

THE 144,000 SEALED!

THE 144,000 SEALED!

WHEN? WHY?

Special Protection Promised for the Time of Trouble.

God's Message of Love for His Remnant Church.

By

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PROLOGUE

When are the remnant people sealed with the seal of the living God? The answer to this question may be found in the answer to the other question: "Why does God seal His people?"

The sealing message of Revelation 7 is a most important theme which ought to engross the attention of the people of God at this time. So much is involved in its study. The Lord gave the revelation of Revelation 7 and its parallel passage in Revelation 14 as messages of love for His remnant church. These passages contain vital messages of warning and encouragement to those who will live on earth during the most tempestuous period of human history, a time of trouble that is shortly to plunge God's people into unprecedented situations and perplexities. "None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict" (Great Controversy, Page 593).

There must not be any doubt or uncertainty in the mind of those who will endure the trying days ahead. Any part of the Bible, particularly the books of Daniel and Revelation, that is not understood influences our judgment and understanding of other parts. The Bible is one unit -the Holy Spirit inspired and superintended the writing of the whole Bible, and each part must be read in its relation to every other part. Anything contrary to this is a "private interpretation" against which we are warned. Our understanding of Revelation 7 and 14 will influence our understanding of other portions of Holy Writ.

Requests have come from overseas as well as from Australia for me to publish something on the sealing of the 144,000. "The Shepherd's Rod" teaches that the 144,000 as "first fruits" are sealed and then go out to win the "great multitude" the "second fruits", that these two companies live through the time of trouble and are translated. This idea suggests that those who are sealed become preachers and go out to win others. These thoughts have been presented also by some loyal (SDA) members. In examining these ideas I do not desire to cast doubt on the integrity of those who have advanced them. In Revelation 7 two companies are brought to view. Do both these companies pass through the time of trouble, one company - the 144,000 - sealed and the other - the great multitude - not sealed? Why is one company sealed and the other not sealed? Why are the 144,000 said to be "first fruits"?

A variation of the idea first advanced by the "Shepherd's Rod" is at present being advocated in Australia by some people who declare that the seal of God must be received before the Loud Cry. These are earnest folk, seeking to exalt the standard in the church, and are endeavoring to present some precious truths to the people, urging all to make thorough preparation of heart during the Savior's closing ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

But, through an insufficient study of the sealing as given in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, they have confused the seal of the Spirit with the seal given by angels just before probation closes. Through a lack of knowledge of these different sealings, these folk have brought in confusion on some important truths. Therefore in the following pages the writer has sought to clear up some erroneous conceptions concerning Christ's sealing message for His remnant church.

Friends of mine have requested that I print something on the 144,000 and the sealing, stating my views on these subjects. In order to do this in answer to inquiries, it is advisable to give consideration to certain views being presented today both verbally and in writing. This I do, not in a spirit of criticism, but in order to arrive at a correct conclusion. Consider the following statements, which are today being publicized:

"Only those who have the seal of God can have a part in giving the Loud Cry"(1). "The seal and the latter rain are one." "The remnant will be sealed with the name of their God, and the abundant outpouring of the Spirit will witness to that sealing"(2). "When the people of God receive, believe and appropriate the benefits of the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14, they will have the seal of God. Thus the angel of Revelation 18 will unite his voice with the third angel to swell his message to a loud cry. So then, let us observe again, that the people who give the loud cry have entered into the judgmental ministry of Christ, passed through the final cleansing of this Day of Atonement, and received the seal of God. The latter rain and the loud cry is required to carry the everlasting gospel to all the world. But this efficiency can only be received by those who pass through the final cleansing of this Day of Atonement, and receive the seal of God. Then in the power of the Holy Ghost, they will witness and demonstrate to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, the glory of the ministry of Jesus in the most holy place"(3).

"Major premise: The loud cry can only be given by a people who have the seal of God. Minor premise: The 1888 message was to usher in the loud cry. Conclusion: Therefore the 1888 message was to bring to God's people the seal of God." (4)

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1. "The Vision by the Hiddekel" (pages 112, 113, 116).
2. "The Seal of the Holy Spirit" (pages 4, 8).
3. "God's Eternal Purpose" (pages 173-175).
4. "God's Eternal Purpose", page 184.

It is certainly true that there must be a thorough preparation to receive the latter rain and to proclaim the loud cry, but the teaching that the seal of God must be received before the giving of the loud cry has incongruities. There is nothing in the Old Testament typical service that showed that the ancient Israelites on the Day of Atonement were cleansed and received the seal of God, then went out that day to preach to the nations about them. The Scriptures say nothing concerning Israel receiving the seal of God before the closing services of that day.

That the seal is received after the loud cry is obvious from the following extracts:

"While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God." (Great Controversy, Page 605). The context shows that the receiving of the mark of the beast or the seal of God is after the loud cry, or the latter rain which gives power to give the loud cry, has come. "And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people that those who continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast" (Great Controversy, Page 449). "No one has yet received the mark of the beast. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit Sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast (Evangelism, pages 234, 235).

"The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. (Revelation 13:11-17, quoted). This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed- (Letter 11, 1890, quoted in SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 976).

One class receives the mark of the beast, the other class receives the seal of God but, observe, not until after the loud cry has warned men. Therefore the seal is not given before the loud cry, but after it has sounded the warning message. This is in harmony with such extracts as this one: "Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God" (5 Testimonies, page 475; Prophets and Kings, Page 587).

It is also said that the Loud Cry is still future, and will not occur until after the judgment of the Living. Yet the Lord's servant wrote in November 22, 1892 (Review & Herald): "The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."

If, as asserted, the judgment of the Living, and the giving of the seal, precede the Loud Cry, then a simple deduction is that the judgment of the Living began before 1892 when the Lord's servant said that the Loud Cry had already commenced. Then again, about the year 1890, Sister White, correcting a false report concerning the judgment of the Living, wrote: Several times during the past winter (1888-1889) I have met the report. I made a remark substantially as follows: 'The judgment has been over forty years in progress on the cases of the dead, and we know not how soon it will pass to the cases of the living' " (5 Testimonies, page 692). That is, at about the time she stated that "The Loud Cry of the third angel has already begun" she denied that she or anyone else had any knowledge that the judgment of the Living had commenced; she did not know when it would commence in the future. So from this we clearly see that the judgment of the Living and the giving of the seal, as is claimed, do not precede the giving of the Loud Cry. But, as we shall show, there are greater reasons for rejecting the teaching that the seal of the living God must be received before the Loud Cry.

The, fallacy of the claim that the seal of God must be given before the latter rain, the loud cry, is further seen in the experience of Brother A. T. Jones, who was one of the leading protagonists in preaching righteousness by faith about 1888. His standing, then before God was clearly stated: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones, the messengers of God's righteousness, whom the Lord recognized as His servants" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 91, 96, 97).

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Mrs. E. G. White, writing of the experience of those times, stated “The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ” (Review and Herald, 22 November, 1892).

Brother A. T. Jones declared: “We know by every evidence that now we are in the time of refreshing the time of the latter rain” (The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection). According to the belief that the seal of God must be given before the latter rain (the loud cry) and that the character of those sealed is perfect and fixed “Their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity” (5 Testimonies, page 216). A. T. Jones should never have apostatized, as Mrs. E. G. White stated he had when she wrote to him in 1906. [Also again, on November 19, 1911, Sister White, writing to A. T. Jones, stated very clearly that he had departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits. God’s Eternal Purpose (pages 198-200).]

The fact that, afterwards, he did apostatize, though having been in that loud cry experience, clearly exposes the erroneous teaching that those who proclaim the loud cry must first be judged in the judgment of the living and receive the seal of God, thus fixing their characters for eternity before the latter rain.

The futile attempt to prove that the seal is given before the Loud Cry leads to the misinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures. This is further shown by the interpretation presented of the parable of the virgins who are invited to be present at the marriage (Matthew 25: 1-13). An author, who employs this parable to bolster up the belief that the seal is given before the Loud Cry plainly (probably unwittingly) contradicts the Spirit of Prophecy and confuses two weddings. (1) believers being married to Christ and (2) Christ being married to the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom (Great Controversy, Page 426, 427) - the latter occurring at the close of probation after the former has been accomplished. The Lord’s servant plainly states that our Lord is married to the New Jerusalem, His kingdom, after “the last work of mediation” “at its close to receive His kingdom” (Great Controversy, Page 428). To confuse that event with something supposed to occur before the Loud Cry is an unfortunate misinterpretation of the sacred Scriptures.

When Christ is married to the New Jerusalem the work of saving human beings is then finished. This fact is again stated in the summary of events presented in Early Writings, page 280: “Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people, and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated.”

The reader will see readily the confused ideas presented when an event that occurs after salvation is completed is presented as occurring before the Loud Cry! This confusion is rendered all the more noticeable when we observe the statement so emphatically made by God’s servant in Great Controversy, Page 427: “The coming of the Bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called the ‘bride, the Lamb’s wife’ (Revelation 21: 9, 10). Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper (Revelation 19: 9). If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride.”

The application made by the Lord’s servant of the parable of the virgins is that the virgins are not the bride. The virgins are those who have professed already to be married to Christ and who have accepted the invitation to be present at the marriage supper to celebrate the marriage of Christ to His eternal kingdom. In Christ Object Lessons, pages 405, 406, 412, 413, 414, 421, the Lord servant shows that the virgins in this parable are separate from the bride. As the virgins are guests and cannot be made the bride presented in these Scriptures, it is unscriptural to apply these passages in such a contradictory way. The application of these Scriptures concerning the marriage of Christ to His kingdom, which is done at the close of His heavenly ministry, in reference to the supposed reception of the seal before the Loud Cry, reveals the confusion that results from this erroneous conception.

The confusion resident in the teaching which declares that “the seal and the latter rain are one”, that “only those who have the seal of God can have a part in giving the Loud Cry”, is made manifest also by the consideration that the latter rain is the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, “the third person of the Godhead (Desire of Ages, page 671). Whereas the seal of the living God is placed upon God’s remnant people by the angels – 5 Testimonies, page 475; Prophets and Kings, Page 587. “The Lord lives, and His Holy Spirit presides everywhere” (Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 365).

“And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the Representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle” (Desire of Ages, page 352). If, as claimed by the erroneous

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teaching, “the seal and the latter rain are one”, that would mean that the angels give the latter rain to God’s people, for the angels “place upon them the seal of the living God”. This makes strange, new doctrine, for angels, mighty as they are, cannot give God’s people the power of the Holy Spirit. The Omnipotent Holy Spirit alone can give His power to God’s people. Obviously the assertion that “the seal and the latter rain are one” is false teaching, and once again the theory that the seal is given before the Loud Cry is proven to be a very confusing and erroneous doctrine.

Instead of the seal being given before the Loud Cry, the facts we present reveal that the latter rain, the Loud Cry, precedes the giving of the seal. This logical sequence may be discerned even in the argument employed in a book already referred to [God’s Eternal Purpose, page 184] where the author endeavors to present the sequence in reverse order. After quoting: “The loud cry of the third angel has already begun” (Review and Herald 22 November, 1892) in reference to “the 1888 message”, we read on the same page: “Major premise: The loud cry can only be given by a people who have the seal of God. Minor premise: The 1888 message was to usher in the loud cry. Conclusion: therefore the 1888 message was to bring to God’s people the seal of God.”

This is a confused line of reasoning, for as the author rightly says (only intending it to be understood in reverse): “the 1888 message was to bring to God’s people the seal of God.” As the Lord’s servant has stated clearly that “the loud cry of the third angel has already begun” (in the 1888 message) and that message “was to bring to God’s people the seal of God”, then the seal is given after the loud cry, for they must hear the message - which the Lord’s servant said was “the loud cry” - before it could bring the seal to them.

Those who teach that the seal of God is given before the latter rain must have reached this conclusion very hastily, without studying the vast amount of evidence to the contrary. Though they profess to have a clear line up of the closing events, they have actually, through their endeavor to prove that the seal precedes the latter rain, confused events which Inspiration has already made plain. We will not weary the reader with pointing out each item where confusion has been created. They teach, and rightly so, that God’s people must attain unto a holy state before they can receive the latter rain (1 Testimonies, page 619, etc.), that the preaching of the straight testimony will bring about a shaking among God’s people (Early Writings, page 270), that those who endure this test and obtain victory will then receive the seal. Perhaps the simplest way to untangle the confusion resultant from this superficial conclusion is to state that great as this test will be, a far greater test “the final test” (Great Controversy, Page 605, 613) - will then await those who will eventually receive the seal. And this is the clear teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy. We will present the sequence of events as briefly as possible.

We have already quoted Great Controversy, Page 605, 449; Evangelism 234, 235; SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 976, to the effect that the test concerning the image to the beast enforcing the false Sabbath must test the people of God “before they are sealed”, that no one receives the mark of the beast until after “the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast”. This shows that time will elapse during which people are given the opportunity of accepting God’s last message, or of rejecting it. It is not true, as an author states: “By events transpiring upon the earth they [God’s people] will know that the time has come for them to be judged in the courts above. The test on the mark of the beast will be concurrent with the judgment of the living. When the image is set up and the mark is enforced, God’s people will know that the time of sealing has come.” [God’s Eternal Purpose, page 200] However, the facts reveal that the judgment of the living occurs after the testing -not during the test, and certainly not before “the final test”, which follows the Loud Cry. The judgment of the Living will not be prophetic of something yet future, but a judgment of decisions arrived at and actions already done. “The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment” (Great Controversy, Page 480). Everything God does is fit and proper, and the time when He judges the living righteous is when they have completed all the tests which He sees fit to test them by, and facts show clearly that that full fruition is obtained after the latter rain. The test on the straight testimony is to be followed by other tests before God’s people will be ready for the seal. Their final test will be whether they are prepared to die rather than disobey God.

It will help the reader to grasp the increasing severity of the test when we draw attention to the fact that laws enforcing the false Sabbath will become progressively more exacting and harsh until the penalty for their violation will be death - see Revelation 13:15-17. 5 Testimonies, page 81, 212, 213, 450, 451, 464, 472-475, 752. Prophets and Kings, Page 188, 189. 5 Testimonies, page 81, Early Writings, page 85. Great Controversy, Page 604, etc.

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At the end of this “final test”, the Judgment of the living occurs when all those to be saved have matured under the latter’ rain and thus are prepared to endure through the seven last plagues, receiving the seal of God’s approval when the High Priest proclaims: “He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11).

God’s people must stand “the final test”, standing loyally for God in face of death, before they will be judged. Their loyalty under this terrible threat will be registered in the books of heaven and on that record they will be judged worthy to receive the seal, at which time probation closes. This is the plain teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy.

That “the final test” is to be true to God while facing death for such loyalty may be seen by the following statement from Testimonies to Ministers 473, where Satan is represented as speaking to his angels, saying: “When death shall be made the penalty of violating our Sabbath, then many who are now ranked with Sabbath-keepers will come over to our side”. Here is evidence that this refers to the time when God’s people are making decisions before probation closes. “The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives; but they will not yield” (1 Testimonies, pages 353, 354). Writing of the events immediately before probation closes, the Lord’s servant says: “When this time of trouble comes. The seal of the living God is upon His people [intimating that this was the last event before probation closed]. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death” (5 Testimonies, page 213). “It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death” (Desire of Ages, page 122).

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, join the ranks of the opposition. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. In this time of persecution the faith of the Lord’s servant will be tried” (Great Controversy, Page 608). The persecution becomes worse as time continues until “they are threatened with destruction” (page 609). These statements are made in the chapter “The Final Warning”. The event that brings the greatest test - “the final test” - is the outpouring of the latter rain; it is then that the time comes for it [the message] to be given with greatest power”. “The popular ministry stir up the sin-loving multitude to revile and persecute those who proclaim it. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the laws will be invoked against Sabbath-keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment” (Great Controversy, Page 607). “The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message” (Early Writings, page 279).

“An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain ... the loud cry of the third angel’. Great power was with these chosen ones. Said the angel, ‘Look you!’ My attention was turned to the wicked, or unbelievers. They were astir. The zeal and power with the people of God had aroused and enraged them ... I saw measures taken against the company who had the light and power of God. Darkness thickened around them [the test more severe], yet they stood firm, approved of God [judged and sealed]” (Early Writings, page 271, 272). Having stood “the final test”, they are then judged and sealed “approved of God”. Thus they have been “purified, and fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God, [to] pass through the time of trouble” (Early Writings, page 67).

That God’s people are not sealed when the enforcement of Sunday laws has commenced but receive the seal after the loud cry has aroused the enemies of God’s message to take more drastic action toward them, is the consistent teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy. “This message [third angel’s message] was designed to put the children of God on their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, ‘They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image’. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth” (Early Writings, page 254).

Observe that they have not yet been sealed, even though they have been in “close combat with the beast and his image”: “Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake they must hold fast the truth.” That is, they are not sealed until after being tested with “the final test” obedience to God though “their lives are at stake”. This is their only hope of eternal life” - which shows that they have not been sealed until after this test, and this test follows the loud cry. Thus the seal is not given before the loud cry.

The Lord’s servant, in the chapter “The Final Warning” writes concerning the decree (Revelation 13:16) enforcing the false Sabbath, and says: “All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil

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penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment receives the mark of the beast. The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty. When the final test [the loyal-to-death test] shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God" (Great Controversy, Page 604, 605).

It will also be observed that the world will then be divided into two classes - those who have the mark of the beast and thus are marked for the destroyers, and those who have the seal of God and are marked to be protected from the destroyers - see Ezekiel 9:1-6; Revelation 6:14-17; 7: 14; 5 Testimonies, page 212. Thus while individuals make up each class, yet God judges them as two classes: one class to be destroyed. The other class to be sealed and protected. It will be observed that when the Lord's servant writes concerning the sealing just before probation closes, she writes of God's people as a whole - see such passages as 5 Testimonies, page 472-475; Great Controversy, Page 483, 484. The Lord's servant never writes of some of God's people being judged in the judgment of the living before others. The loud cry wins many people, and concerning the results of the Loud Cry, the Lord's servant says: -Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side" (Great Controversy, Page 612). These, after standing loyal to God despite the death penalty hanging over them, are also judged and sealed with the others as probation is about to close.

That the sealing occurs after the loud cry and after "the final test", just as probation is about to close, is stated also in 5 Testimonies, page 472-476. Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement" (p. 472). "Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure. While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God."

Yes, sealed after they have withstood the threat of death; sealed "in the closing up of the great day of atonement".

The Lord's servant, giving a resume of the events connected with the close of probation, shows that the sealing of God's people is the last event before probation closes: "They have received 'the latter rain' and they are prepared for the trying hour before them [the latter rain prepares them to face the threat of death].

