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JUSTIFICATION-SANCTIFICATION-CHRISTIAN STANDARDS

A Response to Keavin Hayden, Lifestyles of the Remnant (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 2001).

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Introduction

Keavin Hayden has made a most revealing contribution to the continuing debate over standards in contemporary Adventism. And we can thank him for it.

At long last, someone has frankly, publicly acknowledged the direct link between the standards debate and the doctrine of salvation. For too long this connection has been pointedly denied, especially by persons who take Hayden's view of the salvation and perfection issues. One recent Adventist author openly criticizes those holding to the post-Fall view of Christ's humanity and related doctrines, on account of their conviction that those taking an opposite view are encouraging laxity in standards (1). After reading Hayden's book, few should doubt that the position one takes on Adventism's current salvation issues carries direct implications for how we deal with lifestyle standards. His candid admission that current lifestyle and worship issues in the denomination are directly impacted by our view of salvation and perfection (pp. 16,24) is one for which all who long have sought clarity in these discussions can be grateful.

Hayden's writings reveal a new high in contempt for the classic Adventist doctrine of salvation. **In his book *Saving Blood, he attacks the hope of character perfection in this life as the product of "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (2). In Lifestyles of the Remnant he declares the same doctrine to be the teaching of Antichrist (pp. 18-19, 21).*** One is amazed at those in responsible positions who approved these books for publication. Were someone to write a book denouncing in such terms the theology Hayden teaches, we can easily guess it would be rejected as "divisive." Considering how many leaders, pastors, evangelistic ministries, and laypeople hold to the position condemned by Hayden, one is amazed that such incendiary words as his would be allowed on a denominational press.

In the final analysis, we cannot condemn Hayden's willingness to be blunt about his views. But his departure from inspired counsel in the construction of these views is quite another matter.

Experience-Driven Theology

Like various other contemporary Adventist authors (3), **Hayden's theology gives evidence of being driven more by his own experience than by an objective study of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.** In a recent Review article, Hayden cites his earlier foray into extremism, his abandonment of a sales career based on his

failure to consider the whole of Ellen White's counsel, and his partaking for a time of a harshly critical spirit (4). Like others of a similar bent, **he credits his rescue from fanaticism to the doctrine of salvation by substitutional righteousness alone and the denial that perfect obedience is possible in this life (5).**

At one point in Lifestyles of the Remnant, Hayden quotes an Ellen White statement which says, "There is in human nature a tendency to run to extremes and from one extreme to another entirely opposite" (p. 86) (6). Sadly, Hayden's own theology appears to follow this pattern. **Vast reaches of inspired evidence, regarding salvation as well as the lifestyle issues he addresses, are ignored in his book. Hayden's theological opponents, many of whom are careful students of Scripture and Ellen White, will quickly note the imbalance and neglected evidence throughout his arguments. This deficiency, along with the inconsistent logic present throughout the book, will likely annul any benefit Hayden's conservative readers might otherwise receive from the valuable insights his book does include.**

Salvation and Perfection

The linchpin of Hayden's argument against various Adventist standards is his belief in forensic-only salvation and consequent denial of the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life. Repeatedly he insists that Christ's "substitutionary merits" and "substitutionary character" are the only righteousness believers can trust (pp. 17, 19, 21), as opposed to trusting cooperation with the Spirit's power in the perfecting of character--which he denounces as "a traditional teaching that has plagued Adventism for years" (p. 18).

The following points will demonstrate how Hayden's salvation theology collides directly with the testimony of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy:

1. The Conditions of Eternal Life.

Hayden complains, regarding the way Adventists have often presented standards, "So often we have presented the topic in a legalistic 'do it or lose your salvation' way" (p. 7). Elsewhere he writes,

"I bring this up because before we contemplate the standards of holy living, we first need to recognize our total dependence upon Jesus. Otherwise we might fall into the trap of thinking that our salvation ultimately depends upon our performance as we live out the divinely inspired standards" (p. 24).

"We do not incorporate biblical standards into our life to obtain salvation" (p. 110).

Hayden is quite correct in reminding us of our need for total dependence upon Jesus. Where he is wrong, as we will see, is in his claim that "total dependence upon Jesus" means depending on justification alone for salvation, and not at all on sanctification.

