

A Study of the Seven Churches – Part VI of a Seven-Part Series

The Church in Philadelphia

Study for the Month of January, 2007

By Nathaniel Fajardo

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL !!

We greet all of you a Happy and Prosperous New Year. May you also include in your list of New Year's Resolutions a plan to try to commit to memory and/or diligently study and put into daily practice the soul-saving precepts and principles taught in the following Scriptures:

Exodus 20: 1-17 (compare to Deut 5:6-22). The Ten Commandments--the transcript of God's character; the standard by which all shall be mercifully and righteously judged; the Biblical summary defining our whole duty to God and our fellowmen; the law that governs heaven and the entire universe; and when written in the heart and mind, is the new covenant.

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13. Defines *agape* love, the only love that will conquer all sin for it hates sin but loves the sinner. Without this love reigning supreme in the heart, no one can be saved.

John 17: 1- 26. The creed of the members of the remnant church—to become one even as the Godhead is one--"that the world may believe that God sent His Son to this world."

Eph. 6: 12-14. The goal of the Gospel--its "length, breadth, depth and height" is "to be filled with all the fullness of God." Contemplate often on this awesome goal and strive for it!

Psalms 51: 1-19. How a new heart is created in fallen man; how he is "born of water and the baptism of the Spirit with fire." Compare to Matt. 3:11, 12; John 3: 1-13; Rom. 6: 1-23; 8: 1-14.

Psalms 91: 1-16. The special protection promised to those who will be sealed in the near future and will live through the seven last plagues, after the close of human probation.

Rev. 14:6-12. The three angels' messages: the last message of mercy and warning entrusted to the remnant church to be proclaimed to the world. Compare to Acts 3:19; Rev. 18: 1-14.

Daniel 8:14. - This is the scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and central pillar of the advent movement (GC 409). It forms the foundation of the study of "the sanctuary in connection with the 2300-days, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus that are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our *present* position is, *establish* the faith of the doubting, give certainty to the glorious *future*" (EW 63).

Read or review at least two Spirit of Prophecy books for the year, such as: "Adventist Home," "Child Guidance," "The Desire of Ages," "Great controversy," "Patriarchs & Prophets," "Prophets & Kings," "Acts of the Apostles," "Ministry of Healing," "Counsels on Diet & Foods," "Counsels on Health," "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," "Christ's Object Lessons," "Steps to Christ," "Education," "Evangelism," "Early Writings," "Testimonies to Ministers," "Testimonies for the Church, Volumes 1-9," etc. The Holy Spirit was promised in order to teach and bring all things to remembrance to all those who "ask, seek, and knock" for the Holy Spirit! John 14:26; 15: 26; 16: 7-14; Luke 11:5-13.

I urge every Sabbath-keeper, particularly the youth and the new converts, to focus your reading and studies on these Bible subjects at the outset of this year because:

- They are “present, sealing truths,” the testing truths of these last days.
- The Spirit of Prophecy books recommended provide invaluable assistance in understanding these subjects.
- Greater blessings are promised to those who pursue these studies diligently.

The urgency for doing so is stated in the following quote [emphasis mine]: **See 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5: 12-14; 6:1 first.**

“It is too late in the day to feed with milk [of the gospel]. If souls *a month or two old in the truth*, who are about to enter the time of trouble such as never was [Dan. 12:1], cannot hear all the straight truth, or endure the strong meat of the of the straightness of the way, how will they stand in the day of battle? Truths that we have been *years* learning must be learned in *a few months* by those who *now* embrace the *third angel’s message*. . . . There is no need of milk after souls are convinced of the truth. As soon as the conviction of truth is yielded to and the heart willing, the truth should have its effect, the truth will work like leaven, and purify and purge away the passions of the natural heart.

It is a disgrace for those who have been in the truth for years to talk of feeding souls who have been months in the truth, upon milk. It shows they know little of the leadings of the Spirit of the Lord, and realize not the time we are living in. Those who embrace the truth now will have to **step fast**. There will have to be a breaking up of the heart before the Lord, a rending of the heart, and not the garment.” – *Manuscript 1*, Feb. 12, 1854.

This New Year, 2007, brings us one year closer to “the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1). We are inching closer each day towards “the early time of trouble,” i.e., if we have not yet entered into its *earliest* stages already. Look at the rapidly-deteriorating world condition around you *in every level of society*. The only place left uncorrupted today is the sanctified hearts of God’s people. Even the very air we breathe is filled with poisonous miasma and reeks with “rebellion and apostasy.”

Pray that: (a) you will not be overwhelmed, discouraged, disheartened, desensitized, or acclimatized--I don’t know which of them is a worse evil (pick your poison, as some would say),--by the non-stop barrage of moral corruption, deception, violence, strife, and death that our senses are daily bombarded with (b) our conscience will remain tender and “unseared” lest it become calloused and hardened against the workings of the Holy Spirit (c) our spiritual discernment will become even quicker and sharper to immediately spot and avoid areas, situations, and individuals who will cause us to stumble and fall later—there is so little probation time left to be bungling around (c) we will become “wise as serpents yet harmless as doves” as we approach that time when acquired Biblical wisdom and the indwelling peace of Christ’s righteousness alone will stand unmoved in the storm and tempest that is coming upon all.

Recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21; 17: 22-37 are the sure signs Jesus said would precede His second coming. Not only is our physical universe undergoing increasing upheavals in earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, tornadoes, blizzards, melting of the icecaps, conflagrations, droughts, floods, outbreak of diseases in pandemic proportions; terrible accidents by air, land, and sea –in lines of travel and centers of human activity--are multiplying rapidly. Moreover, **“the nations are angry.”**

The “wars and rumors of war, nation rising up against nation and kingdom against kingdom” are escalating every year on destruction-bound earth. Multi-awardee Kevin Sites, in “Hot Zone: Backpack Journalism for the New Millenium’ (yahoo.com), lists in his “Scheduled Conflict Coverage,” the following current nations and areas of conflict: Afgahnistan, Cambodia, Chechnya, Colombia, Congo, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Kashmir, Israel/Palestinians, Lebanon, 2006 Mideast Crisis, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Vietnam. His “Hot Zone Watchlist” includes the following: Algeria, Angola, Burrundi, Chad, Ivory Coast, Korean Peninsula, Liberia, Nigeria, Peru, The Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe.

This list, which cannot but increase in the days ahead, focuses on “the kingdoms of this world.” But underneath all these seething cauldrons of political, economic, and military conflicts sizzle the fires fuelled by *religious* strife—no, not between “Christianity and Democracy” versus Moslem religious extremism” so conveniently macro-labeled “terrorists,” but the spiritual cosmic conflict of the ages between Christ and Satan and their respective followers and agencies on earth.

With all the multiplying confusion and warring factions, at the end of time, however, only two classes will remain. Every person born into this world since the time of Adam who lived up to the age of accountability, will be permanently recorded in the books of heaven, of which there are no false entries, as either belonging to one class or the other.

“There are only two classes. Each party is directly stamped, either with the seal of the living God, or with the mark of the beast, or his image. Each son or daughter of Adam chooses Christ or Satan as his general. All who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are under Satan’s black banner and stand charged with rejecting and despitefully using Jesus Christ. They are charged with deliberately crucifying the Lord of life and glory.” –*Manuscript* 40, 1897 (see SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 227, 242-3; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 415-18.

And now we return to our study topic for this first month of the New Year 2007!

THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.” Rev. 3:7.

Historical Background

“Philadelphia. A word meaning ‘brotherly love.’ This city was founded before 138 B.C. and was name for Attalus II Philadelphius of Pergamum in honor of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, who had preceded him on the throne. After a damaging earthquake in A.D. 17 it was rebuilt by the Roman emperor Tiberius, but remained comparatively small. It was situated some 30 miles southeast of Sardis.”- *“Footnotes,” E.G. Comprehensive Commentary on Revelation*, vol. 2, p. 592.

