

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.
Psalm 25:14

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When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:3, 4)



Called To Preach the Three Angels' Messages

Perhaps you have heard of Norton. His life was filled with interesting stories, one of which he relates in this way:

At that time [1856] there was no system established among Seventh-day Adventists for sustaining the ministry. If anyone cared to give them money, it was thankfully received, and the lack supplied by their hand labor. Due to these circumstances I was invited by Elder J. N. Andrews to go to Waukon, Iowa, where he could secure a small piece of land on which to grow supplies for his family, and could speak to the people in that new country as the way might open. So on Oct. 4, 1856, J. T. Orton and I, with our families, left Rochester for Iowa in two lumber wagons. From Buffalo we took the steamer to Detroit, then by freight train to Chicago. On the 11th, we started overland for Waukon, arriving Nov. 20. I moved to Waukon without any intent of leaving the truth or the ministry.

We found things much different from what we expected. The country was so new and the inhabitants so scattered there was little chance of holding meetings. High prices soon began to diminish what little money I had. A cold winter was coming on, so I began laboring at carpenter work thinking to earn money to support my family, then start out and labor for the cause. I felt sad when I thought of the suffering cause of God. But worldly prospects brightened up before me. My heart began to reach out for treasures here, and I began to lose interest in the Review, and to lose love for the brethren. At times when about my work, solemn convictions would come to me that I must throw all my energies into the cause of God or die. As I struggled against these convictions, they became less and less.

We learned in the Review of early December, 1856, that Elder and Mrs. White had gotten as far west as Round Grove, Ill. and they were having very interesting meetings with Sabbathkeepers who had moved there from Vermont and other states. But we had little thought of their making a venture in the severe cold and deep snows of December to come with their sleigh nearly 200 miles to see us. In a vi-

sion given Sister White at Round Grove, December 9, they were instructed that they must go to Waukon, dig us out and get us into the field again.

One day about Christmas time as Brother Mead and I were working on a store building in Waukon, a man looked up at me and inquired, "Do you know a carpenter around here by the name of Hosea Mead?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "He's up here working with me."

Brother Mead said, "That's Elon Evert's voice!" Then he came and looked down.

"Come down!" Everts shouted. "Brother and Sister White and Brother Hart are here in the sleigh!"

If these persons had dropped upon us from the skies, they would hardly have astonished us more. The ground was covered with three feet of snow plus several crusts which were not strong enough to bear up a horse. For more than a week all roads for 40 miles south of Waukon had been abandoned as impassable. The people had been waiting for the weather to moderate before attempting to open the roads. It looked as though one sleigh load, breaking their way through 40 miles of such snow, undertook a Herculean task.

As I reached the sleigh, Sister White greeted me with the question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Shocked at such a question I replied, "I'm working with Brother Mead at carpenter work."

Again she asked, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Now I was so embarrassed at her connecting my case with Elijah I did not know what to say. It was evident there was something back of this I should hear about.

Then she repeated the question a third time, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

I was brought by these bare questions to very seriously consider Elijah hid in a cave away from the work of the Lord. Later on during the meetings here, I learned that she was instructed in a vision at Round Grove to greet me in this very manner. I assure you that the salutation thor-

oughly convinced me there would come a change and “go back” from the labor in which I was then engaged. (John Norton Loughborough, *Miracles in My Life*, pp. 45–47; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

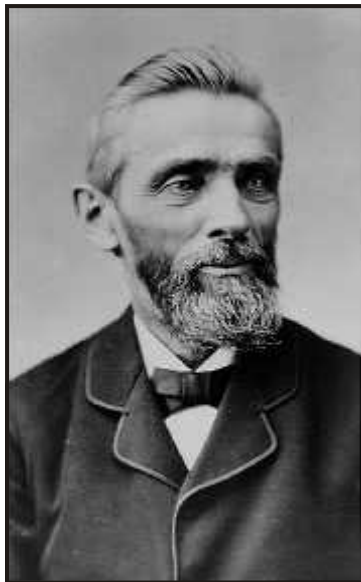
Norton was none other than John Norton Loughborough, better known as J. N. Loughborough, one of our greatest pioneer workers. Notice, though, that as he disengaged himself from the work, Brother Loughborough became less concerned about the work and had less love for the brethren.

If we are to maintain our bodies in good physical health, we must eat good food, drink good water, breathe pure air, and among other things, exercise. If we are to maintain our spiritual health, we must share the truth (spiritual exercise) that has been imparted to us, and we do have a very special message to give.

God has called a special people, at a special time in earth’s history, to give a special call, based upon the three messages given in Revelation 14:6–12:

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. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:6–12)

These are not just any messages, but *the* messages that are to be given by the Advent Movement. They include:



J. N. Loughborough

- A call to fear and reverence God
- A call to preach the everlasting gospel
- A call to acknowledge and worship God as the Creator
- The denunciation of Babylon and that she has fallen
- A warning against, and the results of, accepting the mark of the beast
- An acknowledgment that God’s people will keep his commandments and the faith of Jesus

As prophecy promised, God’s remnant people have been blessed with the Spirit of Prophecy, and through it, we have been told:

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

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God’s people are to be true to the trust committed to them. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19)

God calls upon us to stand in defense of the truth. (*The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1901)

The Everlasting Gospel

The message entrusted to Adventism by God is vital to salvation, and we are to be true to that trust committed to us. First and foremost within this trust is something called *the everlasting gospel*. This is not a new gospel, but the same gospel that was given to the patriarchs in types and symbols. It is the same gospel or good news that Jesus preached and the same good news that will be studied throughout the endless ages by God’s people in heaven. It is the story of a God of love who sent his only begotten Son to this world to die for mankind when man rebelled against him and chose his own way. It is the gospel of John 3:16.

Revelation 14:12 tells us that the everlasting gospel is the gospel of grace and obedience—grace because man can do *nothing* of himself, he cannot raise himself up by his own bootstraps, and grace because it is all, 100%, *unmerited* favor from God. This grace brings power to overcome all sin, thus sanctifying the believer’s life so that he keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The evangelical world speaks a lot about grace and little about the law, and sometimes Adventism neglects placing the proper emphasis upon grace, while speaking strongly of the law. God’s program, however, is a balanced plan of grace and obedience, faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We must realize that the law has its place *in* the gospel, not apart from it.

The summer 2012 issue of *Proclamation!* illustrates the confusion we see, at times, in Adventism over the gospel. *Proclamation!* is a magazine written by former Seventh-day Adventists for current Seventh-day Adventists, so that they will become former Seventh-day Adventists. In other words, its mission is to correct Seventh-day Adventists' perception of the gospel and deliver them from the supposed legalism of Adventism.

In an article entitled "Who's teaching ANOTHER G O S P E L ? " Haroldo Camacho writes of an experience he had when he had been a Seventh-day Adventist:



While I was an Adventist conference secretary (and beginning to understand the gospel) I asked the Union president at a Union-wide workers' retreat, "If we really want to be a peculiar people and have a special message, why don't we preach the cross and 'out-grace' the evangelicals with the message of Christ and Him crucified?"

I remember the quizzical look he gave me, perhaps questioning my Adventist loyalty, and his candid reply: "Well, we'll let the evangelicals do that. We have a special message to give for these last days." (*Proclamation!*, Summer 2012, p. 13)

Beloved, we do have a special message, but within the heart of that message is the message of grace and the gospel—not a system of legalism, but the constraining power of grace that brings one into obedience to all the commandments of God. As Ellen White noted:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. *It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.* Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92)

The Sabbath

Embedded within the first angel's message is a call to worship God as the Creator in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. God is calling his last-day saints to be repairers of the breach that has been made in his law. Isaiah noted:

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, From doing thy pleasure on my holy day; And call the sabbath a delight, The holy of the LORD, honourable; And shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, Nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. (Isaiah 58:12–14)

According to Ellen White this prophecy has special application to us today:

God gave the Sabbath to His people to be a continual sign of His love and mercy, and of their obedience. As He had rested upon this day and been refreshed, so He desired His people to rest and be refreshed. It was a continual reminder to them that they were included in His covenant of grace. Throughout your generations, He said, the Sabbath is to be My sign, My pledge, to you that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you; that I have chosen you, and set you apart as My peculiar people.

