanctuary in heaven, and the fourth commandment was shown to be included in the law which is there enshrined; what God had established, no man could overthrow. *Ibid.*, 435

This view is the truly wider scope of the pre-Advent judgment, and it was through their understanding of this connection that they saw their duty to proclaim the three messages of Revelation 14. We read on: Those who had accepted the light concerning the mediation of Christ and the perpetuity of the law of God, found that these were the

truths presented in Revelation 14. The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord's second coming. . . . The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the words: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment. Ibid., 435-436

By this passage we perceive that when the Advent pioneers laid the foundations of our faith, they were motivated by a power from above--guided by the hand of God. We cannot account for it by attributing it merely to a group of men attempting to relieve themselves of the trauma of their disappointment. The uncanny harmony of the Daniel 8:14 message with the vision of Revelation 10 and the Sabbath reform message of Revelation 14, is convincing evidence that the Midnight Cry and subsequent developments were all the outworking of God's will as defined in prophecy. Like the baptism of John, it is not of men, but from heaven.

David Lin

June 13, 1982

Chapter 16

THE DELUSIONAL SYSTEM

IN the January-March 1982 issue of the Collegiate Quarterly is an article by Jack Provonsha titled, "Was Ellen G. White a Fraud?" The appearance of this article is important for two reasons: (1) It violates the current policy of our administrators to avoid controversial topics, and (2) it attempts to answer the question with modern skeptic philosophy.

A Sabbath school quarterly normally does not contain controversial matter. This particular issue, however, presents the arguments of Walter Rea that Ellen White is a fraud, and Jack Provonsha's reaction to his charge. Dr. Provonsha first states that "I find the idea of Ellen G. White being a fraud both logically and emotionally repugnant." Then the following marginal quotations in bold type give the gist of his thinking:

We see things . . . not as they are but as we are. (p. 103)

Ellen White had her personal "delusional system." (p. 103)

The prophetic "delusional system" would tend to place the prophet back in those times before modern copyright ethics. (p. 104)

The prophetic "delusional system" would tend to place the prophet back in those times before modern copyright ethics. (p. 105)

Pride is the special sin of the "remnant people." (p. 105)

The spirit of the prophets is a spirit of eternal openness and expectancy. . . . (p. 105)

It seems that the editors of this Quarterly particularly appreciated Dr. Provonsha's application of the "delusional system" to Ellen White, because they emphasize this point three times in the marginal quotations, two of which are identical--repetition for added stress. A footnote on page 105 says, "The term is a technical term and could be misleading, so a word of caution is necessary. Delusion suggests pathology. Indeed there are pathological delusions which represent so great a degree of perceptual distortion as to produce isolation and destructive behavior--destructive to others and to the self. But there is normally in perception delusion also."

This footnote begins with a word of caution. But what is the caution? One should expect Provonsha to say that one should not conclude from this article that the writer thinks Ellen White was deluded. But on the contrary, the words which follow the "caution" actually strengthen such an impression, implying that Ellen White's delusional system had pathological factors. Because she was sickly, says he, her ailments aggravated her mental delusions. That is what one gathers from the footnote.

This assessment is in keeping with the spirit of the main presentation. Dr. Provonsha starts out feeling "repugnant" to the idea that Ellen White was a fraud. But he apparently thinks there is no way getting around what Walter Rea has presented, so he indulges in some modern philosophy to leave us with the impression that although Ellen White was not a fraud, she could have been deluded.

The fact that this Collegiate Quarterly was edited by a staff of ten members and passed by a nine-man reading committee appointed by the General Conference implies that our leading brethren regard Jack Provonsha's article (the only one published in this Quarterly in answer to Rea's charges) as the best answer we have. But in fact it raises more questions than it settles. Such a controversial topic should either be omitted from the Quarterly or, if included, make a fair presentation of both sides of the issue. To present Rea's charges and then argue that Ellen White was only deluded and not a fraud is actually to abandon our defenses.

In fairness to Provonsha we should point out that he does not say that Ellen White was deluded. On the contrary, after introducing the "delusional system" as a universal phenomenon in the perception process he says that "The prophet is therefore

selected, not because he is able to perceive things absolutely 'as they really are,' but because he or she is the best (least distorting) vehicle available at the moment of need." Ibid., 103

In other words, among a group of human beings affected by the "delusional system," Ellen White could have been the least affected. Nevertheless this sentence is emphasized: "Ellen White had her personal 'delusional system' as a member of the human race." Two additional marginal captions give this term triple emphasis.

What is the effect? This Quarterly, which has a circulation of 20,000, is placed in the hands of undergraduates in Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. Most of them are still in their teens, just learning to be "thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts." But instead of teaching them to think God's thoughts after Him, it initiates them into the philosophy of the noted skeptic Immanuel Kant. Thus our Quarterly violates its own maxim by affecting the thoughts of a man who doubts the existence of God. And the "delusional system," so ably played up by Professor Provonsha, is introduced as a basis for our thinking. Its application to Ellen White can serve as a dangerous precedent, teaching our young people not to be sure of anything. The next step would be, How can we be sure of the Scriptures?

It should be pointed out that the "delusional system," bandied about in learned circles as a technical term, has misleading connotations, so it is not scientifically accurate. Provonsha says, "Since our way of looking at things (our perception of reality) may not precisely correspond to actual reality, it is appropriate to speak of our perceptual bias as a 'delusional system.'" This is an exaggerated term, because the common understanding of "delusion" has to do with something wholly false. One accepted definition is, "false opinion or belief, especially one that may be a symptom of madness." Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Perceptual bias may lead to an imperfect perception of actual reality, but it cannot be properly called a delusion, though sometimes it may be an illusion. The expression "perceptual bias" is good enough and does not need a substitute. It certainly is less misleading to speak of Ellen White's perceptual bias instead of her "delusional system." This term may cause no difficulty in a philosophy classroom, but it will certainly create wrong impressions when used in a Sabbath School Quarterly and applied to Ellen White. The way the editors stress it will inevitably leave the impression in the minds of our college youth that Professor Provonsha teaches that Ellen White was deluded, despite his protests to the contrary.

Fair Play

Apart from this wrong editorial emphasis, Provonsha's application of the "delusional system" to Ellen White alone reveals his personal bias in this controversy. Since his article opens with a summary of Walter Rea's charges against Ellen White, then his application of the "delusional system" should begin with Walter Rea. The first question to be faced is "In what way did Walter Rea's delusional system influence his judgment of Ellen White?" Coming down to facts, Provonsha should first examine the dependability of the evidence produced by Rea, and the conclusions he draws therefrom, to determine the extent of his delusions and the resultant delusion his book is creating among its readers. Instead of Rea's exaggerated conclusion that eighty per cent of Ellen White's writings are borrowed, a scientific check will find that eight-tenths of one per cent comes closer to reality. Further study will reveal that while Ellen White was "the best (least distorting) vehicle available at the moment" God needed her, Walter Rea was the worst (most distorting, ñ80%) vehicle available at the moment the devil needed him. And after noting that "the prophetic 'delusional system' could tend to place the prophet back in those times before modern copyright ethics," Dr. Provonsha should observe that Walter Rea's delusional system would tend to obsess him with the most stringent demands of modern copyright ethics.

I am not being sardonic. I am just pleading for fair play. It is unfair to theorize that the "delusional system" is common to all men and then in practice apply it only to Ellen White. Another person it should apply to is Jack Provonsha himself. He should say in all humility, "Since I am chairman of the department of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University, I should be first to practice the Christian ethic of admitting that I too have my personal 'delusional system' as a member of the human race. And because my perceptual bias may cause me to err, I may be deluded about the whole thing, so all I have said about Ellen White may not correspond to reality." Such an admission will agree with the following observation made in the Columbia Encyclopedia, 1946 edition, p. 1638:

Thoroughgoing skepticism is logically untenable because in denying the possibility of any truth, the skeptic denies the truth of his own statement.

The Real Problem

Jack Provonsha is "deluded" on at least on one major point: the source of Ellen White's enlightenment. He writes: I suspect that a prophet, who felt the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit while reading in his or her library would be even less inclined to give credit to the human author of the momentary words he or she was reading. The sense of the divine presence--the "light" behind those words--would seem so intense that it would seem inaccurate, indeed almost blasphemous, certainly demeaning, to attribute the enlightenment to a human source.

Provonsha assumes that Ellen White received enlightenment of the Holy Spirit simply by reading the works of others, just as "all of us have had the experience, while reading, of feeling that God has spoken to our hearts in something we have read." Throughout his article he does not mention visions as a major source of her spiritual knowledge, perhaps because it is embarrassing for a man of learning to speak of them, or simply because he doubts their genuineness. But to ignore or wholly to deny her visions and attribute all her enlightenment to the reading of other authors certainly is a warping of historical fact, because there are scores, if not hundreds, of validated instances of her receiving in vision divine instructions to write letters addressed to particular groups or persons concerning concrete problems. These letters were sometimes mailed across the continent or the Pacific Ocean and delivered at the precise moment to meet certain critical problems which had just arisen, and there is evidence that all these letters contained details which Ellen White could not have known except through divine illumination. These historical facts prove that she actually received direct communications from God, and if we want to avoid perceptual bias and form least distorted conclusions regarding the question "Was E.G.White a fraud?" we should take all these facts into consideration. But isn't it strange Jack Provonsha makes no mention of them? Does not his refusal to look into them prove that his delusional system is giving him an extremely distorted view of this problem?

After ascertaining that Ellen White indeed received direct visions from God, we may conclude that she did not have great difficulty in the perception process. Since Provonsha admits that only God can perceive reality as it really is, then he should agree that God can also cause His chosen instrument of communication to perceive and understand His message as accurately as practical purposes require. Ellen White's experience confirms this fact, for she testifies that God often gave her "repeat" visions to make sure she saw things clearly. We see then that her chief difficulty was not in the perception process. Her difficulty, according to her own words was in efficiently communicating what she saw and felt. She often lamented her lack in such words as these:

Oh, how inefficient, how incapable I am of expressing the things which burn in soul in reference to the mission of Christ! I have hardly dared to enter upon the work. There is so much to it all. And what shall I say, and what shall I leave unsaid? . . .

I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subject of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. I bow my soul in awe and reverence before God and say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Letter 40, 1892

The Chinese have a saying, "Trying to fathom the depths of a nobleman's soul with the yardstick of a knave." After reading these words by our humble prophet, Walter Rea's wild charges show up to be such a yardstick. They hardly merit a reply. Says the Lord, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Psalm 50:21. Every honest soul who has read Ellen White's writings and entered into the spirit of her utterances can see that such a godly woman was wholly above deception, so Rea's charges roll away like water off a duck's back. (Read Olson's 101 Questions for details.)

Now we have a factual picture of Ellen White, who after receiving visions connected with the great controversy between Christ and Satan, keenly felt her lack of literary training and her inability to express in human language what God had revealed to her. Yet it was this very sense of her inadequacy that goaded this underprivileged woman to master English rhetoric as best she could, and her style did improve rapidly. In the process of learning she collected many literary gems which aptly expressed important spiritual truths, and placed them in a common treasury, from which she drew and incorporated them into her writings with the sole purpose of uplifting Christ and winning souls. Even then, a comparison of the passages she borrowed with their original wording reveals that almost invariably she improved on them, making them more concise, forceful, and attractive, which shows that she certainly was not an ignorant imitator.

As for giving credit, the "Light that lighteth every man" should rightfully get all the credit. When Ellen White felt certain choice quotations ought to be rescued from their age-old hiding places and widely propagated, she regarded it her duty to publish them in the spirit of "the Lord hath need of them." Matthew 21:3. Incidentally, Christ's command for His disciples to untie the ass and her colt without first asking permission of the owner can be called a breach of etiquette. The owner could have made an issue of it and charged the disciples with theft--(if he had been Walter Rea).

Our church leaders must not lose the initiative in this crisis. We should accept the challenge as a God-sent opportunity, take full advantage of the free publicity--negative though it may be--"and it shall turn to you for a testimony." We must not yield under the pressure of the ungodly elements among us who are trying to snicker the Spirit of Prophecy out of court. We must not falter under Rea's rabid attacks and lose our bearings. Nor should we try to meet him half way. Jack Provonsha's introduction of the "delusional system" is ill-advised and settles nothing. As we have pointed out, Ellen White's difficulty did not lie in the perception process, so all the talk about "learning theory" is extraneous. God chose this woman to speak for Him not because her "delusional system" was least distorting (all this pompous talk is a vain attempt to fit God into Kant's philosophy), but because His express purpose has always been to choose the weak to confound the strong that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1 Corinthians 1:29

The statement that the learning theory based on Kant's idealism is "generally accepted" is also open to challenge. These words should be modified by adding, "in

certain parts of the world." For in other regions, especially where dialectical literalism is dominant, Kant's philosophy is widely repudiated. Hegel, Marx, Engels, and Lenin were definitely the equals of Kant in mental caliber, if not superior to him. Their scholarly criticisms of Kant make men wonder who is the wiser sage. And if you have the time and patience to wade through the works of philosophers ancient and modern, you will still have difficulty deciding which school comes closest to the position of Seventh-day Adventists, much less to say which learning theory should be applied to Ellen White. The wisest thing is to leave worldly philosophy with the world and be content to work *Sola Scriptura*. Our philosophy should be the positivism of Jesus Christ, who prayed "Thy word is truth," and emphasized His words with "Verily, verily I say unto you" and "It is written."

An Aggressive Strategy

We should not remain on the defensive. We must go on the offensive, giving tit for tat. The devil is trying to bluff us into submission so that we will take the Ellen White books out of circulation and be ashamed of our glory. We will do the opposite: promote these books with a vengeance! We will sell them to our people and also to the world. From now on every one of our publishers, distributors, and colporteurs should make the Spirit of Prophecy books, especially the Conflict Series, their chief sales item. No, some will say, Walter Rea has ruined E. G. White's reputation; her books won't sell. I am persuaded otherwise. I believe God will work wonders for us by turning this crisis into a blessing. I appeal to every consecrated colporteur who makes soul-winning his goal to try the following canvass:

Have you heard or read about Walter Rea's attacks on a great religious writer Ellen White? Well, the public media are making a sensation of it, so more and more thinking people want to know for themselves the truth about Ellen White's writings. One most important work is *The Great Controversy*. This book tells us of events which are soon to take place. No other writer has presented these vital truths more forcefully, and many readers have decided that Ellen White was indeed an inspired prophet of God. About a hundred years ago she wrote this prophecy (turn to *The Great Controversy*, 624):

"Persons will arise pretending to be Christ himself, and claiming the title and worship which belongs to the world's Redeemer."

Today this is happening before our eyes. You've seen in the papers the full-page ads about Maitreya, who claims to be Christ. Very soon you will see another prophecy fulfilled: (same page)

"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. . . ." (read full passage)

Now if you didn't read this book, you'd possibly be deluded by such a supernatural character, but Ellen White foretells that it will be the devil himself, so you will not be deceived. Now I've brought this book for you and I'm sure you'll get a lot of vital information from it and will not be taken by surprise when supernatural manifestations appear.

This book not only tells you about the startling changes and calamities that will soon befall our planet, but will also help you to prepare for them and have the courage to face the future by trusting in God. Ellen White could not have copied such prophetic material from other books because no other book written before her contained such detailed accounts of things to come. She received them by direct revelations from God. Here the author says (turn to "Author's Introduction," page 13, and read):

"Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. . . ." (read full passage)

And when you've finished reading this great book, you'll be able to decide for yourself who is a liar--Ellen White or Walter Rea.

David Lin

September 15, 1982

Chapter 17

ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

THE first words Satan addressed to Eve fed her ego and caused her to distrust her Creator. These two natural maladies of the soul--selfishness and alienation from God--have brought moral ruin and spiritual death to all mankind. Christ came to undo the work of Satan. A strange and miraculous change occurs in every soul who gazes on the Lamb that was slain for us, putting in us an enmity against sin and a yearning for God. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered--this is the restoration of intercommunication, confidence and cooperation between man and his Maker, which will heal our snake-bitten souls. Thus by God's help, man gradually regains his first dominion over himself, and after that, over all nature.

The Bible calls this change a process of reconciliation with God. Satan first alienated man from God by sowing seeds of distrust, making him think that God was selfish and did not love him, but was withholding something good from him. Christ came to demonstrate that God loves us so much that He does not withhold any good thing from us, not even the best, not even His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Every soul who sees this truth begins to know and to love God, and is thereby reconciled to Him.