An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test [the loyal-to-death test] has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves [by remaining steadfast although their lives were at stake, Early Writings, page 254] loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God'. THEN Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He makes the solemn announcement: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still' " (Great Controversy, Page 613). The statement is then made significantly [in contrast to the false teaching that the sins of the remnant are blotted out before the loud cry]: "Every case has been decided for life and death, Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins." Thus the sins are blotted out at the conclusion of the judgment. "Jesus will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God" (Early Writings, page 48).

In the type, the people of Israel were commanded by God to maintain a repentant attitude until the High Priest came out of the Most Holy Place, and this is stated to be the type of the last days (Great Controversy, Page 485). In the type there is nothing to indicate that the High Priest completed His ministry in behalf of some of the people before He completed His ministry there. The sins of all were blotted out or removed from the sanctuary at the conclusion of the priestly ministry (Great Controversy, Page 420-422; Prophets and Kings, Page 356-358). It is contrary to the type to declare that "the remnant will be sealed" (because they have reached a state of fixed perfection) before the Loud Cry, for that would mean that the atoning ministry of Jesus would cease for them before the Loud Cry, for atonement has reference only to sin. As this teaching is at such variance with the type, so it is out of harmony with other revealed truths.

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Truth sanctifies. Misunderstanding of Bible teaching nullifies its sanctifying effect. The writer feels that it is an error to teach that the seal of God is received before the Loud Cry, because this misapplication helps diminish the reason why the Lord has so graciously given His people the message concerning the sealing of His remnant church. By confusing the time when the seal is given, the very important revelation of the love of God for His people is hidden. Whatever reveals the love of God sanctifies; whatever hides that love prevents that sanctifying effect.

The reader is earnestly invited to consider the following facts which are presented to show when and why God seals His people. Instead of teaching that the seal of God is given before the Loud Cry, the writer believes that the facts reveal that the latter rain is poured out upon the church to prepare the precious harvest for the reception of the seal of God, that the giving of the seal is the last thing in the Lord's program for His people before the close of probation.

Some are misled into believing that when Jesus takes the name of each believer in the judgment of the Living, He then completes the perfecting of the character. This erroneous teaching is a precious thought to those who have not paused to remember that, as our High Priest, Jesus now bears the names of all His people "upon His heart continually" (Exodus 28:29, 30) He is daily our "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2: 1), our "Mediator" (1 Timothy 2:5). "He does not forget us for one brief moment" (Ministry of Healing, page 488). He often mentions our name, taking our prayers and presenting them to the Father with His merits. "Our Savior is in the sanctuary pleading in our behalf. He is our interceding High Priest, making an atoning sacrifice for us, pleading in our behalf the efficacy of His blood" (Fundamentals Christian Education, page 370).

"At the Father's right hand He is interceding for us as our High Priest His atonement is effectual for everyone who will humble himself. It is through His intercession that we, through faith, repentance, and conversion, are enabled to become partakers of the divine nature" (Manuscript 29, 1906).

The judgment is not a time for the perfecting of the character that must be done now.

1. WHY GOD GAVE THE SEALING MESSAGE

God is love, and all His words and actions are motivated by love. It could not be otherwise' for His whole Being is love. As the writer has repeatedly pointed out, all last-day prophecies were written because of God's love for His remnant church. This is why He has given so many details of the final scenes. He has revealed His Father's care over His precious people. He has sought at every turn to make promises, give sweet assurances, to His people that He will be with them in the coming storm. He has given His word that He knows how severe will be the test. He has forewarned us of the fierceness of the coming conflict, but with those warnings He has given full assurance that He will strengthen His people for the onslaught, and that He will sustain them all along the way to the day of eternal calm, where the surges cease to roll. What more could God say by way of promise to His people! What more could He do than what He has so graciously said He will do when the storm bursts over His people!

The foundation of righteousness by faith is faith in God's love, in His almighty power which He has placed at the disposal of all who come unto Him through the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ our Lord. Confidence in God, confidence in His love and in His wisdom, this is the foundation of restfulness in Christian experience. This is the mainstay of those who fearlessly face the future, knowing that God will carry them through any and every danger and distress along the way. The Lord's indictment of His people is stated thus: "Said the angel, 'Lack of love and faith are the great sins of which God's people are now guilty'" (3 Testimonies, page 475). All last-day prophecies are written to create love for, and faith in, God. Satan, of course, has striven to becloud our understanding of God's messages of love as revealed in last-day prophecies by causing those prophecies to be misunderstood. Would that all God's people could say in this regard: "We are not ignorant of his [Satan's] devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). A wrong interpretation of the inspired Word is Satan's way of blinding students of the Word to the real meaning of God's messages. A wrong interpretation either adds to or takes away from God's Word, against which we are expressly warned in Revelation 22: 18, 19. Prophecy was given to us that we would be led to the Sun of righteousness who would arise with healing in His wings (Malachi 4: 2). We are admonished to study prophecy "until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in our hearts". But, we are warned: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but

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holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:19-21). Without the Holy Spirit to guide us in our study of the sacred Scriptures we could no more hope to interpret the inspired words aright than we, of ourselves, could give forth these words. The Holy Spirit Who inspired the Words must also interpret them. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2: 12, 13).

“God’s love for His church is infinite. His care over His heritage is unceasing” (9 Testimonies, page 228). This glorious fact is revealed in every last-day prophecy, including the revelation concerning the sealing of His remnant people. This is the sanctifying truth Satan seeks to hide from the church, for the strength of God’s people lies in their faith in the keeping love and the merciful care of Christ the Creator.

2. THE SEALED ARE PROTECTED FROM GOD’S WRATH

Those who are sealed are to live through the day of God’s wrath, and only as they are especially protected could they ever live to see the coming of Jesus in His Second Advent. In order to appreciate God’s promise of protection through the time of trouble, we need to consider the great dangers and perils of that time. With poignant pen the prophets have painted the horrors of the day of the Lord:

“Howl you; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt” (Isaiah 13:5-7).

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come” (Joel 1:14). “For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible: and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:11).

“The great day of the Lord . . . the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath . . . trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men . . . the day of the Lord’s wrath for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zephaniah’s graphic description of the terrors of the coming day of wrath concludes with a message of hope for the “meek” who will be living at the time probation is about to close. When the “decree” closing probation is proclaimed and the day of salvation goes like chaff blown with wind: “Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger” (Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2:1-3).

The Lord who shut the door of the ark (Genesis 7:15) and protected Noah and his family in the time of the flood has promised to shelter His people during the coming day of trouble. Also through Isaiah, the gospel prophet, the Lord uttered the same comforting truth: “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 over past. For, behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth” (Isaiah 26:20, 21). The Spirit of Prophecy says: “I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble” (Early Writings, page 43). When God seals His remnant, when “the indelible mark of God is upon them-, the Lord will “shut them in” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 446).

The protection to be accorded God’s people in the last days was typified by the experiences of Israel in the night when the death angel passed over the land of Egypt. Urging His people to apply the blood-sprinkled sign to their houses, the Lord declared: “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12: 12, 13, and see 1 Corinthians 10:10-11 margin). The mark of deliverance was quickly followed by the angel of death: “this night In the anti type destruction will promptly follow the application of the sign of deliverance - the seal of God.

“The Israelites placed over their doors a signature in blood, to show that they were God’s property. So the children of God in this age will bear the signature God has appointed. They will place themselves in harmony with God’s holy law. A mark is placed upon every one of God’s people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin” (Review and Herald, Feb. 6, 1900, SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 968).

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Pointing to the crisis that will come to the world and to the people of God as probation's hour is about to close, the Lord's servant says: "The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God's commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast" (5 Testimonies, page 451).

John, on Patmos, was given a vision of the mighty events to transpire in the very last days. He saw the terror-stricken multitudes of the unsaved as they beheld with consternation the dying agonies of a world in rebellion against its Creator. Calling upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them so that they might be hidden from the Lord's avenging eye, they exclaim: "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 7:14-17). The answer to this fear-motivated question is then given in Revelation 7: 1-4, where a special messenger from Heaven descends with instruction to the angels to whom was given power to hurt the earth, the seas, and the things on this planet, "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Only one thing prevents the angels of death from operating - the sealing of those whom God will protect during the day of His anger. There is no intimation that a time period must elapse during which those sealed are to proclaim the loud cry, as some assert in their teaching concerning the reception of the seal of God.

The angels are commissioned to hold back the winds of strife only until God's servants are sealed. This prophecy clearly intimates that destruction follows immediately the saints are sealed - and thus it is with every prophecy concerning the sealing of God's remnant people. Dr. Strong says the Greek original for "seal" signifies to stamp for security or preservation. When the Jews were anxious that our Lord's body should be safe inside the tomb from any attempt of the disciples to take it, they requested Pilate to "command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day. Pilate said unto them go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone" (Matthew 27: 64-66). The Revelator pictures Satan's incarceration in the bottomless pit during the 1,000 years: "And shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled (Revelation 20: 3). The mark of the beast (which is set forth in the Bible in contrast to the seal of God) will be received by deceived, fear-ridden humanity because they think that it will give them security: "That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark." (Revelation 13: 17).

The thought of sealing occurs about 72 times in the Bible, including 27 times in the Revelation. A seal is used in various ways in the Bible. In most of its uses seal means finality, and the prophecy concerning the sealing of God's servant is obviously intended to convey the truth that this is the conclusion of Christ's priestly work, His final ministry for His remnant people. This prophecy is intended to explain that God seals them for their protection during the day of His wrath. Depicting the final hours of the Lord's ministry in the temple above, the Lord's servant says that--Jesus gazed in pity on the remnant . . . the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and commissioned the special messenger to command the angels to whom was entrusted the fearful responsibility of hurting the earth, sea and things upon this planet, to "hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads" (Early Writings, page 38).

Our (SDA) Bible Commentary (on Revelation 7: 2) says concerning Ezekiel's prophecy: "By virtue of the mark they were to be saved from destruction (Ezekiel 9:2-6). The symbolism of sealing finds an interesting parallel in Jewish eschatological thinking. The Jews thus conceived of the mark on the righteous as keeping them from the perils of the time of the coming of the Messiah."

We read in "A Word to the 'Little Flock' page 3 (Ellen G. White and Her Critics, page 563): "The saints are exhorted not to fear the plagues at that time, for God will give His angels charge over them, so that no plague shall come nigh their dwellings. The men with the slaughter-weapons in their hands have this charge, 'come not near any man upon whom is the mark'. But the humble followers of the Lamb, have nothing to fear from the terrors of the day of His wrath. For they will be sealed before the plagues are poured out. The man 'clothed in linen', marks the saints before slaying commences. The 'four angels' are not to hurt the 'earth, neither the sea, nor the trees', till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads" (Revelation 7: 1-3). The marking or sealing of the saints seems to be shadowed forth by the marking of the side posts and upper door posts of the houses of all Israel, before the Lord passed through Egypt, to slay the first-born of the Egyptians. Israel was safe; for God was their Protector in that perilous night. The true Israel of God will be safely protected, when Christ rules the nations with a 'rod of iron', and dashes them 'in pieces like a potter's vessel', for He has promised to give His angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways. Those who do every well known duty to God, and His children will safely rest in the arms of the holy angels, while the burning wrath of God is being poured out on those who have rejected His counsel, and commandments".

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3. WHY THE SAINTS NEED TO BE SEALED

THEIR PRESERVATION THROUGH THE INDESCRIBABLE CONDITIONS OF THE TIME OF TROUBLE: DIRE DISASTERS TO OVERWHELM THE WHOLE WORLD WHEN PROBATION CLOSES

Every act of God is wise and loving. The angels, mighty and wise in their angelic status, are, nevertheless, finite. When sudden destruction is falling all around the inhabitants of the earth the angels must know for sure, and quickly, at any moment, just who are to be protected. It is not their work to judge anyone. That is God's prerogative alone. The decisions concerning the individuals to be afforded protection must have been previously decided by the infinite judge. It must be indicated by God who are to be protected, and those without the seal of God who are not to be protected. The fearful, overall picture presented of the colossal catastrophic calamities to befall the world when probation closes should of itself present to the thoughtful the adequate reason for sealing those whom God desires His angels to protect. The Lord's servant, writing on this very theme, says:

"We hear now of earthquakes . . . of fires, of tempests, of disasters by sea and land, of pestilence, of famine. This is only the beginning of what shall be. The description of the day of God is given through John by the Revelator. The cry of the terror-stricken millions has fallen upon the ear of John. 'The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' The apostle himself was awed and overwhelmed. If such scenes as this are to come, such tremendous judgments on a guilty world, where will be the refuge for God's people? How will they be sheltered until the indignation be over past? John sees the elements of nature - earthquake, tempest, and political strife represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church. Only those . . . who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti typical day of atonement will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection. This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision. John saw the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear. He beheld the earth moved, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea ... the water thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He was shown plagues, pestilence, famine, and death performing their terrible mission. 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. 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" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 444-446).

In the vision of Ezekiel 9, which is stated to be the same as the sealing of the saints in Revelation 7, the command is given: "Set a mark upon the foreheads. And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go you after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have you pity: slay utterly old and young but come not near any man upon whom is the mark" (verses 4-6). Nothing is said concerning the mark being given so that these marked ones can go and preach the loud cry - this idea is simply a human addition to God's Word that confuses the revelation of last-day events. Briefly, it is simply, be marked -or be slain! This position is clearly expressed by the Lord's servant, for, after quoting Ezekiel 9: 1-6, she says: "Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, to put on the garments of vengeance, and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them. The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time [when Christ's mediation ceases and the day of wrath begins] presented before his vision" (5 Testimonies, page 207, 208). "When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a Protector of all who have preserved the faith in its purity" (p. 200). "The day of vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons" (p. 212).

When the Lord's servant makes reference to God's people receiving the seal of God, the seal is given so that those sealed will not be destroyed by the destroying angels who are pictured as following immediately upon their sealing. Not once in all these many references does the Lord's servant intimate that the sealed ones receive that seal in order to preach the loud cry. As stated by the inspired pen: "Soon the

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dead and dying will be all around us. Those only who have the seal of the living God will be sheltered from the storm of wrath that will soon fall on the heads of those who have rejected the truth” (see “Mrs. E. G. White and Her Critics”, by Francis D. Nichol, p. 634).

The more realistically we grasp the terrible pictures painted by the prophets, the more we shall appreciate the reason why God seals His people - so that the angels will afford them protection. Daniel 12:1 declares that ‘when Christ ceases His heavenly ministry, “There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”.

The following extracts will enable us to understand better why the Lord seals His people just as probation is about to close. From these presentations of the frightful days ahead the saints will derive comfort from the Lord’s assurance given in the seal that those who seek earnestly to do His commandments will be protected, as He has promised in the 91st Psalm.

“The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land follow each other in quick succession. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed. But when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture the judgments of God that are about to fall upon a doomed world” (6 Testimonies, page 408).

“The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place” (9 Testimonies, page 14).

“Everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere” (1 Testimonies, page 268).

“Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations - trouble that will not cease till Jesus comes. The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumors of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand” (Review & Herald, November 30, 1904).

“Everything is preparing for the last great day of God . . . then the wrath of God, which has so long slumbered, will awake. The desolating power of God is upon the earth to rend and destroy. The inhabitants of the earth are appointed to the sword, to famine, and to pestilence” (1 Testimonies, page 363). “This earth has almost reached the place where God will permit the destroyer to work his will upon it. He will arise in His majesty to shake terribly the earth” (7 Testimonies, page 141).

“The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the evil one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere [God’s people] will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature, and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe” (Great Controversy, Page 614).

“The Lord is removing His restrictions from the earth, and soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime. Those who are without God’s protection will find no safety in any place or position. Human agents are being trained, and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill” (8 Testimonies, page 49).

“Four mighty angels hold back the powers of earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon” (Letter 79, 1900, quoted in Our Firm Foundation, Volume 2, page 287).

“Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle. Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict, when all will take sides” (6 Testimonies, page 14).

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“The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by the millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel” (Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890).

“In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another. Fire and flood and earthquakes, with war and blood-shed. Something great and decisive will soon of necessity take place. The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at lofty and supposedly fireproof buildings, and said, ‘They are perfectly safe’. But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction” (Life Sketches, New Edition, pages 413, 414).

“During a vision of the night I stood on an eminence, from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small, were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theatres, hotels, and the homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified. The destroying angels were at work. One touch, and buildings so thoroughly constructed that men regarded them as secure against every danger quickly became heaps of rubbish. There was no assurance of safety in any place” (9 Testimonies, page 92, 93).

“Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hastening greatly. But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads” (Review and Herald 28 January, 1909).

“Just before we entered it [the time of trouble], we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion” (Day-Star, March 14, 1846).

THE TIME OF TROUBLE ILLUSTRATED BY THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

“The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old . . . desolation everywhere” (Great Controversy, Page 614).

They became Satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, among the highest and the lowest classes alike, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. There was no safety anywhere. Friends and kindred betrayed one another. Parents slew their children and children their parents. The leaders of the opposing factions at times united to plunder and torture their wretched victims, and again fell upon each other’s forces, and slaughtered without mercy. Unhappy Jerusalem! Rent by internal dissensions, the blood of her children slain by lone another’s hands crimsoning her streets while alien armies beat down her fortifications and slew her men of war. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan’s vindictive power over those who yield to his control. The Savior’s prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow the doom of a world. The records of the past, the long procession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions, the ‘battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood’ - what are these in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and Satanic wrath!” (Great Controversy, Page 28, 29, 36, 37).

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ILLUSTRATES THE TIME OF TROUBLE

‘The reign of terror’. Peace and happiness were banished from the homes and hearts of men. No one was secure violence and lust held undisputed sway. The cities of the kingdom were filled with scenes of horror. One party of revolutionists was against another party, and France became one vast field for contending masses, swayed by the fury of their passions, citizens were divided into a medley of factions that seemed intent on nothing but mutual extermination. And to add to the general misery, the nation became involved in a prolonged and devastating war with the great powers of Europe. All this was as Satan would have it. His steadfast purpose is to bring woe and wretchedness upon men. He urges them on to excesses and atrocities. The restraining Spirit of God, which imposes a check upon the cruel power of Satan, was in a great measure removed, and he whose only delight is in the wretchedness of men was

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permitted to work his will. The land was filled with crimes too horrible for pen to trace” (Great Controversy, Page 282-288).

If this occurred when God’s Spirit “was in a great measure removed”, what will the whole world be like when Satan has no restraint to his cruelties? “The earth became one vast field of strife” (Great Controversy, Page 655). “Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed” (Great Controversy, Page 656).

There will be no safety anywhere, yet through it all God will protect His people, for this is the significance of His sealing them.