When the Sabbath was changed, the seal was taken from the law. Now the disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it, by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator's memorial and the sign of His authority. The prophet Isaiah thus points out the ordinance which has been forsaken: (Isaiah 58:12–14 quote)

This prophecy also applies in our own time. A breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed; but the time has come for that institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired, and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. The Lord has His messengers, whom He bids to proclaim His law to be changeless in its character, as enduring as eternity. (*The Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1910)

Friends, one of the great pillars of our faith is the seventh-day Sabbath. For over one hundred sixty years, Adventism has taught that the seventh-day is the Sabbath. Did our pioneers have a specific belief about which day was the seventh day? Yes, they did. In the 1872 statement of fundamental beliefs, we read the following:

XII. That the fourth commandment of this law requires that we devote the seventh day of each week, *commonly called Saturday*, to abstinence from our own labor, and to

the performance of sacred and religious duties; that this is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart before Paradise was lost, Gen. 2:2, 3, and which will be observed in paradise restored, Isa. 66:22, 23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confine it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms, Jewish Sabbath, and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest-day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning.

Today there is an insidious movement to replace the biblical Sabbath with something that is called the lunar Sabbath. This Sabbath is said to be the seventh-day of the week, but the difference is that weeks are measured differently than is commonly done by others. The weeks are calculated from the new moon each month. One of the problems with this idea is that the moon goes through phases that take a total of about twenty-nine and one half days. That amounts to four seven-day weeks and one or two extra days. What this means is that somehow each month, one or two extra days must be added into the weeks. Under this arrangement, most people who claim to observe the lunar Sabbath keep the Sabbath on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days of the month. This requires the day that the Sabbath is kept to rotate throughout the days of the week, as they are commonly measured on the Georgian Calendar. For example, one month the Sabbath would be observed on what most people call Monday. The next month the Sabbath might be observed on Tuesday, or it could be Wednesday, depending upon the moon. Those who keep the lunar Sabbath disagree with this objection, saying that they are not keeping Monday, Tuesday, or any named day, but are keeping the seventh-day of the week and that other people are wrong in keeping what is commonly called Saturday each week.

Proponents of the lunar Sabbath reject the Georgian Calendar, but they have to agree that there is a counting rotation of more than seven days between the last Sabbath of any given lunar month and the first Sabbath of the next month.

I believe that God foresaw the arrival of the lunar Sabbath movement and inspired our pioneers to write exactly as they did in their statement of belief. They left no doubt that they did not believe in the necessity of a lunar calendar. They understood that the Sabbath was the seventh day “commonly called Saturday.” I also believe that God inspired Ellen White to write to a sister in the faith who had questions about the Sabbath and the International Date Line. Ellen White plainly wrote: “The seventh-day Sabbath is in no uncertainty” (*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 318). She also noted, “Is it possible that so much importance can be clustered about those who observe the Sabbath, and yet no one can tell when the Sabbath comes” (*Ibid.*).

In 1881 Ellen White could triumphantly write:

It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot

change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 595)

Over one hundred forty years before the lunar Sabbath began to be discussed, Ellen White said that the people of God already had the truth. Now, of course, we admit that new light is to shine from God’s word, but that new light will not contradict any established light. If the lunar Sabbath were true, however, then we would have to admit that our pioneers were wrong about the Sabbath and that God did not really guide them into the truth needed for the second coming. We would have to admit that Ellen White was wrong and was, in fact, *uncertain* about the seventh-day Sabbath, even though she said God had given us the truth. If we were fair and objective, we would have to admit that Ellen White was a false prophet and that the Advent Movement, as we know it today, was allowed to start and continue for many years without God correcting serious error in it. We would have to believe that somehow Satan was in control of the pioneers and that the Sabbath observed on what is commonly called Saturday is just as much the mark of the beast as Sunday keeping! This we cannot do, beloved! (For a detailed study on the issue of the lunar Sabbath, please see the April 2007 edition of *Old Paths*, available online at http://www.smyrna.org/op/2007/op07_4.htm).

The hours of the Sabbath are sacred, and we are to teach their sacredness to others. The Bible teaches that the Sabbath is to be kept from sunset to sunset: “It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath” (Leviticus 23:32). So, as the sun sets upon the horizon on the evening of the sixth day (commonly called Friday), the Sabbath begins. When the sun sets upon the horizon the next evening, on the seventh day, the Sabbath ends, and a new week begins.

Should we guard the edges of the Sabbath? Nehemiah certainly did:

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. (Nehemiah 13:19)

Nehemiah did not wait for the sun to set on the horizon. Once the sun had passed the gates, Nehemiah ordered the gates of the city of Jerusalem to be shut. Today we have been told that “we should jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 356).

God is looking for people today who will stand in the gap that has been made in his law and in his truth. Anciently God told Ezekiel, “And I sought for a man among them, that

should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30).

Imagine, if you can, that God is looking for a man, one man, to stand in the gap. We would think that there might be many who could, and should, fulfill their duty to God and to Israel, but God fails to find even one man. I now ask you, dear reader, will this be said today of you, or will you go and boldly stand in the gap? Our call to preach the Sabbath is a call to stand in the gap of God’s law made by transgression.

Interlocking Teachings

Within the everlasting gospel and the three angels’ messages are a host of interlocking teachings that form the foundation, top, and middle of our theological experience. They can be grouped into different areas, but three well-known groups are soteriology, Christology, and eschatology.

Soteriology is the science, or study, of salvation. Within this branch of theology, we study the nature of sin, the nature of man, grace, the Ten Commandments, and other such subjects.

Christology is the branch of theology that deals with the person and the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because his relationship to God is vital to understanding his person, the truth about God is often studied here, as well as the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Eschatology is the part of theology which deals with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind. Some of the key doctrines here are the state of the dead, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the mark of the beast, and the seal of God.

Besides these areas of theology, God’s people are to teach and practice reforms in health, in dress, and in worship.

It would be impossible in this article to list and expound upon all the points that the remnant have been called to preach, but I think we can see that God has a plan to give an entire package of truth to the world so that all who wish to live under its transforming grace may do so.

Paul called the elders of Ephesus to the island of Miletus to meet him. He could say to them:

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, . . . For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:20, 27)

Paul is clear that he taught the Ephesians all the counsel of God. Paul, perhaps better than anyone, understood the necessity of preaching all the counsel of God, for he said:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. (Romans 1:18)

The New King James version says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” God’s servants must not suppress or hold

back the truth, but rather give all the counsel of God. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said: “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16)!

God has pronounced the worldly churches to be a part of Babylon. They cannot possibly be in any condition to give the last warning message to the world. We have a work to do! Let us not have to be called twice, like Jonah!

Godly Lives Preach the Gospel

We are called to preach the message by the lives we live. Paul notes:

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:1–3)

Paul is saying our lives are living letters that others are reading all the time.

The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. (The Ministry of Healing, p. 470)

Called into Fellowship

God calls us to give the three angels’ messages, but we are not called to give them alone. We are called into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and then with like believers. John writes: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). God’s call to fellowship with him tells us that he has a personal interest in each one of us. He is



Nehemiah guarded the edges of the Sabbath.

calling us to salvation. In the parable of the wedding garment, the king, representing God the Father, examines each guest, to see if the garment of Christ's righteousness is upon him. Even when he finds the one without the supplied garment, he addresses the deficient one as "friend" (Matthew 22:12). "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9). Paul says that we have all been called by God into fellowship with his Son, but as we saw from John, we have also been called into fellowship with each other, and the closer we all draw toward Jesus Christ, the closer we will be to each other.

We noted earlier that the Sabbath is one of the great pillars of our faith, and meeting together with God, Christ, and fellow believers is a part of God's plan for our spiritual health. In Leviticus 23:3, we are told that the Sabbath is "an holy convocation." The Sabbath is not simple a political or social gathering, but a holy gathering. Paul warns believers against missing these holy gatherings, when he writes: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Today many believers are scattered and sometimes moderate travel is necessary to fulfill the command of Hebrews 10:25. At times some seem to have a reluctance to do so, but I am reminded of the old saying, *we generally do as we please*. If it is our desire to meet with the people of God, God will open some way for us, if that is what we really want.

The great composer J. S. Bach was so interested in learning and in knowing about good music that when he was young, he walked two hundred miles to hear Dietrich Buxtehude, a famous composer and organist, play and to talk with him. Bach walked two hundred miles, and we find it hard to drive or ride a few? That attitude is sad and, even, criminal, beloved. Where is our zeal? Do you remember the story of James and Ellen White making a perilous trip to see Brother Loughborough? Beloved, God is calling his people to be a dedicated people.