At the same time, the bleeding Lamb of God reveals to us the exceeding sinfulness of sin. We are prone to think that little sins do not matter. But Calvary tells us that these "little sins," when placed on Christ our Substitute, can cause Him to sweat bloody drops of agony and cry out in despair, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and finally die of a broken heart. Then we will feel as did Adam, when he first slew a sacrificial lamb and was amazed to see that the "little sin" of eating the forbidden fruit could result in bloodshed, agony, and death.

The natural sciences corroborate these truths regarding the attributes of God: The atom, whose structure is extremely complex, is believed by some scientists to be infinitely divisible, so that all matter can be ultimately resolved into binding energy. At any rate, even our limited knowledge of the microcosmos tells us that the Creator is very particular and meticulous in His doings. On the other hand, our knowledge of the macrocosmos reveals that God is also surprisingly generous and lavish in His giving, because He has exhaustless resources at His command. Read Isaiah 40:26.

This is also the message of Calvary. The bleeding Victim, in whom is concentrated all the riches of God's grace, testifies of God's infinite love, but also that He will by no means clear the guilty. See Exodus 34:7. He will not condone sin, even if it is found on His Most Beloved, Christ. Because Jesus is willing to bear our sins, then He must satisfy the demands of God's law by paying the penalty. Christ's prayer, "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me. . . ." demonstrates to all creation that though God has a thousand ways of accomplishing His purposes of which we know nothing, yet on this particular issue it was not possible to "let this cup pass," unless He chose to abandon our sinful race to perdition. But that would be a denial of God's love and a diminishing of His glory. The only course open to Christ was to drain that cup of woe. These grim realities are to impress upon our minds the sinfulness of sin and the sure results of continuing in transgression. Since it was not possible for our Sin-bearer, Jesus Christ the Son of God, to escape its penalty, what possible hope is there for the sinner who must bear his own guilt because he chooses to live on in sin?

Accountability

That first act of disobedience--trifling though it seemed--was essentially a manifestation of defiance of God's authority. The fact that God took immediate action indicates the seriousness of the situation. Adam and Eve were called to account for their sin.

Our accountability to God arises from the fact that we are His creatures and enjoy freedom of independent action. This freedom has not in any way been withdrawn after the entrance of sin, because God's purpose now is to teach us through Christ the proper and effective exercise of our freedom: how we can intelligently and resolutely say "Yes" to God and "No" to the devil. That is, the endowment of the ability to rule must first be trained to control our own passions and propensities. God said to Cain, "If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; It desires to have you, but you must master it." Genesis 4:7, NIV. "Master" is the key word. Either we master sin, or it masters us. That is what Christ meant when He said, "The truth shall make you free." Knowledge of the truth leads to mastery of self, which means freedom from sin through connection with Christ. And the truth that makes us free is in the Word of God, which tells us what the issue is all about and how we can gain the mastery.

Some deny the possibility of man ever gaining the mastery over sin. They say, "Only Christ lived a sinless life, so His perfection must be reckoned as ours, but it can never become a living reality in us," implying that we will never gain the mastery and never be free, thus belying Christ's words, "The truth shall make you free." In fact, such a doctrine belies all the truths connected with the judgment. For if it is impossible to gain the mastery, then God has no right to call us to account or to punish any man for disobedience. For sinners would be able to challenge Him with the words, "It is impossible to keep Your law--Your demands are unreasonable." God declares that He is ready to show mercy unto "thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments," but will also "by no means clear the guilty." The existence of the thousands who keep God's commandments justifies God's punishment of the thousands who do not. For it is they who keep His commandments that prove that they can be kept by human beings restored to a vital connection with God. Therefore those who violate them are without excuse. The Cains in our world hate the Abels, because the obedience of the Abels condemns the disobedience of the Cains.

Gaining the Mastery

Ever since Creation it has not been possible for man to keep God's law in his own strength. But when God's original plan is again implemented through Christ, and man's conscious dependence on God is restored through the avenue of prayer, he receives strength to overcome sin through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. That is what God meant when He said, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. This process is also called the new birth--the beginning of "the manifestation of the sons of God"--a company of men and women in close touch with Heaven by means of the angels "ascending and descending on the Son of man." Christ compares this to the relation of the branch with the vine. So long as the branch remains in the vine, it has vitality to bear fruit. But once it is severed, it dries up and becomes a useless twig. It is impossible for man to gain mastery in his own strength, just as it is impossible for a broken twig to bear fruit. That is why Christ teaches us: Abide in me, and I in you. . . . If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John 15:4, 7

Here man's union with Christ is realized in the prayer life. The man who abides in Christ prays in His name according to the will of God. It is that simple: When Christ's words abide in us, they mold our thinking, and we learn to pray as He prayed. Our "asking" will then be, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Such a request will certainly "be done unto you." God's answer to a truly Christ-inspired prayer brings the joy of Christ to our hearts. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Herein is the joy of true mastery--mastery over self with power received from heaven through the Holy Spirit.

This process of assimilation takes place in every soul that is born again. A human being assimilates the thoughts and affections of Jesus Christ, who describes it as eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Peter says that all who do so are "partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. For it is in the realm of thought that man enjoys communion with God. When the Lord says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts," He is appealing to us to rise to His level of thinking by prayerfully studying His Word, which will remold our minds in His likeness. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void. . . ."

The Bible speaks of the day when men who have regained the mastery over self will be entrusted with greater responsibilities: the Lord will say, "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Luke 19:17. Thus shall we see the realization of the Creator's original plan in making man to exercise authority under His appointment. "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." Micah 4:8

The parable of the talents teaches us that before any of us is given this authority, we shall be called to "render an account" of our stewardship. This stewardship inheres in our freedom of action. Each free moral agent is naturally entrusted by his Creator with "talents," which represent everything we are free to use, such as our time, money, energies, influence, and so on. With the resources God places at our disposal we are free to decide what to do. To that extent we are "rulers" within our little domains. And to that extent God restricts His own freedom to interfere. But the time always comes when He will ask how we have ruled in the domain entrusted to us.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. . . . For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:14

The Last Judgment As it was on Calvary, so will it be in the judgment. God will be very generous and also very particular. He let the repentant thief off at a word, because His Son took over his burden of guilt. But He hid His face from Him who was "made to be sin for us," and who finally died in the agony of being torn from the Father's bosom. All because the Father will by no means clear the guilty. Likewise in the judgment, every soul who sincerely repents will have his sins blotted out in one stroke, but he who clings to his sins will die under the wrath of the same God who suffered His Son to be crucified. There will be no compromise.

On the typical Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) every Jew was required to "afflict his soul." "For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 23:29. This verse teaches us that every man's destiny is decided by his attitude toward God's plan of redemption. Summing it up in one word, it is "believe." But our belief must have a sound basis. Is there sufficient Bible evidence to support the doctrine that we are now in the true day of atonement and our cases will soon be decided for eternity?

Anciently, on Yom Kippur the Jews could partly see and hear (by the bells on the high-priest's garment) the services going on in the earthly sanctuary. But today we must follow our High Priest by faith. The question we face is, Can we be sure that our faith is well founded? This question requires every sincere Christian to find out the truth for himself by studying the Scriptures. It is too great a risk to take another man's word for it. We need the earnest spirit of the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11

God requires us to live our lives in a spirit of deep earnestness born of the realization that our cases are pending final decision in the heavenly courtroom. Every

Christian who senses the reality of this truth cannot abandon himself to frivolity and self-indulgence. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," is Christ's admonition to every one of His followers. We must make sure that our hands are clean and our hearts are pure.

Christ has specified one particular point as an index to the genuineness of our affliction of soul. He said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14, 15. True faith brings forth "fruits meet for repentance" Matthew 3:8. A truly repentant soul who is grateful for God's forgiveness responds by loving every soul for whom Christ died, even though that soul has grievously wronged him. This love is not "works," but simply an indication that the grace of God has wrought the desired change in his heart. Applying this concept to the judgment, we can imagine that when a case is brought up, the question will be asked, "Has he forgiven his neighbor as God has forgiven him?" If so, his sins will be blotted out. If not, then his sins, though once confessed and forgiven, will be closely examined, remain on his record, and he will pay the penalty in the lake of fire.

O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. Matthew 18:32-34

. This parable, as well as the sanctuary service, teaches that every repentant sinner is forgiven on probation until his case is closed at death (in most cases) or at the close of probation before the Second Advent. It also teaches that God is very particular with His children, looking for the image of His Son to be reproduced in every one He redeems. His forgiving compassion would not only remove our guilt, but would also fill us with compassion. He looks for fruitage from His sacrifice: a host of children reflecting the beauty of His grace. Hence we all must face that searching question, "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion?"

This meaningful word embraces all that is in the mind of God, who says "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." What is the substance of His thoughts and His ways? Compassion! The immediate context says, "He will abundantly pardon."

Some people look with horror on the judgment, but God teaches us how to face judgment without horror. It is written, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." James 2:13. Do you want to rejoice against judgment? Then learn to show mercy. That is the secret.

We live today in the era of the Most Holy Place. God has revealed to us the present situation in the religious world: God's people have followed Christ into the Most Holy, but others who failed to follow Him remain in the holy place bowed down before an empty throne. This worship corresponds to the theology of the modern Evangelicals. Their emphasis is on free grace--forgiveness without true repentance: "Salvation is yours for the asking." The third angel's message is the true gospel: probationary forgiveness in the holy place and final disposition of sins in the Most Holy.

The message of God's judgment is His call to perfection, for He is very particular.

There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another

being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." The Great Controversy, 490

Again we hear voices crying, "Salvation by works!" Yes, it is salvation by God working "in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. It is the work of "Christ in you the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. This is the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He first died for our sins, then He lives in us to remake us after God's holy image, for He is determined to have a church that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And He will accomplish this purpose in us through the agency of the Holy Spirit leading us into all truth.

But, as from the beginning, this transformation can be accomplished only through our willing and active cooperation. Man must gain the complete mastery by daily receiving the indwelling Christ, who manifests Himself in a life that is in harmony with God's commandments. As the Lord of the Sabbath He comes to dwell with His people, so that they bear this mark of sanctification--the holy Sabbath of the Lord--the only badge recognized by the Creator because He himself instituted it when He made the world.

Because of the flood of new light that has come to us in the third angel's message we, the most-favored people, are also most accountable to God. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Luke 12:48. Then let every Seventh-day Adventist remember that he is not to follow the crowd in pleasure-seeking, self-indulgence, and frivolity. They are in the dark, but you are in the light--light given to be proclaimed to the world. How can you forget your sacred duty and be content to be "one of the crowd?" How will you be able to render an account of your stewardship?

When Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," He was stating a universal axiom. Its corollary would be "You are made free in proportion to the amount of truth you know." It is so with man's experience in harnessing the forces of nature. Before he discovered the laws governing electricity, he had no freedom in its use. But after he gradually mastered them, he was able to harness electricity step by step, until now he can use it freely. Likewise, when we were in the dark about the love and justice of God and the plan of redemption, we were willing slaves of Satan and the sport of his wiles. But now through studying God's Word, we have acquired the knowledge that makes us wise unto salvation. The truth helps us to know God and to master ourselves by restoring our connection with God through earnest prayer. But we must continue to advance. As we approach the closing scenes of Christ's conflict with Satan, God reveals increasing light for His people, and the day will come when "all truth" will be fully revealed, and His people will arrive at the goal of perfect mastery of self and freedom from sin. The spotless Bride of Christ will appear "in the fullness of time" to vindicate His cause and glorify His name. "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Isaiah 35:10; Revelation 14:5. Anything short of this goal will be a failure of God's plan of salvation and incompatible with Christ's perfect sacrifice.

When God reveals "all truth" to His people, there still exists the danger of their failing to receive it and to practice it. Just so the consummation of God's great plan depends also on our attitude toward the truth He reveals. Ezra 9:4 speaks of "every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel." In Isaiah 66:1-2 God says, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. . . . all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been . . . but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." We too should tremble at the words of

the God of Israel. Such a serious attitude springs out of a heart that realizes in some measure the awful majesty of Him with whom we have to deal.

The Israelites once trembled when they heard God's voice thundering from Mount Sinai. But their trembling was transitory, because they feared the physical manifestations. The trembling which God values grows out of a heart which believes His written Word, senses His moral greatness, and obeys His every command.

God in His wisdom instituted the Sabbath as a universal test of loyalty. It is based on the authority of His Word alone, for no natural phenomenon marks its sanctity, nor does a man keep the Sabbath instinctively. Moreover, God repeats this test of loyalty every week, like a physician keeping check on his patient's pulse. In the end He permits the devil's agent to enforce the mark of the beast--Satan's test of loyalty--to see how many will tremble at his command. Satan threatens the people of God with immediate economic sanctions, and finally with death. God warns the idolatrous world of future punishment--fire and brimstone. Thus the battle is joined.

For all who tremble at the word of God, He has provided the testimonies of His Spirit to prepare them for the last conflict. These writings expose the wiles of the devil and point out the many pitfalls along our path, encouraging us to look to Christ for strength. That is why Satan is stirring up his agents to discredit them. Every soul who is striving for the mastery must not be deceived. The more the enemy rants and rails against the gift of prophecy, the more conscientiously must we read its admonitions, practice them in fear and trembling, and push the distribution of these writings. For they are the "weapons" which our Commander has issued to His forces: "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

When the battle is won, and every man stands before the Lord to render an account of his stewardship, may we all hear Him say to us, "Well done!"

David Lin

September 9, 1982

Chapter 18

CLEANSE THE CAMP

Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest position. God will not be trifled with. Fornication is in our ranks. I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollution. Testimonies to Ministers, 427

THESE words were written about a century ago when moral standards were higher than today. Even 40 years ago, the Pacific Union College Bulletin specified the length of skirts to be worn by co-eds, and the chaperon system was in practice. But today these standards are "old fashioned," and new problems, such as alcoholism, homosexuality, and finding homes for illegitimate children, have become pressing problems within our denomination. Add to this the appearance of official "Achans" in the camp, and we see that the call for a cleansing is timely indeed.

Could it be true that "the Lord will not do good, nor do evil"? Zephaniah 1:12. Why doesn't He do something about this situation? Are we all waiting for Him to do something? What if He does something really drastic, such as call for another big fire or two? Judging by the magnitude of our problems, a big fire or two will not begin to faze us. It seems that even a loss of 40 million dollars will not hurt us much. We are so rich and increased in goods. Then what can the Lord do?

Look at China

The Lord can do many surprising things. Let us look over some of His doings in China. First, in the Chinese religious world in general. The political changes following the establishment of New China have really plowed up the field in a constructive way.

1. The Catholic Church in China has received a complete overhauling. The big cathedral in Wuhu, Anhui, was ransacked and the public was treated to an exhibit of hundreds of dead babies found in a lime pit--the carcasses of our little orphans starved to death because the kindhearted nuns didn't want so many. The citizens in Shanghai had their eyes opened in another exhibit of Catholic counterrevolutionary activities. Heaps of firearms and radio communication equipment ferreted out of the cellars of several cathedrals in that city were enough to equip a formidable commando force for an armed assault when and if the Vatican so ordered. Photos of prison cells and secret chambers in the cathedrals remind us of the words, "[Rome] is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated." The Great Controversy, 581. Today a rejuvenated Chinese Catholic church has severed ties with the Vatican and repudiated papal primacy. That is indeed something new under the sun.

2. The Protestant churches in general have also undergone healthy shakeup. One indigenous but reactionary group--the "Little Flock"--had for years before the liberation followed the leadership of a man who under government investigation was proved to be a fornicator. His followers had given him liberal offerings--some in the form of gold bullion--which he shamelessly lavished on his mistress--a professional prostitute. Among the items appearing in his exhibition was reel of movie film he shot of his mistress in the nude.

3. Another "religious" crook--a popular evangelist--was also exposed by the authorities. He had claimed the gift of healing and performed miracles in public by opening the eyes of the blind and restoring the hearing of the deaf, all in a bedlam of shouting and praising. He also had a way of seducing the young women who came to him for counsel and prayer.

These three examples suffice to show that God can use governmental agencies to bring about certain religious reforms. If the Chinese Communist Party had not come to power, we may be sure that the lime pits under the cathedrals would continue to receive

more famished babies, their armories would be stocked with more guns, and many "pious" swindlers and fornicators would still be free to prey upon the public. Today Chinese Christians are thankful for a more decent social environment, and that the government has helped the religious organizations to rid us of many evils which we could hardly eradicate by ourselves.