Dr. John D. Davies says that Philadelphia was:

“A city of Lydia, In Asia Minor. . . in the plain of the Ilermus. It was built by Attalus Philadelphius, on a part of mount Tmolus. . . It was the seat of one of the seven churches of Asia addressed in the Book of Revelation (1: 11; 3: 7-13). Unlike most of the seven, it receives commendation and encouragement, unmixed with censure. It is now called Allah Sher, and continues to be inhabited. The walls of the ancient city, which

are still standing, enclose several hills, with the remains of a temple and other buildings.”- “*A Dictionary of the Bible, Fourth Revised Edition*, Westminster Press, PA, 1942.

Halley’s Bible Hand Book of the New International Version (Zondervan), p. 924 says:

“Philadelphia was a Lydian city founded by Attalus Philadelphius (159-138 B.C.). The city was an outpost of Hellenism in Anatolia. It lies in a broad, low, easily defended hill, which explains why Philadelphia was the last city of Asia Minor to fall to the Turks in A.D. 1390. The district is disastrously seismic, and the great earthquake of A.D. 17 that also hit Sardis ruined it completely. Place right above the fault, Philadelphia was tormented for 20 years by recurrent quakes after the disaster of A.D. 17. This may be the basis of imagery of Revelation 3:2 [‘a pillar,’ ‘go no more out,’ ‘a new name’]. **The ‘new name’ is certainly a reference to the proposal to rename the city Neocaesaria in gratitude for Tiberius’s generous earthquake relief.** The district was vine-growing and a center, in consequence, of the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine and intoxication.”

The foregoing information was placed in a box, while in the lower portion of the same page it adds that:

“A ‘new name’ seemed to refer to unimaginable joys to be realized in heaven. Here, he that overcomes will receive God’s own name. It is a sign of ownership and a mark of citizenship. In the same way, followers of the beast receive the mark of their master (Rev. 13: 16, 17). Each of us belongs either to the Lord or to the **beast.**” – *Ibid.*

Not having “the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10) in their midst, as only the remnant church of prophecy does, this authoritative source used as reference by ministers, pastors, and Bible students of mainstream Christianity, misses wide of the mark of both the context and spiritual meaning of what “the new name” refers to! Confused, they say that this “new name” refers to “unimaginable joys to be realized in heaven,” and then add that it also refers to “God’s name” that “the overcomer will receive.” Which is which?

While their statement that “each of us belongs either to the Lord or to the beast” is scripturally sound, particularly after the “mark of the beast” has been enacted and enforced, their interpretation of who the “beast” of Revelation 13 is, also misses wide of the mark as well! The prophecies of Daniel clearly explain that “beasts” refer to empires, nations, and kingdoms---not individuals! Notice what they say:

“One of the heads of the beast *seemed* [original italics] to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed’ (Rev. 13:3). It comes as no surprise that Satan, the great imitator, orchestrated ‘the death and resurrection’ of the Antichrist. A cheap imitation, indeed, but the ‘whole world was astonished and followed the beast.’ *How easily people are deceived if they don’t know the truth found in God’s Word!*

“To the **preterist** interpreter, **this first beast is the old Roman Empire**, whose mission was to persecute the church. The **futurist** interpreter believes that this beast (the Antichrist) is **a literal man** who will rise to political power in a revived Roman Empire and will continue as a world power for 42 [literal] months. He will blaspheme the name of God and will be given power by Satan to make war on the saints (God’s true believers)—but the rest of the world (those whose names are not written in the Book of Life) will worship **the demon-possessed politician**. It will be a time of trouble the like of which the world has never known. At the end of this 3¹/₂ [literal] years of terror, Christ will return to reclaim His dominion of the earth from Satan.” – *Ibid*, p. 944.

It is correct to point out the fearful truth that “How easily people are deceived if they don’t know the truth found in God’s Word.” But there is an even more fearful truth, however. Those who have a wider reach and a greater clout of influence---as the writers and editors of Halley’s Bible Handbook are—become even greater deceivers themselves, perhaps ignorantly but certainly not innocently, when they pass off as gospel truth erroneous interpretations of the Bible, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. This they do by presenting two views that are diametrically opposed to each

other, preterism vs. futurism, but both united against the true interpretation as to who the beast and the “man of sin” is, -- the papacy! Such duality serves only to further confuse the honest yet credulous searcher for truth

The True Historical Application

“When the **historical application** is made, the message to Philadelphia made be thought of as appropriate to **the various movements within Protestantism during the latter years of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th** whose objective it was to make religion a vital, personal affair (see on v.2; see Additional Note on chapter 2 of our past study). **In a special way the great evangelical and advent movements in Europe and the United States restored the spirit of brotherly love and stressed practical godliness in contrast with the forms of religion.** Revived faith in the saving grace of Christ and in the nearness of His return resulted in a deeper spirit of Christian fellowship than the church had experienced since the early days of the Reformation.”- *“Footnotes,” An Exhaustive E.G. White Commentary on Revelation*, Vol. 2, p. 592 (emphasis mine).

I thank and praise God for this scripturally-sound and historically-correct interpretation of who the “Philadelphian church” of Revelation refers to in the train of the Christian church history since after Pentecost! In the early 1990s, after reading some of the early publications of the pioneers of the Advent movement, I prematurely arrived at the conclusion that the true church of the last days would be “Philadelphia,” and would be made up of those who “come out of the apostate Laodicean Church.”

Such a narrow interpretation was a result of my lack of spiritual maturity and limited understanding of “who the true remnant church is.” After continuing research, I realized my mistake and abandoned my former thinking and position, humbly asking the Lord for forgiveness. He knew I was earnestly searching for advancing truth (and still do with much greater joy and freedom since then!), and that it was part of my education to pass through such humiliating yet cathartic experiences that would help to expand my spiritual lateral vision so indispensable to correctly interpreting the other subjects of “present, sealing truth” what would naturally unfold in the years following!

NOTE: An invaluable contributor to my awakening was the study I got into on the three kinds of love, namely, *eros*, *philos*, and *agape*. It quickly pointed out to me that to settle for *philos*, the brotherly love of which the Philadelphian church was known for, was to settle for *less* than God’s requirement for His church is,—the John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 13 *agape* love—the one that unites, not divides! See John 17. This is the *only* love that the *saved church* will possess—one that “loves and forgives one’s enemies unconditionally” while “hating sin with perfect hatred,” as Jesus did; one that “is not puffed up nor easily provoked,” is not self-righteous or fanatical but calm, kind, patient, merciful, and courteous, particularly to the enemies of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” It is this love alone that compels and that conquers all—the very one described in Rom. 8: 35-39!

“He that is holy, He that is true.” – “This title is equivalent to ‘the Holy One,’ used of God in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:25; Hab. 3:3). In the New Testament a similar ascription is applied repeatedly to Christ, implying His deity (see Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27; cf. on John 6:69). **True** is the Greek *alethinos*, meaning, “genuine,” “real,” in contrast with false gods.”- *Ibid.*

“Key of David.” – “This verse applies to Isaiah’s prophecy concerning Eliakim, to Christ (Isa. 22:20-22; see 2 Kings 18:18). Eliakim was appointed to have supervision ‘over the household’ of David, as signified by the fact that he was to be given ‘the key of the house of David.’ Christ’s possession of the ‘key’ represents His jurisdiction over the church and over the divine purpose to be achieved through it (see Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22). Compare Rev. 5:5; 22:16; see on Matt. 1:1.”- *Ibid*, pp. 592-3.

“He that openeth.” – “That is, with the ‘key of David.’ Christ has full authority to open and to shut, to carry the plan of redemption forward to success.”- *Ibid*, p. 593.

“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee and open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and has not denied My name.” Rev. 3:8.