God Has Called Us to His Eternal Glory

We have also been called, in the giving of the three angels' messages, to bring glory to God. Revelation 14:7 gives the marching orders: "Fear God and give glory to him." First Peter 5:10 says, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." This is a fantastic promise, beloved. We can each bring eternal glory to God as we accept the calling he has given us in his Son, Jesus Christ! "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). Some translations speak of the *creation* waiting which means the same thing here. The universe is the audience, as it were, and this earth is the stage upon which the great controversy is being lived out, and the whole creation is waiting and watching to see what will happen.

You see, Satan had brought charges against God and his government:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, . . . (The Desire of Ages, p. 761)

Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God. Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the head and representative of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges. (The Signs of the Times, January 16, 1896)

Since God's law is tied to his character, any charge of weakness or imperfection in the law is a charge against the character of God. Those who claim that God's law cannot be kept are not guided by holy angels or by the Spirit of God, but, rather, by Satan. All such claims should be instantly repelled from the mind, for they lead to doubt concerning God's ability to save, concerning his care for mankind, and concerning his character of love.

God has promised in his word that his power is plentiful to save and to help the weak, when assailed with divers temptations. Notice the following beautiful and powerful promises:

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)

Here God tells us we do not face any unique trial but that he has already foreseen the trial and has measured and weighed the temptation before it is allowed to come to us and that he provides us the grace to deal with the temptation.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24)

God is able to keep you from falling! How precious it is that we may come to his presence in holiness because of his grace working in our lives.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. (Ephesians 3:20)

No matter how much wickedness we have done or can conceive of, the Bible tells us that God is about to do more than we can ask or even of which we may think! In fact, Paul says that the church for which Jesus is returning is a perfect church: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

First John 3:9, 10 is even more gripping. It says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” Is John speaking of something that only a few elect may appreciate and experience? No, not at all. In fact, John indicates that this should be the normal experience, not the exception!

We have been told that “when the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69). Of course, God, in his omniscience, knows the time of Christ’s return, but that time is not a prefixed date that is the result of an arbitrary decree. No, no! The time of Christ’s return is dependent upon the character development of God’s people. Peter says that we are now “waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:12).

Through the years Adventism studied and developed an eschatology that includes the perfection of God’s people and their being brought to the place where they will live in the sight of a holy God without a mediator.

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. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 425)

As Paul noted in Ephesians, God’s church must be clothed with robes that are spotless and this comes by “the grace of God and their own diligent effort . . . in the battle with evil.” While the power to overcome evil and purify the character is totally from heaven, we must constantly choose to surrender self and to allow God to work in us, as we battle evil.

The world and worldly churches say that this demonstration cannot be accomplished, but the Bible guarantees it. Satan’s charges in the great controversy will be disproved, not just by one person, or even by a few special cases, but a righteous nation keeping God’s commandments will enter into heaven (Isaiah 26:2).

While it is true that many from time to time have dedicated their lives to God and lived without sin for periods of time, Satan claims that these are special cases, as was Job’s case, and do not come under the ordinary rules. He demands a clear-cut case where there can be no doubt, and where God has not interfered. Can such an instance be pro-

duced? (M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, pp. 113, 114)

Ellen White says that God and the rest of heaven are waiting for just such a demonstration: “All heaven is waiting for man to vindicate God’s law” (*The Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901).

Since God’s law is a transcript of his character, to vindicate God’s law is tantamount to vindicating God and his character. “The honor of the law of God is to be vindicated before the unfallen worlds, before the heavenly universe, and before the fallen world. The bitterest persecution will come, but when Zion arises, and puts on her beautiful garments, she will shine forth in the beauty of holiness. God designs us to have more life and more power, because the glory of God has risen upon the church” (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 338). “It becomes every child of God to vindicate His [God’s] character. You can magnify the Lord; you can show the power of sustaining grace” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 317). Notice, we may show *the power of sustaining grace*. This is not sustaining power of our own, for it is grace and grace is unmerited favor. This is the power of God alone, but it is more than simply forgiveness (justification), it is sustaining, or sanctifying, grace.



M. L. Andreasen

Conclusion

God’s people will stand the test. The weakest of the weak will, by the grace of Jesus Christ, withstand the worst onslaught from Satan in the history of the earth. We, with other faithful voices, can be a part of that final generation that will find true fellowship with the Father and the Son and accept the calling to give the three angels’ messages.

Will you be a part of those who give the three angels’ messages and sound the loud cry? Will you step out in faith to do all that God gives you? The war that began in heaven (Revelation 12:7) is still being fought, but the battlefield has moved to this earth. Yet God will have a faithful people who will stand, for they are “called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

President Clinton posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor to Theodore Roosevelt (TR) for his actions in the Spanish-American War. He is the only President to be awarded the nation’s highest military honor for military valor. When the then Colonel Roosevelt led the rough riders up Kettle Hill, he was but thirty-nine years old. None of his men watching him lead the charge thought he would live, but

though wounded lightly, he continued through a maze of stiff rifle fire until the enemy had been subdued. Before the war, Roosevelt had been assistant secretary of Navy and had called upon President McKinley to go to war after the sinking of the USS *Maine*. When war was declared he said that it would be wrong for him to have called for war and then not to have been willing to go and fight. Roosevelt had a patriotic spirit, and his willingness to die in battle proved his mettle as a man dedicated to his country.

Almost twenty years later, when war was raging in Europe, Roosevelt felt that President Wilson's policy of neutrality was not in the best interests of Europe and the United States. He publically called for Wilson to go to war against Germany. In 1917, when Wilson could no longer keep the United States out of war, Roosevelt was nearing sixty years of age. Roosevelt wrote to Wilson, "Now all I ask is that I be allowed to do all that is in me to help make good this speech of yours—to help get the nation to act, so as to justify and live up to the speech, and the declaration of war that followed." No longer the youthful colonel, he was now a spent warrior. He was blind in one eye, his hearing was bad, and the effects of nearly dying, both accident and disease, while exploring part of the Amazon River had left his body tired and spent. Despite all his health issues, however, he asked President Wilson to re-commission him as an officer and to allow him to lead a regiment of men in the army. Later writing to Colonel House, Roosevelt noted, "After all, I'm only asking to be allowed to die." President Wilson, however, refused Roosevelt's request, due to political considerations and as a punishment for Roosevelt's outspokenness against his prior policies. Roosevelt realized that he would not be able to go to war, but he would, instead, allow his four sons to go.



Theodore Roosevelt

Writing to the famous author Rudyard Kipling, Roosevelt noted, "I have explained to my four sons that, if there is a war during their lifetime, I wish them to be in a position to explain why they did go to it and not why they did not go to it."

Being raised in the home of Theodore Roosevelt, his four boys felt the same patriotic spirit that he felt, and all were willing to lay their lives on the line for their country.

Quentin was the youngest of the Roosevelt children. He was only three years old when his father became president. As a young boy he would ride his pony on the White House lawn, but now Quentin was eighteen years old, and he

enlisted in the Army to become a fighter pilot in the war. On July 14, 1918, Quentin's plane was shot down over enemy lines, and he was killed.

Quentin's brother, Archie, was crippled and given the French War Cross for gallantry. During World War II, Archie was commissioned as a Lieutenant Colonel, was wounded in battle, and was awarded the Silver Star.

Kermit was awarded the Military Cross which is given in recognition of "an act or acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy."

In World War I, Roosevelt's oldest son, Ted, was gassed, and he was cited for conspicuous gallantry. In World War II, General Omar Bradley was asked to name the single most heroic action he had ever seen in combat, and he replied, "Ted Roosevelt [leading his troops] on Utah Beach." Ted was the only general to land on the beach and, at fifty-six, the oldest soldier landing on D-Day. Ted died from a heart attack a month later and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on September 28, 1944.



Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.

Why have we taken this little history lesson about TR and his sons? To illustrate that here was a man and a family who were dedicated to their country, to its principles, and to its cause and who were willing to serve and, if need be, to die for their country. They are merely one example of many which could have been cited, but the country for which they served was, and is, a temporal nation, one whose glory will one day vanish away.

*"Now all I ask is that I be allowed to do all that I
in me to help." – Theodore Roosevelt*

We, however, serve a righteous King, whose kingdom shall know no end (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:33). Surely we can be as willing, and even more so, to sacrifice for our King by giving lives of unselfish service to him in preaching, teaching, and living the three angels' messages. Remember the words of Paul to Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). Beloved, we are rapidly nearing the end, and our command is *onward, Christian soldiers*. Let us purpose to do all that is within us to give the three angels' messages. Let us be able to explain to others why we worked so earnestly to give the three angels' messages, instead of why we did not!