Now comes our most relevant question: "What changes have occurred in the Chinese Adventist church?" We have space here for only a few examples which may serve to show what can also happen in other parts of the world. Since one of our most pressing problems today has to do with "Achans" in our camp, we shall begin with a review of their doings in the China Division up to 1951. Compared to our total membership of only 21,000 in that year, we had an extraordinary number of Achans. Why? Because there was an abundance of "American gold" (Chinese name for United States dollars).

It is almost unbelievable that such a small membership could form the constituency of a whole Division organization with its ramification of departments, committees and associations. It was the most top-heavy organization we had in the world. Below the Division were nine (9) union missions divided into 24 local missions, every one of them staffed by directors, treasurers, secretaries, stenographers, teachers, preachers, Bible women, colporteurs, and so on. Then we had 13 sanitariums and clinics, one big publishing establishment, one junior college and a number of academies and church schools in operation. When one tallies up all the hired personnel in the various missions and institutions, who made up part of the 21,000 members, it can be seen that the actual lay membership comprised a fraction of the total. It can also be seen that such a small membership could not be expected to support such an organization with its tithes and offerings. The fact is that whereas in the United States church organization began from the bottom up, in mission lands it develops from the top down. The China Division started out using mission appropriations from the United States, and continued to depend on this source of income right through its development from 1902 to 1950.

The writer was secretary of the Division from January 1950 through October 1951, the most tumultuous period in its history. Just before this time, China went through a baptism of blood and fire in two sanguinary wars--the war of resistance against Japanese aggression and the war of liberation which followed the defeat of Japan. In those trying years the Division maintained some form of organization, and mission appropriations continued to keep it "fed" in one way or another. But because of circumstances, a regular auditing system was not practicable, and that contributed to the development of dishonest treasurers. In some places the treasurer was bookkeeper and cashier in one, while in other places bookkeeper and cashier worked hand-in-glove to embezzle mission funds.

In December of 1950, after foreign missionaries had vacated, mission funds were frozen due to the Korean conflict, and I was sent to a union mission to settle matters. The workers in a local mission in that union accused the director of embezzling mission funds in collusion with the treasurer, and also of violating the seventh commandment. There was I, having no accounting experience, forced to audit the books of this mission. I simply checked invoices and receipts against book entries, and soon found purposeful falsification of accounts. Investigation proved the adultery charge true also. About this time a union treasurer took his books to the Division office for auditing. The books were water-soaked and many figures were obliterated. He said they got wet on the train, and asked for an "all clear" statement from the Division auditor, who told him that was not possible. Another Division auditor went to check the books of a sanitarium, and also

discovered falsified accounts. The story continues--all in the same vein--Achans coveting a wedge of gold.

What did the Lord do about it? He simply turned off the gold supply, and the sinning stopped. Achans, Judases, and other opportunists were not punished (by the church), nor did they repent or commit suicide, but simply left the church because there was no more gold. But God's work went right on. A new class of believers came in their place not looking for gold, but in search of truth.

Can this thievery happen in other places? Why not? I'm no prognosticator, but certain laws are self-evident. Circumstances may differ, but wherever the spirituality of God's people drops, mission offerings dry up and tithe receipts drop with it. If the "new theology" continues to spread, its advocates, who are supported by faithful Seventh-day Adventist tithesayers, will sooner or later discover that because their teachings tend to lower the spiritual fervor of God's people, they have been digging their own graves. For if, as they insist, it is not possible to keep God's law, why be so liberal in mission offerings and faithful in tithing? Thus, while in China political developments led to the drying up of the gold supply, the dissemination of the "new theology" can lead to the same result in other lands. You cannot expect our people to give up Adventism and continue paying tithe into God's treasury. This heresy may be their end: yeast germs in fermenting grape juice are finally destroyed by the alcohol they produce. But that is only one possibility. God has other ways of turning off His gold supply.

The Baal-Peor Crisis

When the people of Israel were on the borders of Canaan, Satan succeeded in seducing them into sin by working through the prophet Balaam. When hired to curse Israel, the prophet was impelled by the Holy Spirit to say: Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. Numbers 23:20-21

However, this poor prophet was infatuated by Balak's offer of riches, and was bent on pleasing his patron. He devised a scheme to bring God's curse on Israel. At his suggestion Balak sent a group of voluptuous women to draw the Israelites into sin. The plan worked, and Satan exulted. Many Seventh-day Adventists today have also fallen into Balaam's trap. Hence this statement by Ellen White about fornication in our ranks. (If she copied it, she must have had access to the books in heaven.) "What is to be done? The command is to 'cleanse the camp,' . . . if it takes the highest men in the highest positions." But who is to do it? The answer is, the laity. I know of a case in China where a popular self-made Adventist evangelist once traveled around the country in the company of a single woman. He spoke a dialect not familiar to most Chinese, so he used her as an interpreter. It did not take long before the lay members told him that it is not proper for a preacher to travel with a single woman. There you have it: a man who is supposed to teach the people to obey the law of God being told by the people what is proper and what is not. Sex infatuation has a blinding effect, even on preachers who are normally sane and sensible. Ellen White says that this bewitching spell can afflict "the highest men in the highest positions." If a preacher does not want to be humiliated by being taught by lay people how to behave, he must live close to God and depend on Him to keep his head cool.

Let none say a state of feeling is upon them in undue attachments, unlawful love, that they cannot break away from. It is a deception. You cherish the evil, you strengthen it. You love it better than you love truth, purity, righteousness. You do not take hold of divine help, wrenching yourselves from hurtful and dangerous associations. You tamely give yourselves to the working of an evil way, as though you had no free moral agency. Study God's word prayerfully, meet its demands firmly, resolutely, as did Joseph and Daniel." Testimonies to Ministers, 42

God gives us a picture of the Israelites at Baal-Peor. The Bible tells how an Israelite prince named Zimri, unmindful of the plague that had befallen his people, and of them who were weeping and praying, shamelessly led a Midianite girl into his tent. Then we see a young man named Phinehas rise from his knees, grab a javelin, follow them in, and thrust it through man and woman. For this deed God made a covenant with Phinehas as a token of His approbation. The initiative of one man stayed the plague that had stricken down 24,000 souls.

What Will We Do?

This example answers our question, "What is God going to do?" Actually, God is waiting to see what we will do. Will there be another Phinehas in modern Israel to stand on God's side and rid the church of them who work folly in Israel?

Now Phinehas was not a eunuch, but a creature with sex instincts like all men, but he was not seduced by the Midianite girls. Why? He had his mind fortified with the word of God. The holy Spirit helped him keep a level head and retain the mastery over his passions. When those idolatrous beauties threw their glances at him he recalled the words, "Lest . . . their daughters . . . make thy sons go awhoring after their gods." Exodus 34:15-16. He knew this trap was set by the devil, and stayed clear of it. "The adulteress will hunt for the precious life," and he knew his life was precious in God's sight. He willed not to be the devil's victim, but joined the people in prayer and then rose to slay the transgressor who dared to flaunt his sin before the congregation. God signally honored his noble act. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chronicles 16:9

God, who endowed man with the power of choice, places a high estimate on individual initiative. When we study this trait in connection with the fact that "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," (Philippians 2:13), we come upon the wonderful truth that though all power to overcome sin comes from God, yet He gives us the credit for every victory we gain in His name. And we give Him all praise, thanksgiving, and glory.

We are all actors in the drama of the great controversy. The angels and inhabitants of myriads of worlds are the spectators. How do you plan to act? Will you play the part of another Zimri, or will you act the part of Phinehas? How would you appear--you who are shepherds of God's flock--if you allow yourself to fall under the spell of a female decoy and be led "as an ox goeth to the slaughter"? Remember: the whole universe is looking on. Do not make a fool of yourself--a shame to the Advent cause and a reproach to God. Do not lead a double life, having always something to cover up. Living in sin and yet posing as a saint--such a state of mind is most demoralizing, and unfits a man for the work of God. Remember: "To thine own self be true," so that you can hold up your chin and fight the battles of the Lord.

Pluck Out the Eye

Another case of lay members maintaining our standards and disciplining a preacher recently happened in a Chinese Adventist church whose minister fell in love with a married woman and made her divorce her husband to marry him. The church members did their best to restrain him, but he was deliriously infatuated, and they resolutely disfellowshipped both man and woman. They obeyed Christ's teaching: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Because this "right eye" had become a real offense to men and a dishonor to God, they plucked it out. This example is representative of many Adventist congregations whose members are firm in their love of the truth and refuse to follow false shepherds. The question is asked: How can lay members have a higher moral standard than that of their

preacher? The answer is, They learned it through the Testimonies of the Spirit. Through these books God speaks to His people and feeds His flock. Thus is fulfilled these words:

"Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . . And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd. . . . Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out . . . and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day . . . and I will feed them in good pasture." Ezekiel 34:2-14

When the shepherds fail, the Lord will feed His flock through the Spirit of Prophecy writings. This fact has been demonstrated in China. It will be demonstrated in other fields.

Are we exalting the Spirit of Prophecy above the Bible? Does not the Lord feed His flock through the Scriptures? Yes, of course, but without the light shed by the gift of prophecy upon critical passages, the Bible does not make people into Adventists. That is a historical fact. Reading the Bible all their lives, Baptists remain Baptists, Episcopalians remain Episcopalians. In the Ellen White writings God takes His own words as written by men of old and applies them in the right place at the right time. This application makes all the difference between a commandment keeper and a commandment breaker. That is why the devil attacks the Ellen White writings.

Why Shepherds Fail

The failure of the shepherds in China has its peculiarities. We never had very many to begin with, and their general quality was low. By this statement we mean their grasp of the truth and their dedication to the cause were weak. The only evangelist of some note moved to Hongkong in 1949 and stayed. The ordained ministers in China who are still loyal to the truth number about 16, half of whom are in their dotage. Licensed ministers are also few. In 1951 six pastors were ordained. Today all are living, but only one is still a pastor. It can be seen that if we depend on the shepherds to feed the flock, the flock will starve.

This condition has its historical factors. We started on the wrong foot. From the beginning we put major emphasis on medical evangelism and little effort in training gospel workers. In 1937, when I was in our training institute as a ministerial student, I heard of a fund called the "urge-to-study" scholarship (literal translation). Urge to study what? To study for the ministry. Why should students be urged to do that? Because unless urged with money no youth would study to be a preacher. Why? Because Chinese preachers in those days ranked very low on the social scale. Even in our training school ministerial students were lightly regarded. A student of means invariably took the pre-med course. Others who were not well-to-do but could afford to pay expenses took the teachers' training or business course. Only the poor applied for the "urge-to-study" scholarship. It is hard for us now to imagine the state of things in pre-war China. A Chinese preacher was held in low esteem, even by some missionaries. Two examples will make this fact clear: One missionary took a fancy to help a beggar boy and his sister. Would he train them to preach the gospel? No, the boy became a pharmacist, the girl went through nurses' training. Another example is found in the missionary salary report submitted to the Division Committee about the year 1935. It was a salary scale for Chinese mission workers. The norm fixed for local country preachers was based on the living standard of the rickshaw coolie. (There were still rickshaws in the 30s.) It became a byword among Chinese workers. That explains why it was necessary to establish this "urge-to-study" fund. That was also why the preachers turned out under such a training system were not satisfactory. The failure of the shepherds in China really should be traced to the failure of our educational system.

The Other Extreme

Many of our colleges in the West have leaned toward the other extreme: turning out theological "experts" who talk over the heads of the people. Our members are often impressed with the profundity of their preacher's learning, but go away empty and ill-prepared to face life's battles. For they are not fed with the Bread of Life, but with worldly provender. To satisfy their soul hunger, many of our people turn to the testimonies of the Spirit. In both extremes the pattern is the same: When shepherds fail, the Lord Himself feeds His flock. Praise Him for His timely provision!

The root cause of our troubles is our inclination to follow fashion. It was the fashion in China to look upon the ministry as a cheap profession. "Anyone who speaks well can preach," was the common attitude, and as the result we paid them a rickshaw coolie's wages. When no youth would study for the ministry, we bought up a few paupers to do so. The idea of a divine calling and a wholehearted consecration was absent. The result is a dearth of consecrated preachers. But there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few, for He has provided His sheep with richest provender in the books of the gift of prophecy. Even though the Division organization has crumbled, a body of new believers, whom the Lord Himself is feeding, continues to thrive, and from them have sprung up a group of consecrated lay workers. One has taken the pains to copy the complete The Great Controversy by hand so that he can own a copy. He is representative of all who are led by the Spirit to step out for God.

The fashion in the West is to have sophisticated ministers. Adventists too must have scholars in the pulpit. But when the time of trouble comes, all who refuse to worship the beast and his image will be in sore straits. Then will the shepherds be smitten and the sheep scattered. But again, the Lord says, "I, even I, will feed My sheep." How? By the testimonies of His Spirit. Remember, brethren and sisters, hold on to your Bibles and those "red" books. They will be your pasture when the shepherds fail.

Quarantine

There is another aspect to our experience in China. We thank the Lord for a virtual quarantine from the moral pollution that is engulfing the so-called "Christian" countries. It is not as thorough as one might wish, but it is a quarantine nevertheless. Many people in the West would not believe it, but we have no great hardship dealing with alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, homosexuality, pornography, broken families, juvenile delinquency, and organized crime. The divorce rate is much lower than that in the United States, and crime is well under control. Our customs authorities ban imports of rock music. As a result, the general moral tone of Chinese society is healthier than in the West.

Students of social science unacquainted with the history of the rejection of the Law of God by the popular churches will never arrive at a correct answer to the question "How is it that today 'Christian' nations are experiencing a moral decline and disintegration more serious than that in a heathen country?" Does it prove that the gospel has no power to preserve human society from corruption? Even some learned theologians are baffled. Here is the answer:

Because they have transgressed the laws (the Decalogue), changed the ordinance (the Sabbath), broken the everlasting covenant (the gospel), therefore hath the curse devoured the earth." Isaiah 24:5-6

Corruption has set in not because people are Christians, but because since 1844 they have broken God's law and trampled on His Sabbath in the name of Christ. Their faith today is a travesty of the true gospel. This rejection of truth has caused them to sink to the present depths of degradation. Then let all who are trying to do away with our teachings on 1844 take note: A fair and honest assessment of the major developments in the world since 1844 will prove that the Adventist teachings are historically as well as

biblically correct. The rapid increase in crime throughout all Christendom cries out in thundering tones, "Babylon is fallen!"

When the popular churches rejected the message to worship the Creator by keeping His Sabbath, they took the next logical step of abolishing the Ten Commandments. If you accept the Decalogue, you must keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Sunday keepers began then to preach from the pulpit that God's law is 'nailed to the cross.' "Babylon is fallen" is God's philosophy of modern church history. It epitomizes the deepening crisis in all Christendom following 1844. The rejection of the Advent message in that year was but the beginning of a protracted apostasy in Protestantism, carrying the popular churches step by step toward complete affinity with Rome and spiritism. When this threefold union is realized, the fourth angel's message reaches its crescendo: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils. . . . Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." But is it not strange that in this crisis hour there are some Adventist ministers trying to pull us back into Babylon? This error too is a failing of our shepherds.

A Control Specimen

I believe God has preserved China as a "control specimen" to prove the truthfulness of the above thesis. Here we have a separate nation that has regulated itself since antiquity by the natural law alone. See Romans 2:14-15. How does it compare with a nation that was founded on Bible principles but subsequently apostatized? The latter is seen to be in a worse moral condition.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 2 Peter 2:21 Q.E.D.

About three years ago, when China opened her doors again, the TV stations imported a foreign film depicting the life of a harlot. The public was shocked. Many parents turned off their TV sets to keep their children from witnessing the most lurid scenes. Letters of protest swamped the TV stations, and that stopped the importing of smutty films for good--on the strength of the public opinion of a "heathen" nation educated in their national traditions and communist ideals.

True enough, things in China went berserk for a number of years during the "Cultural Revolution," and practically every norm of human behavior was challenged and broken. The restraining influence of the Spirit of God was temporarily withdrawn. But we thank Him that order has been restored, and that those years of turmoil failed to uproot the basic ideals God planted in the Chinese mentality. In those years of terror many youth learned to defy all authority, but today we see the age-old norm; "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man," (Leviticus 19:32), is still deeply rooted in the Chinese conscience. On a trip to north China I was many times offered a seat on crowded buses by young and middle-aged women as well as by a ten-year-old boy. They did it purely out of respect for my grey hairs. In the West it is "ladies first," but over here it is "elderlies first." How is it that this precept of the Levitical code is so deeply ingrained in the minds of a "heathen" race?