“An open door.”- “In the preceding verse Christ is said to have ‘the key of David.’ Verse 8 may imply that with that ‘key’ He now opens before the Philadelphia church is a ‘door’ of unlimited opportunity for personal victory in the struggle with sin, and for bearing witness to the saving truth of the gospel. For similar uses of the ‘door’ as a symbol of opportunity see Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3.”-*Ibid*, p. 598.

“Seventh-day Adventists hold that the close of the Philadelphia period (in 1844) marks the beginning of the investigative judgment described in Dan. 7:10; Rev. 14: 6, 7 (see comment there). Christ is our great high priest (Heb. 4:14, 15; 8:1), ministering in the sanctuary above, ‘the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man’ (Heb. 8:2, 6; cf. Exo. 25:8, 9). Now, the ritual of the earthly sanctuary consisted essentially of two parts, the *daily* service of ministration for sin, in the *holy place*, and the *yearly* service, on the Day of Atonement, which was considered a day of judgment, in the *most holy place* (see Heb. 9:1; 6, 7; see on Dan. 8: 11, 14). In view of the fact that the earthly sanctuary served as an ‘example and shadow of heavenly things’ (Heb. 8:5) it is proper to conclude that the daily and yearly services of the earthly sanctuary have their counterpart in the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.” - *Ibid*, p. 598.

“No man can shut.”- This refers to a spiritual “shut door” which some of the early Advent believers thought to be the close of probation on those that rejected the first angel’s message (also known as the judgment hour message or the “midnight cry” given in the summer of 1844). What it really means, however, is explained in the following:

“To speak in terms of the symbolism of the earthly sanctuary, which was ‘a copy of the true one’ (Heb. 9:23, RSV): On the *antitypical* day of atonement, beginning in 1844, our Great High Priest may be thought of as leaving the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and entering the most holy place. Accordingly, the ‘shut door’ would be that of the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and the ‘open door’ that of the most holy place where Christ has been engaged in the work of the great antitypical day of atonement since that time (see GC 430, 431, 435; EW 42). **In other words, the ‘shut door’ indicates the closing of the first phase of Christ’s heavenly ministry, and the ‘open door’ the beginning of the second phase.** For a discussion of the ‘shut door’ in early Adventist teaching see L.E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. 4, pp. 829-842; F.D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 161-252. For a summary of the sanctuary doctrine see Additional Note on Heb. 10).” - *Ibid*.

“No man can shut” also means that “Christ will carry forward the work of redemption until it is complete.” No one in heaven or earth neither all the evil hosts of angels and wicked men on earth united in desperation, can ever frustrate much less prevent our omnipotent God from finishing what He begun! And it will be an eternally, glorious triumphant issue although now it appears that God has been defeated by Satan in deceiving the whole world--except for a very small remnant!

“A little strength.” – “Or simply, ‘little strength.’

“Of all the **great religious movements** since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human imperfection and the wiles of Satan than was that of the **autumn of 1844**. Even now, after the lapse of many years, all who shared in that movement and who have stood firm upon the platform of truth still feel the holy influence of that **blessed work** and bear witness that it was of God.” - *Great Controversy*, p. 401.

“It is not clear whether Christ is here reproving the Philadelphia church for having so little strength, or commending them for having ‘some strength.’ Except for a ‘few’ in Sardis, that church was all but ‘dead,’ and

it may be that the 'little strength' of Philadelphia represents a more encouraging situation than that in Sardis [see last month's study on Sardis]. The fact that the 'little strength' is so closely connected with the commendation for heeding Christ's Word and not denying His name tends to confirm this conclusion. Also, the 'open door' may be thought of as an invitation to enter into an experience of even *greater strength*. The church in Philadelphia was apparently neither large or influential, but it was pure and faithful."- *Ibid*.

"The Philadelphia period of church history, with its increased attention to God's Word, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation, and to personal godliness, represented a much more encouraging picture than the preceding period [the Sardis period]."- *Ibid*.

What diligent students of prophecy should be magnifying on when studying the Philadelphian church, are the following:

- It describes the great religious movement and the work accomplished during the autumn of 1844.
- It represents "*increased attention to God's word, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, and to personal godliness.*"

These are the special qualities that the Philadelphian condition represent and exemplify, and thus is the message and lesson particularly applicable to us today. But while they are essential, and in fact, indispensable for the work of preparing to receive the seal of God, in and of themselves alone they do not replace or supersede the Biblical definition of who the remnant church of prophecy is

To insist that "the Philadelphian church is the true church of the last days" (and kindred errors), as a few still do, in spite of the overwhelming scriptural evidence to the contrary, is to:

(a) Destroy the harmony of the prophetic depiction of the Christian church as it goes through *only seven* successive conditions – Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—no more, no less, and in this pre-ordained perfect order. Why? "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Cor. 14: 33. Order is heaven's first law (CH 101; 6T 201); God is a God of order" (PP 376; 2 SM 476), and is the "law of heaven" (4T 142).

(b) Indulge in rebellion and stubbornness against God's Word, as well as "making of none effect the testimony of God" which is "Satan's last deception" (see 1 SM 48; 2SM 78). Notice what the Word compares this to: "For rebellion is a the sin of *witchcraft*, and stubbornness is as *iniquity* and *idolatry*" (1 Sam. 15:23, NKJV). God's servant expands the latter to include "**the idol of man's opinion**," a more deceptive form of idolatry since many who are victims of this particular error have long dispensed with *physical images for worship made up* of wood, stone, or precious metals. The "idol of man's opinion" is further identified as a "sin most nearly hopeless and incurable" (see 7T 199-200, etc). Saul and the Pharisees stubbornly persisted in it and eventually committed the unpardonable sin. Worse, those deceived, deceive others, and they still others!

Again, this is not saying that those deceived by this particular error do not love God or His Word. Nothing can be farther from that! It only reveals how delusive the temptations and deceptions of Satan are for these last days "knowing his time is short" (Rev. 12:12). He has "invented unnumbered schemes" (GC 488) of temptations and deceptions designed to hit *our* weakest points of moral character that have not yet been overcome "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony." And yet all of us can take heart in the following promise with its accompanying provisions (emphasis mine):

“Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived, who shun to the self-denial and sacrifice [of self-opinion] demanded by the truth; **but it is impossible for him to hold under his power one soul who honestly desires, at whatever cost, to know the truth.** Christ is the truth and the ‘Light,; which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ John 1:9. The Spirit of truth has been sent to guide men into all truth. And upon the authority of the Son of God it is declared: ‘Seek, and ye shall find.’ ‘If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.’ Matt. 7:7; John 7:17.”- *Great Controversy*, p. 528.

“And has kept My word.”- God’s word expresses His will; His will is an expression of His thoughts, character, love, power, and authority.

Q. How has and does God reveal His will?

A. God has revealed His will through six agencies, namely, [1] through nature, also through [2] His prophets and apostles, [3] by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to the human heart, [4] through the experiences of life, [5] through the course of human history, [6] and preeminently through Christ.”- *Ibid.*

“And has not denied My name.” – What denying Christ means for us today is explained in the following quote (emphasis mine):

“He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possess Christlike meekness and love, they are not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, what ever the profession. Men may deny Christ by [1] evil-speaking, by [2] foolish-talking, by [3] words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by [4] shunning life’s burdens, by the [5] pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by [6] conforming to the world, by [7] uncourteous behavior, by the [8] love of their own opinions, by [9] justifying self, by [10] cherishing doubt, [11] borrowing trouble, and [12] dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is in not in them. And ‘whosoever shall deny Me before men,’ He says, ‘him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.’ Matt. 10:33.”- *Desire of Ages*, p. 357.

All should be thoroughly familiar with this comprehensive list (which I titled “The Dirty Dozen” in a previous study), if we truly desire to know for sure whether Christ is dwelling *in* us or not! It is so revealing that it is scary!