Allen Stump

The Protestant Reformation

Part 1—Undercurrents

As Adventists, we would probably all agree that the events surrounding the earthly life of Christ are the greatest events in the history of our fallen world, and the second greatest might be the entrance of Christ into the most holy place in 1844 and his continued work there. Then, and only then, might we come to the great events of the Protestant Reformation. Philip Schaff, however, historian of the Christian church, sees things in this way: “The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history” (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, p. 204). Other historians see the Reformation as a bridge or a transition of mankind from the Middle Ages to the modern world. However we rank the importance of the Reformation, its significance cannot be questioned—to Christians in particular, and to the world in general. To understand the importance of the Reformation, we need to first examine some of the issues that thrust it upon the world’s stage, especially in matters of faith, and how the people related to the serious upheavals brewing in their homes, in their villages, and in distant lands across the seas on the eve of this turbulent time. The Renaissance was beginning to flourish, the guild system of the Middle Ages was disappearing into economic individualism and capitalism, a banking system was emerging, education was expanding, and most of all, the very basic structure of the Roman Catholic Church was crumbling.

The Church of the Middle Ages

The whole system of the medieval western Church was built on the Mass and on the central role of the pope. This is well-stated in the following letter of Nicholas Ridley, one of the Oxford martyrs burned at the stake in England in 1555:

Brother Bradford,

I wish you and your company in Christ, yea, and all the holy brotherhood, that now with you in divers prisons suffereth and beareth patiently Christ’s cross for the maintenance of his gospel, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sir, considering the state of this chivalry and warfare, wherein I doubt not but we be set to fight under Christ’s banner and his cross against our ghostly enemy the devil, and the old serpent Satan, methink I perceive two things to be his most perilous and most dangerous engines which he hath to impugn Christ’s verity, his Gospel, his faith: and the same two also to be the most massy posts and most mighty pillars, whereby he maintaineth and upholdeth his Satanical synagogue. These two, sir, are they in my judgment: the one his false doctrine and idolatrical use of the

Lord’s supper; and the other, the wicked and abominable usurpation of the primacy of the see of Rome. By these two Satan seemeth to me principally to maintain and uphold his kingdom: by these two, he driveth down mightily (alas! I fear me), the third part of the stars in heaven. These two poisonous rotten posts he hath so painted over with such a pretence and colour of religion, of unity in Christ’s church, of the catholic faith, and such like, that the wily serpent is able to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect of God. Wherefore John said not without great cause, “If any know not Satan’s subtilities and the dungeons thereof, I will wish him no other burden to be laden withal.” Sir, because these be his principal and main posts whereupon standeth all his falsehood, craft, and treachery; therefore, according to the poor power that God hath given me, I have bended mine artillery to shoot at the same. I know it to be little (God knoweth) that I can do; and of my shot I know they pass a not. Yet will I not (God willing) cease to do the best that I can, to shake those cankered and rotten posts. The Lord grant me good success, to the glory of his name, and the furtherance of Christ’s Gospel. I have now already (I thank God) for this present time spent a good part of my powder in these scribblings, whereof this bearer shall give you knowledge. Good brother Bradford, let the wicked surmise and say what they list; know you for a certainty by God’s grace, without all doubt, that in Christ’s Gospel’s cause, against and upon the foresaid God’s enemies, I am fully determined to live and die. Farewell, dear brother; and I beseech you and all the rest of our brethren, to have good remembrance of the condemned heretics (as they call them) of Oxford in your prayers. The bearer shall certify you of our state. Farewell in the Lord. From Bocardo [the prison where Ridley was held]. Yours in Christ, N. R. (*The Works of Bishop Ridley*, H. Christmas, editor, p. 366; published 1841)

These two “cankered and rotten posts” held sway during the time just before the Protestant Reformation, so let us examine them briefly.

The Mass

The word *Mass* represents the Catholic Church’s central act—the service of the Eucharist. The Eucharist in the Middle Ages (and today) served as a way to link Christ to his followers in a mysterious union achieved by supposedly ingesting his very body and blood. It was considered such a powerful and sacred act that the lay people usually partook of it only once a year—at Easter—and the rest of the year were content to watch the priests partake of it. In addition, they only received the wafer at the altar at Easter, never the wine,



The Mass

for there was concern that the Lord's blood might be caught in the mustaches and beards of the men.

It was customary for the priest to elevate the bread immediately after uttering the words that brought about the supposed miracle of transubstantiation. This was done so the people could adore the wafer as the very person of Christ. For the lay people, seeing the elevated wafer became the high point of Mass, and just before the "miracle-working" words were uttered by the priest, a bell was rung to alert the worshippers to look up. In large churches where many Masses were celebrated simultaneously, the Masses in side altars were timed so that the fake miracle of transubstantiation could be staggered, allowing the lay people to see it many times. The side altar areas even had viewing slits so the officiating priest could keep an eye on the other altars and time his "miracle" accordingly! We present this heresy as one example of the great hold the church had (and continues to have) over the lay population.

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1532 to 1534 and later burned at the stake for heresy, was pulled from his pulpit during what was to be his last sermon, as he stated: "As for the pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and antichrist with all his false doctrine." Several years earlier, however, he wrote the following words about the passion the people had to see the wafer that was supposed to be the very body of Christ:

What made the people to run from their seats to the altar, and from altar to altar . . . peeping, tooting and gazing at that thing which the priest held up in his hands, if they thought not to honour the thing which they saw? What moved the priests to lift up the sacrament so high over their heads? Or the people to say to the priest "Hold up! Hold up!" or one man to say to another "Stoop down before" or to say "This day have I seen my Maker" and "I cannot be quiet except I see my Maker once a day"? What was the cause of all these . . . but that they worshipped that visible thing which they saw with their eyes and took it for very God? (*Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. J. E. Cox, p. 442)

The Mass, however, did more than supposedly give man a view of his Maker. It was a powerful form of public prayer designed to help people gain entrance into heaven after they died. In other words, the Mass was a means of interceding for the dead. By the 800s, western churches were built with several altars, so the priests could say as many Masses each day as possible for the dead and for those approaching death, at a price, of course. By the 1100s, the church's belief of a transitional condition after death—purgatory, a place in which one becomes purified so as to be fit for heaven—began to take more concrete form. The word *purgatory* was first used sometime between the years 1160 and 1180, and a place in purgatory (*limbus infantium*) was created for infants who had not been baptized, but who had no actual sins to send them to hell. They would remain in this place forever, without any hope of deliverance, although it was said to be a happy state. A place was also made (*limbus partum*) for the Old Testament saints. Because these people had died before the incarnation of Christ, they could not ascend to heaven at death; instead, they waited in *limbus partum* until Christ died. Intercession for the dead was considered a duty, for it was believed that the fate of those in purgatory could be affected by the actions of the living.

The Mass was not the only activity extremely important to the spiritual life of the people, however. Good works were also highly valued because they also could reduce the time one spent in purgatory. Works, such as giving to beggars, contributing to the upkeep of hospitals, repairing a community bridge, or leaving money in a will to pay the future village taxes were performed in exchange for less time in purgatory. Individual prayer was also considered to be a good work. The beggar was expected to pray for the future welfare of the mistress who fed him. Patients were to lie in their hospital beds praying for the benefactors of the hospital. Those who used the bridge were to pray for the ones who repaired it, inscriptions with the names of the repairers being conveniently left on the bridge. Tomb inscriptions reminded visitors to pray for the souls of the departed. Even the dead in purgatory were expected to spend their time (they had plenty of it) praying for those who were praying for them! You can see that expectations of prayer were high for the people.

Journeys to sacred places and to shrines to offer prayers were also held in high esteem because it was believed that a person who had entered heaven and who also had a strong connection to earth through a relic (perhaps his or her skeleton or possession) or who had a strong association with a place (such as a holy well) or an association with a past miracle was an especially powerful saint who could grant the desired answer to prayer. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was considered the most powerful of saints, but she had no bodily relics that could be enshrined because she had supposedly entered heaven with a body that had not experienced normal death. This doctrine is known as the bodily assumption of Mary and was the reason for the many statues of Mary to be

found during this time period. In other words, since there were no relics (bones) of Mary to offer the people at a holy shrine, the church had to offer, instead, a statue, as a representation of her body.

