

Cleansing and Mediating Blood

The inspired writers are unanimous on this point: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7), for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Heb 9:22), and in Him "we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). These symbolic statements point to the transcendent reality that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom 5:10). Paul here combines the results of the death and of the life of the Saviour. It is because He is alive that He has the authority to save sinners. His power to do so is symbolized by His eternally living human blood.

The Saviour's blood not only purchased the human race; it also ratified the new covenant through which redemption is possible. It is on the basis of His victorious life that Jesus approaches His Father and ours and is able to demand that Deity give eternal life to every repentant sinner, crying in triumph, "My blood, Father, My blood!" (see *Early Writings*, p. 38). By His blood He is able to justify the penitent and sanctify the saint who remains submissive to His will.

The salvific effects of His dwelling in our hearts by faith through grace can be illustrated by the blood circulating through our bodies. "Christ must dwell in your hearts, as the blood is in the body, and circulate there as a vitalizing power. On this subject we cannot be too urgent. While truth must be our panoply, our convictions need to be strengthened by the living sympathies that characterized the life of Christ" (*Testimonies to the Church*, 7: 189).

The never ceasing ministration of Christ's omnipotent blood in the heavenly sanctuary is needed by every penitent and will continue as long as there is one sinner ready to accept the proffered salvation. Contemplating Christ's ministry of His blood in the blazing light of the symbology and typology of the earthly sanctuary, we exclaim in joy and adoration, "Lord, how we love Thee for Thy love!"

TEN WAYS TO PICK REAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS OUT OF A BUSHEL OF CHRISTIANS

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If I showed you a bushel basket full of Red Delicious apples, Golden Delicious, and Granny Smiths and asked you to pick out the Red Delicious, you would have no trouble separating the bright red apples from the green and yellow ones. But if I gave you a bushel with many different kinds of apples and asked you to pick out the Ashmead's Kernels or the Cox's Orange Pippins, you'd probably want someone to tell you in advance what they looked like.

Let's try picking real Seventh-day Adventists out of a bushel of many kinds of Christians. But first let's review what the Bible says real Seventh-day Adventists look like.

1. They're Born Again.

According to the Bible, real Seventh-day Adventists, like real Christians of any variety, are born-again two-table Christians. (What "two-table" means I'll explore in a moment.) Real Adventists—like real Christians of all kinds—don't describe themselves as second- or third-generation Christians, or even as second- or third-generation Adventists. They certainly don't claim special rights on such a basis.

I heard Billy Graham say on the radio once that being born in the church doesn't make a person a Christian any more than being

born in a garage makes a person a car. Apparently he was right. To be Christians, people have to be born of the Spirit, individually “born again,” or more correctly, “born from above, *another*” (Jn 3:1-5).

Nicodemus was a *forty-second generation* Jew (basing our calculations on Matthew 1), yet Jesus said even to him, “You absolutely must be born again”—“from above” and “of the Spirit.”

When Jewish leaders prided themselves that they were “sons of Abraham,” John the Baptist told them that God could make sons of Abraham out of stones (see Matt 3:9). What was needed was sons of God.

“You must be born of the Spirit,” Jesus told Nicodemus. “You have been born anew,” observed Peter, “not of perishable seed [that is, not by human procreation] but of imperishable seed, through the living and abiding *word* of God” (1 Pet 1:23).

Being blood relative even to the most effective Adventist missionary or to the best organized Adventist administrator doesn’t make a real Seventh-day Adventist. Lowering our standards to keep second- and third-generation Adventists in the church is an exercise in futility. Sad to say, “second-generation Adventists” aren’t in the church; only first-generation Adventists are.

And what we’re saying is just as true of ATS members as of any other Christians. We too must be born again, born from above, of the Spirit, through the Word.

2. They’re “Two-table” Christians.

To be real Seventh-day Adventists, people must not only be born again but must also be “two-table” Christians. I promised to explore this.

As we all know, Jesus summarized the ten commandments under two headings representing the two tables of the law—supreme love to God and heartfelt practical love to man (see Matt 22:36-40). Many Christians (perhaps all of us) have a tendency to emphasize one table of the law at the expense of the other. Some of us take our obligations to God so seriously that we neglect our fellow humans or become irritable with them. Others of us treat people kindly enough but take our obligations to God rather lightly.