“Never was there a time when this warning was more appropriate than at the present time. Far too large a number of professed Christians are Christians only in name. They have no root in themselves. Their hearts are filled with *pride, impurity, unholy ambition, self-importance, and love of supremacy.* They may have an intelligent knowledge of the theory of the truth, and prove their doctrines to be sound and Scriptural, but they hold the truth in unrighteousness. **By their course of action they deny the Savior.**” – *Review & Herald*, Nov. 28, 1899.

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Rev. 3: 9.

“The synagogue of Satan.”- Synagogue in Greek means “an assembly.” But it applies to several other things such as “a Jewish place of worship. . . . The building also served for a local law court and school”. . . . *“Punishment ordered by the authorities of the synagogue was inflicted in the building, possibly in some chamber (Matt. 10:17; Acts 22:19).”*- Dr. John Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 4th Revised Edition, Westminster Press, PA, 1942.

The nature of the great controversy of the ages between Christ and Satan that begun in heaven and was continued on earth with the fall of man, is the only way to interpret this topic. Therefore, in the spiritual sense as in the type-antitype correlation, the “synagogue of Satan” applies to a broad base of applications covering the past, present, and future. In general Apostle Paul defines it as “principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12), i.e., the hosts of Satan, both evil angels and evil men in confederacy. It also refers to counterfeit religion and worship and the vast assemblages for this purpose; apostate churches that have done away with God’s law; human centers of authority—religious, civil, and legal, including the academic, that would eventually have the joint power to inflict penalties and punishments as deemed necessary by these institutions against those perceived to be its enemies. Paul further styles them as “children of disobedience and darkness,” in contrast to the faithful and obedient followers of Christ called “the children of light,” all orchestrated under the masterful direction of Satan in his desperate war against God’s law, His government, and His faithful followers on earth, particularly against the remnant church of prophecy.

The various yet comprehensive applications of the “synagogue of Satan” are delineated in the following quotes (emphasis mine):

“Those who love and keep the commandments of God are most obnoxious to **the synagogue of Satan, and the powers of evil** will manifest their hatred toward them to the fullest extent possible. John foresaw the conflict between the remnant church and the power of evil, and said, “The **dragon** was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ’ [Rev. 12 17; cf. 19:10]. **The forces of darkness will unite with human agents who have given themselves over to the control of Satan,** and the same scenes that were exhibited at the trial, rejection, and crucifixion of Christ will be revived. **Through yielding to Satanic influences, men will be transformed into fiends; and those who were created in the image of God who were formed to honor and glorify their Creator, will become the habitation of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his masterpiece of evil,---men who reflect his own image.**” -- *Review & Herald*, Apr. 14, 1896.

“Where this [the proper education of children in the home by their parents] is neglected, **Satan** early takes the children into **his school**, and teaches them his hellish arts. Jesus spoke of the **synagogue of Satan**. He has a **religion** that he teaches, and those who learn in his school soon reveal the fact that he is their teacher. **Satan is watching to catch the children through the neglect of the parents.** One disobedient child will do great harm to those with whom he associates; for he will fashion other children after his own pattern.”- *Review & Herald*, Mar. 13, 1894.

“Could Satan have caused the Son of the infinite God to become in the least degree a partaker of his own hellish attributes, then Satan would have wounded the head of Christ [cf. Gen. 3:15], and in hellish exultation he would have triumphed over Him, and the world would have remained his dominion, the human family his slaves, the synagogue of Satan would have been victorious, and man would have perished, without God and without hope. Satan could cause pain to the Son of God, but he could not force Him to transgress the law of God. He could cause Him to suffer, but he could not defile Him. He did make the Savior’s life one of sorrow and affliction; but Jesus patiently endured grief, for He knew that through His conflict with **the powers of darkness**, the chains of Satan could be broken from the human family, and he would place them on vantage ground before God.” - *Signs of the Times*, Mar. 26, 1894.

“Those in the **synagogue of Satan will profess to be converted** and, unless God’s servants have keen eyesight, they will not discern the working of the powers of darkness.”- *Letter 98*, June 19, 1901.

“The so-called **Christian world** is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. **Men in authority** will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. **Babylon** will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. **Every nation will be involved.** Of this time John declares [Rev. 18:3-7 quoted]. [Rev. 17: 13, 14 quoted]. **‘These have one mind.’ There will be one universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan’s forces.** ‘And shall give their power and strength unto the beast.’ Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism. **In the warfare to be waged in the last days, there will be united in opposition to God’s people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from the allegiance to the law of Jehovah.** In this warfare **the Sabbath** of the fourth commandment will be the great point of issue, for in the Sabbath commandment the Lawgiver identifies Himself as the Creator of heaven and earth.”- *Manuscript 24*, 1891.

“I have a word of warning to my brethren: [Rev. 3: 6-11 quoted-- Philadelphia church]. The same spirit is seen today that is represented in Rev. 6:6-8. History is to be reenacted. That which has been will be again. This spirit works to confuse and perplex. *Dissension will be seen in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and those who have not had the spirit to follow the light God has given in His living oracles, through His appointed agencies, will become confused. Their judgment will reveal weakness.* **Disorder and strife and confusion will be seen in the church [the synagogue of Satan].** The same spirit that controls the nations of the earth is working upon the minds of those who have had light. As the children of disobedience, irrespective of consequences, they act like the blind. They are drunken but not with strong drink [See Isa. 29:9 cf. Rev. 14:8; 18: 2, 3]. – *Letter 65*, Aug. 23, 1898.

“Which say are Jews, and are not, but lie.” – Jews here is figurative, not literal in the sense that Christians now are sometimes described as “Israel.” See Rom. 2:28, 29; 9: 6, 7; Gal. 3: 28, 29; 1 Pet. 2:9. As here used, the term no doubt refers to those who claim to serve God, but actually serve Satan.”

“To substitute external forms of religion for holiness of heart and life is still as pleasing to the **unrenewed nature** as it was in the days of the Jewish teachers. **Today, as then, there are false spiritual guides,** to whose doctrines many listen eagerly. It is Satan’s studied effort to divert minds from the hope of salvation through faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God. In every age the archenemy adapts his temptations to the prejudices or inclinations of those whom he is seeking to deceive. **In apostolic times he led the Jews to exalt the ceremonial law and reject Christ; at the present time he induces many professing Christians, under pretense of honoring Christ, to cast contempt on the moral law and teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity.**”- *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 387.

“I will make them to come and worship at thy feet.” The “Footnotes,” “*An Exhaustive E.G. White Commentary on Revelation*, Vol.2, p. 601 correctly points out that:

“The sequence of thought---‘come,’ ‘worship,’ ‘know’ seems to imply more than that the Christians of ancient Philadelphia would ultimately triumph over their Jewish opponents. For Christians, like pagan conquerors, to rejoice at the prospect of their accusers finally lying prostrate before their feet hardly seems to reflect the spirit of true Christianity. Rather [historically], these words may refer to the conversion of some of the Jews of Philadelphia (cf. 1 Cor. 14: 24, 25) who would learn of God’s love by personal experience. Such a growth in membership may result from the ‘open door’ of Rev. 3:8 and the loyalty of the church to God’s ‘word.’ Such loyalty has often brought conviction even to the hearts of persecutors themselves [as in the experience of Paul in the martyrdom of Stephen].

Applied to the Philadelphia of church history, this expression may be considered as applicable to those who do not keep pace with advancing truth and oppose Christians who do. Thus understood, reference may be to the [future] time when those who have rejected truth publicly confess their error (see GC 655).

The words ‘come and worship before thy feet’ are from the LXX of Isa. 60:14 (cf. Ch. 49:23). As strangers were to have come to literal Israel of old to learn of God. . . ., so non-Christians were to come to the light of the gospel and find salvation. . . .