Through the purchases of Mass, the papacy prospered, but the recitations of the Mass, the offering of individual prayers, and the performance of good works were not the only means to reduce the expected time in purgatory. One could buy indulgences! The granting of indulgences arose during the Crusades, and they were remissions for all penalties which would have occurred if the soldiers had stayed at home. Later, indulgences were offered to those who were not inclined or able to attend a crusade but who contributed to it, and finally indulgences were granted in order to raise money for the construction of hospitals, bridges, cathedrals, St. Peter's Basilica, and other public works. What is interesting is the underlying theory of indulgence—Jesus and the saints had accrued more merits than were needful for their salvation, and these extra merits could be shared with those who needed them. Of course, the trade of indulgences became a point of theological controversy because through them was the pope not only able to remit punishment for sin, but he was also able to forgive the sin. Nevertheless, the sale of indulgences was one of the means the papacy invented to swell its coffers.

Foment for the Reformation



Sale of Indulgences

The years leading up to the Protestant Reformation were full of heartache, pain, and a deep yearning for something better. Deschamps, a French poet who lived in the 1300s, wrote of an “age of tears, of envy, of torments” and of a “decline nigh to the end.” Several years later, in the 1400s, another French poet, Meschinot, wrote: “O miserable and very sad life! . . . We suffer from warfare, death, and famine; Cold and heat, day and night, sap our strength; Fleas, scabmites and so much other vermin make war upon us. . . . Life is very short.” Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) wrote that life was “nasty, brutish, and short.” People everywhere were anxious,

fearful, and saw divine judgment in their miserable states of affairs. They lived through crisis after crisis, without the benefit of secular or spiritual security and comfort; the faith of all was severely tempted and tried. Famine and illness clung heavily to them, as a foreboding shadow upon the shoulder.

During the late Middle Ages, people began to migrate to the cities from peasant villages, in the hope of building a better life, but most were disappointed, for they were often excluded from the established guild structure already in existence in the city. Instead, they had to rely on menial jobs and had to exist on meager incomes. Some newcomers were even reduced to begging. A new attitude of individualism was replacing the older sense of Christian community, and the care and concern for the needy and poor were beginning to wane.

Famine

Famine was one of the crises that occurred in the years preceding the Reformation. As the population in the cities grew, the demand for food became more than the outlying farms could supply. Remember, no long distance transportation was available to carry food to the cities, and the people had to rely on what was grown within one to three miles of city. By 1320 nearly all of northern Europe was suffering from widespread famine. Crop failures from unusually bad weather, such as floods, bitter winters, and severe droughts, occurred, and in some places rain was incessant:

In southern France, rains inundated Provence in 1307–8 and in 1315. Clergy and laity processed barefoot to appease God for the sins of humankind, but “God was slow to hear their prayers.” Rivers seemed to overflow with terrible regularity, sweeping away bridges, harvest, and people. Severe winters froze rivers, vineyards, and animals. In 1355 it snowed for nearly 20 days on Avignon; in 1439 wolves prowled through Carpentras. In summer heat grilled the grain and wells went dry. In southeast Germany earthquakes and massive locust swarms followed the famine years of 1315–17. Emperor Charles IV wrote of being awakened one morning by a knight with the words, ‘Lord, arise, the Last Judgment is here for the whole world is full of locusts.’ Charles set out on horseback to measure the extent of the swarms. After a full day’s ride, about 25 kilometers, he had still not come to the edge of the swarm, which devoured all vegetation in its path. (Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, p. 26)

The Black Death

Is there any insect more prevalent and more annoying than the mosquito? Or the vector of more death and illness (such as yellow fever, malaria, encephalitis, sleeping sickness, elephantiasis, West Nile virus, dengue fever, and Rift Valley fever) than the mosquito? Probably not. The World Health Organization, for example, has stated there are about 200,000 cases a year of yellow fever, with approximately 30,000 deaths. There are millions of deaths annually from



Pope Benedict XVI

malaria. Forty million people are currently living with elephantiasis. The list goes on, but the humble flea is a close second to the pesky mosquito.

In 1347, a flea no bigger than the letter *o* on this page entered the Italian port of Messina. This flea was filled with several hundred thousand bacilli of *Yersinia pestis*, the organism that causes the bubonic plague, picked up from the rat upon which it had recently lived. The rat itself would eventually die from his infection, but not before the fleas residing on it became infected. Once the rat was dead, the fleas left in search of a new home and could live for weeks, if necessary, until one was found, and in the course of events, humans were bitten, usually upon the legs.

Symptoms of bubonic plague occur within several days—headache, weakness, aches and chills in the upper leg and groin (if bitten on the leg), rapid pulse, slurred speech, confusion, fatigue, apathy, and a staggering gait. A blackish sore forms at the point of the fleabite and (if the bite is on the leg), the lymph nodes in the groin begin to swell, hence the disease's name *bubonic plague*, after the Greek word *boubon* which means *groin*. More symptoms occur—blotches on the skin, collapse of the nervous system causing pain and bizarre behaviors, wild anxiety and terror, the skin continues to blacken, and finally the body begins to stiffen, as death occurs. This description is included to help you understand the terror it caused. The people of Messina did not know the reason for this terrible calamity, other than to guess it must have come from the ships at the dock, so they drove the ships back out to sea, eventually spreading the plague to other ports. And then the town panicked.

People ran to other villages, through fields and vineyards, taking the fleas with them. When those who were ill reached the nearest city, they were permitted admission to the hospital, but then people in that city became ill, and chaos struck. The sick, turning black, stumbled through the city, speaking deliriously and smelling terribly. And the people became afraid. They were afraid of death, of hell, and of purgatory.

No one felt ready to die (not enough Masses had been said for them), and no one could understand what was happening. Some people went to bed seemingly healthy, only to be found dead in the morning.

As bodies stacked up in the streets, strange preventative measures were prescribed—bathe in urine, hover over latrines and breathe its air, carry flowers under noses to ward off the evil air, avoid bathing. Diet advice was also given—eat two figs in the morning with rue and filberts; eat ten-year-old treacle mixed with chopped up snake and other substances; eat rhubarb, onions, leeks, and garlic; use myrrh, saffron, and pepper late in the day; eat roasted, not boiled, meat; if eggs were eaten, eat only hard-boiled ones. One person advocated eating lettuce, but another advised against it. Desserts were forbidden, as was sleep during the day, and when one did sleep, it was to be first on the right side, then on the left. Because exercise introduced more air into the body, one was advised to move slowly. In Milan all the occupants of any victim's house, whether sick or well, were walled up inside the house and left to die.

Finally, when all their measures failed, the people declared the plague was a judgment from God, and upright citizens began to kill those suspected of offending God. Jews were locked up inside wooden buildings and burned alive. Sixteen thousand were murdered in Strasbourg. Others were walled up in their homes. Strangers from other countries, as well as gypsies, drunks, beggars, cripples, and lepers, were also killed. These were desperate times. People tried to appease God in any way they could, but the plague continued, in part spread by people going on pilgrimages. Agents for Pope Clement estimated in 1351 that perhaps twenty-four million people died in the first onslaught of the plague and another twenty million by the end of the century, a total involving a third of the population of Europe.

Papal Primacy

The second “rotten post” of the medieval church was the pope's claim to supremacy, and during the Middle Ages, it was largely upheld. Christendom was, for the most part, ruled by him. During this period, councils and edicts established or promoted many doctrines and administrations of man, such as celibacy; the use of torture to obtain affirmation of faith; the creation of the *Curia* or the court of the pope; the systems of friars, monks, and nuns; the creation of the Templars, the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, and the Teutonic Knights (the Jesuits came later); the expansion of the land holdings of the church; and the development of parishes, but the pillar of papal primacy was beginning to crack. John Wyclif came on the scene and later Jerome Hus. Education for the common man was slowly dawning over the dark horizon. The Bible was soon to be in the hands of the plowman.

Wars and Rebellions

Famine and pestilence were terrible during the late Middle Ages, but war also devastated the people. The Hundred Years War, in which Joan of Arc participated, started in 1337. Peasant rebellions were also frequent. Most of the people of the Middle Ages were peasants who toiled on the land from sunrise to sunset or who were day laborers at the mercy of their employers. Sometimes they were virtual slaves to the landowners and experienced little relief from their life of woe. Often their housing and diet were inadequate, and when pushed to extremes, the normally conservative peasant could react violently. Usually it was on an individual basis, but larger rebellions also took place, such as in 1358 in response to a taxation placed on them for the Hundred Years War between England and France. The peasants revolted in England in 1381, and similar revolts occurred in Italy, Germany, and Spain. Adding to the rebellions and wars was the mining of silver in Germany, which not only affected the production of weaponry, but also impacted the economy of the community, for the owners of the mines increased in wealth, but the nobles, dependent on feudal rents and fixed incomes, suffered. This change in economy caused disunity and mutual suspicions. Towns prospered in contrast to the feudal system, resulting in bitterness and anger, all setting the stage for reformation.