The enemy doesn’t mind which table we emphasize, just so we neglect the other one. Some of the most “liberal” people are the nicest; and some who emphasize the Word of God and its instructions for godly living aren’t so nice.

Here’s a warning to people like us who emphasize the importance of theology and the Bible.

Peter Marshall became famous for asking God, in the Senate, to make all the bad people good and all the good people kind.

3. They Live in Consciousness of the Second Coming, Based on 1844.

Our bushel of Christians will contain many who glow with love for Jesus and who feel committed to both tables of the law, but who aren’t members of the Seventh-day Adventist church. To know for sure whether you are on to real Seventh-day Adventists, you can listen carefully for any suggestions they may make about their long-range plans. Do they instinctively add, “If time lasts” or “If the Lord doesn’t come first.”

“You ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills,’” counsels James 4:15; and Ellen White adds, “You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years” (*Selected Messages*, 1:189).

Perhaps because of the way I was brought up, it seems unthinkable to me that people for whom the near return of Christ is a genuine reality could omit referring to it when exploring their future options.

But beware! In our bushel of Christians there probably are numerous people who believe that Jesus may be coming sooner than even we do.

Whereas Adventists know that Christ cannot return until the gospel is preached in all the world, the image to the beast has been set up, and the plagues have fallen, many Dispensationalists believe that Christ could come at any minute. If believing that Christ is coming soon makes one an Adventist, many Dispensationalists are better Adventists than we are; yet they are not known as Adventists.

So how can you tell if second-coming Christians are really Adventists?

Ask them for the reason why they add, "If time lasts" or "If the Lord doesn't come first."

Real Seventh-day Adventists will be prepared to explain that they believe Christ is coming soon *because* the 2300 days ended in 1844.

The principal evidence that we are living in the last days is the prophetic fulfillment of the 1260-day and 2300-day prophecies, is it not?

Historically, the name "Adventists" is an abbreviation of "Second Adventists," the name applied to the followers of William Miller, who emphasized the nearness of the second advent of Christ on the basis of the fulfillment of the 2300 days in 1844. When our principal periodical was launched in 1850, its first name was *The Second Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald*.

Most Christians say that the final judgment will mark the very end of time. We Seventh-day Adventists are commissioned under the first angel's message to tell people that the final judgment, the judgment that marks the end of time, *has begun already*.

In her Manuscript No. 2 for 1906, Ellen White observed that "the sanctuary is the foundation of our faith." That is, she said that the new ministry which Christ commenced in 1844 in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our special kind of Christian faith. Nowhere is the sanctuary more surely the foundation of our faith than in respect to our very Adventism itself.

Any weakening in our theological presentation of the 2300 days cannot but undermine the essence of our existence as Adventists. Here is a responsibility for the ATS: to *strengthen* our theological presentation of the 2300 days.

So if our Christians in the bushel are born again and committed to both tables, and if they also use a phrase like, "If Christ hasn't returned by then" and can explain their use of it by referring to the 2300 days, you can be almost certain you are on to real Seventh-day Adventists.

4. They Love to Keep the Sabbath Spiritually, Also Because of 1844.

But what if the persons (or apples) you've picked out as possible Adventists don't happen to say anything about the second coming or their future plans? Then prick up your ears if they talk about what they're going to do next Sabbath.

However, even if they do talk about the Sabbath, they could turn out to be among the millions of devout Christians who keep Sabbath on Sunday. Many Sunday keepers who observe the Sabbath on the wrong day nonetheless keep it more or less in the right way.

Likewise, if your people keep Saturday as the Sabbath, you could find on examination that they observe the right day but do so in the wrong way. You would want to find out whether they keep the seventh-day sundown-to-sundown Sabbath in a spiritual manner. You would listen to see if they speak spiritually about Jesus, revealing a kind of Sabbath keeping that finds spiritual fellowship with our Lord.

When we read in Genesis 2 that God sanctified or hallowed the Sabbath, we know that He set the Sabbath apart for a holy purpose. So when Ezekiel 20 says that God gave the Sabbath to show us that He is the one who sanctifies *us*, the meaning is that when He set the Sabbath apart for a holy purpose, part of that holy purpose was to set *us* apart for a holy purpose.