4. HOW SATAN UNITES THE WORLD

Despite the fearful inroads of sin in the human family, the ordinary citizen does not at present contemplate that the time will ever come when the masses of mankind will actually attempt to slay the people of God. The thought today would be incredible to most people, and it would never come about except for the working of Satan. By false doctrines, by miracles, and by false accusations against God’s people, the whole world will be led to make war-upon the remnant of the woman’s seed (Revelation 12:17). Quoting these words, the Lord’s servant says: “In the near future we shall see these words fulfilled, as Protestant churches unite with the world and with the Papal power against commandment keepers. The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. Satan will excite indignation against the humble minority. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education will combine to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals they will stir up the passions of the people” (5 Testimonies, page 449, 450).

“The popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, Papists and Protestants unite” (Great Controversy, Page 607). Satan will succeed in stirring up anger against God’s people. In the Loud Cry, the people of God will declare that this is the result of the plotting of Satan, for we read concerning the angel proclaiming the loud cry: “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 18:1-3). The Lord’s servant, quoting these words, says: “It is a wrath which is created by false doctrines, and when kings and presidents drink this wine of the wrath of her fornication, they are stirred with anger against those who will not come into harmony with the false and satanic heresies which exalt the false Sabbath, and lead men to trample underfoot God’s memorial” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 62). The Lord’s servant often wrote of the uniting of the whole world against God’s people -see 6 Testimonies, page 18, 395; 7 Testimonies, page 141, 182; 9 Testimonies, page 149; Great Controversy, Page 607, 635; Prophets and Kings, Page 512. “At last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death” (Prophets and Kings, Page 512). “As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the Papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false Sabbath, the people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her example” (6 Testimonies, page 18). “Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world” (6 Testimonies, page 395). “There will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof” (Great Controversy, Page 635).

“We may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan, and that the end is near” “when Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism” (5 Testimonies, page 451).

Referring again, in Great Controversy, Page 588, to the union of Protestants with Papists allied to spiritualism, the Lord’s servant says: “Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. Papists, Protestants, and worldly people will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.”

Thus through false teachings and by the miracles of spiritualism the religious world will be led to make war upon the remnant church. Satan has also other weapons in his arsenal which he will employ so

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that the populace will join in the universal execration of the remnant and act to rid the earth of their obnoxious presence. What these weapons are we must now consider.

5. SATAN PLANS WAR AND STRIFE AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE

“The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh day Adventists. It is the purpose of Satan to cause them to be blotted from the earth, in order that his supremacy of the world may not be disrupted” (Testimonies to Ministers 37). “He numbers the world as his subjects, but the little company who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete” (Great Controversy, Page 618).

To bring the whole world to the place where it unites in the satanic desire, to slaughter God's people, Satan will employ wars among the nations. We (SDA's) have always believed that a war of gigantic proportions must occur before the coming of Christ. In fostering this belief many among us have termed this expected conflict the “Armageddon” of Revelation 16:12-16. Some have declared that this and other prophecies depict a world war; others have taught that a, “spiritual” conflict is portrayed therein. It would help to make these opposing beliefs less divergent for consideration, to be given to the fact that Satan plans to create wars and other troubles in order to blame God's people for them. It is the writer's firm conviction that Revelation 16:12-16 can be understood only in the light of the great controversy between Christ and Satan over the People of God; that the gathering of the nations is against the remnant church. That the war which Satan provokes against the remnant (Revelation 12:17) ends in the destruction of all their enemies at “Armageddon” - a symbolic name meaning the mountain of slaughter, referring to the great slaughter of the enemies of the church. However, one of the means which Satan employs to bring the world to the decision to slay the saints is by creating wars and other troubles, so that the angry multitudes will regard them “as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that filling the earth with woe” (Great Controversy, Page 614).

It should be observed that the wars and other troubles increase as soon as probation closes - this may be observed also in the extracts given earlier in this outline. It is not a matter of waiting until the 6th plague for the nations to go to war with each other, for this fighting will have commenced before that time, and it is this bloodshed that is blamed on to God's people which leads to the symbolic gathering of all the nations in their determination to slay the saints, who, ere then, “will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe”.

Referring to the time of trouble before the pouring out of the seven plagues, the Lord's servant says: “ ‘The commencement of the time of trouble’ does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as, not to prevent the work of the third angel” (Early Writings, page 85). As previously shown, when probation closes, then commences without restraint “all the elements of strife”. It is a mistake to teach that this warring of the nations will be postponed until the time of the 6th plague (though universal fratricidal slaughter then occurs), for before that time they will be engaged in conflict, but concerning which we are given no details. When God intervenes to save His people at the time the world has decided upon universal action to slay the saints, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty, when God employs His almighty power to deliver His people from this attempted slaughter of His people, there will then be further and more terrible bloodshed among the enemies of the remnant church. As in the past, when God intervened to save His people from their enemies, He caused them to become divided and confused so that they turned upon each other and slew each other - see Judges 7:22; 1 Samuel 14:20-23; 2 Kings 7:6, 7; 2 Chronicle 20:22-24.

Last-day prophecies depicting the uniting of the world forces against the people of God emphasize this important fact - that every man's sword will be against his brother, see Haggai 2: 21, 22; Ezekiel 38:21; Zechariah 14:13. The Revelator also depicts the uniting, or gathering, of the world forces against God's people (Revelation 16:13, 14), which is followed by God's intervention to save His people and the consequent division and confusion and slaughter among their Babylonian enemies. See Revelation 16:17-21; 17:13-17. Thus in the consideration of the “Armageddon” slaughter it is difficult to entirely separate military wars among the nations generally (details of which are not given) from the prophetic portrayal (Revelation 16: 12-16 and other prophecies) in which all the powers of earth unite to slay God's people. For Satan employs wars and other troubles to stir up anger against the people of God as the cause of these

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judgments; then, after God's voice delivers His people (by causing the greatest earthquake which brings earthly cities down to the dust), the wicked turn on each other in fratricidal slaughter. Wars precede the concerted action of the powers of earth to slay the saints; universal slaughter among the unsaved follows that concerted action to slay the saints depicted in Revelation 16: 13-16.

Thus military wars are involved in the understanding of Revelation 16:13-16, but the prophetic picture is completely spoiled when it is interpreted as depicting a military war: it depicts the united effort of the Satan-led world to destroy God's people, an effort which results in their world-wide slaughter with each man's sword against his brother. "The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed" (Great Controversy, Page 656). "After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God [at the commencement of the 7th plague, Revelation 16: 171, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other" (Early Writings, page 290). After quoting Zechariah 14:12, 13 ("A great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his brother"), the Lord's servant says: "In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth - priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low. 'And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried. (Jeremiah 25:33)" (Great Controversy, Page 657).

Thus war and strife which Satan employs as a means of stirring up the masses to unite to destroy the remnant, God permits as a counter-strategy in which those who are prevented from killing His people turn and slay each other. It must be observed, however, that this war and strife before, and after, the deliverance of God's people is employed in reference to them. Thus it is plainly seen that any interpretation of Revelation 16: 12-16 which declares that this prophecy envisages a military war over the oil wells of the Middle East, or over Turkish territory, or anything of that nature, is definitely a misinterpretation which completely hides the real Purpose of the prophecy. God's blessed assurance that His sealed remnant will be protected when their enemies seek to slay them and that He will confuse and scatter these would-be murderers of the saints causing them to turn and slay each other. Thus the reason why this prophecy is given is to give strength to God's remnant to face the coming crisis, having confidence in their Father's love, in His keeping promises. Satan employs the teaching of a purely military conflict - based upon Revelation 16:12-16 and other prophecies - as a means of weakening the faith of the remnant.

From the foregoing presentation of the balance between the true interpretation of Revelation 16: 12-16 and parallel prophecies in relation to the uniting of the world forces to slay the sealed saints, and the part played by wars and strife before, and after, the deliverance of the remnant, we can understand better why the Lord's servant has on several occasions seemed to commingle military conflicts with the conflict over the Sabbath and God's people. Observe the following: "Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars, and rumors of wars. The nations are angry. Events are changing to bring about the day of God. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle. Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict, when all will take sides [The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part, 6 Testimonies, page 352]. Satan is working to the utmost to make himself as God, and to destroy all who oppose his power" (6 Testimonies, page 14).

Here again we are given the relationship between military wars and strife with the conflict over God's people and the Sabbath. Through coercive Sunday laws Satan will succeed in foisting his will upon the world. Thus he will "make himself as God". And as a part of his scheme to accomplish this purpose he plans "to destroy all who oppose his power". "Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict, when all will take sides, either with God, as evidenced by loyalty to the Creator's sign, the Sabbath day, or with Satan, by accepting the mark of the beast. What is included in Satan's planning "to destroy all who oppose his power? Military wars and strife aplenty so that the, saints "will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe".

Thus Satan has a double purpose in the bloodshed he incites among the nations: (1) he finds devilish delight in slaughter; (2) he will use that slaughter to blame God's people so that the nations will be stirred to slay them.

"It suits his Satanic majesty well to see slaughter and carnage upon the earth. He loves to see the poor soldiers mowed down like grass" (1 Testimonies, page 366). "Satan delights in war. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work

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of preparation to stand in the day of God- (Great Controversy, Page 589). Thus by war he diverts people from preparation for the close of probation. Then, again, he will use war as a means of stirring up hatred against God's people in order to have them slain by the nations.

"He [Satan] will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils" (Great Controversy, Page 589, 590).

"Thus wars in general please Satan's devilish nature. Creatures who were created by Christ and for whom He died killing each other! Then, having led them to war upon each other, he employs their warfare to stir up the nations to decide to slay God's people. Thus literal military wars become mixed up with the world's attempted slaughter of God's people - the former being employed by Satan to bring about the latter.

"Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict when all will take sides" (6 Testimonies, page 14) - create wars, militarily, then use them as a strategy to blame them on to the people of God and thus cause people to be willing and anxious to destroy the remnant.

It might help some to obtain a clearer understanding when it is remembered that the war upon the remnant can be in progress while at the same time the various nations have war among themselves, or have strife internally. "The willing subjects of Satan are faithful, active, and united in one object. And although they hate and war with one another, yet they improve every opportunity to advance their common interest" (1 Testimonies, page 346). "The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head-the Papal power-the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses" (7 Testimonies, page 182).

"Just before probation closes, at the time when God's people are about to be sealed so that they will be protected during the day of God's wrath, during the time when the world will seek to slay them, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel" (Early Writings, page 85). Before probation closes, the world will experience considerable trouble, strife and bloodshed, so that "the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils" (Great Controversy, page 589, 596). Already, at that time, Satan will be urging the destruction of God's people as a means of bringing about better conditions. When probation closes and the world is plunged into unprecedented perils, disasters, and wars, Satan will more vehemently work upon the populace to slay the sealed saints to bring an end to these disastrous occurrences. "Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them. But could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness. While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God" (5 Testimonies, page 475; Prophets and Kings, Page 587).

"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 God's chosen [sealed] people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them; for angels that excel in strength will protect them" (9 Testimonies, page 17).

"In some places, before the time for the decree to be executed, the wicked rushed upon the saints to slay them; but angels in the form of men of war fought for them. Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High., but Jesus bade His angels watch over them. God would be honored [as the Protector of His people] by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected Him. Next came the multitude of the angry wicked, and next a mass of evil angels, hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But before they could approach God's people, the wicked must first pass this company of mighty, holy angels. This was impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede, and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them to fall back. God would not suffer His name to be reproached [He would keep His covenant to protect His people] among the heathen. The time had nearly come when He was to manifest His mighty power, and gloriously deliver His saints. For His name's glory He would deliver His saints, every one of those who had patiently waited for Him. God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark. I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his evil host, and all who hate God, would be gratified. Those who have mocked

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will witness the care of God for His people, and behold their glorious deliverance” (Early Writings, page 283, 284).

Those sealed are assured that their lives will be preserved through the frightful upheavals of nature, from death and disaster that will stalk through the world, and come unharmed through the fury of the wicked who will be persuaded by Satan to regard them, as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe” (Great Controversy, Page 614).

6. THE SEALING OF GOD’S SERVANTS

The 144,000 Receive a Special Seal. It is important that we recognize the difference between the seal of the Spirit and the seal given by the angels just before probation closes. Through failing to do this some folk have brought in confusion where otherwise all is plain. They have assumed that all that was necessary was to advance a few thoughts on the seal of the Spirit and that the latter rain, the outpouring of the Spirit, will indicate that the seal has been received. We quote: “Fullness of the Spirit after Seal. God designs to have a people who will appropriate the benefits of the final atonement of Christ. Even as the fullness of the Spirit was given to Christ as a seal (see John 3:34; 6:27; Acts 10:38), the fullness of the Spirit will seal each saint (see Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 2:22; 3 Testimonies, page 267). Then the power of the Spirit will attend his earthly witness, as he testified to the glory and power of Christ’s atoning ministry with the loud voice of the third angel (Revelation 18:1-4). After quoting Early Writings, page 277-279, this author says: “The above passage shows that this message will be sounded by a people lighted with the glory of God, and clothed with power from on high. The glory of God is the name and character of God (Exodus 33:18, 19:34:6, 7). The name of God is the seal of God (Revelation 7:24; 14:1). When the people receive, believe and appropriate the benefits of the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14, they will have the seal of God, which is the name of God, which is the character of God, which is the glory of God. Thus the angel of Revelation 18 will unite his voice with the third angel to swell his message to a loud cry.” Good as some aspects of this presentation are, this position, nevertheless, brings in confusion through a failure to grasp the reason the Lord has given two pictures of the sealing of the 144,000: (1) Revelation 6:14-17; 7:1-4, where the terrible calamities of the day of the Lord are realistically depicted in somber shades and where it is made perfectly clear that only those with the seal will be protected in that coming day of God’s wrath; and (2) Revelation 14: 1-5, where the character of those protected is emphasized. Important as it is to consider the character of those sealed (Revelation 14), it is also important to consider why they are sealed (Revelation 6:14-17; 7:1-4) -namely, for their Protection during the day of wrath, as Israel was protected in Egypt when God’s wrath was poured out upon the Egyptians. It was to draw attention to these two features of the 144,000 that the Lord gave these two pictures of this holy company. A failure to grasp this twofold nature has caused some of our brethren to arrive at the erroneous conclusion that the seal of God must be given before the loud cry. But this conception throws out of balance important last-day truths. The truth of Bible subjects is seen when all the relevant facts are considered. Partial study of a subject cannot present a true picture. In this chapter we desire to show that a distinction must be drawn between the seal of the Spirit and the seal given by the angels, as indicated in Revelation 7: 1-4.

The word “seal” is found many times and used in various ways in the Bible. There are references to kings’ seals (1 Kings 21:8); there is the figurative seal upon the heart (Song of Solomon 8:6). The seal, or fruitage, of Paul’s apostle ship (1 Corinthians 9:2); the seals that secured ancient Scrolls (Revelation 5:1); the seal which transgression puts upon a man (Job 14: 17); the seal of wisdom (Ezekiel 28:12); the seal of a righteous faith (Romans 4:11), etc. In most of its uses the word “seal” means finality, something unalterable, the sum total or perfection.

It is fitting that the remnant people - those living at the time of the final work of our Lord Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary should be sealed, for such an action indicates the completion of the gospel work. That the seal received by the remnant is of a special kind is obvious from the fact that those sealed are declared by the sealing angel to be “the servants of our God”. The commanding angel, especially sent on this important mission by Christ, the King of the church, is described as “having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to, whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Revelation 7:1-3). The fellowship among the angels themselves and toward those to be sealed is evident by the plural “we” and “our”. The sealing angel is not commissioned from Jesus to come to make

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men the servants of Christ, but to seal those who are already His “servants”. As we shall shortly show, all Christ’s servants have a seal; but these are to receive a special seal for the special purpose of assuring them safety in the unprecedented time of trouble.

The Lord’s servant has written a chapter on “The Sealing (Early Writings, page 36-38) in which is graphically portrayed how King Jesus commissions the angels to hold back the world strife until the remnant are sealed. She says: “They [the angels] were about to let them [winds of strife and destruction] go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed upon the remnant that were not sealed. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed.”

These not sealed ones were servants of God and were “a remnant according to the election of grace”, and as such had already been given the seal of the Spirit, for this is the privilege of all who sincerely accept Jesus as their Savior. As stated by Paul: “In Whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest [pledge] of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:13, 14). The Holy Spirit is the King’s own seal on those who are His peculiar people, proving them to be His- property. It is the pledge which the Redeemer gives to His believing disciples, ‘while they are in the body, of the full redemption yet to come in the resurrection when the dead in Christ shall live again. Here again we may observe that this revelation is made because of God’s love for His people -He desires us to rest in His goodness, and find peace and contentment in knowing that, having commenced the Christian. life, He will guide and protect us until we pass through “this present evil world”.

“And in Him you also by your faith have been stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit, which is the pledge and installment of our common heritage, that we may obtain our divine possession” (Ephesians 1:13, 14, Moffatt). “In Him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it” (RSV).

“And so also is the Holy Ghost Whom God hath given to them that obey Him” (Acts 5:32). The blessing of the presence of the Holy Spirit is for all who believe - see Luke 24:49; John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:17, 18, 33-39; 3:19; Romans 8:9-26; Galatians 3:14, etc. From these and other Scriptures we are informed that the Spirit’s presence quickens the present mortal body, giving renewed life and energy day by day. In a sense, the immortal life promised the believer in Jesus becomes a present possession. At least enough is experienced to be a foretaste of glories divine. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life” (John 3:36). “He that hears My Word and believes on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life” (John 5:24). “He that believes on Me hath everlasting life” (John 6: 47). The believer hath eternal life now - that is, a present possession. Girdlestone, in “Synonyms of the Old Testament,” page 318, says: “The adjective (AIONIOS) is used more than forty times in the New Testament with respect to eternal life, which is regarded partly as a present gift, partly as a promise for the future.”

“He that believes on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that has not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:10-13). John’s repeated assurance of our present possession is echoed in the Spirit of Prophecy: “Christ declares that even now the power which gives life to the dead is among them, and they are to behold its manifestation. This same resurrection power is that which gives life to the soul ‘dead in trespasses and sins’, Ephesians 2:1” (Desire of Ages, page 209).

“Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal” (Desire of Ages, page 388).

“The Holy Spirit will renew every organ of the body. Vitality increases under the influence of the Spirit’s action” (Medical Ministry, page 12). “Those who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God will constantly receive a new endowment of physical, mental and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth His highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties. Through co-operation with Christ, they are made complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence” (Gospel Workers, page 112).