The same goes for the fifth commandment. It is no exaggeration to say that the Chinese people have more respect for their parents than practically any other race on the earth, including the Jews. Jesus rebuked the Jews for neglecting their parents on a pious pretext. See Matthew 15:4-6. The ancient Chinese made no such hypocritical laws; on the contrary, they wrote the Xiao Jing, the "Holy Book on Respect for Parents," and made their children read it as a "must." It is no coincidence that the Chinese race is the longest-lived and most populous. It is another aspect of this "control specimen" God has kept. Like the Rechabites, China teaches the world a silent lesson, attesting that

God's word is true, for He has indeed prolonged our days in the land which He has given us.

A Clean Camp

When will we have a clean camp? When will the church be pure and spotless? The promise is sure: we shall see a "revival of primitive godliness." But today we actually face a seemingly deteriorating situation. We wonder, Will God's promises fail? Will we go the way of all past movements, lose our bearings and fade away? No. We have something which past movements lacked; we have the Spirit of Prophecy--the Paraclete promised by Christ to remain with us and to guide us into all truth. This gift of the Spirit will see us through to the end and fulfill God's purpose in perfecting the saints. That is why at this very time when we need it most, Satan is launching a supreme effort to rob us of this gift. At this very time--when the Achans are plundering God's treasures and the Zimris are flaunting their sex crimes in the church and the shepherds are failing us one by one--we need to lean more and more on God's everlasting arms--the testimonies of His Spirit to keep our vision clear and our bearings straight. We must stand our ground and repulse the enemy. We must give attention to what the Spirit saith to the churches and measure up to God's high and holy standards, holding them up for all to see. One Chinese seeker put it thus: "I'm looking for a church with high standards, not cheap standards. It's like going to school. Men who want a good education look for a first-rate school." The high spiritual standards--the call to perfection--in the Ellen White writings may repel the careless worldling who wants to live by a low standard, but they attract all who are honest in heart and who will respond to the movings of the Holy Spirit. These writings uplift the crucified and risen Saviour; it is He who draws all men unto Himself.

Take down those precious volumes from the shelf, blow the dust off and read every word in fear and trembling, for it is God's personal message to you, saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent." When we humbly obey God's every word, and purify ourselves as He is pure, then will the camp be clean.

David Lin

September 17, 1982

Chapter 19

HOW GOD WORKS

Before the inception of sin, God had already formulated an effective plan of action to meet the contingency. See Ephesians 1:4. In the Bible record we can discern the "manifold wisdom of God," (Ephesians 3:10), in His dealings with Satan and with men.

God deals with Satan on equal terms, like an honest chess-player abiding by all the rules of the game. He does not employ His divine powers to gain an unfair advantage over His antagonist. Only thus can He demonstrate the superiority of truth over error, and of righteousness over iniquity. Truth must prevail on the strength of truth alone. The story of Job is an example. God gave Satan every possible opportunity to prove his point, so that the integrity of Job, without God's intervention, could have truest expression. In the end it was seen that with all protecting fences removed, Job's faith in God prevailed. His experience proved the invincibility of a character modeled after the divine pattern. God will permit Satan to test us in like manner, and that will be our chance to honor God.

God also deals with man on equal terms, in that He draws near to us as the Son of man, walking and talking with us as a man among men, to reveal to our finite senses what kind of a man God is. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"--not in His unapproachable majesty, but in His graciousness, tenderness and righteousness. Even in Old Testament times He appealed to men to "Come now, and let us reason together." And when confronting the Jews who called Him a blasphemer, Christ did not lash back with words of rebuke and condemnation, but quoted Psalm 82:6 to point out their wrong, and then patiently reasoned thus: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him. John 10:37-38

Christ knew that He displayed no outward grandeur to impress men with His divinity, for He had veiled His majesty for the very purpose of appealing to man's love of truth alone. But in order to arrive at truth, man must exert his reasoning powers and not be fooled by appearances. These words of Christ were meant to teach men to use their minds and to think things through. A paraphrase of His words would be: "I know you won't believe Me just because I claim to be God. I don't blame you, because in outward appearance I am just a man. But if you consider My works and recognize that they fulfill what the Scriptures say about the Messiah, you will believe."

That is what we mean by God meeting man on equal terms: talking with him as man to man. And His purpose is the same as in His dealings with Satan: truth must stand on its own merits and prevail against error. To bring out this point God once came down on Mount Sinai to reveal His majesty and proclaim His law. The smoke and thunderings and lightnings struck men with awe, so that they shook and trembled and asked that God would never again speak to them directly. They promised to obey His law and keep the covenant.

But how long did their promise last? Less than 40 days. Why? Because they had been moved by fear, not by love. After the fearful impressions wore off, they reverted to their idolatry.

A similar example is found in the New Testament. When the mob came to arrest Jesus, He asked, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." He said, "I am He." "As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground." What made those tough desperados fall to the ground? It must have been some fearful sight to convince them Jesus was no common mortal. But the apparition

was momentary. They rose again to their feet. Did any of them repent and acknowledge Him the Son of God? No. They forgot about it instantly and went right ahead in their murderous course. Both these examples serve to show that all men, including the most wicked, can be awed into submission by an outward manifestation of divine power, but its effect is transitory. What God wants is true worship and obedience that springs out of a converted heart, and that can be effected only through the transforming power of truth applied by the Holy Spirit.

This basic principle is involved in the incarnation. He who declared Himself to be "the way, the truth and the life" came to our world with no outward show to substantiate a seemingly boastful claim. Not only did He present no physical manifestations of divinity, but He even lacked the recognition of the religious authorities, which He might have secured by attending the rabbinical schools. That is, Christ not only stripped Himself of divine majesty, but also denied Himself the advantage of worldly prestige. He resolved to prevail purely by the force of truth alone, because "God desires us to receive the truth on its own merits--because it is the truth," Testimonies to Ministers, 106. The beauty of a character "full of grace and truth" must be the only attraction to draw all men unto Himself.

In adopting this principle of action, God used the light of truth, which also has the function of repelling those who hate it. For the propagation of truth always has a polarizing effect. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3:20-21

A Parable

Once an upright young man wanted to find an ideal lover. He despised the girls who fell for dandified fops and married for money. He wanted a girl who appreciated moral worth above worldly values. He asked God to lead him to such a girl, and wore plain clothes purposely to keep vain and frivolous girls at a distance. One day he came across one who seemed to meet his standard, so he approached her and introduced himself. On the first date he wore ordinary work clothes and apologized for not being better dressed, explaining that he could not afford good clothes because he worked on a farm and had to support father and mother. He gave her the impression of a boy who worked hard for a living and honored his parents. Would she love such a character? Well, she didn't snub him, but naturally wished he would dress better, so offered to give him some money to buy a suit of clothes for the next date. He gratefully accepted her gift. But the next week he came still dressed in work clothes, apologizing for his failure to buy new clothes because his mother suddenly fell ill and he had to use the money for medicine. How heavy a disappointment could the girl endure? She didn't chide him, but graciously gave him another sum to buy a suit of clothes. The third time he again failed to meet her expectation. He explained that the crops of the farm where he worked were suddenly attacked by pests and due to a shortage of cash, he lent out the money to buy insecticide. But he assured the girl that he could get the money back next week and buy the clothes. Would she be exasperated? Well, her patience and graciousness were indeed taxed to the limit. But she appreciated the unselfishness of her boy friend, believed his story, and looked forward to the next date. When she saw him the fourth time, he was still dressed in work clothes, and she was almost ready to cry and turn away, but he assured her that he had the money, but didn't know what kind of clothes would suit her taste, so would she be willing to go shopping with him?

After letting his girl friend select a suit of clothes for him, the young man said to her, "You've been so generous in giving me a suit of clothes. Now it's my turn to buy you something. Tell me what you like, and I'll buy it for you." The girl picked a brooch made of glass beads, because she knew he couldn't afford anything expensive. But he said,

"Now let me pick something for you. He took her to the jewelry department and bought the most expensive wrist watch he could find. Only then did the girl realize that this poor boy was a rich man's son.

This parable illustrates the way Jesus picks His bride. He laid aside His glory and came to earth as a poor peasant in search of a bride who prizes moral worth above worldly attractions. He knew He would disappoint all who are interested in outward show. In fact it was His purpose to repel the vain and superficial, and to attract the meek and honest in heart. He wanted men and women who could see through His crude exterior and say with Nicodemus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." He looked for people who could recognize the value of the truths He taught regardless of the travel-worn clothes He wore. "They that wear soft raiment are in king's palaces." An honest heart can recognize truth on its own merits, even as an experienced jeweler can pick out a genuine diamond from among a pile of fakes.

Christ declared His mission to the world in these words: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." John 18:37. This heavenly Bridegroom determined to have a Church made up exclusively of "every one that is of the truth." He will be satisfied with nothing less. And when the men and women who prize the truth above earthly pleasures and material wealth have been gathered to Him, Christ will present them with a city of gold. But before He does so He will test their love for Him by disappointments and trials. He will gladly accept their gifts and offerings. In the end He will surprise every faithful soul with the exceeding weight of glory and riches which He has reserved for all who love His appearing.

That is how God works. He did that in the past; He does it today. Now that the heavenly Bridegroom is about to bring His bride to perfection so that He can present her to His Father in the beauty of holiness, He is lavishing upon her all the riches of His truth. He in whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge has in these last days opened the windows of heaven to pour upon His people a flood of new light. And what human instrument has He chosen to do this? As in olden days the Christmas angels passed by the learned rabbis of Jerusalem to announce the Saviour's birth to a group of shepherds in the field, so in 1844 He ignored the educated theologians to pick an unschooled maiden to speak for Him. That is characteristic of God's way of working.

A Stone of Stumbling

Christ was a stone of stumbling to the men who expected the Messiah to be a more imposing character. Said the prophet, "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel." Isaiah 8:14. The inhabitants of Nazareth stumbled over Him and said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him." Mark 6:3. The Jews in Jerusalem stumbled over His lack of a formal education, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7:15. Men also stumbled over His virgin birth, saying sneeringly, "We be not born of fornication." John 8:41. Others stumbled over His obscure origin, saying, "Search, and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." John 7:52. "We know not from whence He is." John 9:29. Still others despised His lack of official recognition: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" John 7:48. Yet what was a stumbling block to unbelievers was a sanctuary and a rock of salvation to the faithful, as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed!" Romans 9:33. Said Jesus, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Matthew 11:6

Today Christ the Faithful and True Witness comes again as a stone of stumbling in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the

excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Corinthians 4:7. But many souls are offended over the earthen vessels. A psychologist affirms that E. G. White was mesmerized. One physician diagnoses her ailments and declares that her visions resulted from epileptic fits. A Ph.D. dissertates on modern philosophy to suggest that Ellen White might have been deluded. Another one-time Adventist preacher reasons in three logical steps that her claim to divine inspiration is a lie and outright blasphemy. Then comes a scientifically minded scholar who proposes to settle the question by computing the amount of plagiarism in *The Desire of Ages* with an electric brain.

Thus the skeptics rage and the scholars imagine a vain thing. They take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." For "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and . . . the weak things of the world to confound the . . . mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised . . . and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Corinthians 1:27-29. Such has been God's consistent manner of working since antiquity.

Again Christ says, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Does Ellen White fail to measure up to men's expectations? Do they all deem her a deceiver and a blasphemer? That is not strange. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" When men accused Christ of blasphemy, He bade them examine His works. Today we also ask all who accuse Ellen White of blasphemy to examine her works. Then we will examine their works. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If it is indeed possible to determine with a computer the extent of plagiarism in a book, perhaps it is also possible to compute the number of souls it has won for Christ. After having computed all the good works accomplished by the Ellen G. White writings we should then compute the number of souls *The White Lie* has led to perdition, and you will have the answer to the question, "Who is a blasphemer--Ellen White, or Walter Rea?" Says the Faithful and True Witness, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works." That is fair enough.

The Great Divide

There is a place in the Rocky Mountains of North America called the "Great Divide." The term is in fact applicable to the entire mountain range, which forms a long watershed. Rain and snow falling on its ridge trickle in opposite directions: rivulets flowing eastward arrive in the Atlantic Ocean; those going west into the Pacific.

The E.G.White writings also constitute a Great Divide, because they are an offense to the proud, but a godsend to the meek. This dividing function of truth is described in many ways in the Bible. Concerning Christ it was said, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel; and for a sign to be opposed . . . that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:34-35 NASB. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Matthew 21:44. "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." Proverbs 8:35-36

These texts are also applicable to the testimony of Jesus, which has already caused many to fall and many to rise. Nothing is plainer than the truth that our attitude to these writings will decide our eternal destinies. Let every soul take the right attitude. Believe no man's word for it. Examine these books for yourself. Read them prayerfully and ask yourself, Will I stumble over these messages or will they help me to rise to a higher spiritual plane?

David Lin
November 10, 1982

Chapter 20

ON VAN DOLSON'S LETTER

A letter written by L.R. Van Dolson to Elders N.C. Wilson and Enoch Oliveira, dated December 28, 1982, regarding the Adult Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of 1983, has come to my attention, and I venture to make the following comments: Van Dolson asserts that "Most of the criticism we are receiving is coming as a result of a paper published by Vance Farrel [sic]. He objects to the first quarter, 1983 quarterly authored by Norman Gulley on the grounds that it takes a different position from the one he holds as to the nature of Christ, and that it reflects the Ford position in emphasizing the substitutionary nature of the atonement and downgrading Christ's work in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary."

Van Dolson assumes a neutral stance, not committing himself as to the correctness of Ferrell's objections, nor telling us what he himself believes respecting the nature of Christ. He regards Ferrell's view merely as one aspect of a "full picture," does not agree that Gulley is in error, but only admits that "It is true that he takes a position that can be seen as one-sided."

"However," Van Dolson continues, "the department had been receiving complaints that we did not emphasize this aspect enough. Thus it was felt that the emphasis in this quarterly might help give the full picture and counteract what has been perceived as an intention to downgrade this aspect of the atonement. Later quarterlies will in turn provide more emphasis on the need for obedience and the mediatorial and sanctuary ministry of Christ."

Thus Van Dolson thinks that the Sabbath School Department has done the right thing in presenting an "aspect" of the atonement that had not received sufficient emphasis in the past, and will try in the future to satisfy Ferrell's demand by providing more emphasis on the other "aspect."

This letter is clearly an attempt to soft-pedal the issue. For we are faced not with a question of emphasis on two aspects of a truth, but with a conflict between truth and error. Gulley is attempting to introduce a counterfeit gospel. In posing as a moderator trying to please both sides, Van Dolson is virtually abetting an attempt of the Fordites, first to mingle truth with error, and finally to supplant truth with error.

This attitude of a department head in the General Conference causes much concern. His remarks about the book editors at the Review also cause perplexity. He says that "they would not always recognize some of the variants in theology that might show up." Are Fordian errors mere "variants in theology," so hard to recognize? Do the book editors agree that they did not recognize the errors in Gulley's book?

No, we believe the problem is not one of recognition, but of espousal. Our book editors are well-trained scholars, not muddle-headed judges. My apprehension is that they passed Gulley's book, not because they failed to detect any "variants in theology," but because they agree with Gulley's position. Otherwise they must confess that they are muddle-headed judges. The fact that Van Dolson speaks of Ferrell's position merely as opposed to Gulley's, and makes no effort to ascertain who is right, appears on the surface to be a neutral stance, but in effect he has rejected Ferrell's position in favor of Gulley's, because he makes no move to recall the Sabbath school quarterlies and Gulley's book or to send out any material to counteract its error, but only promises to switch the emphasis in future publications. But as we have said, it is not simply a matter of emphasis.

In the process of editing the Sabbath school lessons, Van Dolson says, he "consulted with Norman about modifying some of the positions that we recognized could lead to some misunderstanding. For instance, on page 22 of Lesson 3 and the parts that follow he had taken a clear prelapsarian position on the nature of Christ. He agreed to

modify it to give equal weight to all positions involved as is evidenced on p. 22." The result of this "modifying" is a mingling of truth and error. The center third of p. 22 gives quotations from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books; the lower third gives the view on the nature of Christ. Thus our Sabbath School Department presents a "modified" prelapsarian position as having equal weight with the postlapsarian position of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books. This tactic is actually an attempt to place error on equal footing with truth.