"When the command was given to Israel, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,' the Lord said also to them, 'Ye shall be holy men unto Me.' Ex 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God." But "in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283).

Will not real Seventh-day Adventists, then, when we find them in our bushel of Christians, be emphasizing the holiness as well as the joy, the joy as well as the holiness, of the Sabbath?

"The sanctuary is the foundation of our faith." It is a matter of history that our pioneers saw the importance of the Sabbath when they realized that it was immortalized in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus had recently entered to

commence the final judgment and the final removal of sin from His people. The words of Psalm 119:89 imparted new excitement: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 434.)

It is no coincidence that the Sabbath truth dawned on our pioneers in 1844, the same year that Jesus entered the most holy place.

Anyone who undermines the heavenly significance of 1844 inevitably undermines the Sabbath and Sabbath holiness.

Discovery of the relationship between the Sabbath and the 1844 event in heaven was paralleled by the consciousness that both the Sabbath and Christ's new sanctuary ministry involved "a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people" that was to take place in preparation for the second coming (*ibid.*, p. 425).

In many countries sad to say Seventh-day Adventist young people attend school on Sabbath and take examinations on that day. In the American armed forces thousands of Seventh-day Adventist youth in recent years have made little if any attempt to avoid Sabbath duty during boot camp. Church leaders often leave our youth to their individual choices. There is danger of making Adventism so spineless it becomes boring.

The ATS must encourage our leaders to encourage our youth to take a courageous stand for the Sabbath for Christ's sake and by His power. The ATS must also reaffirm the heavenly significance of 1844 in relation to Sabbath holiness.

If your candidates in the Christian bushel speak of keeping the Sabbath holy from sundown to sundown and relate the spirituality of the day to the new ministry of our loving Saviour in heaven, you will have pretty good proof that you have indeed landed some Seventh-day Adventists.

5. They Know What They Believe.

The real, ripe Adventists in our bushel will know what they believe. It was said in the sixteenth century that the ordinary citizens of Geneva knew the Bible as well as the doctors (the theology professors) at the Sorbonne. End-time ripe Seventh-day Adventists will know the Bible even better. "Prepared to make a

defense to any one . . . for the hope" that is in them (1 Pet 3:15), they will have qualified for the seal of God and become settled "into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved" (Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4: 1161).

They will know the Christ of the cross and His forgiveness. They will cherish the promises of His second coming. And they will be well informed about His current ministry. "All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 488).

6. They Love and Are Nurtured by the Spirit of Prophecy

Your Adventist apples seem devout and well informed. How you hope they share your love for the Spirit of Prophecy!

You express a word of appreciation for the writings that mean so much to you. Do your candidates reflect your warmth, or are they instantly irritated? Do they remark caustically, "Another string of quotations!" or, "You can prove anything from Ellen White!" or, "All we ever hear these days is Mrs. White, Mrs. White!"?

You probably caught an editorial in a recent *Adventist Review* written by Eugene Durand. It takes up several "myths" about Adventists and comments on them constructively. The fifth in the list is the "myth" that we Adventists "quote Ellen White too much." Durand responds: "Not anymore we don't [quote Ellen White too much], if we ever did. Of course, it is possible to emphasize the modern prophet at the expense of the Bible, and sometimes we may have been guilty of this. If we have gotten away from an unbalanced use of these two inspired sources, that is all to the good.

"But how much is too much? Surely the Lord didn't grant us this precious gift of the Spirit of Prophecy only to have us ignore it. These inspired writings for these last days are meant to be read and heeded. But I fear that new members and our youth have not been taught to appreciate them as our older members were" (*Adventist Review*, Aug. 17, 1989, p. 5).

I am more delighted than you may realize at Affirmation 4 in the ATS Constitution and By-laws. It says: "We believe that the writings of Ellen G. White possess more than pastoral authority, and

that in them God has spoken *as He did through the prophets and apostles of old*, to instruct His people concerning His will and the course He would have His people pursue.”

We believe that the writings of Ellen White are a true manifestation of the “testimony of Jesus” (Rev 19:10). They come from the One who lived and died for us and now “ever lives” for us (Heb 7:25). We cling to the testimony because we cling to Jesus.