The believer truly has “the pledge and installment” of the promised inheritance in Christ - the seal every believer receives from a loving Savior with the assurance of His keeping grace and power that will lead all trusting hearts into the fullness of eternal life. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4: 30). “Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the

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Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1: 22). “Who stamped me with His seal, and gave me the Spirit as a pledge in my heart” (Moffatt). “He has put His seal upon us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (RSV). “Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are His” (2 Timothy 2: 19). Cruden: -Having this confirmation, or security, that God discerns His people from others, and will take care of them.”

The prophecy of Revelation 7:1-4 depicts the sealing of God’s “servants”. As God’s “servants” they will have been already sealed with the Holy Spirit and recipients of all the blessings which come in the train of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is obvious that the sealing of God’s “servants” refers to a special seal given for a special occasion. “This sealing secures the safety to the sealed ones as the judgment of the great day goes over the nations” (The Apocalypse, by Joseph Seiss, Volume 1, page 424). “This action of sealing with the seal or signet of God is equivalent to a declaration that they who are sealed appertain to God, and are distinguished as such from others who do not belong to Him, and are assured by Him of His Protection against evil” (Chr. Wordsworth, Lectures on the Apocalypse. Quoted by J. A. Seiss in op. cit., Volume 1, pp. 423, 424).

The Sabbath Commandment is the seal of the Law of God. “The fourth commandment contains the seal of God” (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 307). “The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God” (Great Controversy, Page 640). It is the sign of sanctification - see Exodus 31:13, 17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20. “Seal the law among My disciples” (Isaiah 8:16). This obviously refers to the fact that when God’s law is lived out, or enshrined, in a human heart, that is the justification of the law. It is the protection of God in a man’s life and the sign of God’s presence. Observance of the Sabbath recognizes God, the Creator, and places a sign, mark, or seal on the observers. Those sealed have the Father’s name on them. They partake of His character. They, having no guile (lie) in them, are faultless before God - see Revelation 14:1-5.

It is because the remnant (through learning to obtain unlimited power from our Lord Jesus in His priestly ministry) attain unto holiness that they are sealed with the seal of the living God -the sign of sanctification is the keeping of the Sabbath Commandment (which shows that the Ten Commandments come from the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the living God). A distinction is thus drawn between the sealing of God’s law among His disciples (Isaiah 8: 16), and the sealing of God’s people because they honor the seal of the law (Revelation 7:1-4). The two seals cannot be separated - only those who honor the seal of the law will be honored by the seal of the Creator upon those whom He promises to protect through the day of His wrath and the time of trouble which is to come to a world in rebellion against His government.

The Spirit of Prophecy refers to two sealings: one now in progress and another future and to be accomplished just before the close of probation. “God has placed His seal upon us, because He manifests in us His own character of love” (Ministry of Healing, page 37). In the chapter: “The Open and the Shut Door” (Early Writings, page’ 42-45), the Lord’s servant says: “Satan is now using every device it! This sealing time to keep the minds of God’s people from the present truth.” The context shows that reference is made to “the present truth”, the added light which has come upon the ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary before the Law of God, resulting in -the call of Christ to His people in all the churches to restore the Sabbath, the seal of the law, to its rightful place in their hearts. Satan is pictured as trying hard to prevent the honest people in all churches from seeing this present truth “in this sealing time”. Then in, the chapter, “Mark of the Beast” (Early Writings, page 64, 67), God’s servant says:

“I saw that those who of late have embraced the truth [which concerns the sealing of the law among Christ’s disciples] would have trials fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God, pass through, the time of trouble, see the King in His beauty,” etc. This reference to, the sealing of the remnant is a future work. Sabbath keepers - those who have the seal of God’s law in their hearts are here referred to who, through suffering, would be prepared to receive the seal and thus he equipped for protection in “the time of trouble” and live to see “the King in His beauty” at the time of His second advent.

“Just before we entered it [the time of trouble], we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds” (Day-Star, March 14, 1846).

Under the chapter “The Sealing” (Early Writings, page 36-38), Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed. Observe that God’s faithful remnant are thus bright to view just before the time of trouble commences. They are loyal Sabbath keepers having the seal of the Spirit and also the seal of God’s law in their hearts, but they are not sealed with the special seal until just before the close of probation and the winds of strife are permitted to blow. That the giving of this special seal occurs after the outpouring of the

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latter rain as the last act of Jesus in His priestly ministry may be seen by the following statements: “When the third angel’s message closes. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received ‘the latter rain’, ‘the refreshing from the presence of the Lord’, and, they are prepared for the trying hour before them. An angel returning from the earth announces that His work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts [shown by observing the Sabbath, the seal of the law] have received ‘the seal of the living God’. Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above” (Great Controversy, Page 613).

That the seal not the latter rain, as some have suggested, but is given subsequent to the latter rain and, just before the close of probation, is again shown in the itemized description of the final events given in Early Writings, page 279: “They had received the latter rain. The last great warning had sounded everywhere. An angel returned from the earth, and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus throw down the censer.” It will assist the reader further to discern the difference between the two sealings when it is pointed out that the seal of God is given to Sabbath keepers after they have been tested concerning the mark of the beast, and Sunday keepers do not receive “the mark of the beast” until after they have been tested concerning the seal of God, the Sabbath. “While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God” (Great Controversy, Page 605). Those who obey the Law, shown by obeying the Sabbath Commandment which contains the seal of God, will “receive the seal of God”; those who will not obey this fourth Commandment which contains the seal of God, will then receive “the mark of the beast”. That is, the acceptance or rejection of the seal of the Law will determine whether we receive the seal of God for protection from the coming storm of wrath, or receive the mark of the beast and be thus marked down for death. Observe that the above quotation presents two features for each class: the former people accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, then receive the mark of the beast; the latter ones, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, then receive the seal of God.

This same feature is brought to view again in Great Controversy, Page 449: “And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive ‘the mark of the beast’.” Thus the seal of God, or the mark of the beast, is not received until after the issues have been plainly set before the people. Then, after the testing, people are either sealed for protection, or marked for destruction. Those sealed have “gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his name, and over the number of his name (Revelation 15:1-3), and they are mentioned in connection with the outpouring of the wrath of God in the seven last plagues. It is showing that the receiving of the seal of God is for their protection during the outpouring of the wrath of God. The Lord’s servant has given us a commentary on this Scripture: “Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire . . . are gathered the company that have gotten the victory over the beast. With the Lamb they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men. They have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble. They have stood with out an Intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they have been delivered. They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat” (Great Controversy, Page 648, 649).

That the seal of God given to loyal commandment keepers refers to a special seal given to them just before the time of trouble commences is again revealed in Prophets and Kings, Page 591: “While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God.”

This sealing done by the angels just before probation closes must not be confused with the seal of the Spirit which is given early in the experience of every believer. The seal of the Spirit has been received down through the centuries, but the sealing of the 144,000 by the angels is given to those who courageously face the threat of death by resisting “the mark of the beast” “in the closing scenes of the great day of Atonement.” See context Prophets and Kings, Page 587-592.

In Prophets and Kings, Page 591 the Lord’s servant is not employing symbolic language. “The seal” must be something as real as “Satan”, “this company” (the remnant), and the “holy angels” who place “upon them the seal of the living God”. The angels cannot symbolize the people with a message, for the angels place the seal of God upon the remnant.

Statements made by the apostle Paul concerning righteousness by faith without works and statements made by James concerning faith and works harmonize when we see the particular aspect of faith

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that each is at that moment stressing. Similarly, sometimes the Lord's servant stresses the character of those to be sealed, other times, their deliverance; and then also there may be discerned a mingling of both. When one understands the two aspects of the sealing work he can read those statements more understandingly. Some people believe that the character is the seal, but according to Ellen G. White the character must be perfected before the seal is given, as shown by the following: "All who receive the seal must be without spot before God" (5 Testimonies, page 216). If by the seal, character is all that is intended this statement would be incongruous, for it is to those who have a pure character that the seal is given.

It will help us to grasp more fully the two aspects of the sealing of the 144,000-one by the Holy Spirit in the development of character, and the other by the angels just before probation closes when we consider the way the seal itself is sometimes referred to: (1) unseen to human eyes; (2) visible to the angels.

Stressing the thought that this seal will not be a mark visible to human eyes, the Lord's servant says:

"In the issue of the great contest two parties are developed, those who 'worship the beast and his image' and receive his mark, and those who receive 'the seal of the living God', who have the 'Father's name written in their foreheads'. This is not a visible mark" (Signs of the Times, November 1, 1849, Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 980).

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads- it is not a seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so that they cannot be moved-just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming" (Manuscript 173, 1902, Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 1161). God is waiting for His people to be ready and sealed before permitting the coming calamities, the more terrible shaking to come upon the nations - "the judgments of God" ("war, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence shake the powers of earth", Early Writings, page 41).

"Science has revealed that there are millions of real things which human eyes cannot see - microscopic forms of life indigenous to this planet too infinitesimal for man to see; also the electrons and protons of the atomic world; and many rays in the electro-magnetic fields. Multiplied millions of angels - good and evil - are moving ceaselessly around on this planet unseen by man. Some day, when God's people enter the eternal kingdom, they will see more clearly that we now see through a glass, darkly . . . in part" (1 Corinthians 13:12), that in the kingdom there is a satisfying union of real things and spiritual things. With these thought; in mind we are not surprised to read the following extracts from the Spirit of Prophecy in our Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 1161:

"A MARK WHICH ANGELS READ ... What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption (Letter 126, 1898). The angel with the writer's ink horn is to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who separate from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel (Letter 12, 1886)." Again we quote:

"The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God's property. A mark is placed upon every one of God's people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin." (Review and Herald, February 6, 1900, Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7, pages 968, 969).

Thus in some places the Lord's servant says that this seal is not a visible mark (to human beings), but yet "is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption".

The part played by the angels in the sealing of the 144,000 is clearly stated: "While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God" (5 Testimonies, page 475, 476; Prophets and Kings, Page 591).

While the angels place upon them the seal of God, this seal is not visible to human beings nor to evil angels, for, after God's people have been sealed, Satan cannot see anything upon their persons that indicates this, for we read: "He [Satan] sees that holy angels are guarding them, and he infers that their sins have been pardoned; but he does not know that their cases have been decided in the sanctuary above" (Great Controversy, Page 618). Satan cannot see what the holy angels see, for by His almighty power the Lord has enabled holy angels to read our thoughts (1 Testimonies, page 124, 544; 2 Testimonies, page 181); whereas concerning Satan we read: "The adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts" (Mrs. E. G. White, Training for the Throne). It does not surprise us to consider the possibility of some invisible sign

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known only by holy angels being upon those sealed when we remember that light that is invisible to the human eye falls upon those who pray: “The light which fell from the -open portals upon the head of the Savior will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation” (Desire of Ages, page 113). Were we to “pray without ceasing” that stream of light would never cease to flow to us personally: “Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life” (SC.). Writing of the “celestial glory” which will surround the persecuted saints, the Lord’s servant says: “They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God” (9 Testimonies, page 16).

In the light of the foregoing we can discern more clearly the operation of the Holy Spirit in character development and the seal given by the angels for the protection of the saints, in the following statement in 3 Testimonies, page 266, 267:

“Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God’s professed people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet’s illustration of the last work under the figure of the men each having a slaughter weapon, in his hand. Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work, and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God’s sealing approval. They will fall in the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons. Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done’ in the church.”

Here the Lord’s servant emphasizes the truth that those who are to receive God’s mark for their protection in the day of His wrath, “the mark of God’s sealing approval”, are those who “receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost”. These are led by the Spirit. From the time they “were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”, and thus “sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30), they were led of the Spirit, led by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:18; Romans 8:14, etc.). Day by day the principles of truth and righteousness became part of the warp and the woof of their lives. These alone are the ones who will receive the seal - “the mark of God’s sealing approval”. The character developed through life is done by the power of the Holy Ghost. The seal for their protection from “the general destruction of the wicked”, given at the conclusion of this work by the angels, acknowledges a work completed; “the stamp is impressed”, on the perfected character.

What is contained in this special seal, which is given for the safety of the 144,000 during the time of trouble, is stated in Early Writings, page 15: “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.” The Lord’s servant, in presenting before us our choice:

“Whether we shall receive the seal of the living God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons” (5 Testimonies, page 212, etc.), directs us to the events associated with the close of probation. Then, in obedience to the behest of King Jesus, the angels impress the seal of deliverance, for God’s servant says: “These are receiving the heavenly mould, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity (5 Testimonies, page 216).

From Prophets and Kings, Page 591; 5 Testimonies, page 473, 476, we learn that “holy angels unseen” place “upon them [the 144,000] the seal of the living God” “while Satan is urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company”. Then “the mark of deliverance will be set [by angels] upon the men who keep God’s commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image” (5 Testimonies, page 451). The angels will wait for Christ to give them the command, and then “the stamp is impressed”, and those sealed - “fitted through suffering to receive the seal of the living God, pass through the time of trouble, [and] see the King in His beauty” (Early Writings, page 67) - will pass unscathed through all the perils and perplexities in the post-probationary period and live to see the coming of the King in all His beauty, majesty and power.

7. THE SPECIAL SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD

Some have expressed the thought that the seal must be received before the latter rain is given (see Prologue). However, this is opposite to the truth, for, as we hope to show, the latter rain is given to

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complete the preparation for the reception of the seal. A sufficient refutation of the error advanced may be found in Testimonies to Ministers, page 506-512. Not all of our readers possess a copy of "Testimonies to Ministers", so we will quote as briefly as possible the salient features to which we wish to draw attention, showing that the latter rain precedes the sealing, for it is necessary for the final development and preparation of character: "The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest [the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul], represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection [God's special seal is placed only on perfected characters (5 Testimonies, pages 9-14, 216; Early Writings, page 71), thus showing that the latter rain precedes the giving of the seal]. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that, without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man's co-operation is required. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain."

The foregoing extracts show God's plan for ripening the harvest: "God alone can ripen the harvest." "The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest prepares the church" and completes "the work of God's grace for the soul". It is the latter rain that brings the "seed to perfection". "Without the latter rain to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready". In answer to our earnest prayers, the Lord will send us "the perfecting latter rain". These extracts (and Acts of the Apostles, page 55) show that the latter rain is God's gracious gift to those who are earnestly praying for perfection of character. "Man's co-operation is required. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us." "It is God who begin the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it."

Thus it is clearly taught that the latter rain is necessary to perfect the character, and the seal of God is given only to those who have perfection of character, therefore the latter rain must precede the giving of the seal. The seal, suggesting finality, is placed upon the finished article as the Sabbath rest completed the Lord's work of Creation. After stating that those with certain character deficiencies will not receive the seal, the Lord's servant says: "All who receive the seal must be without spot before God - candidates for Heaven" (5 Testimonies, page 214). "When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity" (5 Testimonies, page 216).

The Lord's servant most emphatically states: "Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot, or stain upon them." Then we are presented with the steps to be taken to perfect the character in preparation for the reception of the seal: "It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost" (5 Testimonies, page 214). This statement has been quoted in the endeavor to prove that the seal must be received before the latter rain. However, this position misinterprets the statement made by the servant of the Lord and also contradicts her frequent declaration that the latter rain perfects the character, which is necessary for the reception of the seal. As we have shown in "Power Unlimited", the Apocalypse often states the climax before giving the steps leading to that climax.

So in this statement in 5 Testimonies, page 214, the Lord's servant, as she shows in other places in this same chapter on "The Seal of God", declares that the character must be perfect to receive the seal, then, having drawn attention to the high standard, proceeds to present the steps to be taken to reach that standard. "It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us." The end product of this process will be the seal of God.

The apostle Paul, employing the figure: "You are the temple of the living God", refers to the effort we must exert in order to cleanse the soul temple for the indwelling of God by His Spirit: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1).

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“Man can accomplish nothing without God, and God has arranged His plans so as to accomplish nothing in the restoration of the human soul without the co-operation of the human with the Divine. The part man is required to sustain is immeasurably small, yet in the plan of God it is just that force that is needed to make the work a success” (Manuscript 113, September 8, 1898). “As we thus work, God co-operates with us. If we are faithful in doing our part, in co-operating with Him, God will work through us to do the good pleasure of His will, but cannot work through us if we make no effort” (Review & Herald June 11, 1901). “God does nothing for man without his co-operation. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. His power awaits the demand of those who would overcome” (Manuscript, 26a, 1892).

This is the significance of the Lord’s counsel given in the message to the Laodiceans: “I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou may be rich” (Revelation 3: 18). The price paid is to strive with all our power to overcome to obtain the greatest treasure on earth - a character that will stand the test. Then, when we have done all within our power, the Lord will graciously pour out His Spirit in the latter rain, “the perfecting latter rain”.

There must be a thorough preparation of heart to receive the latter rain. The Lord’s servant says:

“God requires of His people to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. All those who are indifferent and excuse themselves from this work, waiting for the Lord to do for them that which He requires them to do for themselves, will be found wanting when the meek of the earth, who have wrought His judgments, are hid in the day of the Lord’s anger. I was shown that if God’s people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors. If they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting. The refreshing or power comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (1 Testimonies, page 619).

There must be a thorough preparation of heart to receive the latter rain. The Lord’s servant says: “The third angel’s message is to enlighten the earth with its glory, but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming this message when it shall have swelled into a loud cry” (Week of Prayer, 1908).

Writing of the message to the Laodiceans, the servant of God says: “It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their back sliding, and to lead them to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel” (1 Testimonies, page 186). As God’s people prepare, the latter rain is sent to complete their preparation for translation: “Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation” (1 Testimonies, page 188). “As great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble” (1 Testimonies, page 353).

“The work of this angel [Revelation 18:1-3] comes in at the right time, as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet” (Early Writings, page 277).

“It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in a greater degree, must be done now” (Testimonies to Ministers 507).

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand” (Review and Herald, March 9, 1905).

The Lord’s servant, in Early Writings, page 71, again presents the fact that the latter rain perfects the receivers to receive the seal of God and thus be protected in the time of trouble: “Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully. I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful, and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord, and live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation, therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the

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Lord, and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.”

Observe the climax of our preparation for the day of God: “Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully.” How will this be accomplished? We must co-operate with God in the work of preparation, then God will pour out the Holy Spirit to make us “fit” “to live in the sight of a holy God”, “to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord”, when those without the seal will be cut down with the destroying weapons.

8. THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

Some are mistakenly teaching that, as each case of the living is considered in the Investigative judgment, his sins are blotted out of the books of Record, and he is then given the seal, followed by the latter rain. It is said that Acts 3:19, 20 supports this idea. This teaching has arisen through a limited application of Acts 3:19, 20, and a human attempt to explain how the infinite God conducts the Investigative judgment, dealing with one case after another until the last person to be considered is thus dealt with. But surely this endeavor to explain infinite matters is not the way to interpret the Word of God. “How infinite are His judgments, and His ways past finding out” (Romans 11:33). Our space prevents us from presenting all that could be said against this conception, for many things could be said against it.