None will deny, to be sure, that at times our approach to the lifestyle imperatives of our faith has lacked a Christ-centered focus and the constant awareness that God alone gives power for obedience. However, **the Bible is clear that while faith alone produces in Christian lives the obedience God requires (John 15:5; Rom. 14:23; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 11), this obedience is nevertheless the clearly-stated condition for our receiving eternal life.**

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life" (Matt. 19:16), Jesus replied, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (verse 17). Of course He went on to say that "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (verse 26), making it clear yet again that only divine strength can fulfill this condition of salvation. When the lawyer to whom Jesus told the Good

Samaritan story asked Him the same question (Luke 10:25), Jesus asked him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (verse 26). After the lawyer had cited the twin principles of love to God and to one's neighbor, Christ declared, "**Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live**" (verse 28).

The apostle Paul teaches the same thing. He writes of a God

"who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom. 2:6-8).

Elsewhere he writes:

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). Again we see that Paul affirms how only through the Spirit, not through our unaided strength, can this mortification of the flesh take place. And in the book of Hebrews he writes, "And being made perfect He [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

One has a hard time reconciling these words of Scripture with Hayden's objection to what he calls the "do it or lose your salvation" approach to standards (p. 7). **Unconverted hearts may indeed strive for obedience and salvation with selfish motives, but we cannot let this obscure the Bible truth that Spirit-empowered obedience is the condition for our being saved.**

Just as Scripture teaches that the heart's intent to commit sin is the same as the outward act thereof (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28; 1 John 3:15), the same holds true for righteousness.

Hayden writes, "Jesus grants salvation to us the moment we accept Him as our perfect Substitute-before we even begin to make any outward changes" (p. 110). But outward changes aren't the issue here. Obedience, like disobedience, is primarily a state of the heart. Just as Scripture teaches that the heart's intent to commit sin is the same as the outward act thereof (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28; 1 John 3:15), the same holds true for righteousness. The thief on the cross wasn't able to restore what he had stolen, as the Bible commands (Eze. 33:15). But the Lord knew the thief would do this if he had the chance, and thus forgave him.

RENUNCIATION OF SIN BY THE HEART

This renunciation of sin by the heart is plainly stated by Scripture to be a prerequisite for receiving God's forgiveness (2 Chron. 7:14; Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Rom. 2:13). Without clarification, Hayden's claim that we are saved before any "outward changes" are made could be understood as implying that repentance--defined by Inspiration as "sorrow for sin and a turning away from it" (7)--is not needed before forgiveness is received.

2. Justification and Sanctification.

Hayden insists that when Ellen White speaks of salvation by "Christ's righteousness alone" (p. 19) (8), and describes the wedding garment of Jesus' parable (p. 19) (9), that this refers to substitutional righteousness (justification) only, in contrast with sanctification which Hayden denies can ever be perfect here on earth. But the Bible not only teaches that we are saved by sanctification and the Spirit's work within; it also teaches that this inward work will be perfect in preparation for Jesus' coming:

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Notice the contrast in Titus 3:5 between the "works of righteousness which we have done" and what the Spirit accomplishes in and through the believer.

But where does Inspiration ever call sanctification "self-righteous character building"?

Sadly, Hayden confuses these two, insisting that "because of our carnal state (even after conversion) "all our righteousness (right doings) are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) (p. 19). Elsewhere he sets up the false dilemma of choosing between exclusive trust in "Christ's substitutionary character" or trusting to "self-righteous character building" (p. 20). But where does Inspiration ever call sanctification "self-righteous character building"?

Ellen White affirms both Justification and Sanctification

The fact is that nowhere do either Scripture or Ellen White equate sanctification with the filthy rags of self-righteousness! Ellen White affirms the truth of Scripture with her declaration that not only will sanctification be perfect in this life, but that it forms as much a part of the ground of our salvation as justification:

"What is sanctification? It is to give one's self wholly and without reserve--soul, body, and spirit--to God; to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; to know and to do the will of God without regard to self or self-interest; to be heavenly minded, pure, unselfish, holy, and without spot or stain (10).

"True sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God" (11).

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us" (12).

"false robe of righteousness"

Hayden quotes an Ellen White statement which speaks of people boasting in their own perfection, which she calls a "false robe of righteousness" (p. 19) (13). Hayden sees this passage as warning believers not to trust in sanctification. But the **above Ellen White statement makes it clear that the solution to boasting and self-righteousness is not simply justification, but sanctification as well.** In the following statements, in which she defines these terms, this point is made even clearer:

"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 it" (14).