When Champions Are Few

Yet the roots of our trouble lie deeper. In 1957 the appearance of Questions on Doctrine and Andreasen's effort to combat its false teaching on the nature of Christ comprised the first round in our fight with error. Our leaders reprimanded Andreasen and did nothing to correct the error. Then Ralph Larson wrote his paper, "The Fraud of the Unfallen Nature," in which he pointed out that the authors of Questions on Doctrine quoted Ellen G. White in such a way as to make her say the opposite of what she intended. The evidence he presented was convincing, yet nothing was done. Now Ferrell strikes the gong for the third round. Gulley steps into the ring with the odds in his favor. Since the error in Questions on Doctrine remains uncorrected, he can state, I am taking the official Adventist position on the nature of Christ. And our leaders can but nod in silent assent. So Van Dolson is absolved from responsibility in the matter, for truth and error were "officially" mingled long before he came into office.

We Must Save Face

Adventists are noted for their face-saving ability. Des Ford plays up the fact that the doctrine of the investigative judgment has been dubbed "the greatest face-saving device in history." Yet we are hanging on to this device for dear life, because we believe it is a part of God's soul-saving device. But there are times when there is no way to save face. There are also times when to save face will not do. For instance, no amount of face saving will turn the Davenport fiasco into anything but a face-loser. In like manner, simply to sit tight and pretend that all is well with us, or to reprimand Andreasen, Larson, and Ferrell, will not save us any face after we have shamefully manipulated Ellen G. White statements to suit the tastes of Barnhouse and Martin. The only honorable course is to take a decided stand in identifying truth and error, then confess and correct our mistakes. But such a courageous step calls for earnest, humble prayer and Bible study. That is how our work began, and that is the only way it can be finished.

The Fruitage of Taking Wrong Counsel

Rehoboam's failure is an example of following wrong counsel. The advice of young upstarts (to uphold his kingly dignity) pleased his ego, so he rejected the wise counsel of "old fogies" (to face the facts and right past wrongs). As a result, he lost ten tribes. Today we too are reaping the fruitage of taking wrong counsel. About a century ago we were already influenced by worldly policies. The servant of the Lord alerted us to it in these words:

Students are sent from great distances to attend the college at Battle Creek, for the very purpose of receiving instruction from the lectures on Bible subjects. But for one or two years past, there has been an effort to mold our schools after other colleges. When this is done, we can give no encouragement to parents to send their children to Battle Creek College. Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 21

Some may urge that if religious teaching is to be made prominent, our school will become unpopular; that those who are not of our faith will not patronize the college. Very well, then let them go to other colleges. . . .

If worldly influence is to bear sway in our school, then sell it out to worldlings, and let them take the entire control; and those who have invested their means in that institution will establish another school, to be conducted, not upon the plan of popular

schools nor according to the desires of principal and teachers, but upon the plan which God has specified.

In the name of my Master I entreat all who stand in responsible positions in that school to be men of God. When the Lord requires us to be distinct and peculiar, how can we crave popularity or seek to imitate the customs and practices of the world?"

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 25-26

In those early days there was already an effort to mold our schools after worldly models. That effort has prevailed, and we are reaping its results. A generation of teachers, editors, writers, and ministers turned out by schools molded after worldly models, are remolding the whole church. About 40 years ago we had only to contend with the counterfeit gospel in other denominations; now we are fighting it in our own ranks. In those days it was the enemy who sowed tares in our field. Now we ourselves are sowing tares, and shall certainly reap what we sow.

A Ray of Hope

But it shall be known that there is a God in Israel. He has not relinquished His leadership. We see signs of spiritual vitality among us. It is evident in a wide-awake and articulate laity. In the very schools worst affected by worldly influences we see consecrated young people raising their voices in protest against professors teaching error. In the student testimonials published in the Collegedale Tidings and the PUC Papers we hear the ring of truth--indeed, we hear the voice of stern rebuke coming as it were from the very throne of God. We thank God for these courageous youth. In them we see hope ahead.

How is it that students studying under skeptic professors are able to detect the errors propagated by them? Where did these youth get such keen perception? Here is the answer: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." The presence of the Holy Spirit with the faithful--be they young or old--guarantees that they will see things as God sees them and be strong to combat error. The Holy Spirit instructs us through the Testimonies, and it is these writings which have alerted our youth and given them wisdom far excelling that of worldly theologians. We praise and thank God for this gift.

It is also these writings which teach all our people to identify error. In contrast to the editors who Van Dolson says "would not always recognize some of the variants in theology that might show up," many souls who live close to God are quick to detect false doctrine. This trait is unique among Seventh-day Adventists. Ever since the inception of our movement our task has been to make every member a Bible student and a reader of the Testimonies. As a result we have a host of "lay theologians."

In fact theology was never meant to be an "expert" discipline. God never intended that the gospel truth should be the exclusive possession of a sophisticated elite. He never told His prophets to use pompous language. On the contrary, the Old Testament Scriptures employ a very limited vocabulary and sentences of simple construction. The New Testament Scriptures were written in the Greek Koin., the language of the common people, because God's Word must reach every humble soul. But some scholars imagine themselves to be authorities in faith and doctrine, when their prayer life and moral practice often fall behind that of some of the laity. Their very assumption of superior wisdom exposes their folly, for it is contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Carpenter of Nazareth. Today God already has a people educated according to His definition of education--they possess a practical knowledge of His Word. For Heaven values a man not according to his academic awards, but according to his capacity to know and to love God.

Today the people whom God has educated through His testimonies are asserting their prerogatives. They are rising up in protest against the errors taught by false

teachers. This fact brings us to the matter of church leadership. Is it enough for a leader to halt between two opinions and to act merely as a moderator between them? Is it right in every crisis to think first of how we can maintain our dignity as leaders and try to save face by refusing to confess past wrongs? Indeed, it would be humiliating to admit that the Adult Sabbath School Lessons contain the teachings of an officially condemned apostate. Yet that is a stark fact. If we take no effective measures and continue to let matters slide, we shall only serve the cause of error and prepare the way for its deeper intrusion.

Conviction and Initiative

To lead God's people effectively, His servants must be men of strong convictions based on a living faith in the Word of God. They must know whom and what they believe and be bold in the defense of truth. Thus they will always retain the initiative in selecting topics for emphasis and not be swayed by conflicting demands from the field. A leader must always be the head, not the tail to be wagged by the body. Ford still has a strong following among our workers and laity. They are most aggressive, and form a lobby which creates a rumpus out of proportion to their numbers. On the other hand, since faithful commandment keepers seem less inclined to agitate, leaders need sanctified judgment in weighing conflicting opinions.

Our department heads and editors must work carefully to prevent Fordites from using our publications to disseminate their errors. The Ford accent is so strong in Gulley's book that no one in the know can mistake it, and still it was freely circulated. Even the obvious mistake on page 53, paragraph 10 of the quarterly was not detected. It says that Christ's resurrected body was still "flesh and blood." It should be "flesh and bones." For "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 15:50

Study for Survival

"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" We must never forget that our movement began in the Spirit--in earnest prayer and Bible study extending into early morning hours. The Holy Spirit was with us in that day of small things. We exist for only one purpose: to spread the truths committed to us by the Holy Spirit. If we permit these truths to be adulterated and we no longer obey them, we forfeit the reason for our existence. Obedience to God is a vital part of our message. If Christ's obedience is a substitute for ours, our obedience becomes inconsequential, and we ask, "Why be so strict about Sabbathkeeping and tithe paying?" The stories told by Ferrell of two young couples who once rejoiced in the Advent message and later embraced the "New Theology" and lost their hold on God will be repeated on a large scale if this heresy continues to spread, and tithe payments will shrink in proportion. Our economic structure stands or falls with the spiritual.

That's why we must pray and study. The chapter "Modern Revivals" in *The Great Controversy*, 461, analyzes the substance of the "New Theology," which really isn't new at all. Long before Des Ford and Norman Gulley were born, popular churches preached it everywhere, and Ellen White warned us against it: "Only believe," say they, "and the blessing is yours." No further effort on the part of the receiver is supposed to be required. . . .

The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine. *The Great Controversy*, 471

That is the essence of the old error in the "New Theology" and so-called "mainstream Christianity."

Children's Voices

As we dally with this "New Theology," Satan is stealing a march on us. Events are converging toward the final crisis. Then this prophecy will be fulfilled:

As the children sang in the temple courts, "Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," so in these last days, children's voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world. When heavenly intelligences see that men are no longer permitted to present the truth, the Spirit of God will come upon the children, and they will do a work in the proclamation of the truth which the older workers cannot do, because their way will be hedged up.

Our church schools are ordained by God to prepare the children for this great work. Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 176

We gather hope and courage from these words. We pray God to help us strengthen this our second line of defense. May all our church school teachers heed these words:

To train the young to become true soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most noble work ever given to man. . . . Teachers who study the word of God as it should be studied will know something of the value of the souls under their care, and from them the children will receive a true Christian education.

In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world, that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church. Ibid., 166-167

The defenses in many of our colleges and universities are crumbling under the attacks of skepticism and heresy, and now our Sabbath School Department is in danger, all because we failed to follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit. Pray God to guard our younger children against this influence.

David Lin

January 24, 1983

Chapter 21

COMPROMISE WITH ERROR

UNLIKE the "alpha" apostasy, the "omega" is taking on a new turn. Reports say that "Good News Unlimited" is drawing in a sizable net, and the General Conference is worried. In 1980, after Des Ford was defrocked, President Wilson assured us that tithes were still flowing in regularly, and there was no cause for alarm. But developments have not been as expected. Ford continues to draw away our people, so the General Conference hopes to patch up relations with him.

Careful and Troubled About Many Things

Conditions existing in the General Conference headquarters today make me think of the hectic days in 1951, when I was secretary of the China Division and new problems plagued its executive committee in rapid succession. We were a group of men dazed by unending committee sessions. We had little time to wait on our knees for divine guidance or to study what counsel could be found in the Testimonies. The result was the bungling of important matters.

Looking further back in history, we recall how Joshua, the divinely appointed successor to Moses, once made a mistake because he failed to "enquire of the Lord." He was fooled by the crafty Gibeonites and concluded an ill-advised pact with them. Today most loyal Adventists have faith in church leadership, and can sincerely say to them, "According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto you: only the Lord thy God be with you, as He was with Moses." Yet the fact remains that when our modern Joshuas make a wrong move, the whole constituency is bound to feel its effects. When some well-meaning souls say we should not criticize our leaders--I would say that to help our leaders see things clearly and avoid serious mistakes is our sacred duty. We take no delight in criticizing anyone, but we do feel a deep concern for the welfare of our cause, and should speak up, praying that God will give clear minds and strong hearts to all who have something to do in leading the Advent movement. It is not right to stand by idly when the church is heading for disaster.

Criterion for Self-Analysis

What is the proper criterion for evaluating our work as a people? We have been in the habit of looking at our rate of growth and tithe and mission offerings, but have not been much concerned with our standing before God. When PREXAD recommended the withdrawal of Des Ford's credentials, they were chiefly concerned over the fact that he was proving to be a divisive factor. It was believed that his influence could be arrested by removing him from the ministry. This move provoked such a screech and howl of protest from Ford sympathizers that the General Conference was hesitant to follow up with a thoroughgoing purge, for it was seen that we had cut off only the head of a hydra, after which a plurality of heads emerged. Now, two years later, we find ourselves on the defensive and ready to parley again with this foe who has continued to pursue his divisive activities and threatens to draw away more than "the third part of the stars of heaven."

Our decision in 1980 to dismiss Ford, and our recent move again to bargain with him, both sprang from a materialistic philosophy in operating a church enterprise and evaluating our success in terms of membership growth and financial income. We first imagined that with Ford gone, we could preserve our unity and end the dispute over the sanctuary doctrine. Now we feel we must sit down again and negotiate, because we hope it will keep more of our people from flocking to the Good News Unlimited, and funds from being bypassed into Ford's coffers. But we have been working by a wrong standard of values.

Truth Paramount

If there is one word that can epitomize the life and work of our Lord, it is "truth." He declared Himself to be the Truth, and that He came to bear witness to the truth. See John 14:6; 18:37. He told the people that they would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. He prayed that we should be sanctified by the truth--God's word. See John 8:32; 17:17. This one term can also serve to epitomize the work of God's own people. We rightly call our beliefs "the truth," because we have examined the evidences and are convinced of the fact that He who is the Truth initiated this movement and will carry us through to the end. If we were not so convinced, we would not have cast in our lots to begin with. And now the only safe and sure way to work is to continue making truth paramount. All else must be made secondary and tributary. If we lose sight of this primary object and keep our eyes on our numbers and tithe receipts, making them the index of our prosperity, and stand ready to compromise truth for the sake of peace and unity, we will find ourselves in a dangerous position.

Here is the primary issue: we stand or fall with the truth. If we hold on to the truth which the Lord has committed to us, refusing to yield one inch of ground, He will remain with us, and we will make it to the kingdom, no matter how many heartaches and disappointments we may still have to go through. But if we lose our devotion to the truth and permit strangers to come in and scatter our jewels amid a heap of rubbish, how shall we render an account to Him who has made us His trustees?

The First Defection

It is indeed discouraging to see so many Adventists attracted by the Good News Unlimited. But if we orientate ourselves properly, we won't get panicky, much less imagine we might keep these members by "enhancing relationships" with Des Ford. Study that first defection in Galilee. Jesus had reached the peak of popularity, and the disciples, led by the sagacious son of Iscariot, took full advantage of the enthusiasm of the people who had just been fed, by agitating for a political uprising--to hail Jesus as the long-expected Messiah. If Jesus permitted Himself to be carried away by that wave of political fervor, His life mission would have been defeated. The crisis called for resolute action. He peremptorily ordered the disciples to depart and the multitude to disperse. Jesus resisted the temptation to be a popular demagogue. He had one prime purpose:

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world: that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. John 18:37

Here is an important lesson for our leaders. Like Jesus, we must never lose sight of our divine commission: to bear witness to the truth of the three angels' messages. So long as we keep our eyes on this primary task, what may appear (to Judas-like elements) to be a wonderful chance to gain popularity will be spurned as a threat to the successful prosecution of our work. It was to teach this lesson that Jesus dashed the ambitious hopes of His disciples again and again. The morning following that disappointment, many of the people who had partaken of the loaves and fishes came again to Jesus. Fresh hopes were again kindled in the disciples' breasts. Their Master's popularity apparently remained unimpaired, despite His "lack" of political acumen in having failed to make hay while the sun shone. Even now, if He would rally the scattered supporters, He could still win the day.

But another disappointment awaited the disciples. Jesus not only failed to capitalize on His popularity, but also seemed bent on offending His admirers. He bluntly told them that they had come just for more loaves and fishes, which He now refused to give them. Then He dwelt at length on the theme of the Bread of Life, of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. People became exasperated and said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Finally Christ clarified His theme by saying, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit,

and they are life." This declaration repulsed people. They saw they could expect no more material benefits from this stranger. Then "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Thus in one day, a following of five thousand dwindled to twelve. And even of the twelve not all were sure they wanted to follow Jesus all the way. Jesus kept the door open and asked, "Will ye also go away?"

"Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" By this He meant to say, Peter, you have spoken well, but not for all twelve. One disagrees with you, though he has not spoken.

Thus we have before us the mind of Jesus and the mind of Judas. One stands for truth, the other yearns for popularity. Today the Judas mentality prevails among the worldly churches: streamline the gospel to give it popular appeal; make Christianity an easy religion. This tactic is also the genius of Desmond Ford. We should not, says he, make people worry about the judgment. We should say, "Eternal life is yours for the asking. So take it easy and enjoy yourselves. It is easier to be saved than to be lost. Widen the narrow path into a six-lane freeway!" That is Fordism in a nutshell.

Moreover, Ford stakes the success of his "new theology" on popular scholastic support. He claims that a large number of influential Adventist scholars agree with his teachings. Note that he appeals to his peers, not to the Word of God or to the Testimonies of His Spirit. Who are the peers to whom Ford appeals? They are men steeped in the wisdom of this world. But mark you: "the world by wisdom knew not God." In Paul's day, the theme of Christ crucified was to the Greeks foolishness. Now the doctrine of the two apartments and the investigative judgment is foolishness to the wise theologians of our day. "But unto them which are called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 1:23-24. The everlasting gospel was not designed to provide comfortable passage to heaven. No, it was designed to prick the hearts of all who hear it and call them to repentance. But Ford proposes to remove the pricks.