In order that the reader may appreciate more fully our endeavor to clarify the misunderstanding and confusion that has been brought about by some widely scattered publications, we quote from “The Judgment of the Living- Revelation 18”:

“There is conclusive proof [this is an assertion without proof] from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that those who receive the latter rain, have previously passed through the judgment, their sins have been blotted out, and the seal impressed. Acts 3:19, 20; Peter 4:17. Having established the fact that the blotting out of the sins of the faithful of this church, and the imparting of the seal takes place before Revelation 18. According to 1 Peter 4:17, this work commences at the Adventist church, and extends to other sheep. But no one receives the refreshing unless they have first experienced the blotting out of sins, and have been sealed. The time of refreshing then becomes the period of judgment for the ‘other sheep’ (pp. 3-5).

We briefly touch upon 1 Peter 4: 17 in passing to point out that this text does not refer to two classes in the church, but rather the two classes in the world: (1) the righteous, and (2) the unsaved. The judgment commences with the church to sift out those who have had profession and not possession of Christ - then judgment will later come upon those who have not heeded the gospel call. This is the interpretation given in the Spirit of Prophecy: “So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. ‘Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us [the church], what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?’ (1 Peter 4:17)” (Great Controversy, Page 480).

Thus it may be readily discerned that the application made of 1 Peter 4:17 (referred to in the extract given above) to fit in with a man-made order of events diminishes the solemnity of Peter’s statement, and employs it to confuse matters referring to the blotting out of sins and the sealing of the remnant people, as if Peter taught that the judgment of the living would result in the sealing of a certain section in the Adventist church who, then being sealed, would receive the latter rain and give the Loud Cry of Revelation 18. There is not the slightest evidence in 1 Peter 4: 17 that Peter had any such an idea when he penned those words. This misinterpretation of 1 Peter 4:17 is also the interpretation given in The Shepherd’s Rod literature and it is to be regretted that our friends whose literature we now examine should have repeated this obvious misapplication of 1 Peter 4: 17.

We quote again from “The Seal of the Holy Spirit”:

“It is clear from the above that the seal and the latter rain are one. The blotting out of sins must precede the latter rain. For many years now this work of blotting out of sins has been going on in heaven. As each name comes up before the Great judge, the sins of the case are blotted from the books of record. But God is waiting to prepare a people to stand before Him in the anti typical day of atonement to have all their sins blotted out. This grand truth is borne in all its clear-cut certainty in the sermon of Peter in Acts 3:19, 20. Without doubt then, this blotting out of sins must precede the latter rain. There can be no other

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meaning to this text. And as Great Controversy, Page 485 tells us that ‘it is impossible for the sins of men to be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated’, then it is evident that the people of God must pass the judgment of the living before they can carry the harvest ripening message of the latter rain to all the world. Peter says that the blotting out of sins (in the investigative judgment) must come before the latter rain experience” (pp. 4-6).

It is not true to say that “there can be no other meaning to this text” (Acts 3:18, 20) when applying it to the blotting out of sins in the judgment of the living and stating that this must precede the latter rain. The subject of the judgment of the living is indeed a solemn one and worthy of our most sincere consideration, but care has to be exercised lest by restricted interpretations of the sacred Scriptures confused ideas are mistaken for truth, and glorious Gospel facts are clouded over.

It is true that Great Controversy, Page 485 quotes Acts 3:19, 20, but it is not true that the Lord’s servant there supports the presentation that Acts 3:19, 20 points us to the judgment of the living, the sealing, followed by the latter rain. The Lord’s servant merely quotes Acts 3: 19, 20 to stress the truth that “the work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the Second Advent of our Lord”. After quoting Acts 3:19, 20 the comment given is: “When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come”. Thus there is no support from Great Controversy, Page 485 for the teaching that Acts 3: 19, 20 refers to the judgment of the living, the sealing, followed by the latter rain. The Lord’s servant quotes Acts 3: 19, 20, in Great Controversy, Page 612, in reference to the latter rain but in the setting that the latter rain is given “for the ‘ripening’ of the harvest” (see page 611). This, we have shown, precedes the giving of the seal; the latter rain prepares God’s people for their perfect state, which is followed by the giving of the seal. In other words, the Lord’s servant is against the idea that Acts 3: 19, 20 refers to the judgment of the living, the blotting out of sins and the sealing, then followed by the latter rain.

When Peter spoke the words recorded in Acts 3:19, 20 he employed them to convey the gospel to the people who then listened to him. Those words had a definite message for them as they have had a message for every generation since then. By applying Acts 3:19, 20 in a restricted way to the judgment of the living and declaring that “there can be no other meaning to this text”, glorious gospel truth is thereby covered up.

Without diminishing in the slightest the solemnity of the truth that in the investigative judgment occurs the blotting out of sins from the books of record, we wish to draw attention to the fact that Acts 3:19, 20 states a principle that operated in the days when Peter spoke, a principle that has operated ever since. “You must, therefore, repent and turn, for your sins to be wiped away; and then better and brighter days will come direct from the Lord Himself” (20th Century New Testament). By endeavoring to make out a time table of events from this passage and restricting it to the very last days of probation, the gospel truth is covered, the gospel truth that the people of Peter’s day and since could receive blessings from the Lord by turning away from sin, and that by believing in Jesus they could have their sins “wiped away”, and they be refreshed. It has been the daily privilege of Christians of all time to seek the Lord in order to put sin away from their hearts and lives and receive a refreshing from the presence of the Lord. When the Lord’s servant wrote condemning those who denounced “the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon”, she said they did so “at the very time when that church was receiving the outpouring of the Spirit of God. How is it that men can be so deceived as to imagine that the loud cry consists in calling the people of God out from the fellowship of a church that is enjoying a season of refreshing” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 23). Thus the “refreshing” from the presence of the Lord mentioned in Acts 3:19, 20, was applicable to our (SDA) church many decades ago. Obviously that was the way Peter meant those words to be understood by the people living in his day.

It is the very essence of the gospel that those who repent and are converted have their sins “wiped away” in a personal sense. Ananias said to Paul: “Be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22: 16). When our sins are laid on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, He frees us from the accursed load and bears them away from us. See Isaiah 53:4, 5, 11; 1 Peter 2: 24. This great gospel truth was demonstrated in the daily service of the ancient Jewish sanctuary service when the sinner brought his sacrifice to the courtyard and, by his confessing his sins over the head of his substitute, his sins were transferred to the sanctuary. See Leviticus 4 and 5. At times the priest ate the flesh of the sacrifice and thus in type carried those sins in his person into the sanctuary. Leviticus 10: 17. Thus in type, the sinner was freed from his sin and he, being forgiven (Leviticus 4: 20, 26, 31, 35; 5: 10, 13, 16, 18), would enjoy the refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

It is true, of course, that that was not the end of the sin - its record was retained in the sanctuary until the day of atonement. As stated by Paul: “Because that the worshippers once purged should have had

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no more conscience made of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year” (Hebrews 10:1-4). “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin. It would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin-offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be free, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement. As in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind, so in the type they were borne away into the wilderness, forever separated from the congregation” (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 357, 358).

As my books are written chiefly for keen Bible students in the (SDA) church, it will not be necessary to go into the details of the day of atonement. With the blood of the slain goat, representing the death of Christ on Calvary, the High Priest cleansed the sanctuary of the sins of the truly penitent. Then “upon the live goat”, representing Satan, the author of sin who is to die an eternal death “with” those sins upon him, were placed the sins of Israel: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited [margin, of separation]” (Leviticus 16: 20-22).

“Not until the goat had been thus sent away did the people regard themselves as freed from the burden of their sins. Every man was to afflict his soul while the work of atonement was going forward. All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart” (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 355).

While in the type there was “remembrance again made of sins every year”, yet it was also true that “the blood of the sin-offering removed the sin from the penitent”. Every Christian knows that there is a day of judgment, a reckoning day coming, a day when just rewards will be given, a day when Satan and his hosts must suffer the second death, when sin will be completely expunged from the universe. The Bible fully explains these things. So in the warp and woof of the Scriptures may be seen the teaching that God intends to have a day of accounting, that while we are forgiven our sins there is yet to come a time of final cleansing of the universe, a riddance of sin for all eternity. But while we must be fully conscious of this fact, God desires that in a sense we shall have faith to believe that He has removed our sins from us, that they are forever removed from us personally - “if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end”.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our sins from us” (Psalm 103:12). He casts “all [our] sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). “I, even I, am He that blots out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins” (Isaiah 43:25; 44:22). The Lord’s servant, writing of our privilege of laying our troubles and perplexities at His feet and leaving “them there”, says that if we ask Him to carry our burdens, “He will answer: ‘I will take them. With everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee. I will take your sins, and will give you peace. Banish no longer your self-respect. Your remorse for sin I will remove’. I, even I, am He”, the Lord declares, “that blots out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 519, 520).

Thus there is a sense when, individually, the Lord removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west, burying them out of our sight in the depths of the sea, and blots out our sins from His and our sight. “It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame and remorse” (Steps to Christ, page 56). We are then as if we had not sinned. Our (SDA) Bible Commentary says on Acts 3: 19, 20: “Blotted out. Or, ‘wiped away’. Repeatedly in Scripture the forgiveness of sin is portrayed as a washing (see John 13:10; Revelation 1:5; see on Revelation 22:14). The thought of wiping away sin is a familiar one. The image that may underlie the words here is that of an indictment that catalogues the sins of the penitent, which the pardoning love of the Father cancels (see Isaiah 43:25; Colossians 2:14; see on Matthew 1:21; 3; 6; 26-28; Luke 3: 3). The immediate result to those who accepted Peter’s call to repentance was the forgiveness of their sins. In this sense the blotting out of their sins may be regarded as having occurred immediately. In the ultimate sense, however, the final blotting out of sin takes place just before the second advent of Christ in connection with the close of Christ’s work as High Priest. Guilt for specific sins is cancelled when they are confessed and forgiven; they are expunged from the

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record in the day of judgment (cf. Ezekiel 3:20; 18:24; 33:13; Great Controversy, Page 485) as already stated, that in one sense of the word the sins of converted men were then blotted out, for they were covered by the saving blood of Jesus Christ" (Volume 6, pages 158, 159).

In his great love the Lord not only forgives the sinner but if he continues (see Christ Object Lessons, page 160) in a repentant state his sins will not be mentioned to him: "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him" (Ezekiel 18: 21, 22). Thus, so far as the repentant sinner is concerned, his sins have been forever removed from him and in that sense they have been blotted out - though the record of those sins remain on the books of record until they are removed and placed upon the head of the scapegoat in the concluding phase of Christ's work as High Priest. The righteous man who apostatizes "has denied his repentance, and his sins are upon him as if he had not repented" (Christ Object Lessons, page 251); see also Ezekiel 18: 23-24; Matthew 18: 23-35.

The remission of sins is one of the most emphatic features of the Gospel. Jesus said: "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26: 28). "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10: 43). "Receive you the Holy Ghost: Whose so ever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins you retain, they are retained" (John 20: 22, 23). "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24: 47). This was the thought Peter had in mind, particularly when he spoke to his audience of the blotting out of sin, so that it is not correct to assert that "there can be no other meaning to this text" than that the blotting out of sins in the judgment of the living and the receiving of the seal must precede the latter rain.

Acts 3:19, 20 has a message for the last days as well as for the days of Peter, this principle operates throughout the Bible. In fact it is one of the tests of true doctrines that, in principle, every present truth", every special message for special times, is the same in principle all down the centuries. The gospel is "the everlasting gospel", in which eternal principles are explained and enforced in Scriptural teaching. God, His government, and the plan of salvation centered in Jesus have never changed. As the writer has explained in some of his books dealing with Bible principles of interpretation, there are definite laws of interpretation which, when applied, bring a glorious harmony into all Scripture. For instance, in testing the true Bible teaching on Armageddon and other prophecies depicting the final conflict, we observe that these prophecies describe the same conflict that is mentioned in Genesis 3:15 and throughout the Bible, including the attack by Satan and his hosts after the thousand years upon the Lord and His people in the New Jerusalem. The principles involved in the warfare from Genesis 3: 15 to Revelation 20: 8, 9 are the same and the message of Genesis 3: 15 to Adam and Eve has a meaning for today.

The Scriptures describing the final attempt of Satan and his hosts upon the New Jerusalem at the end of the 1,000 years have a meaning for the people of God today, for the same leaders are involved in this struggle, also it is the same people (believers) and the same warfare. Thus it is a Bible principle that a message that was effective in the past has a fundamental basis for God's message in a later period. The Word of God, proclaimed and applied earlier, has a fuller meaning which applies to a later time. Thus Acts 3: 19, 20 has a message for today. The Lord's servant applies Acts 3: 19, 20 in connection with the blotting out of sins before the Second Advent (Great Controversy, Page 485) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days (Great Controversy, Page 612). Thus Acts 3:19, 20 states a principle operative at any time so long -as probation lasts - repent and be converted and God will take our sins away. Then there is to be discerned in that passage a developmental aspect, a linking of Peter's time with that of the Second Advent (which follows the pattern of all the prophecies). This linking the past with the Second Advent is made more evident by the RSV: "Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ." A good comment given in our: (SDA) Bible Commentary itemizes the links in the chain in the order which I have presented in this outline; "Evidently, Peter, speaking by inspiration, and thus beyond his own finite understanding, is referring, tersely, to two great events of earth's last days (1) the mighty outpouring of God's Spirit, and (2) the final blotting out of the sins of the righteous." which are tied to a third climactic event, the Second Advent of Christ" (Volume 6, page 160).

But to apply Acts 3:19, 20 in the attempt to prove that the seal of God is given before the latter rain is a misinterpretation of that passage. Those who feel that they have been raised up of God to teach this supposed sealing work before the latter rain have a solemn duty to perform, namely, to heed the seven times repeated (in the Bible) test of the truthfulness of a message: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1). "We should make the Bible its own expositor"

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(Testimonies to Ministers, page 106). “Compare Scripture with Scripture” (Testimonies to Ministers, page 476). All Bible doctrine is established by comparing one passage with a number of other parallel passages. Where are these other parallel passages that say the same thing as the supposed interpretation of Acts 3:19, 20. Where are the other definite texts which say that the seal of the living God is given to the 144,000 before the latter rain. The writer has solicited such from the protagonists of the theory under review, but no other passage is offered only inferences and human argumentation, but no explicit revelation. Good extracts from the Spirit of Prophecy are ingeniously tied together by human inference and deduction, but no clear-cut statements saying what is claimed from those extracts. Such expositions do not measure up to Bible tests of true doctrine.

Those professing to have a special message - the judgment of the living, the sealing, followed by the latter rain and the giving of the loud cry should have more to build upon than human deductions. V. T. Houteff, founder of “The Davidians” or “The Shepherd’s Rod”, stated on Jan. 1, 1949, “The Davidians are the ones unto whom the message of this cleansing, ‘the judgment of the Living’, is committed” (Volume 2, Number 43, Timely Greetings). But his message was based upon human deductions. As I have read the literature of “The Shepherd’s Rod” and the other literature which we are now considering I am struck with the similarity of some of their teachings. Those who would reject teachings emanating from “The Shepherd’s Rod” need to examine closely similar ideas advanced from any other source.

9. THE 144,000 AND THE GREAT MULTITUDE

Surely the prophecy of Revelation 7:1-4 clearly informs us that only those sealed, the 144,000, will endure through the day of God’s wrath, the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. That is why that prophecy was given to warn that “we shall receive the seal of God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons” (5 Testimonies, page 212). Therefore, only those sealed are protected in the time of trouble; that is the reason for them being sealed, as we have previously proved. As this is so important Satan seeks to bring in confusion over the sealing, thus causing some to lose the sense of the very high standard required of those who will be among the 144,000. “Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand” (Review and Herald, March 9, 1905).

“The Shepherd’s Rod” literature confuses this solemn sealing work by teaching that there will be two companies-one sealed, the other-not sealed-to go through the time of trouble: “The, harvest of Matthew 13 precedes the close of probation, and is the time of the ingathering of the first and second fruits-the 144,000 and the ‘great multitude’-all the saints who are to be translated” (The Judgment and the Harvest, page 82).

If there are two ways to a destination it is human to choose to go the easier way. And when people are deceived into thinking that the Bible teaches that there are two classes of people to go through the time of trouble - the 144,000 sealed ones, and “the great multitude” it is human to think, when the effort is hard and difficult, “Well if I do not attain unto the very high standard required of the 144,006 then I will qualify at least to be among the great multitude”.

This deceptive reasoning would thus be derived from a confused idea concerning the sealing. This shows how care needs to be exercised that there be no confused ideas on the sealing work depicted in Revelation 7:1-4. “The Shepherd’s Rod” literature, and some other literature which we are at present examining, have common ground in matters relating to the sealing - that the latter rain follows the sealing. “The Shepherd’s Rod” says: “After the first fruits are sealed and the tares are removed from among them, they, then being separate from the influence of the world, as were the 120 on the day of Pentecost, will receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in as much greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance’ (7 Testimonies, page 33)” (“The Judgment and the Harvest,” page 86).

“The Davidian Association [The Shepherd’s Rod] holds . . . (3) That it [the prophetic gift] was manifested anew in the closing work for the church to effect the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God (3 Testimonies, page 266), and to give power and force (Early Writings, page 277) to the third angel’s Message (Revelation 14:6-11) so that the 144,000 might be empowered to accomplish the closing work for the world, and to gather all their brethren out of all nations (Isaiah 66:19; Revelation 18:4)” (Timely Greetings, Volume 2, Numbers 9, 10, page 29).

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The other literature says: "Those who receive the latter rain have previously passed through the judgment, their sins have been blotted out, and the seal impressed, the imparting of the seal takes place before Revelation 18. But no one receives the refreshing unless they have first experienced the blotting out of sins, and have been sealed" (The Judgment of the Living - Revelation 18, pages 3-5). "Only those who have the seal of God can have a part in giving the Loud Cry". "The Shepherd's Rod" also teaches that those sealed go out to give the Loud Cry: "The first fruits, the 144,000, who, free from the wicked (the tares), shall then, as 'the servants of our God', bring in the second fruits, the great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations" (The Judgment and the Harvest, page 70). "The Davidian Association holds [after the sealing of the 144,000]. That with this sequence of events will ensue the Loud Cry of the angel that lightens the earth with his glory (Revelation 18:1)" (Timely Greetings, Volume 2, Numbers 9, 10, page 30).