I like to think that the formation of the ATS marks the threshold of a new era in Ellen White studies and that this organization is going to promote careful well-documented well-disciplined studies of her vast corpus. Among the many benefits the church can realize from the formation of this organization should be the production of a great many real, ripe Seventh-day Adventists who, with us, will agree—and know why they agree—that the writings of Ellen White do “possess more than pastoral authority, and that in them God has spoken as He did through the prophets and apostles of old, to instruct His people concerning His will and the course He would have His people pursue.”

7. They're Grateful to Be Part of a Special End-time People.

Another mark of real Seventh-day Adventists is that they are grateful to belong to a very special, end-time people.

I am delighted with our ATS Affirmation 6: “We affirm . . . the identification of the Seventh-day Adventist church as the remnant movement called by God to proclaim the three angel’s messages . . . which prepare the world for the soon return of Christ.”

In this statement we recognize that the Seventh-day Adventist church is “the” remnant movement, not “a” remnant movement.

Seventh-day Adventists early taught that this movement into which God in His inscrutable grace has called us constitutes, in spite of its imperfections, the “remnant” of Revelation 12:17 *KJV*.

Even *Questions on Doctrine* so teaches. But *QOD* in 1957 said something about the remnant that we must now regret. On p. 188, *QOD* said that we “firmly believe that God has a precious remnant, a multitude of earnest, sincere believers, in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who are living up to all the light God has given them.”

We do hold that God has earnest, sincere believers in the other churches. His invitation in Rev 18:1-4 to “come out of her [Babylon], my *people*” proves as much. But the Bible *does not* identify those earnest, sincere believers as the end-time remnant. The Bible says the end-time remnant “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17).

In the early 1960s I began hearing complaints that referring to ourselves as the remnant was boastful and inappropriate.

I have often reflected on the boastful part, and have decided that calling the Seventh-day Adventist movement exclusively God’s “remnant” is God’s choice, not ours. If any of us are members of this movement, it is because He called us into it. God gave us the third angel’s message; we didn’t invent it. He thrust it into our hands and bade us run with it. And God hasn’t limited membership in the remnant church as if it were an exclusive country club. Far from being an exclusive club, the remnant is commissioned to persuade—even to urge—everyone in the entire world, literally, to join it and become part of the remnant with us.

There is no place in true Adventism for a drift back to Babylon. “Come out,” should be our cry, “that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev 18:4).

The churches of Babylon stumbled seriously in 1844 precisely because they rejected the fulfillment of the 2300 days with its lifestyle implications. The message of 1844 meant they should emphasize the nearness of the second advent, enter into true Sabbath keeping, and heed the messages of the true Witness, our High Priest, delivered through His chosen messenger.

The 1844 event didn’t just tack interesting data onto old Protestant theology. Nor does it today make us Seventh-day Lutherans or Seventh-day Calvinists or Seventh-day Methodists. 1844 called for a correction of all that the Reformation hadn’t yet corrected, even a reinterpretation of so basic a concept as justification by faith.

Early Adventists didn’t perceive all of this at once. Not until the 1880s, for instance, did God lead Elder E. J. Waggoner to call attention to the “righteousness of Christ” “*placed where it should be in the third angel’s message*” (Ellen G. White, MS 24, 1888; *1888 Materials*, 1: 211). In Minneapolis Christ’s righteousness was

presented not only in the setting of the cross as Luther knew it, but also in relation to the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and sanctification.

Our message on justification owes much to Luther, but Luther spoke to people whose minds, like his, bore the scars and many of the limitations and confusions of Rome. The principal issue when the Reformation began was legalism versus grace. Today the issue is much broader. Antinomianism is a terrible peril as well as legalism. And we have the blazing light emanating from our High Priest, ministering beside the ten commandments—where a halo of glory encircles the very fourth commandment that Luther inconsistently rejected as no longer binding.

We have a special message designed to produce a special people, those who separate from Babylon and keep God's commandments and cherish the Spirit of Prophecy. We must make sure we're out of Babylon. We must study the Spirit of Prophecy as never before and let the Lord develop in us remnant qualities of which He can be eternally proud.