Receive Him Not

Needless to say, the overtures the General Conference brethren are making to "enhance relations" with Ford and arrive at a "better understanding of each other's doctrinal positions" are motivated not by a desire to uphold the truth, but to win popularity. Instead of challenging every member with the question, "Will you also go away?" we are crying to the departing multitude, "Wait, don't go away. Let's talk it over and work out a compromise."

The attempt to hold discussions for a "better understanding" leaves no one guessing as to the true intentions of the men who urged such a step. It is a virtual truce with the devil--the first step toward capitulation. In God's name let us cry out: Stop it before you pull us all into the abyss! Do you remember the instruction the Lord gave to Ellen White in 1903 regarding a man who was already confirmed in his rebellion? It was to have no interview with him. See A.L.White, EGW, Early Elmshaven Years, 241. We have a very good understanding of Ford's doctrinal positions, and he cannot possibly understand our positions any better. To work out a compromise with him will be tantamount to a betrayal of the truth. The only safe course to follow is to obey God's orders:

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 2 John 10-11

Whoever Is Fearful and Afraid

To seek peace with the enemy is an act of cowardice, an admission of defeat. When we see Des Ford enjoying popular support and worldly recognition, are we fearful that it

might result in an avalanche of defections? No, not if we are determined to stand with the One with whom are the words of eternal life. Christ can accomplish more with twelve men who love the truth than He can with 5000 who follow Him just for the loaves and fishes. Let the 5000 go, as long as the twelve remain. In Gideon's day those who left him because of cowardice numbered 37,100. Only 300 brave souls remained. God purposely made it so when He said to Gideon:

The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. Judges 7:2-3

Did Gideon's heart sink when he saw those thousands turn their backs on him? Perhaps, but he knew it was God's doing, and so long as he obeyed God, God would be responsible for the outcome. Again we say to all His servants, Don't lose your nerve when you see fellow Adventists falling for Fordism. Only make sure you obey God and have the truth.

Our Broken Sword

We must make sure we have the truth and nothing but the truth. Let us correct the doctrinal errors in our publications and thus repair our broken sword. Let us beware the Ford sympathizers and fifth columnists among us who have a way of engineering measures to receive him into our house and bid him Godspeed. Let us intensify our efforts to defend the truth and refute error, not to mingle the two and muddle up the issue. Our failure to correct the false teachings on the nature of Christ as published in Questions on Doctrine places us at a disadvantage. Unless we make the correction, we are in no position to talk with anybody on doctrinal questions. Only when we take our stand on a consistent platform of truth and are united on it, can we hope to carry our movement to a victorious consummation.

Our only guarantee of success is "God with us." And the secret for securing His presence is to love and obey the truth. We must earnestly long for God's presence as did Moses of old, who prayed:

If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. Exodus 33:15-16

So must every leader of God's people plead for His presence. However, to be sure of His presence we must obey His voice as heard in the testimonies of His Spirit. Ancient Israel lost their peculiarity when they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. Psalm 78:58-61

The history of Israel is being repeated today. They wanted to be like the nations around them; in like manner we are following the fashions of the day, hankering after the status of a big denomination, putting emphasis on quantity instead of quality, popularity instead of peculiarity. Can God be with us in our disregard of His will?

Friend or Enemy?

We need to know who are our friends and who are our foes. It would be disastrous to befriend our enemies and attack our friends. That was what Ahab did when he called Elijah a troubler of Israel and Ben-Hadad his brother. Some leading workers in Australia once committed this mistake by banning anti-Ford ministers from our pulpits and inviting anti-Adventist speaker Geoffrey Paxton to address our congregations. Today we are repeating the same mistake by sitting down to parley with Ford. If we

continue in this direction, Fordites will eventually control the General Conference, and all who will not line up will be expelled as lunatics. That will be the sure result of courting worldly favor. Then our theologians will be striving not to enter the strait gate, but to remove the stigma of "theological illiteracy." Our leaders will stretch and strain to hobnob with the great ones of earth. Since Ford, Rea, and Company have succeeded in winning public acclaim by denouncing Adventism, then we too can be sure of worldly success by following suit. Even now some of our leading men respect their bravado, treat them as our guests and want to patch up past differences.

Prognosis

The gravity of the situation forebodes a heart-rending sequel. The very fact that the Eva-Ford talks were even placed on the agenda, not to say that they were passed by the General Conference Committee, already spells defeat for the anti-Ford forces as far as human factors are concerned. It takes no prophet to foresee serious developments ahead. What puzzles many observers is: How can our leading brethren consider Desmond Ford an amenable party to negotiations on doctrine when he has fully unmasked his true self by openly taking his stand with Walter Rea in a TV program downgrading Seventh-day Adventist beliefs? Moreover, he once gave himself out as having counted on the effect of Rea's White Lie to compel the General Conference to agree to a parley.

What is more alarming is that certain indications reveal that a number of men in the General Conference are working to prepare the way for a dramatic about-face to be effected through the Eva-Ford talks. Forces are at work to put Ford back in position which may possibly be more influential than the one he left. The Adult Sabbath School Quarterly for the first quarter, 1983, is giving our people a fair sampling of Ford's teachings: Emphasis on the "finished" work at the cross; negative remarks on the investigative judgment; words attacking "legalists" and comparing them to the builders of Babel, and so on. All these familiar Fordian thrusts amplified in Norman Gulley's book *Christ Our Substitute* comprise an artillery barrage to soften up the ground for a rapid advance by the Fordite forces.

Other publications will strike the same note. There will be a series of articles on justification by faith, condemning all who keep God's law as being "severed from Christ." Our people will also be conditioned to expect "change." It will be an "advance step" in understanding the Bible more fully. When the majority accept this "new light," it will be wrong to oppose it, for that would create dissensions and difficulties. Ellen White will be quoted in its support. They were able in 1956 to doctor her statements to teach the opposite of what she believed on the nature of Christ; they will do it again to buttress the "New Theology." But what she actually wrote on such apostasies is as follows:

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power which, without God, is worthless. Selected Messages Book 1, 204-205

It cannot happen, some say. But it is beginning to happen already. If the talks are not stopped, some day this summer we will see a document of agreement wherein many pleasant things will be said about unity in Christ, brotherly love, and reconciliation. Perhaps there will not be a declaration of any radical change in fundamental beliefs (for that would be an invitation for more trouble), but it will be understood that differences have been narrowed, and inasmuch as Desmond Ford has declared his full support for the Dallas Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, he will be reinstated as a Seventh-day Adventist minister in good standing. The Chinese call it Yin lang ru shi--"Ushering the wolf into the parlor." Though this is only a conjecture, developments point in that direction. We pray it will not happen. If it does, all who protest will be treated as trouble-makers.

The Eyes of the Lord Run to and Fro

Where will God be in all this? If it is true that His church is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard, then we may be sure He is not a mere spectator. But according to what we know of His doings in the past, God consistently gives free rein to human initiative. Yet He does not leave us without His guidance. To aid us in our warfare against the prince of darkness, God gives us ample instructions in His written Word, resorting to direct intervention only when necessary. In fact it is amazing to see how God restrains Himself in order to bring men's moral motivations into full play.

Take the case of Hezekiah. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him . . . and he rebelled against the king of Assyria."

Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah . . . sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah . . . 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord . . . at that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah . . . had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. 2 Kings 18:5-16

The Bible makes no comment about Hezekiah's rebelling against Assyria. Neither does it say whether his later submission was right. But we see a picture of a good king forced by circumstances to do a most shameful thing--scraping the gold off God's temple to appease an idolatrous power. If we were living in those days, we would have cried, "Ichabod! Have we come to this?" But the amazing thing is, God remained silent. As far as the record goes, Isaiah had no message for the king. What was God waiting for? He was waiting for things to come to a head. He wanted Hezekiah to learn a much-needed lesson: that it is useless to appease the enemy at God's expense. As things developed, Hezekiah learned to his utter remorse that all the silver and gold robbed from God failed to bring peace--the enemy was not half satisfied. Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh to demand complete surrender. When Hezekiah tore his garments and prostrated himself before God in humble repentance, casting himself entirely on His mercy, then only did God intervene--then only did He send Isaiah with a message of courage and command His angel to destroy the Assyrian wolf.

We are assured that "the Lord is perfectly able to take care of His cause." Today, as the adversary steps up his activities against us, God has given us a maximum of specific instructions in the Testimonies of His Spirit. With regard to the present theological crisis, His order is, "Meet it!" Not to dillydally with error and work out a compromise. As in the days of Hezekiah, God allows matters to come to a head, patiently waiting to see what every one of us, as well as our leaders, will do in this crisis. If we think we can appease the enemy by scraping the gold from off the sanctuary, or

even scrap it altogether (for some have lost all sense of the sacredness of this precious truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit), perhaps God will permit us to go that far and see what we will get for it. To be sure, Ford will not rest content. He will continue to work for the complete dissolution of the remnant church. Will we meekly submit? Or will we rend our hearts and cast ourselves on the mercy of God in humble repentance? If we do that, God will work wonders for us. Like Peter (who first "went out and wept bitterly") at Pentecost, we will see 3000 souls won in one day to fill the place of the those who have defected.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. 2 Chronicles 16:9

David Lin February 15, 1983

Chapter 22

SIN AND TRESPASS OFFERING

THE Bible speaks of sins of ignorance, sins of human weakness, and sins of presumption or defiance. The first category is committed unintentionally, the second knowingly, and the third deliberately.

The sin offering described in Leviticus 4, as distinguished from that of Leviticus 16, is for sins of ignorance, but no specific offenses are cited. The trespass offering described in Leviticus 5 and 6 is for sins of human weakness, of which concrete cases of false oaths, theft, and deception are given. As for the third category, we read: But any person who sins deliberately, whether he is a native or a foreigner, is guilty of treating the Lord with contempt, and he shall be put to death, because he has rejected what the Lord said and has deliberately broken one of His commands. He is responsible for his own death. Numbers 15:30-31 TEV

Sins of Ignorance

Seventh-day Adventists may think that they cannot break the Decalogue ignorantly. That is not always so. We can break the Sabbath ignorantly as a result of failing to keep track of the days of the week when we are on vacation. Some are in the habit of using modified profanities, such as "Oh dear!" which comes from the French "Oh Dieu" (O God), and thus break the third commandment ignorantly. Catholics break the second commandment ignorantly when they bow down to images. Cannibals and headhunters break the sixth commandment without knowing it. These sins, committed in ignorance, are nonetheless true sins in God's sight, and He requires a sin offering, which varies according to the four ranks of sinners. These offerings are all types of Christ dying for a world of "ignorant" sinners.

Sins of Human Weakness

When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery, or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him, or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full, and add to it one-fifth more. . . . Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the Lord, a ram without defect from the flock. Leviticus 6:2-6 NASB. Note "trespass" is rendered "guilt."

The trespass offering covers sins involving the third, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments. They are not sins of ignorance, but of human weakness. All misappropriated property must be returned to the owner plus interest, and then a trespass offering must be brought to the priest. It is not a substitute for restitution, neither does restitution free the offender from the obligation to bring an offering.

Note in Leviticus 5 and 6 that apart from defilement by the carcasses of unclean men and animals, the sins listed are all manifestations of covetousness and other wrong acts prompted by it, such as lying and false swearing. Taking our cue from the truth that "the love of money is the root of all evil," (1 Timothy 6:10), we may proceed to discover the connection of this root with all the sins forbidden in the Decalogue.

Concerning the first and second commandments we read, "No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth . . . covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:4

The third commandment is broken by the false oath, as stated in Leviticus 5--often in connection with money matters.

The fourth commandment is often broken knowingly by believers who feel they cannot make a living without working on Saturdays. In the last analysis, they would rather have an extra day's wages than God's Sabbath blessing. In principle they are little better than the man who betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver.

In Matthew 15 Jesus pointed out the sin of them who instituted "Corban" to release men from their obligation to support their parents. Again it is that "root of all evil" at work. Murder and adultery are more or less related to the love of money, although it was not so in King David's case, which we shall study later.

"Token" Sins

In the light of the foregoing, I suggest we call the sins listed in Leviticus 5 and 6 "token" sins, because they are related to all other sins and therefore representative of them. They can be called "token" sins also on the force of the truth that "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. There are also practical reasons for limiting the trespass offering to the offenses listed in Leviticus 5 and 6.

(1) These sins are never committed in ignorance, nor out of defiance to divine authority, but purely out of greed for material gain. So they best represent all sins committed from human weakness.

(2) Owing to the provision for restitution (plus interest) of ill-gotten gain, the trespass offering is guarded against abuse--from being regarded as a license for sinning, which would be the case if, for example, an offering were required for adultery.

(3) The Levitical code was at the same time a criminal and civil code under a theocratic system. The provision for restitution was actually a part of the criminal code, while the offering of the ram was the ceremonial requirement. But in the case of murder and adultery, the criminal code demanded the life of the offender, so no ceremonial performance was required. King David prayed, "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:16, 17

Here we come to the question of David and the woman in John 8. Since adultery can be forgiven without an offering, what point is there in requiring an offering for false oaths, theft and deception? The answer would be, in light of what we have studied: adultery cannot be forgiven without an offering in reality. In the daily service of Levitical object lessons, this and other sins committed knowingly are betokened by the less heinous sins. We must keep in mind that the sin and trespass offerings are types of Christ's work of mediation in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and He assures us that "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Matthew 12:31

In actuality therefore, the real trespass offering, Jesus Christ, has been sacrificed to cover all sins committed knowingly and repented of sincerely, as did David and the woman of John 8. But in the figurative trespass offering, the token sins should be recognized as representing all other sins for which the life of the offender is demanded by the criminal law. If we do not recognize this fact and insist on strict correspondence of type with antitype, and say that Christ's blood is effectual for only the four sins mentioned, then the Levitical code would be incomplete--seriously deficient in failing to provide for the forgiveness of the grosser crimes.

In support of this "token" idea, there is another text which apparently corroborates Leviticus 5 and 6 in citing theft and false swearing to betoken violation of both tables of the Decalogue. It reads:

I see a flying roll. . . . Then said he unto me, this is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to

it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. Zechariah 5:2-4

Sins of Presumption

Numbers 15 begins with a resum, of the sin offering covering sins of ignorance. Then it says explicitly that he who sins deliberately "shall be utterly cut off." In a word, no sacrifice can atone for sins of presumption, which is literally, "with a high hand" (rendered "defiantly" in the NIV and NASB, and "deliberately" in the TEV). We are reminded of this passage:

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Hebrews 10:26-27

Sin may be compared to a tree. Starting from the top down, the twigs and branches are sins of ignorance; the trunk represents sins of human weakness, and the root willful and deliberate sins. Leviticus 5 and 6 deal mainly with sins of human weakness, but also with sins of ignorance such as in Leviticus 5:15-19, which also call for trespass offerings. Some call these borderline cases "sin-trespass offerings." They teach us that unintentional sins can develop into sins of human weakness, and the latter may develop into sins of presumption. In the KJV, various forms of the Hebrew roots zed and zud are rendered "presumptuous," "presumptuously" 5 times, "proudly" 4 times, and "proud" 12 times. Here we come to where Satan started--the basic sin of rebellion against God.

All four commandments in the first table can be violated ignorantly, or knowingly, or deliberately. The token sin of swearing falsely refers only to the act of taking false oaths, which constitutes a knowing violation of the third commandment. A deliberate violation would be blasphemy, which receives the death sentence. An example is given in the youth stoned to death in Leviticus 24:10-16.

Judging Our Own Sins

When we learn to regard sin as God regards it, we should be better able to examine ourselves. We will pray, "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Psalm 19:13

Many sincere Christians are apprehensive when they read Hebrews 10:26-27 (quoted above), for fear they have committed the unpardonable sin. The fact that they are worried proves that they are not yet in the frame of mind of a presumptuous, deliberate sinner. For whoever commits the unpardonable sin is so proud that he feels no need of forgiveness. Numbers gives two examples: the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath, and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The first case indicates that the man probably left part of his manna uncooked on Friday and gathered sticks on the next day to let all know that he was going to cook on the Sabbath in defiance of God's instruction, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." Exodus 35:2. God added this regulation because (1) in those days of no matches, kindling a fire was a laborious process, (2) God performed a miracle every week to keep the manna from spoiling overnight, so He told them to cook their Sabbath food on Friday, and (3) since daytime in the Sinai desert is always warm, they needed no fire. Now if the man who wanted a fire on Sabbath was not moved by contempt of God's law, he could have kept an extra supply of sticks on Friday to kindle a fire secretly in his tent on Sabbath. But no, he would gather sticks openly to make public his defiance. This defiance is the true nature of the case, which is quite different from the thoughtless misdemeanor some people imagine it to be.