The "Rod's" belief that the 144,000 - the sealed ones - go out to proclaim the Loud Cry and gather in the "great multitude (who are not said in Revelation 7 to be sealed), ignores the reason why God gives the seal, namely, for the protection of those who pass through the time of trouble. Only those sealed could possibly be preserved through that terrible time.

The Spirit of Prophecy applies the "great multitude" of Revelation 7: 9 to the redeemed of all ages: "Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the 'great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kingdoms and people, and tongues, before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands' (Revelation 7: 9) (Great Controversy, Page 665). This verse is again quoted in Great Controversy, Page 646 concerning all the saved: "Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him in every hand are placed the victor's palm and the shining harp" Again in 1 Testimonies, page 79, we read:

Suffering has been the portion of the people of God from the days of the martyr Abel. None will be there who have Pot, like Moses, chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God. The prophet John saw the multitude of the redeemed, and inquired who they were. The prompt answer came: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (see Revelation 7:14). 1 Testimonies, page 155 again applies Revelation 7: 9 to all the redeemed. "The Spirit of Prophecy", p. 253, says:

"The Savior presents the captives He has rescued from the bonds of death. His hands place immortal crowns upon their brows, for, they are the representatives, and sample, of those who shall be redeemed, by the blood of Christ, from all nations, tongues, and people (Revelation 7:9), and come forth from the dead when He shall call the just from their graves at His second coming."

There should be no question in the minds of those who accept the Spirit of Prophecy that in Revelation 7: 9 and v. 14 John saw the unnumbered host of the redeemed of all ages, that they are those Who are to be resurrected at the second advent, and do not pass through the time of trouble in the last days.

Abraham was promised an innumerable seed (Genesis 15:5; 17:4-8), so when John was shown those who would be the last company saved in the work of salvation, those sealed to go through the final scenes of earth, it was natural that at that time he would also be shown all the seed promised to Abraham - the unnumbered host of the redeemed from all ages. Especially when the emphasis is placed upon the sealing of the tribes of Israel, the descendants of Abraham.

In the presentation of Revelation 7 only the 144,000 are said to be sealed, followed by the blowing of the winds of trouble and destruction. This suggests that the others brought into this prophetic picture do not pass through this coming day of wrath, and this automatically rules out the idea that the 144,000 sealed ones go out as preachers to win the "great multitude". As the Spirit of Prophecy applies the "great multitude" to the saved of all ages they do not live through the day of God's wrath and do not receive the special seal of God which is given for the protection of those who live through the unprecedented time of trouble. All who enter into the eternal life suffer buffeting from Satan's machinations and efforts to turn them away from Christ and His salvation. "We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22; see also Matthew 10:38; Luke 22:28, 29; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:11; 3:12). But this "great multitude", though "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise", "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 1: 13; 4:30), are not sealed with the special seal because they do not live through the terrible crisis over the mark of the beast, nor do they live through the time of trouble without a Mediator. The "great multitude" are not those won to Christ by the 144,000 sealed saints -that idea is opposed to the truth.

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The 144,000 are not sealed so they may go out preaching the Loud Cry; they are sealed after the Loud Cry has been sounded and just before probation closes.

10. WHY ARE THE SEALED CALLED FIRST FRUITS?

Both of the groups whose teachings we have referred to teach that those sealed go out to preach the gospel. This conception, in principle, hides the purposes for which the Lord presents the sealing message. Three main reasons may be advanced for the sealing: (1) to indicate that this is the final act that completes the preaching of the gospel (if the sealed go out to preach to others this nullifies this indication); (2) Sealed with God's name to show that the sealed have God's character and are "God's property, His possession" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 446) whom He will care for when Satan controls the world; (3) The sealed will be protected through the day of God's wrath.

The argument advanced by "The Shepherd's Rod" as to why the sealed are called the "First-fruits" is explained by V. T. Houteff, 1 January, 1949:

"How many yields of fruit is the harvest to give? If the 144,000 are the 'first fruits' (Revelation 14: 4), then there must be 'second fruits', for where there is no second there can be no first. The word 'first fruits' absolutely necessitates second fruits. Where do the first fruits come from, and where do the second fruits come from? We are plainly told that the first fruits are Israelites-all from the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 7: 4-8). Israel certainly stands for the church membership at the time they are sealed; the title 'Israel' cannot be construed to mean the world. The first fruits, therefore, are harvested from the church itself at the time the separation begins. The word 'sealed' means placed in a safe place-sealed. This is exactly what the apostle Peter says: 1 Peter 4: 17-18 'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

"Now, then if judgment begins first in the 'house of God', in the church, then it will end in the world, outside the church circles. Again we here am that those who escape the slaying of the Lord 'in the house of God' (obviously the first fruits, 'the servants of God') are sent to the nations who know God, and from there they bring all their brethren (the second fruits) to the purified house of God where there is neither sin nor sinner. We have now positively seen that there are first and second fruits: one from the church-the 144,000 sons of Jacob; and one from the nations-the great multitude which no man can number (Revelation 7: 9)" (Timely Greetings, Volume 2, Number 43, pages 34-36).

We have quoted lengthily so that our readers may obtain as clear a picture as possible of the idea intended to be conveyed by the "Rod". The reader will have discerned the erroneous use of 1 Peter 4:17, 18 -as if Peter wrote concerning the purification of the church by judgment - "the judgment of the Living" as the context shows - resulting in the sealing of the 144,000, and these sealed ones in turn go out to the world and bring in the great multitude. But this is definitely a wrong application of 1 Peter 4: 17, 18, as we have shown elsewhere.

There is no justification for the employment of 1 Peter 4: 17, 18 in connection with "the Judgment of the Living" ("the truth of the judgment of the Living, the separation or purification of the church", page 39) - those sealed in the purified church then going out to win the great multitude.

The other group who teach similarly refer to the fact that the Jews on the Day of Atonement connected up that day with the sealing of the people .1. 2 But this reference is fatal to the claim that the sealed ones go out to proclaim the Loud Cry, for, as understood by the Jews, the seal was received at the close of that day. In other words, it symbolized the decisions in the supreme court of the universe for those who are to be eternally saved, at the same time cutting off all those who have failed to accept the terms of pardon. A converted Jew, Pastor F. C. Gilbert, has written of the custom of the Jew today, showing their idea of the "sealing time":

"As the day draws to its close, the earnestness and intensity increase. It is generally believed that the close of this day is regarded in heaven as a 'sealing time'. If the people have done sufficient repenting, they will receive a 'good seal', which means that they have stood the test in heaven. If not, then they fear they are lost, and may die at any time. Hence in their closing prayers of the day, instead of saying, 'Our Father, our King, write our name in the book of life.' 'Our Father, our King, write our name in the book of remembrance', etc., they say, 'Our Father, our King, seal our name in the book of remembrance.' 'Our Father, our King, seal our names in the book of life.' And when the service is ended, they greet each other

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with the salutation, 'I hope you have received a good seal' " (Practical Lessons from the Experience of Israel, pp. 536, 537, 2nd edition).

They were not sealed to go out to preach to others that day; they were grateful that they received the seal of God's favor at the close of the day of atonement - there was no time left for preaching to others, for probation closed when the High Priest came out of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.

In the Bible the term "first-fruit" is employed in two ways: (1) first-fruits of a harvest, and (2) the quality of the fruits. The first-fruits were the first in quality as well as in time. In margin of Ezekiel 44:30 they are called the "chief" fruits, and in Numbers 18:12, the "best". When the fruit began to ripen the owner went into his vineyard or orchard and selected the best and largest of that which was maturing early and marked it by tying a fiber around it, saying as he did so, "This shall be among the first-fruits". When a basketful of each kind had matured the owner gathered and dedicated them to the priests. In Micah 7:1 We are told that the Lord desires the first-fruits rather than the gleanings. They could not be sold or exchanged, see Ezekiel 48: 14. So that even the "first-fruits" had to be first in quality. "For if the be holy, the lump is also holy" (Romans 11:16).

Undoubtedly in Revelation 14: 4 the word "first-fruits" is employed to emphasize the quality of the fruit, the character of the 144,000. In this case (as in every other instance in the Scripture where there may be a question as to the manner in which a word is employed) the context clearly shows. Briefly, the context draws attention to the purity of these people: They stand "with" Jesus (Revelation 14:1). The same ones are mentioned in Revelation 17: 14: 'And they that are with Him are called, and chosen [sealed], and faithful.' These have stood the test, and God judges them perfect, fit for fellowship with Jesus the Sinless One. "These are they which, were not defiled with women" (Revelation 14: 4). A woman in prophecy denotes a church. In Revelation 17:5 we have a picture of an impure woman with her daughters, all of whom have partaken of the same unholy nature. This is the symbol of "Babylon the great." the combination of worldly churches that teach false doctrine, and combine with the Governments of earth to compel God's people to accept these false teachings and to forsake the pure religion, and worship of the living God. But the 144,000 sealed ones are not defiled with these women, or these apostate churches.

"For they are virgins" (v. 4). Paul wrote: "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ- (2 Corinthians 11:2). Those who "have purified their souls in obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1: 22) have fellowship with Jesus, they become eternally united to Him. It is because the ten virgins in the parable of Matthew 25:1-13 have a pure faith, as they wait 'for the coming of Jesus the Bridegroom, that they are said to be virgins.' The "lamps" in their hands symbolize the word of God (Psalm 119: 105), and it is by the light from this Lamp that the truth is seen, and from whence also comes power to obey to the purification of the life.

"These are they which follow the Lamb, whither so ever He goes" (Revelation 14: 4). That is, they have learned to listen to His voice and thus learned the way of victory: "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcomes" (Revelation 3: 20, 21). "But all who follow the Lamb in heaven must first have followed Him on earth, not fretfully or capriciously, but in trustful, loving, willing obedience, as the flock follows the shepherd" (Acts of the Apostles, page 591 see also Christ Object Lessons, page 223).

"These were redeemed from among men- (v. 4) - they have been called from the world of sinful men and have learned to live holy lives. They separated (2 Corinthians 6:17; 7:1; Revelation 18:4) from sin and sinners and are found with Jesus their Companion: "We are to follow the Lamb of God whither so ever He goes. His guidance is to be chosen, His companionship valued, above the companionship of earthly friends" (Christ Object Lessons, page 223). "Enoch walked with God" (Genesis 5:22). "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Hebrews 11:5), and he became the type of those sealed in the last days who, also, would be translated to heaven, purified through walking with the Sinless One on earth and thus made ready to walk into heaven to continue that holy walk with Him.

"In their mouth was found no guile" (v. 5). The Lord's servant, in describing those who "receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble", says: "I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action" (Early Writings, page 71). "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (James 3:2). Our words indicate the character within, and often we are influenced for good or evil by our own words. Zephaniah; describing the remnant church, says that they "shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth" (3:13).

"For they are without fault before the throne of God" (v. 5). These words need no comment; they are the last of a list of designations of this sealed company. Each of those designations is designed to

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convey one most important fact namely, that this company are companions with the holy Jesus, the Lamb, because they like Him, are also holy. These designations were not given to indicate that they would go out as preachers, but only to emphasize their holiness. Now the words, "being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb", found among these other designations, are obviously employed also to emphasize their holiness, and it would completely spoil the emphasis being made upon the quality, their holiness, to have one of these designations made to mean that they are going out to give the Loud Cry, or to win the great multitude. This would be, distinctly, an intrusion of something irrelevant to the context. As all the other designations refer to their character, so the term "first-fruits" is undoubtedly employed to refer to the quality of the remnant church. This holy company, the last of the harvest of the world, will live through the darkest period of earth, at a time when the devil's deceptions will be the greatest, and, at a time when all the world will wonder after the beast, they will remain, in the face of the threat of death, loyal to the Lamb of God and endure through the final conflict with Him.

The context clearly shows that the term "first-fruits" does not refer to a time element but refers to the quality of that fruit. It is in this sense that the Lord spoke of Israel, for we read: "Thus said the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn". Israel came from Jacob, who was not the firstborn from the point of time - Esau was the firstborn (Genesis 25: 24-26). It was because God found Jacob to have a better character than that of Esau that He loved Jacob more than Esau (Malachi 1: 2, 3; Romans 9: 13). The same emphasis upon the use of "first" is seen in Jeremiah 31:9: "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." Ephraim as largest of the tribes, stood for the ten tribes of the northern division of the kingdom of the Jews. Yet Ephraim was not actually the firstborn in point of time: "Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh . . . and the name of the second he called Ephraim" (Genesis 41:51).

In Matthew 1: 25 Jesus is not referred to as Mary's "firstborn Son" in order to suggest that she had other children, but to emphasize the fact that she was a virgin. Thus the context makes quite clear the use that is intended to be conveyed by the use of the word "first". Christ is said to be the "first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15: 20, 23); the "first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23). The "first begotten", and "first-begotten of the dead" (Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:5); the firstborn among many brethren", the "firstborn of every creature", and the "firstborn from the dead" (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18). The time element is not intended, for there were a number of people resurrected before the resurrection of Jesus.

Observe James' use of the word: "Of His own will made He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). The universe is peopled with angels, and there are sinless worlds with millions of inhabitants who were in existence a long time before this world was created, so in point of time those saved from this sinful planet could not possibly be "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures". But, thank God, through the wonderful plan of redemption, those saved from this world will be exalted more highly than the sinless inhabitants of the realms above. Through the infinite price paid for man's redemption the redeemed become the most highly exalted of all God's creatures.

The word (Prototokos) rendered first-begotten and first-born is defined by Robinson thus: "Properly the first-born of father or mother"; and, as the first-born was entitled to certain prerogatives and privileges over the rest of the family, the word takes another meaning; namely, "first-born, the same as the first, the chief, one highly distinguished and pre-eminent. So of Christ, as the beloved Son of God (Colossians 1:15)".

"The general assembly and church of the first-born" (Hebrews 13: 21, 22) could refer only to the redeemed from earth down all ages, and as there will not be salvation for any others, the word "first" does not indicate that there must be others to follow. "Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of His increase" (Jeremiah 2:3), that is, treated with the deference shown to the firstborn on the basis of holiness.

The Spirit of Prophecy, ever faithful as the guide of the remnant people, throws light upon this word, as follows: "None but the 144,000 can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience - an experience such as no other company have ever had. These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb' (Great Controversy, Page 649). The word "counted" again shows that no time element is intended. The word "being" in Revelation 14:4 is a supplied word, and the RSV (also Phillips, 20th Century) translates it thus: "These have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb." thus the character of the people is emphasized without any reference to any others to follow.

The Lord's servant was given a vision of the Advent people until they enter the city of God. In this vision the only company who live through the final scenes are those comprising the 144,000: "The

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living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice. The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name" (Early Writings, page 15). No hint is ever to be found in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy that the 144,000, after being sealed, go out to give the Loud Cry or to bring in the great multitude. They are sealed because they are holy. They are called the "first-fruits" because they are holy, and that term is employed to emphasize that fact. Evidently Satan is seeking to confuse minds so that this important feature is not so clearly seen.

Moses was not translated because of his sin: "Had not the life of Moses been marred with that one sin, in failing to give God the glory of bringing water from the rock at Kadesh, he would have entered the promised land, and would have been translated to heaven without seeing death" (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 478). Translation in the last days is for perfect people: "first-fruits". What care should he exercised in the interpretation of the sacred word of the living God lest we, by some man-made interpretation, be led to inject some thought into the divinely-inspired picture that would prevent people from obtaining the real essence of what the Lord has sought, to convey to us. Those who declare that those sealed go out to preach to others in giving the Loud Cry, or go out to bring in the great multitude, help to confuse the fact that God, through His Word has stated that He is looking for a perfect people to stand upon the earth, and to remain faithful through the fiercest conflict of all ages. When God has that company prepared, purified, He will then seal them as the product of His finished work of salvation, there will be no more won, for they are indeed the remnant people.

11. THE SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD

The teaching that the seal of the living God is given before the Loud Cry throws into confusion the Bible teaching on the close of probation. If it were true, as is claimed, that the judgment of the Living must precede the giving of the seal, that as each case is judged he is given the seal, and that this work precedes the Loud Cry, that would mean that probation will close for those sealed before the Loud Cry, and also for all others whose cases would have been judged and found unrighteous. If it were true that the judgment of the Living considers one case at a time, giving or refusing to give the seal, and thus closing the probation of each case thus dealt with, then the conclusion of Christ's work in the sanctuary would be confined to the very last case to be considered. This is stated thus by our friends: "When at length the last candidate for heaven has been examined, Jesus ceases His ministry in the most holy and makes the solemn announcement, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still (Revelation 22: 11). The decision is final and irrevocable.'"

This conception of the close of probation is foreign to the Scriptures and to the Spirit of Prophecy - read Great Controversy, Page 613; Early Writings, page 279.

Let us commence our consideration of this aspect of the sealing work by quoting a statement from the Lord's servant: "Probation closes; Christ's intercessions cease in Heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all, and those [members of the church] who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping", (2 Testimonies, page 191). The close of probation "comes suddenly upon all" when Christ ceases His ministry in the sanctuary. This inspired statement is contradicted by the teaching that the judgment of the Living considers each case and closes probation for individuals (giving or not giving the seal) until the, last case ends Christ's ministry.

The Lord's servant wrote concerning the close of probation to which Jesus often directed the attention of the remnant people of God: "Jesus has left us word, 'Watch you therefore. For you know not when the master of the house comes, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch'. We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He finds us sleeping. What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire, and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still'. When Jesus ceases to plead for man the cases of all are

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forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. This time finally comes suddenly upon all (pp. 190, 191).

The theory that the judgment of the Living closes the probation of those in the church, giving the seal or not giving it, before the Loud Cry, is a contradiction of the plainest of inspired words in the Scripture and in the Spirit of Prophecy - it brings in confusion where otherwise all is clear and plain. Jesus warned His Advent people concerning the close of probation: "Watch therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord does come. Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes. The Lord of that [evil] servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes" (Matthew 24:42-50; 25:1-13).

How clear the Lord's words, how simple this parable is in teaching that the close of probation - comes suddenly upon all", at the same time. The wise virgins represent those sealed, the foolish virgins the unsealed, and the decisive time, the close of probation for them all, is when Christ ceases "His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and when the mandate goes forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still and he that is holy, let him be holy still'. When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the reckoning time with His servants. This time comes suddenly upon all".

These words are rendered meaningless when it is taught that the decisions determined by the judgment of the Living before the Loud Cry then gives the seal - or refuses it to others - thus closing probation for the church. If before the Loud Cry the judgment gives the seal upon those found holy they are then pronounced "holy" and the seal would enable them to be "holy still", for when "the stamp [of the seal] is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity" (5 Testimonies, page 216), "The indelible mark of God is upon them" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 446). They would thus be pronounced "holy still" before the Loud Cry; whereas the Lord's servant assures us that that "mandate goes forth when Jesus ceases to plead for man. This is the time of reckoning with His servants ... This time finally comes suddenly upon all".