Rev. 3: 9 has also been applied to those who persist in opposition to the truth, particularly to the time when circumstances will compel them, though unrepentant, to acknowledge that those who have been loyal

to truth are indeed God's people. There is nothing to preclude the possibility that the statement of this verse may include both the repentant and the unrepentant opponents of the truth, with the one group making the acknowledgement in sincerity and the other only because circumstances compel them to do so."

"I saw that the **priests** who are leading on their flocks to death are soon to be arrested in their dreadful career. The plagues of God are coming, but it will not be sufficient for the false shepherds to be tormented with one or two of these plagues. God's hand **at that time** [during the time of the falling of the 7 last plagues still in the near future] will be stretched out still in wrath and justice and will not be brought [back] to Himself until His purposes are fully accomplished, **and the hireling priests are led to worship at the feet of the saints**, and to acknowledge that God has loved them because they held fast the truth and kept God's commandments, and until all the unrighteous one are destroyed from the earth." - *Early Writings*, p. 124.

[This takes place after the close of human probation while the 7 last plagues are already falling]. -- "Ministers and people see that they have not sustained the right relation to God. They see that they have rebelled against the Author of all just and righteous law. The setting aside of the divine precepts gave rise to thousands of springs of evil, discord, hatred, iniquity, until the earth became one vast field of strife, one sink of corruption. This is the view that now appears to those who rejected truth and chose to cherish error. **No language can express the longing which the disobedient and the disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever--eternal life. Men whom the world has worshipped for their talents and eloquence** now see these things in their true light. They realize what they have forfeited by transgression, and they **fall at the feet of those whose fidelity they have despised and derided**, and confess that God has loved them." - *Great Controversy*, p. 655.

"**You think that those who worship before the saints' feet (Rev. 3:9) will at last be saved?** Here I must differ with you; for God showed me that **this class were professed Adventists, who had fallen away**, and 'crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to open shame' [Heb. 6:6]. **And in the 'hour of temptation** [see Rev. 3:10], **which is yet to come**, to show out everyone's true character, they will know that **they are forever lost**, and **overwhelmed with anguish of spirit, they will bow at the saints' feet.**" - *Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.

Historically, "**professed Adventists**" refer to the majority of the 50,000 who withdrew from their churches in response to the "midnight cry given in the summer of 1844" but returned to their churches after the "great Disappointment." They became the most bitter critics and enemies of their former brethren. **Only 50** remained to study further the reason for the Disappointment. They found the clearest answers in the overarching "sanctuary doctrine" and message of Daniel 8:14, and went on to form the pioneer nucleus of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that formally organized in 1863.

In the **antitype of the last days**, "professed Adventists" must apply to all classes of Christians who profess to be waiting for Christ's second coming, including the "Rapturists" but like the Jews in Christ's first coming and birth in Bethlehem, are not preparing for His glorious return by obeying the law of God, particularly the Biblical Sabbath. Instead, they are conforming to the world's standard, keeping the counterfeit Sabbath, and thus preparing to finally receive "the mark of beast," not the "seal of God."

"The **144,000** were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, 'God, New Jerusalem,' and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At **our** happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on **us** to thrust **us** into prison, when **we** would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and the wicked would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved **us**, and they worshipped at **our** feet." - *Life Sketches*, p. 65.

In the last quote God's servant uses prophetic license to speak in the first person plural for a very special group of saints that are formed only during the seventh plague--**the 144,000, and the special resurrectees**. She refers to them as "our," and "us." The former (the 144,000) do not taste death, while the latter "died in the faith of the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath," "desiring the second coming of Christ more than the dawn of the next day," and went to their graves *sealed* in that condition. They are

made up of that very special, small group of advent pioneers who remained faithful after the Great Disappointment in 1844. (It is *very likely* that E. G. White, her husband James, and a majority of the 50 will be included in the second class). They come up from their graves during the beginning of the seventh and last plague, in response to the voice of God saying, "It is done," causing the great earthquake which opens up their graves. See Dan. 12:1. (This is the "big one" wrongly attributed to the temblor that is supposed to cause San Francisco to disappear into the ocean, etc!). Then, hailstones weighing "a talent," (about 100 pounds), fall on earth, completing its desolation in preparation for the millennium where Satan and his angels are "chained" to this absolute desolation.

NOTE: The 144,00 are those faithful Sabbath-keepers *who remain alive* after the enactment, of the Sunday law, the outpouring of the latter rain immediately after for the final Loud cry, followed by the close of human probation not long after, and the outpouring of God's wrath unmingled with mercy in the seven last plagues. The universal death decree happens during the sixth plague, when Satan is finally allowed of God to make his final overmastering delusion appearing and speaking like Christ. The whole world at this time is totally unaware that human probation already closed long before! The 144,000 saints, all still in their mortal state, remain alive under all these final events protected alone by angels from the Satan, his angels, and all the wicked world, from the whom the Holy Spirit had already been permanently withdrawn.

At the Mount of transfiguration two men appeared with Jesus,--Elijah, representing 144,000 translated saints of the future, and Moses, representing those who are raised during the special resurrection as well as *all* the faithful saints of all ages since the time Adam, who will come up during the general resurrection at His glorious second coming.

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10.

"The word of My patience."- "Some interpret this phrase to mean, 'My word of patience,' i.e., 'My injunction to be patient.'" Others interpret this as "the teaching concerning the patience of Christ (cf. 2 Thess. 3:5). These two ideas are combined in the thought, 'Christ encourages us to be patient as He was patient under trial.'" - *"Footnotes," E.G. White Comprehensive Commentary on Revelation, vol. 2, p 604.*

"The hour of temptation." - This is not a specific length of time—whether literal or prophetic—but a 'season,' or "time." "Hour" is here used in the same sense as in Rev. 3:3. In harmony with the repeated references in the Revelation to the imminence of Christ's return (see on ch. 1:1) , the 'hour of temptation' doubtless refers to a great time of testing *preceding* the second advent." - *Ibid.*

Q. When is this "hour of temptation?" What and who is being tempted and tried? God's servant says that this trying period applies to both now and to the future "time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation" Dan. 12:1.

"In this Scripture is brought to view the hour of temptation that is to try them that dwell upon the earth. **We are now living in this trying hour.** There is no escape for any in this conflict. *If in your life there are defective traits of character that you are not striving to overcome, you may be sure that the enemy will endeavor to take advantage of them; for he is watching vigilantly, seeking to spoil the faith of every one.* In order to gain the victory over every besetment of the enemy, we must lay hold on a power that is out of and beyond ourselves. We must maintain a constant, living connection with Christ, who has power to give victory to every soul that will maintain an attitude of faith and humility. If we are self-sufficient, and think that we may go on just as we please, and yet hope to come out on the right side finally, we shall find that we have made a terrible mistake. As those who hope to receive the overcomer's reward, we must press forward in Christian warfare, though at every advance we meet with opposition." - *Review & Herald, July 9, 1908.*

“Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming, --- a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation [Dan. 12:1],--- God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.”- *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 17.

“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience.’ Does this apply to the men who persecute those who conscientiously keep the commandments of God, who refuse to bow down to an idol Sabbath and worship an institution of the papacy? Who is keeping the word of God’s patience? **This is a question of intense interest, -- a question which none of us can afford to ignore; because God has said of those who do keep the word of His patience, ‘I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation.’**”- *Review & Herald*, June 19, 1900.

Q. In what ways will the faithful “be kept during this hour of temptation”?

“Just before us is ‘the hour of temptation,’ which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.’ Rev. 3:10. All whose faith is not firmly established upon the word of God will be deceived and overcome. Satan ‘works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness’ [2 Thess. 2:10,11] to gain control of the children of men, and his deceptions will continually increase. But he can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. **Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense.** ‘Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee’ (v.10), is the Savior’s promise. **He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.**”- *Great Controversy*, p. 560.