Unless he is an apostate, the average Seventh-day Adventist will not commit sins of presumption, for which there is no forgiveness. But all of us commit sins sometimes unintentionally, and often knowingly, out of human weakness. We seldom if ever keep a perfect Sabbath. Our thoughts will sometimes wander into forbidden paths even when we are singing praises to God in church. The ancient rabbis used to say that as soon as Israel keeps one Sabbath perfectly, God will come to redeem His people. We may sometimes excuse ourselves for such failures, yet the sin and trespass offerings teach us that all unintentional as well as known sins are included in the words, "the wages of sin is death." These sins which we think are not so serious, when placed on our Sin-bearer, the Son of God, caused Him to feel the pangs of the second death. We need to be more careful to avoid these "minor" trespasses.

Professing Christians often sin knowingly like King David, while some will sin like King Saul. David was forgiven, but Saul was not. Why the difference? Judging by appearances, David's sin was more grievous, but his humble acceptance of Nathan's rebuke showed that he was capable of repentance, while Saul's lighter transgression was not truly repented of, due to a selfish, presumptuous heart. Even though he confessed, "I have sinned," yet he still thought of his personal honor, and said to Samuel, "yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." 1 Samuel 15:30. It was this pride in Saul's heart which belied his repentance, undermined the very basis for reconciliation with God, and led to his ultimate ruin.

David was a man "after God's own heart" not because he sinned less than others, but because he sincerely repented of his sins and remained humble through the remaining years of his life. During Absalom's rebellion, when David was ascending the Mount of Olives, Shimei of the house of Saul came to curse him. When Abishai wanted to slay him, David said, "Behold, my son seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." 2 Samuel 16:11-12

This chapter in his experience, when, under cruelest wrong and insult he shows himself to be humble, unselfish, generous and submissive, is one of the noblest in his whole experience. Never was the ruler of Israel more truly great in the sight of heaven than at this hour of his deepest outward humiliation. Patriarchs and Prophets, 738

When we apply the truths learned from the sin and trespass offerings to the lives of these two kings of Israel, we realize that so long as one's heart is submissive to God's every reproof and correction, the most wicked sinner can hope to be forgiven, but if one refuses to bow in humble repentance, the smallest sin can bar his way to heaven.

"I Hate Divorce"

All who continue to sin knowingly are in danger of sliding into presumptuous sin, because they are in the habit of excusing their own weakness, and presume on God's grace. These words of reproof are all too true: "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." Isaiah 43:24

Malachi, the prophet who wrote the last book in the Old Testament, points out two conscious sins of God's people of his generation, which are being repeated in ours:

This is another thing you do: You drown the Lord's altar with tears, weeping and wailing because He no longer accepts the offerings you bring Him. You ask why He no longer accepts them. It is because He knows you have broken your promise to the wife you married when you were young. She was your partner, and you have broken your promise to her, although you promised before God that you would be faithful to her. Didn't God make you one body and spirit with her? What was his purpose in this? It was that you should have children who are truly God's people. So make sure that none of

you breaks his promise to his wife. "I hate divorce" says the Lord God of Israel. "I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife." Malachi 2:13-16 TEV

These words of the prophet remind many Seventh-day Adventists that they have knowingly transgressed God's commandment, and God will not lightly regard it. Let all who are guilty examine themselves in the light of these words.

"Will a Man Cheat God?"

You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my Laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, "What must we do to turn back to you?" I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet you are cheating me. "How?" you ask. In the matter of tithes and offerings. A curse is on you because the whole nation is cheating me. Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of Heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. Malachi 3:6-10 TEV

Interestingly enough, these two sins mentioned by Malachi happen to be "token" sins mentioned in Leviticus 5 and 6--making false marriage vows and cheating God, which is far more serious than cheating man. Many Seventh-day Adventists commit these sins knowingly. How shall we stand in the judgment? Let every man examine himself.

The Mark of the Beast

There are Adventists in different parts of the world who believe the third angel's message, but fail to keep the Sabbath holy due to unfavorable circumstances. They quiet their consciences with various excuses, feeling that somehow God will forgive them. Will God indeed forgive? Well, they quote Christ's words to the disciples when they were dozing instead of praying: "The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak." True, the disciples were forgiven, but they also experienced a sad debacle when they might have stood the test if they had prayed.

But the weakness of the flesh will not always be forgiven. The hour of trial is near, when our human frailty, if untrained to lean on divine strength, will lead us to receive the mark of the beast. Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement. *The Great Controversy*, 621

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they choose the easy, popular side. *Ibid.*, 608

All who knowingly transgress God's law are in great peril. Repeated sinning dulls the conscience, giving one a feeling of false security--security in sin. Will the trespass offering always avail? No. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine. . . ." To receive the mark in one's hand means to yield to the demands of the Sunday law only in deed, not in thought. And that is all the devil requires. It will not be willful rebellion, but it will be a conscious sin for which there will be no more forgiveness!

There is an end to God's forbearance toward our knowing violation of His holy day. When? When the beast begins to enforce his mark. When that day comes, even though you may believe with all your heart that the seventh day is the Sabbath and

Jesus is your Saviour, if under pressure you violate His holy day ever so reluctantly and apologetically, you will surely perish. The third angel says so. Now is the time to prepare.

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands. Ibid., 621-622

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October 11, 1983

Chapter 23

THE TWO GOATS

ON the Day of Atonement, the most prominent animals involved are two goats, one of which is slain as a type of Christ. The other one, which is "for Azazel," is sent to the wilderness never to return. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary explains:

The pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch, for instance, characterizes Azazel as the one who "hath taught all unrighteousness on earth," ch 9:6, and adds that "the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin." ch 10:8. Azazel is also pictured as being bound hand and foot and being cast into an abyss somewhere in the desert, awaiting "the day of the great judgment" when "he shall be cast into the fire." ch 10:4, 6.

In the Bible, two familiar names of angels are Michael (Who is like God?) and Gabriel (might of God). In Isaiah 14:12 Helel (shining one) is the Hebrew name translated Lucifer (light-bearer) in the Latin and English Bibles, and Heosphoros (morning star) in the Septuagint. Since these three Hebrew names of angels all end with el (God), we may surmise that Azazel is another name of the fallen angel, being a combination of Azaz (strength) and el, meaning strength of God. It is synonymous with Gabriel, which means might of God. This similarity in meaning lends support to the supposition that Gabriel is the angel who filled the position vacated by Azazel when he was cast out of heaven.

Function of Sacrificial Blood

Some try to discredit the traditional Adventist teachings on the sanctuary by asserting that (1) sacrificial blood never defiles; it always cleanses, and (2) it is the "little horn" that defiles the sanctuary, not the sins of the saints.

Seventh-day Adventists do not teach that sacrificial blood defiles the sanctuary, but we do believe that the sanctuary is defiled by the "uncleanness of the children of Israel." Leviticus 16:16. The following text also deals with this problem:

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. . . . now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:23-28

Note these facts: (1) There are "patterns of things in the heavens," (2) "the heavenly things themselves" need to be purified, implying that they have been defiled, and (3) Christ was "offered to bear the sins of many," and will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Put Away Sin

We gather from the above that the heavenly sanctuary has been defiled by the sins of penitent sinners, and needs to be purified, which process was figuratively enacted on the Jewish Day of Atonement. Note that this purifying process is not a "washing," but a "bearing" process. The Day of Atonement ritual demonstrates how the defilement of sin is transferred from the sanctuary to the high priest by the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. The high priest bears the sin upon himself, then lays his hands on the live goat, and confesses "over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. . . . and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." Leviticus 16:21-22. Note that the "put" and the "bear" refer to the sins of the people symbolically transferred to the goat and then removed forever from the congregation. This object lesson shows how Christ will "put away" sin by finally transferring it to Satan, the author of all sin.

We see then that sacrificial blood functions as a vehicle for the transfer of sin to and from the sanctuary. Ellen White speaks of the defiling process thus:

Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain, and the blood or the flesh was carried by the priest into the holy place. Thus the sin was, in figure, transferred to the sanctuary. . . . The continual transfer of sins to the sanctuary, rendered a further work of ministration necessary in order for their removal. The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 263

Note that the verse says, "the blood or the flesh," indicating that either the blood or the flesh of the victim served to transfer the sins of the penitents into the sanctuary. The blood was sprinkled before the veil, or the flesh was eaten by the priests. But the animals whose blood was sprinkled were not eaten. We have this record in Leviticus 10:16-17: And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar . . . saying, Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? Behold, the blood of it was not brought within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place.

This passage indicates that the Lord employed two vehicles for the figurative transfer of sin--blood and flesh. If the blood of the sin offering was not sprinkled before the veil in the holy place, the priests were to eat its flesh and thereby bear the iniquity of the congregation.

After this function of the sacrificial blood and flesh is clarified, the problem of defiling and cleansing is easily solved. Since the blood and the flesh are used as vehicles to transfer sin, then every transfer involved both cleansing and defiling. That is, when sin is transferred from A to B, A is cleansed, and B is defiled. In the first stage of the atonement process, sin is transferred from the penitent (who is cleansed) to the sanctuary (which is defiled). In the second stage, sin is transferred from the sanctuary to the goat for Azazel. Thus the sanctuary is cleansed and the goat is defiled, or to be precise, the author of sin finally gets back what he originated. Strictly speaking, we note that sacrificial blood in itself does not defile, but the sin which it conveys defiles the recipient. On the other hand, sacrificial blood cleanses the object from which it removes sin.

Now this question: Since "the heavenly things themselves" should be purified "with better sacrifices than these," how have they been defiled? Here is Ellen White's explanation: As the sins of the people were anciently transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary by the blood of the sin offering, so our sins are, in fact, transferred to

the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. . . . When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of his people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 266-267

One may object to the idea that Christ's blood first defiles the sanctuary and then cleanses it. But that is not true. Christ's blood never defiles the sanctuary; it simply serves as a vehicle to convey the sins of penitent sinners to the sanctuary. It is their sins which defile it.

The Little Horn

Daniel 8:9-14 states that it is the little horn which defiles (treads under foot) the sanctuary. Some modernist interpreters say the little horn is Antiochus Epiphanes, and the sanctuary is the temple in Jerusalem. Thus, they believe, Daniel 8 was fulfilled in pre-Christian times, having nothing to do with our day. Desmond Ford tries to use this theory to overthrow the entire system of Adventist interpretation, divorcing the 2300 days from the 70 weeks. His interpretation is not original. Many modernists held it before him.

The traditional Adventist interpretation holds to the year-day principle in counting the 2300 days. Since the only starting point given in Daniel 8 and 9 is found in Daniel 9:25, therefore we begin the 2300 days in October, 457 B.C., and terminate them on October 22, 1844. Since the earthly Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the only sanctuary existing in 1844 was the heavenly one. This line of reasoning is sound, although the matter of the defiling of the sanctuary by the little horn has not been thoroughly explained to fit into the atonement scheme. Fordite scholars imagine they have found a flaw in the sanctuary doctrine by pointing out that the little horn is not related to Leviticus 16.

The contexts in the two chapters deal with two completely different situations. In Leviticus 16 the sanctuary issue is between God and His people Israel; but in Daniel 8 the sanctuary issue is between God and the apostate horn, the antichrist. See "The Pre-Advent Judgment" by Edward Heppenstall, Ministry, December 1981, 12

Identity of The Little Horn

Our first step in resolving this seeming discrepancy is to identify the little horn. Many papers have been written to disprove the Antiochus Epiphanes interpretation, so we need spend no time on that score. The overwhelming body of evidence identifies this horn of Daniel 8 with that of Daniel 7. It is the same papal antichrist described in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13:17-18. In studying Daniel 8:9-14 we must keep a full picture of the little horn in mind, and not confine ourselves to Daniel 8. The full picture presents this major antichristian power in all its aspects, and the basic point we should grasp is the identity of the little horn with Satan the dragon, who "gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. Our next step is to note how Inspiration recorded Satan's fall and rebellion under the names of his agents, the king of Babylon, (Isaiah 14:4-23), and the king of Tyre, (Ezekiel 28:1-19). Bible students have wondered why, in both these texts, God did not address Satan directly, but spoke to his representatives instead. I believe God's purpose was to help us identify the prime culprit in Daniel 8. The little horn, like the kings of Babylon and Tyre, is the devil in disguise.

Azazel Unmasked

Daniel 8:10-11 reads, "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host." If we adhere to the principle of explaining Scripture with Scripture, we should note that in the Bible "stars" are not used

to symbolize the saints. Daniel 12:3 says that "those who have taught many people to do what is right will shine like the stars for ever" (TEV), but it does not actually call them "stars." Revelation 22:16 says that Christ is "the bright and morning Star;" Lucifer was also a "morning star." Job 38:7 says that "the morning stars sang together." The star of Revelation 9:1 is obviously also an angel. Stars are consistently used in the Bible as figures of heavenly beings. Hence Daniel 8:14-15 is most significantly related to Revelation 12:4, where the dragon's tail "drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." We understand this verse to refer to Satan's work in drawing away a third of the angels. Note that the sentence in Revelation 12 is a parenthetical remark referring to an incident which happened at a much earlier time, interpolated here to identify the dragon. It provides a clue for us to understand Daniel 8:10 in the same way: "It cast down some of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them," refers to the incident mentioned in Revelation 12:4. The "stamping" and "treading under foot" are graphic expressions meaning to "defile" and "degrade," as in Hebrews 10:29, which speaks of him "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God."

Thus we see that the little horn is, like the kings of Babylon and Tyre, the devil in disguise. The next logical step is to identify Satan as Azazel of Leviticus 16:8. Here the connection between verses 13 and 14 in Daniel 8 becomes clear. The sins of the saints which defile the sanctuary are traced to the evil genius behind the little horn--Azazel, who appears as the prime culprit in the last judgment. And now we can better understand the question: "How long shall be the vision . . . to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" A paraphrase of this would be: "How long shall be the vision . . . to give both the sanctuary and the saints to be defiled by Azazel's sins?" And the answer in Daniel 8:14 is, "Unto 2300 days, then shall all defilement return to Azazel the author of all sin, and the sanctuary will be cleansed."

Desmond Ford sees no connection between Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16. The fact is, in Leviticus 16 is found the key (Azazel) to the proper interpretation of Daniel 8:14. The traditional Adventist doctrine on the sanctuary stands fully vindicated. It encompasses a wide range of vital truths, such as our knowledge of the origin of evil, our interpretation of other passages in Daniel and Revelation and our understanding of events connected with the millennium. Most important of all, it magnifies the work of our High Priest in shedding and offering His blood for the removal of sin. Like so many jewels arranged in a golden casket, these truths remain unsullied by the rubbish in which strangers have attempted to bury them. We praise God for this rich legacy of truth, and we can say with fullest assurance, "We have the truth." Let none be ashamed of it. All the world must hear of it.

The Perfect Day

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. The history of the people of God is a history of progress--from the darkness of Egypt into the light of present truth--unto the perfect day. Some say that people in Bible times did not have to cope with the powerful temptations we meet with today. There were no modern playgrounds to divert their attention. True, but neither did they have the flood of gospel light we are basking under today. Since we live in a day of unprecedented revelation, God expects perfection of all who are so privileged. A passage in Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, 163, touches on this point:

The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the Most Holy place where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers, and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living. Jesus makes an atonement for those who died, not receiving the light upon God's commandments, who sinned ignorantly.

This quotation indicates the fact that we today enjoy the light on God's commandments, particularly the Sabbath commandment. It brings in its train all the precious truths revealed through the gift of prophecy. This added light is given to strengthen us to withstand the modern temptations which some say are stronger than in ancient times. So if we still yield to Satan's wiles, we will be without excuse.

The above quotation answers the question about ignorant and knowing sins committed since Jesus entered the Most Holy Place. In the real service in heaven, sins of ignorance as well as conscious sins of human weakness, which were formerly dealt with in the first apartment, are still atoned for in the Second Apartment. Atonement is also made for the righteous dead who failed to keep the Sabbath, as well as for the righteous living who, before the Sabbath light came to them, broke the Sabbath.

However, the words, "the righteous dead . . . who died, not receiving the light upon God's commandments, who sinned ignorantly," include more than those who have known the name of Christ.

Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. The Desire of Ages, 638

The question is raised: If the heathen can be saved through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and Christ's blood can cover even unconfessed sins of ignorance (as indicated in the above quotation), what point is there in sending missionaries abroad? The answer is in Proverbs 4:18. God's ultimate aim is not merely the rescuing of lost souls, but their perfection. He is determined to have a group of living saints who will be without blemish at His coming, which can be realized only through a complete revelation of gospel truth. Their past sins will have been atoned for, but only as their soul temples are thoroughly purged by the blood of the lamb, will their lives reach perfection. A knowledge of the efficacy of His blood will result in an intelligent appreciation of God's love and righteousness. He is waiting for a complete restoration of His image in the sons and daughters who make up His church in the last generation of believers. It will be the result of a full revelation of gospel light accompanied by a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This ultimate purpose is expressed in the commission, "Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations." God anticipates the final fruition of His plan, when He can point to a company of living saints and say to Satan, "Hast thou considered these my servants, that there is none like them in the earth, perfect and upright souls that fear God and eschew evil?" Anything short of this result will be a failure of God's purpose and a vindication of Satan's charges.

Cleansing of the "Host"

The perfecting of God's people is the cleansing of the "host." The question, "How long shall be the vision . . . to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" embraces two objects--the sanctuary and the host. The answer given in Daniel 8:14 mentions only the sanctuary, but the cleansing of the "host" should be recognized as concomitant with the cleansing of the sanctuary. From Daniel 8:24 we understand that the "host" refers to "the mighty and the holy people" (as distinct from the "stars" mentioned in Daniel 8:10). As already observed, the "treading under foot" refers to defilement.

We are therefore justified in stating that Daniel 8:14 answers fully, though implicitly, the question posed in verse 13, and virtually says, "Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary and the host be cleansed." The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is attended by a simultaneous soul-cleansing of God's people on earth. In The Great

Controversy, 425, we read: Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. . . .

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. . . . Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Ephesians 5:27

These two points: (1) just before the Second Advent the saints must stand before God without a mediator, and (2) the final perfection of God's church, are inescapable conclusions when one follows the gospel plan to its ultimate end. Even non-Adventist theologians who believe in the mediatorial work of Christ and His second coming must admit that there should naturally be a brief interval before His coming when He will cease to mediate and prepare to execute vengeance. They must also admit that the grand ideal pictured in Ephesians 5:27 should ultimately be attained, or God's word would be false. Therefore these passages in The Great Controversy bring home to us the rationality as well as the reality of God's ideal for His children. This "special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth" is even now in progress. Are you taking part?

All complaints of "irresistible" temptations encountered in our modern age are so many excuses to sin. God has furnished us with equally modern weapons to make us invincible to all attack. Men in olden times did not have them. Among these powerful weapons is the book, The Great Controversy, whose object is "to unfold the scenes of the great controversy between truth and error; to reveal the wiles of Satan, and the means by which he may be successfully resisted." The Great Controversy, author's Introduction. Do you feel helpless in the face of the world, the flesh and the devil? Sit down and read this book through, and you will no longer feel so helpless, but will be wise to parry Satan's every thrust and foil his plans to trip you. You will be keen to detect his inroads and discern his decoys. You will learn to keep your eyes on Christ, relish the word of God and persist in prayer. You will stay on the narrow way and be saved at last. This is the process of the cleansing of the host on earth, which is concurrent with the work of cleansing the sanctuary in heaven.

Summary

The sanctuary service deals with sin as a substance that can be borne and transferred by the blood or flesh of the sacrificial victim, and also by the priest who sprinkles its blood or eats its flesh. Any defilement involved is not caused by the blood or the flesh, but by the sin which is transferred by them. The text, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood," (Hebrews 9:22), includes other ceremonies than those of the Day of Atonement ritual, which is strictly a transferring process--removing the accumulated sins from the sanctuary to the goat for Azazel. This process results in the cleansing of the sanctuary.

The casting down of the "stars" mentioned in Daniel 8:10 and Revelation 12:4 identifies the little horn as Satan (Azazel), the author of all sin. He defiles the sanctuary by defiling the "host," whose sins are transferred to the sanctuary by the blood of Christ. The question then in Daniel 8:13 is much to the point; it traces all defilement to its source. The question refers to "the sanctuary and the host," so the reply in Daniel 8:14

should be understood to refer to both. The cleansing of the sanctuary predicates the cleansing of the host.

The cleansing of the host is the perfecting of the church. Therefore the first apartment of the sanctuary stands for forgiveness; the second for perfection. Forgiveness is probationary (see Matthew 18:34-35); perfection is final. In the pre-1844 period, God's people sinned ignorantly because they knew not the Sabbath truth. In the post-1844 period, if they sin, they sin knowingly. A flood of gospel light given in the Testimonies of the Spirit is for the perfecting of the saints.

The drama of the two goats is a call to moral perfection. To us God gives the strongest assurance of His help, saying, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Genesis 17:1

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Chapter 24

THE TIME PROBLEM IN HEBREWS

THE April 1985 issue of the Ministry reprinted an Adventist Review article, "Issues in the Book of Hebrews," which addressed the questions, "Does Hebrews 6:19-20 indicate that Christ entered the Most Holy Place at His ascension?" and "Does Hebrews teach that the Day of Atonement type was fulfilled at Calvary?" This article represents the official attitude of the General Conference regarding these questions, since it was prepared by the officially appointed Daniel and Revelation Committee.

A study of the answers to the two questions posed above reveals at best a weak defensive posture. In fact, this article by the committee virtually concedes that Christ entered the Most Holy Place at His ascension, though this admission is veiled by an adroit wording of key statements, so that only a careful reading will reveal their true import. Here is an answer to the first question:

It may be admitted that if the author is using Day of Atonement imagery in chapter 6:19, 20 (a view held by most scholars), it does indeed heighten and sharpen the message he wished to convey to his readers that by virtue of Christ's death and priesthood they now had direct access to God. Through the ministry of their ever-living high priest they could draw near to God "in full assurance of faith" (chaps 7:25; 10:19-22). His efficacious blood would be mediated for them in the very presence of the Deity (chap. 9:14,24)."

Note that four positive arguments are advanced in favor of the "Day of Atonement" imagery in chapter 6:19-20: (1) It is a view held by most scholars; (2) it heightens and sharpens the message that "they now had direct access to "God," (3) "they could draw near to God "in full assurance of faith" and (4) "His efficacious blood would be mediated for them in the very presence of the Deity." Then follows another paragraph which again affirms the plausibility of the same "imagery":

It is the conviction of the committee that if the author of Hebrews had Day of Atonement imagery in mind (in chap. 6:19,20), his application neither exhausts the meaning of the Day of Atonement ritual nor negates a two-apartment priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. In view of the author's evident purpose, Day of Atonement imagery would simply underscore the point that Christ had opened the way to the immediate presence of God, that every barrier between them and God had been removed. Hope in Christ, their living high priest in God's presence, could be to them "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

Thus three more positive arguments are added to the list: (5) Day of Atonement imagery would underscore the point that Christ had opened the way to the immediate presence of God; (6) every barrier between them and God had been removed; (7) hope

in Christ . . . could be to them "an anchor of the soul. . . ." Note that all seven points are arguments in favor of the Day of Atonement imagery in chapter 6:19-20.

Now to clarify the "imagery" idea. It simply means that if the writer of Hebrews 6:19-20 had Day of Atonement imagery in mind, he meant that Christ entered the second veil when he said that Jesus entered "within the veil," because the high priest entered the second veil on the Day of Atonement. Why then did the committee not answer a plain question with a bare "Yes" or "No"? Well, they would just as soon say "Yes," except that such a blunt reply would draw fire from certain quarters. The best thing to do was to reword the proposition--use the "imagery" clause. In case readers catch on to the true intent of their words and accuse them of following A.F. Ballenger and Desmond Ford, they can point out that they have not positively affirmed anything, but have simply considered a conditional proposition--notice that "if" clause.

To that response we pose two questions: (1) "Why has the committee only considered the 'if' proposition and ignored the converse 'if not' proposition? Why not tell us what is to be gained if the writer of Hebrews 6:19-20 did not have the Day of Atonement imagery in mind?" (2) The remark, "(a view held by most scholars)" has no "if" to it. It is not a conditional, but a positive assertion. And an intriguing one too. Does the Daniel and Revelation Committee take exception to this view which most scholars hold? If so, it should say so; if not, that parenthetical remark should say, "a view held by the committee." Anyhow the seven points listed above suffice to show that the committee members accord with the "most scholars," and believe that Hebrews 6:19-20 refers to Christ's entry to the Most Holy Place. And because "entered" is the past tense, the time of Jesus' entry is generally assumed to be at His ascension. If this is the assumption also of the Daniel and Revelation committee, it represents a major capitulation on the part of the General Conference on this mooted issue.

In the face of such an alarming shift, the assurance about this view not exhausting the meaning of the Day of Atonement ritual and not negating a two-apartment priestly ministry sounds hollow and gives poor consolation. However, since the time of entrance is just an assumption, and the committee has not committed itself on this point, the present article will venture to solve the time problem in Hebrews 6:19-20 and to harmonize it with our understanding of Daniel 8:14. For even if we concede that the veil in Hebrews 6:19-20 is the second veil, the doctrine of Christ's entrance to the Second Apartment in 1844 is still tenable, provided we solve the time issue.

We propose to solve this issue with Revelation 13:8, which speaks of the "Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world." It refers to the all-time efficacy of Christ's blood, though it was shed in A.D. 31. For, as far as all mankind is concerned, the plan of redemption was completed since Creation, yea, even earlier--"before the world began." 2 Timothy 1:9. Nevertheless, Christ's mission and ministry had a sequence of development in time. Moreover, the daily, as well as the yearly, rituals performed in the earthly sanctuary should all find their counterparts in the heavenly sanctuary. Yet all these details spread over God's time schedule do not destroy, but rather augment, the truth of the all-time efficacy of Christ's work of atonement begun on the cross and finished in the sanctuary. The thesis that the first apartment of the sanctuary typified the Jewish dispensation, and the second the Christian dispensation, does not work out in practice. Can you find a single item in the Jewish dispensation that is typified by the sacrifices offered in the first apartment? "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Hebrews 10:4. They could only typify the blood of Jesus. But once you admit that, you make the first-apartment rituals point to Jesus, not to the Jewish dispensation. To this day all theologians holding this dispensationalist view have not been able to develop a rational typology for the first apartment, and no one ever will.

The harmony of the all-time efficacy of Christ's atonement with its time sequence was appreciated by Ellen White. Note this passage where she employed the wording of Hebrews 10:19 (AV) in connection with the crucifixion:

With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. . . . The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred.

All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. *The Desire of Ages*, 757

Ellen White states that on the day of crucifixion, "The way into the holiest is laid open." She felt free to say it, in spite of all she had written in chapter 24 of *The Great Controversy*, because she did not confuse the all-time efficacy of Christ's atonement with the time sequence of its performance. This fact shows that Ellen White was a keener theologian than many scholars who insist that Hebrews 6:19-20 can only apply at Christ's ascension. Moreover, her application of this text to the first veil before 1844, and to the second after that date, also reveals that she was free from the rigid thinking of time-bound theologians.

Much of Hebrews should be understood in the light of the all-time efficacy of Christ's redemptive ministry. However, certain parts of Hebrews do deal with the sequential aspect of Levitical rites. Hebrews 9:6-7 speaks of the two apartments.

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

At this point the reader would naturally wonder about the significance of these two apartments. And right here the Holy Spirit makes a solemn declaration. The word used here is *deloo*, which occurs seven times in the New Testament, and is rendered "declare" three times in the A.V. Thus verse 8 should say:

The Holy Spirit declaring this ("this" is accusative in the Greek), that the way into the holiest is not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle (apartment) still stands (as a viable type).

The arbitrary adoption of the instrumental case, "by this," in many modern versions changes the original sense. A positive declaration of the Holy Spirit becomes at best the inspired judgment of the writer.

Some contend that here *ta hagia* should be rendered "the sanctuary," not "the holiest" as in the A.V. Let us now adopt this translation for Hebrews 9:8 and 10:19. Thus they would read:

The Holy Spirit declaring this: that the way into the sanctuary is not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle is still standing. Hebrews 9:8

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus . . . Hebrews 10:19

The substitution of "the sanctuary" for "the holiest" does not resolve the contradiction between the free access and the "not yet made manifest" way into the sanctuary. The only way to harmonize the two is to distinguish between the all-time efficacy (Hebrews 10:19) and the time sequence (Hebrews 9:8) of the atonement ritual.

The committee's understanding of the "first tabernacle" in Hebrews 9:8 is based on a false context. We quote: "The committee considers that the context (which begins with chapter 8:1-2) is determinative and clearly resolves this question. . . . Thus the reference to 'the first tabernacle' is to be understood as a reference to the Sinai tabernacle-sanctuary."

Note however, that the context referred to by the committee never speaks of either the heavenly or the earthly tabernacle as "first" or "second," but only as the "true tabernacle" and a "worldly sanctuary." On the other hand, in the immediate context of chapter 9:8 the "first tabernacle" is twice used (in verses 2 and 6) to indicate the first apartment of the sanctuary. And in verse 7 the term "the second" refers to the second apartment. Thus we have two immediate precedents of "first tabernacle" definitely referring to the first apartment, and one context speaking of the "second," yet the committee wholly ignores this salient evidence, and insists that the "first tabernacle" in verse 8 does not refer to what it refers to in verses 2 and 6, but instead, to the "Sinai tabernacle-sanctuary." Then comes this puzzling statement, "The committee rejected the argument that the author is using the 'first tabernacle/tent' (first apartment) as a symbol for the whole Mosaic tabernacle (a part for the whole). . . ." The antithesis is garbled. The committee first states that "the first tabernacle" is to be understood as a reference to the "Sinai tabernacle-sanctuary," then it rejects the argument that the "first tabernacle/tent" was a symbol for "the whole Mosaic tabernacle?" Pray tell, what is the difference between the "Sinai tabernacle-sanctuary" and the whole Mosaic tabernacle? And why the total silence on the evidence in verses 2 and 6, and the insistence on the "determinative" context which in fact deals with the "true tabernacle?"

Since the Lord pitched it in heaven before man pitched its replica on earth, that "true tabernacle" should have every right to be called the "first tabernacle," because it is truly first both in point of time and of importance. But actually, Hebrews nowhere compares the heavenly and the earthly sanctuaries in terms of antecedence, nor does it give grounds for the supposition that because the Mosaic sanctuary belonged to the first covenant, it may therefore be called the "first tabernacle."

Proponents of the dispensationalist view cannot properly explain Hebrews 9:9, which says that the first apartment "is a figure of the present time." (The "was" and the "time then present" of the A.V. are erroneous.) "The present time" cannot be construed in any way to refer to the Jewish dispensation, for Hebrews was written many years after the crucifixion.

A correct understanding of verse 9 supports the traditional Adventist doctrine on the sanctuary. Verse 8 says, "The Holy Spirit declaring this, that the way into the holiest of all is not yet made manifest while the first apartment still stands [is still viable as a type]." Verse 9 adds, "which is a figure of the present time . . ." The "is" tense is true to the Greek, as against the past tense in some versions.

This correct tense renders the dispensationalist view untenable, and validates the Adventist teaching that when Hebrews was written, the first apartment type for the period from the crucifixion to 1844 was still viable, and that the way into the Most Holy Place was not yet revealed.

Students of Hebrews have put much effort in examining the use of "within the veil" in the Old Testament, and conclude that this phrase points to the second veil. But few have studied it in the light of the all-time efficacy of Christ's atonement. We all agree that the blood of Christ shed in A.D. 31 availed for expiation of Adam's sin as well as for that of the last generation. In fact, the Old Testament Scriptures employ the future, past and present tenses in speaking of the Messiah, for example, Isaiah 53 says, "He shall grow up . . . as a tender plant. . . . He hath no form nor comeliness. . . . He was despised."

In many Scriptures dealing with God's work of redemption, He often regards it as an accomplished fact; for example, "whom He justified, them He also glorified." Romans 8:30. This grand truth should guide us in our study of Hebrews. As far as God is concerned, the atonement rites have been completed, and we "sit with Him in heavenly places." Ephesians 2:6. Hebrews combines this temporal aspect with the eternal,

encouraging us to "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," meanwhile declaring in the first century, "the way into the holiest is not yet made manifest." The wording, "is not yet made manifest" indicates a withholding of light, for the vision of the 2300 days was yet sealed. Christ would have us appreciate His sovereignty over time. He who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, was "slain from the foundation of the world," and entered within the veil "before the world began."

David Lin

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