The Foment Continues

We have, hopefully, set the stage concerning the events leading up to the Reformation, but another momentous event is on our horizon. The world sees and feels the undercurrents now. Fear abounds, as earthquakes, floods, famine, drought, financial collapse, wars and rebellions, and illnesses grip our homes, our villages, and the lands on our distant shores. We may think that we are more educated and more cultured than those in the Middle Ages (and we are) and that we would never treat others as badly as was done in the Middle Ages, but think again. History has a way of repeating itself.

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to put to death. . . . And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:21, 36).

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:5–12).

We shall have to face false christs and false prophets; we shall be betrayed, afflicted, and perhaps even killed; we may see famine, pestilence, earthquakes, and war; and we watch even now as some of the pillars of our faith are torn down as rotten posts, but we must be willing to meet it all! The wonderful promise is given that those who endure unto the end will be saved (Matthew 24:13).

I know not why God’s wondrous grace
To me he hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for his own.
But I know whom I have believèd,
And am persuaded that he is able
To keep that which I’ve committed
Unto him against that day.

—Daniel Whittle

Are you persuaded? Have you determined that “it is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 495)? With Job, may we steadfastly say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him . . . For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 13:15; 19:25).

Onycha Holt

There is one pointed out in prophecy as the man of sin. He is the representative of Satan. Taking the suggestions of Satan concerning the law of God, which is as unchangeable as His throne, this man of sin comes in and represents to the world that he has changed that law, and that the first day of the week instead of the seventh is now the Sabbath. Professing infallibility, he claims the right to change the law of God to suit his own purposes. By so doing, he exalts himself above God, and leaves the world to infer that God is fallible. If it were indeed true that God had made a rule of government that needed to be changed, it would certainly show fallibility. (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol 7, p. 910)

Is the Grass Greener?

Women's Ordination, Part 1

Before we begin our discussion on women's ordination to the gospel ministry, let us first review how the Seventh-day Adventist Church defines the ordination of ministers:

Ordination, an act of commission, acknowledges God's call, sets the individual apart, and appoints that person to serve the church in a special capacity. Ordination endorses the individuals thus set apart as authorized representatives of the church. By this act, the church delegates its authority to its ministers to proclaim the gospel publicly, to administer its ordinances, to organize new congregations, and, within the parameters established by God's Word, to give direction to believers (Matt. 16:19; Heb. 13:17). (Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual, pp.84, 85)

Following the 2010 General Conference session in Atlanta, Georgia, Andrews University began a study on the topic of ordination, to be presented to the 2014 Annual Council, in preparation for a possible vote on women's ordination to the gospel ministry at the next General Conference session, scheduled to be held in 2015 in San Antonio, Texas. This is not the first time the subject of women's ordination has been raised at a General Conference session. It occurred in 1891 and again in 1990 and 1995.

On March 8, 2012, however, instead of waiting for San Antonio and a possible world vote on the issue, the Mid-America Union Conference Executive Committee voted to support the ordination of women to the ministry (all references to women's ordination in this article refer to ordination to the gospel ministry, unless otherwise noted).

On March 22, 2012, the Southeastern California Conference executive committee voted to remove the term *ordained-commissioned* and replace it with *ordained* on all ministerial credentials, regardless of the gender of the credential holder.

On April 23, 2012, the North German Union Conference voted to ordain women.

During April 23–26, 2012, the North American Division Ministerial Department, in an effort to affirm women in ministry, sponsored the first ever Women Clergy Conference.

On May 1, 2012, the Southern California Conference executive committee voted to support the ordination of women to the gospel ministry.

On July 29, 2012, the Columbia Union Conference adopted the policy of ordination to the gospel ministry without regard to gender.

On August 19, 2012, the Pacific Union Conference adopted the ordination of ministers without regard to gender.

On September 5, 2012, the Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee approved fourteen women and two men for ordination in conferences within the union. "According to a Facebook post by union

communications director Gerry Chudleigh, PUC president Ricardo Graham introduced the agenda item saying, "Our next item is the approval of requests for ordination. This will be a historic vote. Is there a motion that we approve these requests?" There was a motion. "Is there a second?" Graham asked. There was a second. "Is there any discussion?" According to Chudleigh, there was no discussion, only silence. "Well, if there is no discussion, we will go to the vote," Graham said. "All in favor say yes." [Loud affirmations] "Any opposed?" [Silence] "Well, this was a historic vote. Thank you," Graham said" (<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2012/09/07/pacific-union-conference-approves-fourteen-women-ordination>).

On October 6, 2012, the first ordination service to include women ministers in the North American Division is to be held at the Loma Linda University Church.

The actions by these union conferences create a conundrum because Ellen White has stated that when the General Conference is in session and brethren from all parts of the field have been assembled that "private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. . . . God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 260, 261). If the Seventh-day Adventist corporate church is still God's anointed, then all of these union conferences are in direct, deliberate, willful, and flagrant rebellion against God, or they simply no longer believe that the General Conference in session is the voice of God. Neither of these positions will promote unity. If the General Conference, however, is no longer the voice of God and if God's Spirit is no longer directing people to show the General Conference respect and to accept its authority, such rebellions are only the natural result of the lack of the Spirit of God, especially when the people are promoting a non-biblical agenda.

Both the Columbia Union and the Pacific Union Conferences have published their rationale for women's ordination in their union magazines, the *Visitor* and the *Recorder*, respectively.

In the *Visitor* for July 2012, a question and answer format is used to address issues the constituents might have considering women's ordination. Only one question in the article addresses the biblical foundation and that question is: "Is it biblical for women to engage in church leadership?" The only Scripture given in answer to this question is Ephesians 5:22–25, with the explanation that in these verses Paul is saying that "man is head of the home and Christ is head of the church" and that "just as women are subject to their husbands in marriage, we are all subject to Christ as His body of believers." In other words, women are subject to men only in the home, and not in the church (*Visitor*, July 2012, p. 12). There is no biblical problem with the man being the head of the home and Christ the head of the church, but in Ephesians 5:22 and onward, Paul's main point is not to make a division between

the home and the church (and to be technical, he does not say the husband is head of the *home*), but in these verses, we read a detailed description of *how* (and why) a man is to love his wife—as Christ loved the church, as his own body, etc.—and not a doctrine on the separation of headship.

The Columbia Union Ad Hoc Committee report on the issue of women’s ordination did attempt to present more biblical support for the ordination of women than did the *Visitor*:

SCRIPTURE: As a global church that values the authority of Scripture, we acknowledge that:

A. Scripture is clear that the end-time church is blessed with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all believers (Joel 2:28–29 and Acts 2:17–18), with the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9) and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, both women and men preach God’s message (Fundamental Beliefs 14 and 17).

B. We are commanded to practice justice in our actions and relationships (Micah 6:8).

C. Everything contained in the Bible relates to the concepts represented in three words: Creation, Fall, and Redemption. This continuum provides the natural outline to the biblical story. In Eden, God created male and female as equals, both spiritually and relationally, and both are necessary to fully reflect the image of God (2 Corinthians 5:17–20).

D. Multiple times throughout Scripture God chose women to lead His people (Deborah, Esther, Hulda, Anna, four daughters of Philip, Phoebe, Junia etc.). (<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2012/05/17/columbia-union-calls-constituency-meeting-vote-ordination>)

Let us look at these four “Scripture” affirmations for women’s ordination.

Point A: In this section do you see any scripture that teaches the doctrine of women’s ordination or of ordination in general? Let us review what the paragraph says: Scripture is clear that there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end time and that there is a priesthood of all believers. True, but as of yet, no biblical support has been given for the ordaining of women. Let’s move on. The Holy Spirit will empower both women and men to preach God’s message. And the biblical reference to support this *is*—Fundamental Beliefs 14 and 17. And there you have it. It is clear the Ad Hoc Committee has no scripture to support its recommendation. The Holy Spirit is to be poured upon all believers, yes, but one cannot infer from this that God intends at least some female recipients of his Spirit to enter the gospel ministry. It also does not mean they are precluded from gospel ministry; it is just not a support for, or against, women’s ordination.

Point B: Being part of the royal priesthood does not support the ordination of women; neither does it deny it. First Peter 2:9 is simply not a strength for the upholding of the ordination of women. It is as Russell L. Staples has stated:

... while the priesthood of the entire community of faith is thus affirmed [in 1 Peter 2:9, 10], no church officer of any kind is designated as a priest in the New Testament. . . .