"The door was shut upon the wise and the unwise virgins at the same time - at the completion of Christ's mediating ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, not the close of probation for each separately over a period of time down to the last case to be considered.

As stated by the Lord's servant: "Thus in one short sentence, 'They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut', we are carried down through the Savior's final ministration to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be completed" (Great Controversy, Page 428).

"When the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied" (Christ Object Lessons, page 412).

These words plainly point to one close of probation for both the wise and the unwise virgins - "at the close of human probation". The reader is requested to observe the following statement in which reference is made to the individual examination, the judgment of the living, and the close of probation - though individual cases are considered in the judgment of the living, yet their probation ends collectively. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Soon, none know how soon, it [the judgment] will pass to the cases of the living. At this time it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for you know not when the time is.' When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: 'He that is unjust Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men. 'Watch you therefore, lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping- (Great Controversy, Page 490, 491).

The close of probation is one subject that God has made to stand out clearly; it is mentioned so frequently. Our space will not permit going exhaustively into this vital theme. But as our consideration of the theory that the seal of God is given before the Loud Cry brings in the question of the close of probation, we will draw the reader's attention to the fact that the burden of the Savior's Armageddon message is His warning to His church concerning the close of probation. The theory that God gives the seal to His people

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before the Loud Cry is a blow against the truth concerning the Lord's warning in His Armageddon message regarding the close of probation. The Lord's warning to His people to watch for the close of probation, to which we have referred earlier (Matthew 24:42-50; 25:1-13; Mark 13:33-37; 2 Testimonies, page 190-192) is again repeated in the Armageddon message, as may be readily seen by reading Revelation 16:15 (which is the heart of the Armageddon message). As we have explained in other publications, the reason why this call to His church to prepare for the close of probation is given in connection with the description of the gathering to the Armageddon slaughter is to remind His people that they will need to be ready for the close of probation when the seal of God is imparted or be cut down in the general slaughter. We must refer our reader to "Power Unlimited" for a fuller consideration of this theme. However, observe the two following extracts which quote Revelation 16: 15 in connection with the close of probation, thus showing that the heart of the Armageddon message is the Lord's warning to His Advent people concerning the coming of the close of probation especially when the nations are uniting on the matter of-enforcing the mark of the beast (this is Heaven's sign that probation is about to close, see 5 Testimonies, page 451).

The Lord's servant says: "The days of our probation are fast closing Beware lest it [that day] find you unready. Take heed lest you be found at the King's feast without a wedding garment. 'In such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes'. 'Blessed is he that watches, and keeps His garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame' (Revelation 16:15)" (Christ Object Lessons, page 319).

Again we read: "Upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth, upon all who make this world their home, the day of God will come as a snare. It comes to them as a prowling thief. Christ says, 'Behold, I come as a thief' (Revelation 16: 15). Probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended and the door of mercy be forever shut" (Desire of Ages, page 635, 636).

Thus the Lord's servant quotes Revelation 16:15 - the heart of the Lord's Armageddon message in which He uses the personal pronoun "I", which He always employs when giving authoritative or special messages - and applies that verse as a warning concerning the close of probation for all when Christ comes out of the sanctuary and ceases His mediation ministry. Obviously the enemy of truth and righteousness seeks to bring in confusion concerning the Lord's special Armageddon warning to His church, a warning to His people to prepare for the close of probation, and Satan does this by the deception that the judgment of the living closes the probation of many, that the sealing precedes the giving of the Loud Cry.

To justify the teaching which we are at present examining, recourse is made to such extracts as are found in 9 Testimonies, page 97, Testimonies to Ministers, page 449, which we now present:

"The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; his hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter."

This merely states a principle that has operated down through the ages. Men who reject the overtures of the Holy Spirit and continue thus for some time, eventually lose their powers to accept the proffered mercy, to them the door is shut. In this extract the Lord does not point forward to a time called the judgment of the living when the door will be closed to those who have been judged. The Lord's servant wrote concerning things then occurring and occurring since. On the same page we read: "More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world. The time of God's destructive judgment is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth, while the door is closed to those who would not enter." This is not a prophecy of what Will be limited to occur in some future judgment period, but is a statement of something occurring at that time and at any time when God's judgments are in the world.

What of the other statement which is used in some vague way about the future judgment of the living? "The time has come when Jerusalem is being searched as with lighted candles. God is at work investigating character, weighing moral worth, and pronouncing decisions on individual cases" (Testimonies to Ministers 448).

This statement can give no support to the claim that in the future the judgment of the living will then decide the probation of members of the church, some receiving the seal and others not before the Loud Cry. The Lord's servant wrote of what was then occurring. In principle, God has in the past ages "weighed moral worth" as He did in Babylon of old, "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting". In each step along the centuries the moral Governor of the universe has done this. And when the Lord's messenger wrote, the time had come when some in the church who had been living in sin for some time were so

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sinning against the Holy Spirit that the Lord was saying of them: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hosea 4:17).

Though the Lord’s servant had written (Testimonies to Ministers, page 444-446) concerning the character of those to receive the seal of God, and shown that the seal is given for the protection of those who live through the coming cataclysm, she does not on page 448 (Testimonies to Ministers) say that some were then receiving or losing the seal of God, yet surely while she was writing on the subject of those to be sealed, that would have been an opportunity to have said something regarding not receiving the seal since God Was then “weighing moral worth, and pronouncing decisions on individual cases”. Obviously, then, the statement on page 448 cannot be employed with reference to the sealing in some future judgment of the living before the Loud Cry.

There is nothing in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy that gives credence to the belief that the seal of God is given before the Loud Cry.

4 Testimonies, page 384-387 does not refer to the investigative judgment, but, as The Lord’s servant clearly states, to “The execution of God’s judgment “ at the conclusion of the Investigative judgment.

12. IS THE NUMBER 144,000 SYMBOLIC?

It is not vital to know that the number 144,000 is a symbolic number, but some feel that they need clarification on this point. Those who believe that the 144,000 win the great multitude naturally feel that they should stress the literalness of that number or otherwise there would be, literally, two unnumbered multitudes. If the 144,000 go out to win the great multitude, who wins the 144,000 multitude? There is confusion only when attempts are made to apply the 144,000 as a literal number. To the present writer there is no doubt, but this is a symbolic number which stands for all church members who are sealed and protected through the time of trouble. Though the number of the remnant may be small in comparison with the number of the lost, yet the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy indicate that there will be, literally, more than 144,000 who will pass through the time of trouble and be preserved until the coming of the King in all His glory.

It would take us beyond the intended scope of this limited outline were we to present the abundant evidence upon which this truth is based, but everything leads to the firmly-established conclusion that this is a symbolic number. The reader is invited to consider a few of the reasons for this conclusion.

Twelve is God’s kingdom number, as many students of Bible numbers agree. In ancient Israel there were 12 tribes; 12 rods; 12 spies; 12 stones gathered from Jordan; 12 stones in the high priest’s breastplate; “Elijah took 12 stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob”, etc. Dr. E. W. Bullinger, in his “Number in Scripture”, says: “There were twelve patriarchs from Seth to Noah and his family, and twelve from Shem to Jacob. The twelve tribes of Israel: Though actually thirteen in number, there are never more than 12 named in any one list. There are about 18 enumerations altogether, but in each list one or other is omitted. Generally it is Levi, but not always. In Revelation 7 both Dan and Ephraim are omitted, but the enumeration is still 12, Levi and Joseph being introduced for this special sealing of the remnant which shall go unscathed through the great tribulation [time of trouble]. Then there were 12 judges or Saviors” (page 253).

The word “King” is employed 12 times in John’s gospel, giving the account of the trial of our Lord, the King of the church see John 18: 33, 37 (twice), 39; 19: 3, 12, 14, 15 (twice), 19, 21 (twice), the twelfth time using the words “Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews. But that He said, I am the King of the Jews”. Jesus certainly said that He was the King of the church. If Jesus desired protection He could have commanded 12 legions of angels, for He is their King, too. Jesus was twelve years of age when He first appeared in public (Luke 2: 42) and uttered His first-recorded words -His purpose to glorify His Father.

The use of 12 as the number of Christ’s kingdom is the same in the Old and the New Testaments. Jesus ordained 12 apostles. There are 12 gates in the New Jerusalem, “and at the gates 12 angels, and the names written thereon, which are the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. And the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and in them the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb, he measured the city with the reed,

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12,000 furlongs . . . And he measured the wall thereof, 144 (12 x 12) cubits” (Revelation 21: 12-17). After picturing the 12 foundations of the city we read: The twelfth, an amethyst. And the 12 gates were 12 pearls- (v. 20, 21). The tree of life also bears “twelve manner of fruits” (22: 2). The word twelve occurs 10 times in John’s description of the New Jerusalem but it is obvious that the 144 is intended to be understood as 12 x 12 and thus make up the 12 times that 12 comes into this picture of the capital city of the kingdom of Christ.

Dr. Bullinger declares: “Twelve is a perfect number, signifying governmental perfection. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with rule. The sun which ‘rules’ the day, and the moon and the stars which ‘govern’ the night, do so by their passage through the 12 signs of the Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 (12 x 30) degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year” (page 253). The word Israel means “God ruled” and designates an overcomer Jacob received this name after his experience with God - a night of prevailing prayer: The Lord said to him: “As a prince has thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed” (Genesis 32: 28). “By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed” (Hosea 12: 2, 3). The praying Nathanael said to Jesus: “Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel” (John 1: 47-51). Jesus had revealed to Nathanael that He saw all who prayed in secret, that He is their King. Those who pray for victory are the overcomers who are designated by the name of Israel (Romans 2: 28, 29; Galatians 3: 29; 6: 15, 16).

That the 144,000 is a symbolic number is further seen by the way it is written in the original language, for this really represents two separate symbolic numbers, 144 and 1,000, for in the Greek it is written in a peculiar manner, the 144 being figures, and the 1,000 in words, as in the English we might write ‘144 thousand’. Obviously the Lord desired to draw attention to the number 144, which is 12 x 12. The numbers 144 and 1,000 are used in a number of places in the Scriptures, the one, 144, to express the perfection of Christ’s kingdom; the other number, 1,000, is the cube of the figure ten, and always expresses the perfection of order. The Most Holy Place in which the perfect Law was deposited measured 10 x 10 x 10. Here in Revelation 7 these two numbers are linked together, expressive of that perfection of Christ’s kingdom with its perfection of order produced by creative power when the believer surrenders his whole being to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The tribes of Israel sealed with the seal of the living God cannot be the literal tribes of Jacob, because two of the original tribes, Ephraim and Dan are not even named. Both were leaders in idolatry. It is obvious that the names given in Revelation 7 and the order in which they are given is because of their spiritual significance; The meaning of Dan indicates “judging”, and Jacob, in Genesis 49: 16, 17, pictures Dan as a “serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that the rider shall fall backward”. Dan represents those in the professing church who criticize and “judge” their fellow-believers, back-biting as they pass along life’s highway, causing those they slander to “fall backwards”. The Danites will not be in the kingdom of Christ. Manasseh, meaning “forgetting;” - representing those who forgive and forget - replaces Dan in the list of the tribes of Israel given in Revelation 7. Ephraim represents those who are “joined to idols” (Hosea 4: 17): those who have “mixed” (Hosea 7: 8) with the world and have not sufficiently valued their eternal life to earnestly seek the things of God (Hosea 6: 8-11). His name does not appear in Revelation 7.

The order in which the names of the tribes of the children of Israel are given in Revelation 7 is significant, being placed in such an Order as to proclaim the gospel in the meaning of their names. The reader will find the meanings of the names in the following verses, with their margins, set forth in the order of their birth: Genesis 29:32; 29:33, 34, 35; 30:6, 8, 11, 13, 18, 20, 24; 35:18; 41:51, 52. Now observe that the tribes of Israel as enumerated in Revelation 7 are not given in the order of their birth, but in such an order that the meaning of their names preaches the gospel. For instance, Judah was the fourth son, yet his name heads the list, because he, being the kingly tribe, represents Jesus “The King of the Jews”, also because his name means “Praise”. In the days of Jehoshaphat, the people of God were faced with perils. The king of Judah “appointed singers unto the Lord [margin, “praise”] that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and say, Praise the Lord, and when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord” gave them victory over their enemies (2 Chronicles 20:21-24). Thus at the commencement of these names we are given the secret of victory. The tribe of Judah led the way in the march across the wilderness to the Promised Land, and its standard was the lion. This is the significance of the cheering message of assurance which was given by one of the elders, one who had been resurrected at the time of the resurrection of Christ (Matthew 27:50-53; Revelation 5:9; Ephesians 4:8): “Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed” (Revelation 5: 5). For it is Jesus,

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“the King of the [spiritual] Jews” (Revelation 2: 9; 3: 9) who leads His people through this world to the eternal Canaan.

Setting out the names in the order in which they are given in Revelation 7 we see that, by this arrangement of names according to their meanings and not according to their order of birth, we have God’s message of assurance to those who* are sealed among the tribes of Israel:

Judah: “Praise”
Reuben: “A son”
Gad: “A company” of sons redeemed and Aser: “Happy” after
Nephtalim: “Wrestling” in prayer
Manasses: “Forgetting” self and the past Simeon: “Hearing” God’s Word
Levi: “Joined” to God as
Issachar: “Servants”
Zabulon: “Dwelling” with
Joseph: “Added” joys and special blessings as
Benjamin: “Sons of the right hand”, for In Thy presence is fullness of joy: at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11).

We regret that lack of space has compelled us to omit many details which would reveal more fully the fact that this arrangement of the names was done with respect to their meanings. Having briefly commented on Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, who is mentioned first in this list, we comment briefly on the last name given. When dying, Rachel gave her new-born son the name of “Benoni, that is, the son of my sorrow; but his father called him Benjamin, that is, the son of the right hand” (Genesis 35:18, margin). Benjamin was born in Bethlehem (see vv. 16-19), and is a type of Jesus Who was also born in Bethlehem. Jesus was born into this world to be “a man of sorrow” (Isaiah 53:3), but later to sit “on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8: 1). Thus both names given to Benjamin the son of sorrow” and “the son of the right hand” - apply to Jesus. All ‘who are redeemed, like their Lord, will know from their own experience What it means to be sons of sorrow; but “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Timothy 2: 12) and be sons of His right hand. Of all redeemed companies, the remnant church is destined to drink to the dregs the cup of sorrow. Their experiences will more nearly be like to those Jesus had on earth than any others. A good outline showing this is found in “Our Firm Foundation”, volume 2, pages 405-424. For our present purpose we draw attention to 1 Testimonies, page 353: “At the transfiguration, Jesus was glorified by His Father. Thus before His betrayal and crucifixion He was strengthened for His last dreadful sufferings. AS the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble’, they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. I saw that God will in a wonderful manner preserve His people through the time of trouble. As Jesus poured out His soul in agony in the garden, they will earnestly cry and agonize day and night for deliverance. See also Early Writings, page 283, 284.

The promise of being sons of Christ’s right hand on His throne is for those who heed the message to the Laodiceans and who endure as Christians through the night of sorrow. Thus the first and last names of the tribes sealed - Judah, the kingly tribe, and Benjamin, the son of sorrow, whose name was changed to the son of the right hand - is written thus to encourage those to be sealed and pass through the time of trouble that they are glorying their King, following Him, obeying Him, and for so doing will suffer with Him, but after the night of weeping, they will sit with Jesus on His throne (Revelation 3: 21) as “sons of His right hand”. They will then say: to the King: “At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16: 11).

The Lord’s servant says: “It is not His [God’s] plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the word. It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question” (Manuscript 26, 1901). “It seems apparent from this statement that Mrs. White did not believe that the matter of who compose the 144,000 had been made absolutely and unmistakably plain” (Our Firm Foundation, volume 2, page 422).

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However, there are some things given in the Spirit of Prophecy which seem quite clear, such as the 144,000 being upon the earth before the general resurrection (Early Writings, page 16), and living at the time God gives “the day and hour of Jesus’ coming” (Early Writings, page 15, 285). They are alive at the time God’s voice (at the commencement of the 7th plague) brings deliverance to His people who are about to be destroyed by the wicked hosts of Babylon, and they endure through the time of Jacob’s trouble (which commences at the close of probation, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 201): “A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob’s trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, ‘and were delivered by the voice of God. The 144,000 triumphed” (Early Writings, page 37). “These [the 144,000] having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as ‘the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb’, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation’; they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God’s judgments. But they have been delivered. They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat” (Great Controversy, Page 649).

The only way those who have died in the message could be included in this number would be by God imputing to them the experiences which they were willing and expecting to endure for His sake, but were prevented from so doing by their death. “God calls those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4: 17).

However, from Early Writings, page 16 we may be certain that the number is symbolic. We read: “Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square.” It is impossible for people numbering literally 144,000 to form a compact “perfect square”.

The Book of Revelation is a book of symbols, and much of the spiritual beauty is lost when a strictly literal meaning is given to its symbols. Undoubtedly the 144,000 is a symbolical number representing those who follow their King Jesus, the Head of the spiritual kingdom of love and power. They will be victorious over their foes because their King is Almighty and because they trust in His power to save.

13. PREPARING FOR THE SEAL

THE CLEANSING OF THE SOUL TEMPLE - THE IMPORTANT LESSON OF THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

We now enter into a consideration of one of the most important lessons to be learned from the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, and the writer is happy to say that the brethren who teach that the seal must precede the Loud Cry and whose teachings we have referred to several times also make this a prominent feature of their teaching. However, before dealing with the most sublime truths we feel that we should cite a few more reasons against the idea that God’s people receive the seal before the Loud Cry. In the type there was nothing to indicate that each person’s name was considered separately on the day of atonement, one following the other, that probation closed earlier for some than it did for others. So far as the type is concerned all Israel together pled for divine mercy, together they repented of their sins, together they looked forward to the completion of the work of the High Priest. There was no separating of the sins of individuals as they were laid upon Satan. And when the High Priest came out and blessed the people, he blessed the whole congregation at the same time. Had God designed to teach that each Israelite received his seal, one after the other, He would have had to signify some way such as the High Priest coming out and blessing one and then going back for the next name.