“The more we learn in reference to the early days of the Christian church, and see what subtlety Satan worked to weaken and destroy, the better we shall be prepared to resist his devices and meet coming perils. **We are in the time when tribulations such as the world has never yet seen will prevail.** [Rev. 12:12 quoted]. **But God has set bounds that Satan cannot pass. Our most holy faith is this barrier; and if we build ourselves up in faith, we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One.** [Rev. 3: 10 quoted].” – *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 297.

“The great crisis is just before us. To meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require persevering faith. But we may triumph gloriously; **not one watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the enemy. In the time of trial before us God’s pledge of security will be placed upon those who have kept the word of His patience.** Christ will say to His faithful ones, ‘Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.’ (Isa. 26:20). **The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of cloud which speaks wrath and terror to the transgressor of God’s law is light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to strike the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal.** Every faithful one will surely be gathered. [Matt. 24: 31 quoted].”- *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 404.

In stark contrast to this Scripturally-sound explanation, widely-acclaimed Zionist theologians spreading the Rapture theory, the most widely-accepted and deceptive of the “peace-and-safety” messages, such as John F. Walvoord (a John Darby disciple), arrives at their preconceived conclusions by employing convoluted reasoning, saying that (emphasis mine):

“This passage therefore provides some support for the hope that **Christ will come for His church before the time of trial and trouble described in Revelation 6 to 19.** This time of tribulation will overtake the entire world, as God inflicts His wrath on unbelieving Gentiles as well as Christ-rejecting Jews. *The Philadelphia church is therefore promised deliverance from the time of trouble which will overtake the world but will not overtake them. . . . In this passage the rapture of the church is in view.*” – “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, “A Commentary By John F. Walvoord,”* Moody Press, Chicago, 1966, pp. 86,87.

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Rev. 3:11.

“Behold, I come quickly.” – “We should keep these words ever in mind, and act as though we do indeed believe that the coming of the Lord is nigh, and that we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth.”- *Maranatha*, p. 75.

“We should be awake to discern the signs of the times, and to give warning to the people. There are many in the world who seek to quiet the alarm of the people, who say, ‘Peace, peace; when there is no peace’ [see Jer. 6:14; 8:11, 15, 20]; but we should take an opposite course from this. *There are many who say to the aroused people, ‘Do not disturb yourselves, go on in godlessness, go on glorifying yourselves, and living in pleasure. The day of the Lord is not at hand.’* Did not Christ have an object in view when He said, ‘Behold, I come quickly’? Did He not see that **His church** would need to keep this solemn even in mind? Shall we say with the last-day scoffers, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? **for since the fathers fell asleep**, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation’? [2 Pet. 3: 3, 4]. [Say to yourself] I do not mean to be with this class. I mean to arouse men with the message of Christ’s near coming.”- *Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1889.

In this scripture passage (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4) those who proclaim false “peace and safety” messages may *also* be found among those who know one of the most fundamental truths of the gospel—the true nature of death! Why? Instead of saying that “since the fathers died and are already in heaven,” it correctly says, “Since the fathers *fell asleep*” (KJV). The NIV even has it as, “Ever since our fathers *died*.” Thus, one stands amazed at the blindness among those who pride themselves in being “New Testament Christians” and yet are so fearfully ignorant of what it teaches on the nature of death!

Furthermore, one may not express in words or in writing (to those becoming awakened to the alarming signs of the times) “do not disturb yourselves, go on glorifying yourselves, live in pleasure; the day of God is not yet at hand,” but the *same* effect can be created by the witness of our lives! How and what we choose, plan, and do, when and where we go, speaks a louder sermon and a more compelling witness. If we are truly longing and preparing for heaven, then *the things of this earth* (1 John 2:15, 16) should be *progressively* losing their hypnotic attraction for us. If not, we have been allowing Satan to deceive us. Wake up and break free from his nets before it is too late!

The world is desperately seeking for any perceived sturdy hook---whether a person, idea, ism, institution, nation, or religion---to hang their rapidly-failing hopes on. The degree of dissipation is directly proportional to the degree of desperation. Look around you. This final generation is the most vulnerable, yet also the most susceptible one--either to truth or the counterfeit. What do they read in our lives? As some one put it so well:--

***I am my neighbor’s Bible. He reads me when we meet.
Today he reads me in my home, tomorrow in the street.
He may be a relative or friend or chance acquaintance be,
he may not even know my name, yet he is reading me.***

“Hold that fast which thou hast .”- This clearly says to all those who “have tasted the heavenly gift and word of God” (Ps. 34:8; Heb. 6:4, 5; 1 Pet. 2:3) that they can never presumptuously take for granted their claims to God’s promises and His salvation. If they do not continuously employ the *provisions* of the gospel, they lose the right to claim its privileges. “Hold fast” means, “cling to,” “never let go,” that is, of the “truth once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). It certainly warns against accepting any form or shade of doctrine that even remotely suggests that “once-saved-always-saved.” To the

members of the remnant church a special warning is raised. Notice the following (emphasis mine):

“Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth, which, point by point has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based on unquestionable authority.”- *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 208.

This is merely one of the abundant references from “the law and testimony” clearly saying that though “the church will appear to fall, it will not.” Many separationists assert that the organized church leadership has already added to, changed, or modified the great “waymarks” or “landmarks,” or “fundamental pillars” of the faith. Hence they advocate separating from the main body which they conclude have become “apostate,” that is, by a narrow interpretation and application of the word “apostate.”

But what did God reveal to His seer for her to write and pass on to His church? “The waymarks which have made us what we are,” **“will be preserved,”** despite the fact that “messages of every order and kind will be urged upon Seventh-day Adventists.” Our full assurance that such will be is that He “signified it through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit,” i.e., by the infallible “law and testimony “(Isa. 8:20)! **“God has set bounds which Satan cannot pass!”**

What more compelling assurance do we, “spiritual Jews,” need? The Roman centurion, “born in heathenism, educated in the idolatry of imperial Rome, trained as a soldier, seemingly cut off from spiritual life by his education and surroundings. . . . this man perceived the truth to which the Jews, the children of Abraham were blinded. He did wait to see whether the Jews themselves would receive the One who claimed to be their Messiah.” Unlike the unbelieving chosen people of God who demanded sign after sign from Him, the Roman centurion simply said to Jesus, “*Speak the word only* and my servant will be healed.” Jesus, amazed and delighted with this demonstration of humble yet intelligent faith coming from a *heathen*, said, “I say unto you, I have not found so great a faith, no, not in Israel.” See on Matt 8:5-13.

What a rebuke to God’s professed people then, and particularly now! If those who claim to believe that “the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy,” i.e., the writings of E. G. White, then they, too, “make of none effect the testimony of Jesus”— indeed “the very last deception of Satan,” – if they deliberately choose to ignore this “Testimony” and many other kindred passages!

“It is our privilege, as children of God, to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. At times the masterly power of temptation seems to tax our willpower to the uttermost, and to exercise faith seems utterly contrary to all evidence of sense or emotion; but our will must be kept on God’s side. We must believe that in Jesus Christ is everlasting strength and efficiency. . . .**Hour by hour we must hold our position triumphantly in God, strong in His strength.**” – *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 687.

“Hold fast to the truth, the precious sanctifying truth. You are then in the best of company, and the very highest intelligences are beholding your course of action. You are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men [1 Cor. 4:9]. **Under provocation, your work is to hold the faith and a good conscience,** ‘Which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.’- Letter, 17, 1897 (Apr. 7, 1897).

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.” Rev. 3: 12.