The significance of this is that while there remains a continuity in God’s purposes for Israel and the church, priests of the Old Testament and ministers of the Christian church perform widely different roles. . . . *All Christians are priests in the sense that they have direct access to God*” (*Women in Ministry*, p. 138; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted).

Children, for example, can be part of the royal priesthood, yet we would not choose to ordain them to be spiritual rulers over us, would we? Next point—using Micah 6:8 to promote the justice of ordaining women to the ministry lends itself to eisegesis. We are to treat others justly, yes, but let us allow God’s, not man’s, word to be the standard of justice and the standard for gospel ministry, and God’s word is clear about gospel order (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Point C: We all wish to be restored to Eden, and when we are new creatures in Christ, old things *are* passed away; but we remain still in this sinful world, and we still must decide moment-by-moment to surrender to God’s will. This surrender includes a surrender to God’s plan for gospel order, for we have no biblical or Spirit of Prophecy basis to say his will in this area has changed. You might think that since we have been counseled to return to the healthful diet of Eden, it would be well to also return to the equality of relationships in Eden.

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side *as an equal*, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46)

Here Ellen White says that Eve was to stand by Adam’s side “as an equal,” yes, but she also says she was also to be at his side to be “protected by him.” This has to mean Adam had something that Eve did not, otherwise he could not protect her, and she would have been able to protect herself. Our first thought might be this ability to protect was because of his physical stature—Adam was taller (and I assume stronger) physically and, therefore, would be able to protect Eve, but from what? There were no physical dangers in Eden. The only danger in Eden was spiritual; therefore, the only protection he could offer had to have been of a spiritual nature. It is interesting that angels were sent from heaven to *warn Adam* (he had the responsibility of protection) of the danger from Satan, although both Adam and Eve were present at the angels’ visit.

Eve was, in addition, specifically charged not to leave her husband's side:

God assembled the angelic host to take measures to avert the threatened evil. It was decided in heaven's council for angels to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 29)

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment, for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. (*Ibid.*, p. 31)

We have been counseled to return to the plant-based diet of Eden for the benefits it carries physically and spiritually, but we have never been counseled to forsake God's gospel order. Does at least one reason for this now seem clear to you? Gospel order was present at Eden! And today, with the world and the church both pushing for gender equality in everything possible and in every way possible, surrender by both men and women to God's gospel order is one means for the perfecting of our characters. Women are called of God to be and to do many things, but they are never called to a headship position over godly men. It is true God has used many godly women over time in his cause, such as Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, but never did these godly women pull out the rug of authority from under the feet of godly men. At times they were the direct mouthpiece of God, but they were an aid and a support to their godly men. Both before and after his incarnation, Jesus was completely submissive to the will of his father, and he is our example.

We readily acknowledge that God's order does not imply that women are inferior to men, but God, in his wisdom, has commanded the man to be the head of the woman, in the church and in the home. This does not mean that the man abusively controls or that the woman loses her individuality and gives up her reasoning powers, but in all matters of the spirit, he is her head, as long as he is faithful and true to his head, and he is the final decision-maker in the home, as long as he does not abuse and/or neglect his wife and children.

It is no evidence of manliness in the husband for him to dwell constantly upon his position as head of the family. It does not increase respect for him to hear him quoting Scripture to sustain his claims to authority. It will not make him more manly to require his wife, the mother of his children, to act upon his plans as if they were infallible. The Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife to be her protector; he is the house-band of the family, binding the members together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Let every husband who claims to love God carefully study the requirements of God in his position. Christ's authority is exercised in wisdom, in all kindness and gentleness; so let the husband exercise his power and imitate the great Head of the church. (*The Adventist Home*, p. 215)

But even in the case of neglect and/or financial duress due to the misuse of funds by the husband, God offers sweet

consolations. Sister M's husband was an alcoholic, but we learn God tenderly watched over her and provided her with sweet attention from heavenly angels. When you are desponding because of difficulties beyond your control, think of Sister M. Her story is recorded in *Testimonies to the Church*, volume 2, pages 268–288, where we are told angels strengthened her when she was desponding, angels ministered to her and led her step-by-step up the rugged pathway, and angels whispered to her. Her health failed her and friends became few, and in this sad state of affairs, a friend, who had left Adventism and had joined a congregation of Shakers, tried to influence her to also become a Shaker, but Ellen White tells us angels were a wall of fire around her to protect her from the deceptive influences. Sister M was not aware of the arts of deception used against her, but the circle of light proceeding from the angels protected her, and darkness could not cloud the light they shed. Angels recorded her promise to serve God, and her prayers for her children in the Army were honored. When her children went into the Army, her prayers followed them, and they were wonderfully preserved from harm. Her children called it good luck, but we are told her prayers had much to do with their preservation.

In the workplace in the United States, equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work rules. It is the law, and here is where the Adventist Church may have stepped into a cauldron because they are employing over one hundred women in the United States to be pastors. The Seventh-day Adventist Corporation is a 501(c)(3) organization, and it would seem that the church could be required to abide by the laws requiring equal opportunity in employment, regardless of gender, since by acquiring a 501(c)(3) status, the church has acknowledged civil rule over it. (See *EEOC v. PPPA*.)

Point D: God uses men and women in his service, yes, but in areas of spiritual authority, God first looks for a godly man, and when he finds none, a woman may be called upon to fill the gap. Ellen White is an example; mothers with non-Christian husbands and church bodies with no adequate male leadership are also examples.

The Columbia Union Ad Hoc Committee also provided, as one of its reasons for the support of women's ordination, the following statement: "The General Conference Session on December 5, 1881, voted: 'RESOLVED, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.' Reported in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1881. It appears there was no record of any action taken" (<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2012/05/17/columbia-union-calls-constituency-meeting-vote-ordination>). We are sorry to say that this is not true. Anyone with Internet access can read the report printed in the December 20, 1881, issue of the *Review and Herald*, and if you were to do so, you would see that the resolution was not voted upon, although the wording in the General Conference minutes quoted in the

Ad Hoc Committee report may lead one to believe it was because the term *resolved* usually means, in such contexts, that a decision has been made by a formal vote. However, as one reviews the rest of the minutes, it becomes clear that in these minutes *resolved* does not have the meaning of a formal vote. It means, rather, that the subject came up for discussion, for it is very clear in the minutes on many other items thus presented that a specific vote was taken or an approval was given *after* the resolution was made. No such vote or approval was noted concerning this resolution; instead, the resolution was referred to the General Conference Committee. We can only assume this was to afford further study on this topic. Furthermore, if the ordination of women had been approved by the General Conference in 1881, then women would have been ordained—it's that simple—and no further discussion would have ever been needed on the subject. Elder William Fagal, then director of the White Estate branch office at Andrews University, reported the activity of this resolution correctly in an article entitled "Did Ellen White support the ordination of women?"

The Committee on Resolutions at the 1881 General Conference session introduced the following for consideration: "Resolved, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry." After discussion in which eight delegates spoke to the issue, the resolution was referred to the General Conference Committee. Referral to committee is a way to provide for more careful study of something on which the whole body is uncertain. It has also functioned at times as a means of dealing with something that will not pass, without having to vote it down. Though General Conference sessions were held yearly until 1889 (when they became biennial), neither the committee nor anyone else ever reintroduced the matter until recent years. Apparently the idea of ordaining women had little support in the church at that time. (William Fagal, *Ministry*, February 1989, p. 6)

Brothers and sisters, we believe that, through the ages, women have done a mighty work for God, and we also believe there is a great work for them to do in the closing scenes of earth's history. Just as the truth about the character of God is vital to understand for his people who are living on the brink of the return of Jesus, so is the truth about gospel order. We cannot afford to follow the religious world in stepping out of the beauty of what God has prescribed and into a gospel order of our own devising, no matter how righteous and just it may appear, for this cannot be honored of God, nor can it bring honor to God because it is contrary to his expressed will:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Dr. Darius Jankiewicz, at the 2012 Women Clergy Conference held in Berrien Springs, Michigan, stated that the "New Testament provides us with very little foundation for our

contemporary ordination practices and beliefs." And what, again, are the contemporary practices and beliefs held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Ordination is a setting apart of authorized representatives of the church to proclaim the gospel publicly, to administer ordinances, to organize new congregations, and to give direction to believers. (See *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Manual*, pages 84, 85.) Even though there is "very little foundation" in the New Testament for these practices, expansion of them is being accepted, as reported in these words of a woman who attended the 2012 Women Clergy Conference:

The conversation has changed. No longer must women working as pastors in local Seventh-day Adventist churches defend the validity of their role, exegete the challenging biblical passages, argue the appropriateness of their vocation in light of Adventist history, or humbly articulate their commitment to their congregations and their ability to be effective in pastoral ministry. At the recent North American Division Women Clergy Conference, April 23–26, 2012, the leaders of the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Department assumed all of the above without question. Acceptance of women in ministry was the new normal. In his final presentation to the group of approximately 120 ministers, President Dan Jackson repeated what had been said many times throughout the conference: "I want to thank each of you for responding to the call of God." The only issue now, it seemed, was just how to resolve the ordination issue in terms of church policy and governance. (Kendra Haloviak Valentine, associate professor of New Testament Studies at the HMS Richards Divinity School, La Sierra University, accessed at <http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2012/05/02/reflections-nad-women-clergy-conference>)

Chris Oberg, the first woman senior pastor of the La Sierra University Church, is included among the group of fourteen women scheduled to be ordained to the gospel ministry on October 6. Yes, the conversation has changed; yes, the ordination issue is being resolved for most people in the Pacific Union Conference, and it seems that, for many women, the grass has appeared greener on the other side of the ordination fence.