"The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ" (15).

Never does either the Bible or Ellen White exalt the purity of justification over that of sanctification

In other words, both justification and sanctification constitute the righteousness of Christ, and both are the solution to boasting and self-righteousness. For Hayden to imply that Ellen White's statements about being saved by "Christ's righteousness alone" (p. 19) (16) refer to substitutional righteousness alone, is to contradict the clear teaching of both Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Never does either the Bible or Ellen White exalt the purity of justification over that of sanctification, nor is either depicted as any more or less the spotless righteousness of Christ than the other.

Hayden attacks the doctrine of Christian perfection as follows:

"But if that [sinless perfection] is possible, then all we need is the Holy Spirit to make us good enough. We really don't need Christ's substitutionary character, do we?"

"Jesus struck at the root of this deception in His parable of the wedding garment (see Matt. 22:1-14). "The wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ, and represents the character of those who will be accepted as guests for the marriage supper of the Lamb" (YI Oct. 21, 1897). In a practical sense, what is this righteousness that He offers us? It is the perfect character He wrought out in His earthly life. When we by faith accept Him as our substitute, Heaven considers His perfect, infinite character as though it were ours. Heaven accounts us as meeting the perfect, infinite standard of the divine law, even though in our lives we really don't" (p. 19).

neither Jesus nor Ellen White equates the wedding garment with justification only.

But contrary to Hayden's view, neither Jesus nor Ellen White equates the wedding garment with justification only. The very statement Hayden quotes from Ellen White describes this garment as "the character of those who will be accepted as guests for the marriage supper of the Lamb" (17). In Christ's Object Lessons, where she comments at length on this parable, she writes concerning the wedding garment:

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. . . . It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. . . . Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' (Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God 'was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.' Sin is defined to be 'the transgression of the law'. 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garments of His righteousness" (18).

Notice how Ellen White says that this unblemished character is imparted to the believer, that this imparted righteousness stands in contrast to the filthy rags of our own righteousness, and that the perfect obedience Jesus accomplished in His earthly life makes it possible for Christians to live out this same obedience in their earthly lives.

Nowhere do either Scripture or Ellen White equate the works-righteousness condemned by Paul with sanctified obedience.

Here we see the Biblical contrast between the righteousness by works condemned in Scripture (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9) and the Biblical command to work out our salvation through the power of God working within (Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:27-29). The first set of works involve self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and boasting (Rom. 2:17-23; Eph. 2:9). The second set involve the fruits of the Spirit, which include meekness (Gal. 5:23). Nowhere do either Scripture or Ellen White equate the works-righteousness condemned by Paul with sanctified obedience.

3. The "umbrella of eternal grace."

More and more in contemporary Adventism, the word "grace" is being tossed about as an synonym for an easy, effortless salvation (of which the Bible knows nothing!). Hayden describes the substitutionary character of Jesus as an "umbrella of eternal grace" which leaves us room to fail and to be more "tolerant" of others' failings (p. 24). Elsewhere he uses the term "God's covering grace" to refer to the same idea (p. 118).

But Inspiration never describes the substitutionary character of Jesus as anything beyond a covering for past sins. John writes that forgiveness is available if we sin (1 John 2:1), not when. Ellen White speaks of how "Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure" (19), not in place of his sanctified success. Elsewhere she writes:

"Christ bears the penalty of man's past transgressions, and by imparting to man His righteousness, makes it possible for man to keep God's holy law" (20).

We will demonstrate shortly how some Ellen White statements have been distorted into teaching this "umbrella" theory of justification, and how when read in context and in comparison with other inspired statements, they teach no such thing.

4. Reproducing the Character of Christ.

Hayden attacks, in no uncertain terms, the hope that Christians can perfectly reproduce Jesus' character in their earthly lives:

"He [a guest at one of Hayden's meetings] was the victim of a traditional teaching that has plagued Adventism for years--that God expects us to unite with the power of the Holy Spirit and develop in this life a character that is as absolutely perfect as Christ's" (p. 18).

"I'm not saying that Christians do not experience a transformation in their characters. . . . What I'm trying to point out, however, is that we should never expect to reach the place at which we will match His [Christ's] level of character perfection. . . . We must always remember that even those good works that Christ creates in us still fail to meet the infinite standard of the law" (pp. 20-21).