“He that overcometh.” – This is the requirement constantly reminded upon all of God’s people since the time of Adam down to the close of time. Only he who overcomes by faith in Christ--whether typified in the system of sacrifices in the Old Testament Dispensation or on Christ Himself, the Lamb of God of the New Testament Dispensation---will receive the reward of eternal life and all the “unsearchable” riches and wisdom of God “which eye hath not seen nor ear heard” (Eph. 3: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:9).

“In order to gain the victory over every besetment of the enemy, we must lay hold on a power that is out and beyond ourselves. We must maintain a constant, living connection with Christ, who has power to give victory to every soul that will maintain an attitude of faith and humility. . . . As those who hope to receive an overcomer’s reward, we must press forward in Christian warfare, though at every advance we meet with opposition. . . . As overcomers, we are to reign with Christ in the heavenly courts, and we are to overcome through the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.”- Sons & Daughters, p. 370.

“A pillar in the temple.”- Pillar here is translated from the Greek *stulos*, “to stiffen; post; support.” Paul uses the same word, saying that “the house of God is the church of the living God, the *pillar* and the ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). It also refers to a support much used in the ancient architecture for upholding roofs and curtains (Exo. 26:32; Judges 16:26). The earth and the heavens were often spoken of poetically as supported by pillars (1 Sam. 2:8; Job 9:6; 26:11). Strong men and fundamental principles are figuratively called pillars (Gal. 2:9; 2 Tim 3:15).

“A metaphorical ‘pillar’ would, of course, be part of a metaphorical ‘temple.’ In the NT the word translated ‘temple’ (*naos*) generally refers to the inner sanctuary containing the holy and most holy places, not to the whole complex of buildings that constituted the ancient Temple. Accordingly, this promise would mean that the overcomer will hold a permanent, important place in the very presence of God. For similar metaphorical usage of the word ‘pillar’ see Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15.”- *“Footnotes,” An Exhaustive E.G. White Commentary on Revelation*, vol. 2, p. 608.

According to *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, metaphor is “a use of a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea in place of another by way of suggesting a *likeness or analogy* between them.” As to how God will fashion us into spiritual “pillars” in the heavenly temple is explained in the following, slightly paraphrased excerpt:

“It may be that much work needs to be done in our **character building**, that we are a rough stone, which must be squared and polished before it can fill a place in God’s temple. **We need not be surprised if with hammer and chisel God cuts away the sharp corners of our characters until we are prepared to fill the place He has for us.** No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that he will not strike one useless blow. His every blow is struck in love, for our eternal happiness. **He knows our infirmities and works to restore, not to destroy.**”- *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 264.

“And he shall go no more out” – meaning, *permanent*. “In harmony with the figure, to ‘go. . . out’ would be to leave the presence of God, deliberately, as Lucifer did (PP 37). Such a promise as this could be made only to those who overcome, *permanently*. In this life the possibility of going ‘out’ remains, but in the future life no one [who is saved] will choose to go out [of God’s presence or heaven itself].” – *Ibid.*

“Name of My God.”- This is a figure of speech that must be properly interpreted.

“See on Acts 3: 16; Rev. 2:3; cf. Rev. 2:17; 14:1; 22: 4. This continues the figure of speech introduced by the pillar, and is therefore also to be taken figuratively. Inasmuch as a ‘name’ implies personality and character, the promise here is that those who overcome will receive the permanent impress of God’s character; the image of their Creator will be fully restored in them. This figure of speech may be also understood to imply that the victorious saints will be completely God’s own, as attested by His name, or sign of ownership, thus affixed upon them.” – *Ibid*.

“The only hope of any man lies through Jesus Christ. . . . The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by any one *after* [ital. in the original] he has entered the gate of the city [New Jerusalem]. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and **the name of God will be seen in their foreheads. This name is the symbol which the apostle saw in vision, and signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God’s commandments.**” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 370.

“Name of the city.” – What this specifically means in this passage is explained thus:

“The pillar not only has the divine name inscribed upon it, but also bears the name of the New Jerusalem. This may be taken to **signify** that the victorious Christian is a citizen of the New Jerusalem and has a right to reside there (Rev. 22: 114).”- *Ibid*.

“New Jerusalem.”- Where is this City to be found?

“This is “not ‘new’ in the sense of being replica of the literal city by the same name, but in supernal contrast with its earthly counterpart. Ancient Jerusalem was to have become the metropolis of this earth and to have stood forever (see Vol. IV, pp. 29, 30), but because of its failure to carry out its assigned task, that role will be accorded the New Jerusalem. The term New Jerusalem is limited to the Revelation, but the thought is anticipated in Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22.”- *Ibid*.

This New Jerusalem is the “city whose Builder and Maker is God, not man. Heb. 11:10. It comes down from heaven to earth (Rev. 21:2) after the close of the Biblical millennium— and is certainly not the one that Zionists and Christian Rapturists are vainly trying to rebuild to set off their fanciful interpretation of the Seven-year Tribulation.

“The same angel who visited Sodom is sounding the note of warning, ‘Escape for thy life.’ The bottles of God’s wrath cannot be poured out to destroy the wicked and their works until all the people of God have been judged, and the cases of the living as well as the dead are decided. **And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come; but the furnace is closely watched by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed-- “God, New Jerusalem.” They are God’s property, His possession.** Will this **seal** be put upon the impure in mind, the fornicator, the adulterer, the man who covets his neighbor’s wife? Let your souls answer the question, Does my character correspond to the qualifications essential that I may receive a **passport** to the mansions Christ has prepared for those who are fitted for them? Holiness must be inwrought in our character.” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 446.

“My new name.”- What is this new name?

“The third name written on the symbolic pillar is that of Christ Himself. The overcomer’s reception of the divine character, represented by the name (see on Acts 3:16), is mediated by Christ. It is only by virtue of the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ that man may once more be restored to the image of God. This is accomplished by the gift of the life and character of Christ to the believer (see Gal. 2:20; DA 388). To receive Christ’s name is also to receive the confirmation of His ownership.” *Ibid*.

Thus, having “the name of God written upon the overcomer” is the same as: “having the name of the Father written in the forehead,” or “being sealed with the seal of the living God, or “sealed in the forehead.” It is also called “the passport” to the mansions above which is “our fitness for heaven,” the result of *sanctification*, a life-time work. It is being

“intellectually and spiritually settled in the truth such that one cannot be moved,” regardless of time, place, or circumstance. Justification is our *title* to heaven while sanctification is our *fitness* for heaven.

“He that heareth let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev. 3:13

It was Jesus Himself who said these words much earlier: “*If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.* But He also added, “*Take heed what you hear.*” (Mark 4: 23, 24; cf. Luke 8:18). He wants us to hear “fair-minded” like the Bereans “who receive the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). This repetitive, urgent plea to all individuals and churches is also a warning fraught with eternal consequences. It is the same message contained in: “Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation” (Ps. 95: 8; Heb. 3:8, 15; 4:7) and, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30), etc.

But “hearing” in the Bible sense--the only sense that matters--is acting upon it intelligently and willingly. Otherwise, it deteriorates into greater darkness and becomes a greater condemnation than when it wasn't yet “heard.” Truth is no truth unless it is practiced; it becomes a lie to those who merely profess it. Worse, the person condemns himself for knowingly violating his own conscience. He will never have the peace of God that surpasses understanding, and will have to *pretend* that he is saved!

“Let the churches be aroused. ‘He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.’ **This message concerns all our churches.** You can never employ your faculty of hearing better than in hearkening to hear what the Voice of God speaks to you in His Word.”- *Review & Herald*, June 6, 1887.

“If you hear what the spirit saith unto the churches,’ and meditate upon the instruction given to them, your ears will be close to the folly and nonsense which surround you. You will neither hear and repeat these things, nor will you ever hanker after them. When Christ satisfies the soul hunger, these trivialities are to you distasteful and disgusting. You have no desire to feast upon them, but choose instead the bread of heaven.” – *Manuscript 91, 1901/ EGW Bible Commentary*, vol.7, p. 957.