We see the push for ordination of women to be another attack of Satan that undermines the character of God and distorts and confuses people about his perfect plan of gospel order, and we do not want you to be misled by it. We may not like the plan, we may think we have wonderful talents and gifts (and we may) that we feel need to be officially recognized, but we need to use those gifts in the way that God has ordained, for only then can we expect the blessing of God on our work.

Onycha Holt

(The biblical doctrine of gospel order and of ordination will be discussed in Part 2.)

Youth's Corner – John, the Beloved

The name of the disciple John is one of the few whose memory clusters round the earthly life of the Son of God. As John studied the life of Christ, he beheld as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and he became changed from glory to glory, from character to character, until he was like him whom he adored. He imitated the life in which he delighted. He knew the Saviour by an experimental knowledge; his Master's lessons were graven on his soul. When he testified of the Saviour's grace, his simple language was eloquent with the love that pervaded his whole being.

As a witness for Christ, John entered into no controversy, no wearisome contention. He declared what he knew, what he had seen and heard. When insult was put upon Christ, John felt it to the very depths of his being. Christ had humbled himself; he had taken man's nature; but few could see him as John saw him. For John the darkness had passed away. On him the true Light was shining.

It was John's deep love for Christ that led him always to desire to be close by his side; and this place was always given him. Jesus loves those who represent the Father, and John could talk of God's love as none of the other disciples could. He revealed to his fellow men that which he felt it to be his duty to reveal, representing in his character the character of God. The glory of the Lord was expressed in his face. The beauty of holiness, which had transformed him, shone with a Christlike radiance from his countenance.

The life and character of Christ stood out before the world in sharp contrast with the life and character of the professedly religious rulers of the nation. His life of purity condemned their life of selfishness and iniquity. And their jealousy and hatred of him were intense. "The world is gone after him," they declared, and they determined to rid themselves of him. At his trial they hired false witnesses to testify against him. When Barabbas was placed by the side of Christ, and Pilate asked, "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas? or Jesus, which is called Christ?" the mob, stirred to a pitch of frenzy by the priests and rulers, cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas." "What shall I do then with Jesus?" Pilate asked. And they answered, "Let him be crucified." The thief and murderer was released; while the Son of God, free from even the taint of sin, was condemned to die. Evil angels, under their leader, Satan, were the unseen agencies in this work. It was they who inspired the priests and rulers with the spirit of rebellion.

Christ was crucified; but he rose from the dead, appeared to his disciples, and ascended to heaven, escorted by myriads of heavenly beings. At the Father's throne he received the assurance that his sacrifice was accepted, and that the world that had been divorced from God by sin, was drawn across the gulf. Receiving Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour, man might become an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ; "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John's testimony in regard to the life, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ was clear and forcible. Out of the abundance of a heart overflowing with love for the Saviour he spoke, and no power could stay his words. With power he bore witness that Christ was a risen Saviour. "That which was from the beginning," he writes, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

If we study the epistles of John, we shall see why it was that this disciple could not be left in his old age to live in peace among his brethren. To please the Jews the Romans had crucified Christ, and they now sought still further to please them by placing John where his voice could not be heard by Jew or Gentile. Thinking to silence his voice, his enemies cast him into a caldron of boiling oil. But his testimony was not stayed. Like his Master, John patiently submitted to every attempt to put him to death; and the faithful servant was preserved as were the three worthies in the fiery furnace. As the words were spoken, "Thus perish all who believe in that deceiver, Jesus Christ of Nazareth," John declared: "My Master patiently submitted to all that Satan and his angels could devise to humiliate and torture him. He gave his life to save the world. He died that we might live. I am honored in being permitted to suffer for his sake. I am a weak, sinful man; Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin and sinners. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." These words of the disciple had an influence, and he was removed from the caldron by the very ones who had cast him in.

Again the enemies of the truth sought to silence the voice of the faithful witness, and John was banished to the Isle of Patmos. Here, they thought, he could no longer trouble Israel, or the wicked rulers of the world, and he must finally die from hardship and distress. But John made friends and converts even here.

To outward appearance the enemies of truth were triumphing, but God's hand was moving unseen in the darkness. God permitted his faithful servant to be placed where Christ could give him a more wonderful revelation of himself. He placed him where he could receive the most precious truth for the enlightenment of the churches. He placed him in solitude, that his ear and heart might be more fully sanctified to receive the truth. The Lord was preparing John to endure hatred and scorn for the sake of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The man who exiled John was not released from responsibility in the matter. But he became the instrument in the hands of God to carry out his eternal purpose; and the very effort to extinguish light placed the truth in bold relief.

John was deprived of the society of his brethren, but no man could deprive him of the light and revelation of Christ. A great

light was to shine from Christ to his servant. The Lord watched over his banished disciple, and gave him a wonderful revelation of himself. Richly favored was this beloved disciple. With the other disciples he had traveled with Jesus, learning of him and feasting on his words. His head had often rested on his Saviour's bosom. But he must see him also in Patmos. God and Christ and the heavenly host were John's companions on the lonely isle; and from them he received instruction that he imparted to those separated with him from the world. There he wrote out the visions and revelations he received from God, telling of the things that would take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history. When his voice could no longer witness to the truth, when he could no longer testify of the One he loved and served, the messages given to him on that rocky, barren coast were to go forth as a lamp that burneth. Every nation, kindred, tongue, and people would learn the sure purpose of the Lord, not concerning the Jewish nation merely, but concerning every nation upon the earth.

The Sabbath, which God had instituted in Eden, was as precious to John on the lonely isle as when he was with his companions in the cities and towns. The precious promises that Christ had given regarding this day he repeated and claimed as his own. It was the sign to him that God was his; for God had declared: "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. . . . Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever."

On the Sabbath day the risen Saviour made his presence known to John. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," he writes, "and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send to the seven churches. . . . And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore."

The persecution of John became a means of grace. Patmos was made resplendent with the glory of a risen Saviour. John had seen Christ in human form, with the marks of the nails, which will ever be his glory, in his hands and his feet. Now he was permitted again to behold his risen Lord, clothed with as much glory as a human being could behold, and live. What a Sabbath was that to the lonely exile, always precious in the sight of Christ, but now more than ever exalted! Never had he learned so much of Jesus. Never had he heard such exalted truth.

The appearance of Christ to John should be to all, believers and unbelievers, an evidence that we have a risen Christ. It should give living power to the church. At times dark clouds surround God's people. It seems as if oppression and

persecution would extinguish them. But at such times the most instructive lessons are given. Christ often enters prisons, and reveals himself to his chosen ones. He is in the fire with them at the stake. As in the darkest night the stars shine the brightest, so the most brilliant beams of God's glory are revealed in the deepest gloom. The darker the sky, the more clear and impressive are the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the risen Saviour. (Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor*, March 2 and April 5, 1900)

Sabbath School Quarterly Comments

Please take time to read the enclosed comments booklet, as it contains valuable information about Seventh-day Adventist doctrine and the history of its development, as well as pertinent comments on the current Adult Sabbath School materials. We have purposely shortened this issue of *Old Paths* to allow for a larger comments booklet.

YouTube Channel: Like many other people, we have had a YouTube account for a few years, but we recently received allowance from YouTube to post videos longer than fifteen minutes. This allows us to post whole sermons, as well as shorter presentations. We have just started posting recently, but we hope to have more up soon. Our URL is: http://www.youtube.com/user/swiftkayak?feature=results_main.

Allen Stump



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