Meanwhile, let us beware of diluting the difference, of making being an Adventist so easy that our youth see no reason to be one. Real Seventh-day Adventists are grateful to belong to something special, God's true end-time remnant.

8. They're Deeply Involved in Soul Winning.

Our real Adventists have chosen to be separate from Babylon—and they want every other Christian in the bushel to be separate too. They give time, money, talent, and their prayers generously and gladly that others might come out of Babylon and into the remnant. A "Seventh-day Adventist" who isn't deeply concerned for the salvation of others isn't a real Seventh-day Adventist.

As Ellen White said to church leaders gathered in Copenhagen on July 22, 1886, "The very work that is essential for every one who receives the present truth, is to aim at perfection of character, and thoroughness in winning souls to Christ." "We have the greatest truth and hope that were ever given to our world, and the greatest faith." "If you once would get the understanding that you are the light of the world, you would feel that a great responsibility rested upon you" (*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1887).

Our sanctuary message shows that we are living in the end time, in the era when people who are our contemporaries may be the very ones to receive the mark of the beast and suffer the plagues. People *in our lifetime*; people alive today, may one day say to us, "Why didn't you warn us?"

I'm hoping that the articles published by the ATS will not be confined to theological abstractions. If Adventist theology doesn't lead to soul-winning, it isn't good enough for our time and place. Real Seventh-day Adventists, whether in the bushel or in the classroom, are constantly concerned with soul winning.

9. Their Lifestyle Is Based on the Bible, Not Merely on Culture and the Majority.

Being separated from Babylon, real Seventh-day Adventists don't want their lifestyles to be influenced negatively by what other Christians think and do.

Many Christians, tragically, seem content to set their lifestyle standards by what others do. In the August 17 *Review* editorial we referred to a moment ago, Eugene Durand listed as Adventist Myth No. 3: "Seventh-day Adventists worry too much about what members eat, drink, wear, and do."

Durand responded: "I find myself wishing there were more truth to this myth. But in reality, the facts appear to reveal quite the opposite. In too many cases we don't seem to care much anymore whether we live up to our historical standards. It has become increasingly difficult to distinguish an Adventist from a non-member in areas of dress, adornment, diet, and recreation. Many of us have joined our adversaries in viewing carefulness in these matters as old-fashioned legalism.

"I believe we had good reasons for our standards in those areas, and that those reasons are still valid."

I hope that the ATS will be a real Seventh-day Adventist society in the bushel of Christian societies—and that we will apply our theological insights to practical concerns. I hope that the ATS will matter, that it will make a difference in the way people live.

I hope that the ATS will help wean people from the fatal philosophy that lifestyle is to be determined by opinion polls and majority votes rather than by inspired divine revelation.

The *Adventist Review* tells us (see June 1, 1989) that 62 percent of our members drink caffeinated beverages regularly. Does this make caffeine healthful? It tells us that 98 percent of our youth watch commercial movies and videos. Does this make such movies helpful? The *Review* also tells us that 20 percent of our North American churches have women elders, and that 12.4 percent of our North American members drink wine. What do these figures prove?

Observation leads to the statistic that about 50 percent of our white members in North America are absent from church on a typical Sabbath. Does this mean that absence half the time is all right?

“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the *voice of the majority*—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595, italics supplied).

Our real Seventh-day Adventists, when arranging their lifestyles, will search to know, first last and always, “What saith the Lord?”

10. They Long for the Beauty of a Christ-like Character.

In the talk we referred to a moment ago, delivered to church leaders in Copenhagen in 1886, Ellen White stated: “The very work [singular] that is essential for every one who receives the present truth, is [two intimately related things, namely] to aim at perfection of character, and thoroughness in winning souls to Christ.”

Ellen White spoke of character perfection hundreds of times. In Copenhagen she linked it to thoroughness in soul winning. I think she linked it to soul winning for at least two reasons. For one, character perfection is being like Jesus, and Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10). No one can *have* a truly Christ-like character who isn’t involved in saving souls.

Second, no one can *develop* a Christ-like character without working for souls. Only as we work for others can we develop that

sacrificial love that clings to God for the sake of others in the way that Christ intercedes with the Father for us.

Ellen White linked Christlikeness to soul winning in the familiar passage in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69: “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come and claim them as His own.”