“God desires us to give attention to the words of truth. We are to hear and practice them; for the truth is a message from Heaven to those who take heed. The oft-repeated charge of the Lord is, ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ Of the Israelites the apostle says, ‘The words preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.’ [Heb. 4:2]. This opens before us the reason why so little is accomplished by the many discourses given. The words may be indited by the Holy Spirit, but if those who hear do not hear with a desire to be benefited, the words spoken do not profit them.” – *Bible Echo*, Aug. 14, 1899.

“Man is to hear the Word of God filled with a hungering desire to hear in faith and profit by the hearing. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.’ [Luke 8: 18]. **We are to give sincere, earnest attention to the teaching of Christ, realizing the importance of hearing aright, that God may use us in teaching others.** ‘With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’ –The measure of the earnestness with which you hear My Word, that you may help others, will be the measure by which a knowledge of this word is given to you. **To him who listens intently shall be given; for God sees that he will use his knowledge aright.** From him who has not improved his opportunities, who has not practiced the truth, that other may share in the blessing of his knowledge, shall be taken away, **even that which he has.** His opportunity to be all that God designed him to be, receiving and imparting the light of heaven, **shall be taken away from him.**” – *Pacific Union Recorder*, Dec. 12, 1904.

“Those who not only hear but do the words of Christ, make manifest in character the operation of the Holy Spirit. The result of the *internal* operation of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in

the outward conduct. The life of the [true] Christian is hid with Christ in God, and God acknowledges those who are His, declaring, 'Ye are My witnesses.' They testify that divine power is influencing their hearts and shaping their conduct. **Their works give evidence that the Spirit is working in the inward man;** those who are associated with them are **convinced** that they are making Jesus their pattern."- *In Heavenly Places*, p. 22.

Abiding in Christ: what does it mean? The actual, practical way of hearing the Word, and doing by faith what the Word says, is to first learn the lesson of what "Abiding in Christ" means. It is obtaining and retaining a vital, not superficial connection with Christ, a daily living experience of heart work, mind change, a renovation of the life.

"We wish to repeat over and over again, until it is indelibly imprinted upon the heart, the blessed invitation, 'Abide in Me. Read the Word, and in the light of a "Thus saith the Lord," meditate upon it. Pray until the lesson and meaning of **abiding in** is fully learned, accompanied with its claims and its promises. The Holy Spirit, Christ's Representative, is now in our world to bring all things to our remembrance, that His claims shall not be forgotten or neglected. Read the Word and pray. **Meditate on the Scriptures until the understanding, the gate to the door of the heart,** is opened to comprehend its requirements and our dependence. Those who will wait to hear what the Spirit saith unto them shall not hear in vain. Fix the eye upon Christ alone in quiet waiting upon Him to hear His voice saying, 'Abide in Me, and I in you.'" - *Ibid*, p. 277.

All these, however, is only possible if the Holy Spirit is daily invited into the heart, allowed to do His work unimpeded by any thing or any body, and not grieved away by any *presumptuous* thought, word, or deed. It is a constant dedication and re-dedication of self and a constant consecration and re-consecration of means. *It is a daily dying to self—or the crucifixion of self—not Christ!* See Luke 9: 23; 1 Cor. 15:31; cf. Heb. 3:13.

This is the most difficult yet indispensable work for us to do for *our own personal salvation*. Many religious teachers reject this precious light, contradicting the very Word of God by erroneously and viciously attacking it as "righteousness by works" that every false and heathen religion is based upon. But God, the Divine Worker works, and expects and empowers us *to work as co-laborers* with Him (1 Cor. 3: 9). Apostle Paul says: "Work out *your own salvation* with fear and trembling for it is *God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure*" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Dare we remain idle?

"The most powerful preaching of the Word will avail nothing unless the Spirit teaches and enlightens those who hear. Unless the Spirit works with and through the human agent, souls will not be saved, or characters transformed by the reading of the Scriptures. The planning and devising that is done in connection with the work should not be of a character to draw attention to **self**. The word is power, a sword in the hand of the human agent. But the Holy Spirit is its efficiency, its vital power in impressing the mind." - *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 2, p. 45.

"At infinite cost, provision has been made that men shall reach the perfection of Christian character. Those who have been privileged to hear the truth, and have been impressed by the Holy Spirit to receive the Holy Scriptures as the Voice of God, have no excuse for becoming **dwarfs** in the religious life. **By exercising the ability which God has given, they are to be daily learning, and daily receiving spiritual fervor and power, which have been provided for every true believer.**" - *Review & Herald*, May 5, 1896.

"The Holy Spirit flatters no man, neither does it work according to the devising of any man. Finite, sinful men are not to work the Holy Spirit. **When it shall come as a Reprover, through any human agent whom God shall choose, it is man's place to hear and obey its voice.**" - *Testimonies to Ministers*, P. 65.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit"

See Matt. 12: 31, 32; Eph. 4:30; 7:51. Having inspired its writing, the Holy Spirit works primarily through the **written Word** to reprove, convict of sin, convince of

righteousness and judgment, enlighten, guide, and nurture. Next, He works through various **human agencies**, anointed or appointed, to do what is necessary to bring about conviction---whether through loving counsel or strong reproof, or even through conscience-convicting kind deeds. In times past, however, God has even used **brute creatures** to speak to for Him. The apostate prophet Balaam's ass vocally reproved him, temporarily hindering him from his rebellious and apostate mission to connive with Balak, Israel's enemy. (See Num. 22: 22-35; 2 Pet. 2:16).

If we presumptuously, stubbornly, and persistently fail to listen to the Holy Spirit's invitation to repent and forsake our besetting and pet sins, we eventually will grieve the Holy Spirit away, commit the unpardonable sin, and lose our souls even while alive!

"It is not God that blinds the eye or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the *rejection* of this light that the eyes are blinded and the hearts hardened. **Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible.** Light comes to the soul through **God's Word**, through **His servants**, or by the direct agency of **His Spirit**; but when *one* ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of the light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness *increases*, until it is night in the soul" – *Desire of Ages*, pp. 322.

See Matt 12: 43-45 Luke 11: 24-26. "Then Jesus **added a warning** to those who had been impressed by His words, who heard Him gladly, but who had not surrendered themselves for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **It is not only by resistance but by neglect that the soul is destroyed.** 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of man,' said Jesus, 'he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from when I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.'" – *Ibid*, p, 323.

"**There is so much formality in the church.** Souls are perishing for light and knowledge. We should be so connected with the Source of all light that we can be channels of light to the world. The Lord would have His ministers who preach the word be energized by His Holy Spirit. **And the people who hear should not sit down in drowsy indifference or stare vacantly about, making no responses to what is being said. The spirit of the world has paralyzed the spirituality of such, and they are not awake to the precious theme of redemption. The truth of God's word is spoken to leaden ears, and hard, unimpressible hearts.** The impression given the unbeliever by these professed Christians is anything but favorable for the religion of Christ. **These dull, careless ones show ambition and zeal when engaged in the business of the world, but things of eternal importance do not engross the mind and interest them as do worldly things.** The voice of God through His messengers is a pleasant song; but its sacred warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are all unheeded. Eternal and sacred things are placed upon a level with common things. **The Holy Spirit is grieved.** Said, Christ, 'Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.' [See Mark 4: 23, 24]. **Those are spiritually dead who profess to worship God while the heart is not in the work. There should be a hearty, wide-awake church to encourage and uphold the hands of the ministers of Jesus.**" – *Review & Herald*, Jan. 1, 1880.

Any message that comes to us, whether in word or print, that bothers and convicts our conscience, is the voice of God speaking to us. May none of us willfully close our ears to that "still, small voice" of His Holy Spirit! "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. . . . Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55: 6, 7).

To be continued next month