No such indication is given. Yet, it should be observed, God did judge each person in the vast assembly of Israel. The Investigative judgment will certainly consider each person thoroughly, yet we must not measure God’s way of dealing with these cases on the basis of human ability. We can deal with only one case at a time. We are so very, very finite. God is so infinite that He thoroughly judged all those Israelites practically simultaneously, or at least all in that one day. Their probation ended at sunset. Supposing (in an effort to show how we should not try to work out Bible teaching on the basis of our human viewpoint) we estimate that there were 1,000,000 (probably many more when a prosperous nation in Palestine) responsible Israelites to be judged that day. God would surely give them a probation for half the

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daylight hours. The actual judgmental portion of that day - the slaying of the goat and the taking of his blood into the Most Holy Place - did not commence for a while. So that each case would not have more than a few seconds for consideration. This analysis could be extended, but what purpose would be gained except to reveal the folly of trying to use a human gauge with which to restrict the infinite God. We had better leave the unrevealed with Him Whose "ways are past finding out. "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God".

At Pentecost the early rain fell upon the assembled disciples at the one time -early in the morning, for at 9 o'clock Peter was explaining what had happened (Acts 2: 1-15). When the latter rain falls it will fall similarly, for we read: "The latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." It will not fall as each person is judged following the other, as it would if it were true, as our friends say, that each person judged then receives the seal, and "the seal and the latter rain are one".

The reader will readily see that there is a difference in judging those whose destiny has been decided at death, and those who are living. God being just, and, considering all things, would consider the future of the living - whether they would accept Christ later before probation closed, etc.

It is not suggested that in any way the case of each person will not be thoroughly investigated, for we read: "Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated" (Great Controversy, Page 483). But it is suggested that the infinite God is not so limited that He could deal with only one case at a time. The Lord's servant is writing specifically of the dead, though the same individual attention applies in the cases of the living. We are not given details of the conduct of the investigative judgment. It is possible that when the Lord considers the cases of the living He does not complete the judgment of one, thus closing his probation before He passes on to another, until all are dealt with, but, rather, He considers them on a day to day basis and thus knows on any day just where each one stands. In this way it would not require a long period of time for the consideration of one person at a time until all are considered, but rather just before probation closes those persons who have from day to day maintained their standing before God are judged worthy to receive the seal. This thought is suggested by the plural employed by God's servant when describing the investigative judgment with particular reference to the living:

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great Day of Atonement. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel so the remnant church will plead. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness. The tempter points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins and the Divine Advocate pleads in their behalf and declares: 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, I gave My life for these souls.' As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments from them.' The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure. While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God" (5 Testimonies, page 472-475).

In Zechariah 3:4 the words are "Take away the filthy garments from him", but in the above extract it reads: "Take away the filthy garments from them". The reading of the whole of the description given by the Lord's servant in 5 Testimonies, page 472-475 (and other places where the judgment of the living saints is depicted) the use of the plural throughout in reference to the whole of the remnant church, the people of God, is significant. In this connection it is interesting to observe how an author who believes in the one-after-another judgment of the living, the giving of the seal before the Loud Cry, quotes these descriptions of the judgment in which the Lord's servant portrays the experience of the remnant church as a whole, and uses them in reference to an individual.'

Having dealt with these discrepancies, let us consider the most important lesson taught by the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.

The latter rain came upon the disciples as they repented of their sins and put away from their lives the things that were displeasing to the all-pure eye of God (see Acts of the Apostles, page 36-56). "It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost" (5 Testimonies, page 214). Then, with this heart cleansing, the saints will be preparing to receive the seal of God - see context. "Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti typical day of atonement will be recognized and marked as

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worthy of God's protection will be numbered with those who are sealed" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 445).

Thus, while the High Priest was in the sanctuary and the sins were about to be removed from there, the people outside were repenting of, and confessing and forsaking their sins.

The cleansing of the sanctuary is more than a matter of understanding how the sins of the penitent are removed from the books of record in the heavenly temple; it involves the cleansing of God's temple on earth -His church, in a collective sense, and individuals when applied in detail. "While the Investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of the penitent are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of Purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people" (Great Controversy, Page 424). "Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people. We must work in harmony with Him upon earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement" (Review and Herald, February, 11, 1890).

"While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshippers on the earth should carefully review their life and compare their character with the standard of righteousness. As they see their deficiencies, they would seek the aid of the Spirit of God to enable them to have moral strength to resist the temptations of Satan and to reach the perfection of the standard" (Review and Herald, April 8, 1890).

"The Jewish tabernacle was a type of the Christian church. The, church on earth composed of those who are faithful and loyal to God, is the 'true tabernacle', whereof the Redeemer is the minister. God and not man, pitched this tabernacle on a high, elevated platform. This tabernacle is Christ's body A holy tabernacle is built up of those who receive Christ as their personal Savior. Christ is the minister of the true tabernacle, the High Priest, of all who believe in Him as a personal Savior" (Signs of the Times, February 14, 1900).

The Disappointment of those who expected our Lord to come to earth in 1844 is outlined in Revelation 10: 9, 10 the message from the book of Daniel concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary they interpreted to mean the coming of Christ to the earth. The thought of the Savior's return was sweet as honey to them, but the sweetness turned to bitterness when their hopes were dashed. However, the prophecy outlined that, following that Disappointment, they would understand and preach concerning the true meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary. "And he [the angel] told me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (Revelation 10:11; 11:1).

This clearly states that, after the 1844 Disappointment, those who would then see the light concerning the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary were to make this message known to all mankind. But more than this was included in this prophecy: the double meaning concerning the cleansing of the church and the individuals of the church was also to be made clear to the people. The Spirit of Prophecy, as we have seen, draws attention to this double meaning. However, this is a feature that has not been as fully proclaimed, as no doubt it will be in the future, among those who are praying for the latter rain, which is to be followed by the reception of the seal of the living God upon the cleansed temple.

Commenting upon Revelation 11: 1, the Lord's servant says: "The church is a temple built after the Divine similitude, and the angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, that every stone may be hewed and squared by the Divine measurement" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 17). The personal application "that every stone may be hewed and squared" shows that inherent in that prophecy is the shaping of the character to fit into the place in the temple that the great Architect of the Universe has designed. That is, an obedient resignation to the will of God so that He may fit us for a place in heaven. "The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed. The righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven; the second is our fitness for heaven" (Review and Herald, 4 June, 1895).

A number of times in the inspired writings it is stated that there is to be a special cleansing work among believers on earth preparatory to the latter rain. Such is the prophecy of Malachi 3: 1-4. The Lord's servant quotes this prophecy in connection with the declaration that "While the Investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of the penitent are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon the earth": "The Son of man came to the Ancient of days.' This coming is foretold by the prophet Malachi: 'The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, said the Lord of hosts' (Malachi 3: 1). The coming of the Lord to His temple was sudden, unexpected, to His people. They were not looking for Him there. But the people were not ready to

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meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Says the prophet: 'Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness' (Malachi 3:2, 3). Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil" (Great Controversy, Page 424, 425). This work of cleansing the earthly temple must proceed "while the sins of the penitent are being removed from the sanctuary".

From the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy it may be discerned that the nearer we draw to the time for the outpouring of the latter rain, the more will God's people give study to the cleansing of the earthly temple - the church and the individuals comprising the church. This we have already seen in the repeated designations of the holiness of the 144,000 sealed ones given in Revelation 14: 1-5. More and more, there will be the measuring of the temple as foretold in Revelation 11: 1, which the Lord's servant interprets as the shaping up of the stones to fit the places desired by the heavenly Architect.

"Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol -that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshipping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His Purpose for the human soul" (Education, p. 36).

"From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny of every soul" (Desire of Ages, page 161).

"In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin - from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul" (Desire of Ages, page 161).

"Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great High Priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no less thereby. While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth" (Desire of Ages, page 166).

"We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ's work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. Those who do not sympathize with Jesus in His work in the heavenly courts, who do not cleanse the soul temple of every defilement, are joining with the enemy of God and man" (Review and Herald, 21 January, 1890).

Solomon's magnificent temple symbolized the church and each believer. Concerning the building of this temple on Mount Moriah, we read: "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (1 Kings 6:7). The noiseless building of the temple typified the building of Christ's spiritual temple by the quiet operations of the Spirit of God. This was probably in Paul's mind when he wrote: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2: 20-22).

"Of surpassing beauty and unrivalled splendor was the palatial building which Solomon and his associates erected for God and His worship. Garnished with precious stones, was a fit emblem of the living church on earth, which through the ages has been building in accordance with the divine pattern, with materials that have been likened to 'gold, silver, precious stones', 'polished after the similitude of a palace' (1 Corinthians 3: 12; Psalm 144: 12). Of this spiritual temple Christ is 'the chief cornerstone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord' " (Prophets and Kings, Page 36).

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In my book written many years ago: "The Moral Purpose of Prophecy", from whence I have largely drawn for much in this chapter, I wrote: 'Incidents, such as the Babylonians' destruction of Solomon's temple (2 Chronicles 36: 17-19); their carrying off to Babylon the vessels belonging to the house of God (2 Chronicles 36: 18; Ezra 1: 7-11; Daniel 1: 2) and using them there in the service of their false gods (Daniel 5: 2, 3); the deliverance and the return of ancient Israel from their Babylonian captivity, the rebuilding of the broken down temple and city of Jerusalem, etc., are all recorded in the Scriptures (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, etc.) for a moral purpose. While the study of sacred history is interesting and profitable in itself, yet the main reason for which these incidents are recorded is that by them we might receive spiritual strength (Romans 15: 4). Not only may we discern the building of Christ's church and of each believer in the building of the tabernacle and the temple, but the restoration of the back-sliding soul or church as an habitation of God may be seen in the rebuilding and restoration of the temple and its services after being subjected to assault and damage at the hand of the forces of Babylon. 'The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, tinder the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of earth's history' (Prophets and Kings, Page 677)" (The Moral Purpose of Prophecy, pp. 42, 43).

Paul not only spoke of the church as being God's "temple", but also of each individual (Ephesians 2:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, etc.). The tabernacle was made after the heavenly "pattern" (Exodus 25:9, 40). After Moses had completed every detail of the structure and all the furnishings "as the Lord had commanded" him (Exodus 40: 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31), "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (v. 35). The same thing occurred at the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10, 12; 2 Chronicles 5:13, 14; 7: 2). The spiritual lesson is obvious: when we do all that the Lord commands us to do we, too, shall be filled with the glory of God. The New Testament command: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18) is tantamount to urging us to obey God in everything, for only in this way will the Spirit of God flood the soul with His glory. "The Holy Ghost, Whom. God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). The minute and most exact measurements of each part of the temple (see Ezekiel 40:3, and throughout Ezekiel's closing chapters dealing with the temple and its measurements, which is the basis for the measurements of the temple mentioned in Revelation 11:1) is designed to convey to us the fact that God requires all pertaining to the church and to us as individuals to be in accordance with the Divine measuring rod.

This is the import of the special message which we (SDA's) have been informed, in Revelation 10:11; 11:1, would follow the Disappointment. Knowledge that Jesus is in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, removing blotting out the sins of the penitent from the books of record, would eventually lead to a greater consideration of the cleansing of the church and of each individual of every sin, and a building of character in harmony with the Divine measurements. God's people will yet put forth every effort to heed the inspired counsel: "Having therefore these promises [of Christ reigning in the temple as He will when we are separated from sin and error, see previous verses], dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God- (2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1).

"As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when He shall prepare a people to stand the final test in the closing of the great conflict. When the earth is lightened with the glory of God, we shall see a work similar to that which was wrought when the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the power of a risen Savior. Thus it was in the time of the early rain; but the latter rain will be more abundant- (Review and Herald, November 22 and 29, 1892).

God's people will yet heed the counsel of "the Faithful and true Witness", and will buy of Him "gold tried in the fire" and be truly rich; and the "white raiment" of the righteousness of Christ; and with spiritual "eye salve" will see the truth as it is in Jesus and have holy fellowship with Him (Revelation 3:18-20). "When any lust takes possession of the mind in any way or to any degree, and there is a yielding to fleshly desires, we lose the image of Christ in spirit and character. The work in the heavenly sanctuary becomes obscure" (Review and Herald, 21 January, 1890).

On the other hand, as we progress with character building, the spiritual vision becomes clearer (Steps to Christ, page 118; TMB. 127), and thus we are better able to follow and to discern Jesus as He completes His final ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (Great Controversy, Page 430, 431, 488, 489). This is the significance of the words: "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage and the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10).

When Moses had done all that God commanded him to do in the erection and furnishing of the sanctuary, then God filled it with the glory of His presence. When Solomon's temple was built and

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everything was in readiness, again the Lord filled it with the glory of His presence. When God's people have cleansed "the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost" (5 Testimonies, page 214). Then will be completely fulfilled the prophecy made by Peter: "Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ (Acts 3:19, 20, RSV). The blotting out of sins from the human temple, which is parallel with remedying "the defects in our characters- precedes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power. As long as we sin so long must they be registered in the heavenly books of record, so that the cleansing of the human temple - the blotting out of sins in the lives of God's people must precede the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The earthly cleansing must precede the heavenly, and it is to this blotting out of sins in the lives of God's people which will precede the out pouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain that the prophecy of Peter particularly points. "It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every sin. Then the latter rain will fall on us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." Then, under the ripening influence of the latter rain, the grains will be ready for harvesting. "Without the latter rain to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the Perfecting latter rain" (Testimonies to Ministers 508, 509).

The last act of Jesus toward His people in His heavenly ministry is to commission His angels to place the seal in the foreheads of His tried and faithful people: "When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity" (5 Testimonies, page 216). Writing earlier in this chapter on "The Seal of God", the Lord's servant, after quoting Daniel 12:1, says: "When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of God is upon His people. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death" (page 213).

Observe that the seal of God is mentioned in connection with the close of probation, the commencement of the time of trouble and their preservation through God defending them. Observe, too, that this follows immediately upon the words of the preceding paragraph: "Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons" (5 Testimonies, page 212) in the seven last plagues (see context).

The Lord's servant gives a resume of the final events: "I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work, and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing, from the presence of the Lord. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message. I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's ink-horn by his side returned from the earth, and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, 'It is done'" (Early Writings, page 279; Great Controversy, Page 613).

Thus we observe the latter rain is not the seal. The seal is not given before but after the latter rain or the loud cry - it is the last thing done before Jesus closes the door of mercy to commence pouring out the seven last plagues upon a world in rebellion against the Government of heaven. The saints are given the special seal just before the close of probation and are thus guaranteed safety through the day of God's wrath and the unprecedented time of trouble.

EPILOGUE - THOSE WHO WILL BE SEALED

"Those who overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti typical day of atonement will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection. The names of those who are steadfastly looking and

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waiting and watching for the appearing of the Savior - more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning - will be numbered with those who are sealed" (Testimonies to Ministers, page 445).

"Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne" (Revelation 3:19-21).

The Day of Atonement was essentially a day of repentance. The Lord's last-day appeal to His remnant people is to "be zealous, therefore, and repent". "At every advance step in our Christian experience, our repentance will deepen" (Acts of the Apostles, page 561). Those who would make progress in the Christian life must repent and continue in an attitude of repentance until the end of the Day of Atonement. God can work wonders upon a softened heart, but cannot mould a heart of stone. Continued repentance brings in the power of God to operate upon prepared soil. It is the work of Jesus as High Priest to give repentance: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 31). Satan opposes this work by causing pride to arise in the heart, and where pride is there is no spiritual progress. "He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Selfishness and pride will make a stand against anything that would show them to be sinful" (Mount of Blessings, page 203, 204).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). "Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize before God for divine power. Man may have a power to resist evil - a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them" (Review and Herald, 18 February, 1890).

"Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive [agonize] to enter it at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13: 23, 24).

"Some I saw did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these, and I saw them hastening to the assistance of those who were struggling with all their energies to resist the evil angels, and trying, to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified" (1 Testimonies, page 180, 181; Early Writings, page 270). The reader is urged to read this chapter in Testimonies and Early Writings, page on "The Shaking".

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders. Let priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not your heritage to reproach, that the heathen [nations] should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2: 15-17).

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4: 7-10).

"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired. Before the decree bring forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek you the Lord, all you meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be he shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zephaniah 2:1-3).

"Men and women who profess to be disciples of Christ and to keep all the commandments of God will have to feel in their daily lives the true spirit of agonizing to enter in at the strait gate. The agonizing ones are the only ones who will urge their passage through the strait gate and narrow way that lead to life eternal, to fullness of joy and pleasures forever more. Those who merely seek to enter in will never be able. The entire Christian life of many will be spent in no greater effort than that of seeking, and their only reward will be to find it an utter impossibility for them to enter in at that strait gate" (2 Testimonies, page 480, 481).

"Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and

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persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God - how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch!" (Great Controversy, Page 621).

"We must be much in prayer, if we would make progress in the divine life" (5 Testimonies, page 161). "He [Jesus] frequently, spent the entire night upon the damp ground in agonizing prayer" (1 Testimonies, page 505).

"God brings against ministers and people the heavy charge of spiritual feebleness. God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death" (Review and Herald, 25 February, 1902).

"There is to be a resurrection from apparent death. By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the king's highway. As we do this, the power of the Spirit will come upon us. We need Pentecostal energy. This will come; for the Lord has promised to send His Spirit as the all-conquering power" (Gospel Worker, page 307, 308).

"The sins of Israel must go to judgment beforehand. Ever, sin must be confessed at the sanctuary, then the work will move, it must be done now. The latter rain is coming on those that are pure - all, then, will receive it as formerly" (E. G. White, General Conference Bulletin, 1893, page 179).

"Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness ever pressing toward the mark set before us the perfection of character? When the Lord's people reach this mark they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished'" (Review and Herald 10 June, 1902).

"The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception- (Testimonies to Ministers 510). "His power awaits the demand of those who would overcome" (Ms. 26a, 1892). The reader is urged to obtain. "Power Unlimited. Righteousness by Faith and the Final 'Conflict'" for further study on how to receive renewed power from the inexhaustible supplies of Heaven" (Gospel Workers, page 112).

Dear reader, we have been considering themes of eternal import. The most important question is that of our personal relationship to the Savior. How is it with you? Have you a vital, living union with the great Life-Giver? Only in this way can we be prepared to stand the test of the judgment. We must obtain a fitness of character to live with God. Only "the pure in heart shall see God" (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 12:8). "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Purity of heart, seeks purity of doctrine; purity of doctrine upholds and develops Purity of heart: "You have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1:22). God has ordained that by prayer and the study of His Word we shall be "changed from glory to glory even as, by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3: 18). "The perfection of character He [God] requires can be obtained only by becoming familiar with His Word" ("Counsels to Teachers", page 454). "The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character" (Christ Object Lessons, page 100). "The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel" (Great Controversy, Page 520). "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). "If you continue in My Word, then are you My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). "The perception and appreciation of truth, He [Jesus] said, depends less upon the mind than upon the heart Truth must be received into the soul. Its reception depends upon the, renunciation of every sin that the Spirit of God reveals. To those who thus yield themselves to God, having an honest desire to know and to do His will, the truth is with them.

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