The character of Christ! Ah, suppose we found *Jesus* in our bushel of Christians! How brightly colored, blemish free, sweet, and juicy He would be!

And isn’t this what He wants us all to be? And isn’t this what every true Christian and every true Seventh-day Adventist, longs to be?

You remember how the quotation continues on p. 69 of *Christ’s Object Lessons*: “It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.”

God has given us the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18). Thus we play a part in the atonement—persuading people to be reconciled to (to be “at one with”) God through the witness of our lips and lives. God wants the world to decide for or against Himself partly on the basis of what sinners can learn about Him by seeing His goodness lived out in us. He knows that most people “would rather see a sermon than hear one any day” (Edgar Guest). How important that our lives reflect the beauty of Jesus.

Thank God that Matthew 5:33 is a promise!

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ *This command is a promise*. . . . He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. . . . There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311).

It’s in the Bible. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts [yours and mine] by faith,” so that “ye [you and I] might be *filled with all*

the fulness of God" (Eph 3:17, 20 KJV). By God's grace, we can become like Jesus, attractive "sweet and juicy" Christ-like apples.

Long ago I memorized an encouraging passage located at the end of the first chapter in *The Desire of Ages* on Christ's temptations: "There was in Him [in Jesus] nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. *So it may be with us.* Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."

I often hear people say that in the time of trouble the true Christian "would rather die than commit a known sin." The suggestion seems from one standpoint inadequate; after all, being like Jesus isn't only refusing to sin. "The completeness of Christian character is attained"—not when a person merely refuses to do wrong but—"when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384).

Nonetheless the concept that in the time of trouble the true Christian "would rather die than commit a known sin" is helpful in its own way. It reveals something encouraging about the earnestness of real end-time saints.

Hopefully, the saints' prayer will not be, "O God, we want to be bad, but we know the plagues will fall on us if we sin, so please help us not to be bad."

Much better, it seems to me, will be the prayer of real Seventh-day Adventists, who will have become habitually concerned about what their lives tell others about the goodness of God. In the time of trouble such Adventists' prayer will be, "O Lord, Your enemies demand that we let You down. Please, in mighty power enable us to witness to Your goodness and faithfulness, even if the pain is excruciating and our lives are lost. What are our lives, O Lord, in contrast to Your infinite love and sacrifice?"

Real Adventists, preparing for the time of trouble don't whine about high standards and calls to sacrifice. They ask not how little they need do for the Lord and others; they ask how much God can

help them do for others while probation lingers and there are still souls in Babylon who might come out if they saw real Seventh-day Adventists reflecting the Lord's loveliness.

Conclusion

Real Seventh-day Adventists can be picked out of a bushel of Christians, if we remember that the Bible indicates that they are born-again two-table Christians who because of 1844 live in consciousness of the second coming and love to keep the Sabbath spiritually. They know what they believe, love the Spirit of Prophecy, are humbly grateful to belong to the end-time "remnant," are deeply involved in soul winning, and base their life-style on Scripture rather than merely on culture. Loving Jesus with all their hearts in view of His goodness and His redeeming self-sacrifice for us, they long to reflect the beauty of His sweet character to the world around them.

We have been using apples as a figure of speech, so let me close with an illustration about Alar, the spray so commonly used on Red Delicious apples until its recent condemnation.

Alar has suffered a lot from a lurid press—even though its possible harmfulness to humans hasn't been fully established yet. But whatever its harmfulness to people may turn out to be, Alar is of *undoubted value to apples*.

Alar, or Daminozide as it's known more technically, is a hormone, not a pesticide. When sprayed on Red Delicious apples and absorbed through their skins, Alar (1) makes the apples both redder and better shaped, (2) helps them ripen uniformly for better harvesting, and (3) helps them resist spoilage, greatly increasing their shelf life.

Thus, from its good side, Alar is a splendid illustration of the Holy Spirit. Accepted into the hearts and minds of end-time Seventh-day Adventists, the Holy Spirit, which by means of the holy Word brings people to the new birth, can also, by means of the holy Word, ripen them sweet, juicy, and beautiful in time for the final harvest and keep them immune from spoilage during the seven last plagues.

God help us ATS members take full advantage of our spiritual opportunities to be real ripe Seventh-day Adventists.