No one can mistake Hayden's comments as being directed at those relying on their own strength to be perfect. He is quite clear that in his view, even when uniting with the Holy Spirit's power, the perfection of Christ remains out of our reach.

But what Hayden dismisses as a "traditional teaching" is in fact a Biblical teaching. The following verses speak for themselves:

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not" (1 Cor. 15:34).

"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 Cor. 7:1).

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

"And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:5; see also Zeph. 3:13).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. . . . Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3:2-3,7).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:13-15).

Each of these verses, as anyone can see, states clearly that the sinless life of Jesus is to be reproduced through heaven's power in the lives of His followers. Ellen White's statement that "when the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" (21), is based entirely on these New Testament passages.

Misuse of 1 John 3:2

At one point Hayden quotes 1 John 3:2, with its statement that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." He uses this verse as proof that "it is at the great Second Advent that we shall finally realize our hope of a perfect sinless state" (p. 23). But if Hayden had gone on to quote the very next verse, his theory would have been exploded, for the next verse maintains that "every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (verse 3). In other words, we purify ourselves as Christ is pure while we still have the hope of His coming, not when faith becomes sight and we see Him come. Hayden follows this pattern in a later chapter, where he quotes Jesus' statement to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee" (John 8:11), and stops right there (p.109). **Finishing the verse would utterly destroy Hayden's doctrinal position, for Jesus went on to say, "Go and sin no more."**

The Biblical promise that Christ's character can and will be duplicated in Christian lives is echoed in the following Ellen White statements:

"Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was" (22).

"Cherish those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, but put away whatever is unlike our Redeemer. . . . Every soul that gains eternal life must be like Christ, 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners' (Heb. 7:26)" (23).

"In our work we are to remember the way in which Christ worked. He made the world. He made man. Then He came in person to the world to show its inhabitants how to live sinless lives" (24).

"Christ came to this world and lived a life of perfect obedience, that men and women, through His grace, might also live lives of perfect obedience. This is necessary to their salvation" (25).

"The Saviour is wounded afresh and put to open shame when His people pay no heed to His word. He came to this world and lived a sinless life, that in His power His people might also live lives of sinlessness. He desires them by practicing the principles of truth to show to the world that God's grace has power to sanctify the heart" (26).

Ellen White offers a very sober warning against the anti-perfection theology, making it clear this is no small issue:

"In the day of judgment the course of the man who has retained the frailty and imperfection of humanity will not be vindicated. For him there will be no place in heaven. He could not enjoy the perfection of the saints in light. He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God" (27).

Hayden criticizes the failure of some Christians "to distinguish between idealism and realism" claiming that when Inspiration presents the standard of perfect obedience it is only meant to show us how badly we need Christ's "substitutionary merits" which supposedly "offer our only hope of fully satisfying what the law requires of us" (p. 17). Here we see a case of pure human conjecture, without the slightest support from inspired writings. The ten spies who considered the giants and walled cities of Canaan too strong to overcome were obviously trying to be "realistic," and doubtless viewed Caleb and Joshua as too idealistic. We have already seen multiple inspired passages which state beyond misunderstanding that while justifying righteousness is needed to cover past sins (28), sanctifying righteousness will indeed be perfect this side of heaven (29). To talk of "idealism" versus "realism" may sound clever, but the words of Inspiration speak for themselves.

5. Fallacious Arguments.

He quotes an Ellen White statement in Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 60

Hayden employs arguments against the perfection doctrine for which "fallacious" is the kindest description. He quotes an Ellen White statement in Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 60, which speaks of Jesus having developed "an infinitely perfect character" (p. 22), **claiming that this proves sinless obedience is impossible for fallen beings** (pp. 18, 21, 22). At one point he writes:

"How can finite creatures ever think they can reach the spiritual state of an infinite God? Such thoughts transformed the angel Lucifer into the demon called Satan (see Isaiah 14)" (p. 22).

The illogic and twisted thinking here is breathtaking!

The unfallen inhabitants of the universe are not infinite, yet they are certainly without sin. Adam before the fall was not an infinite being, yet he was sinless. The only infinite Being in the universe is God, yet He is not the only sinless Being. Certainly Jesus developed, as Ellen White says, "an infinitely perfect character," for He relinquished the infinite prerogatives of Deity in order to take humanity and be our
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Saviour. But this hardly means that only infinite beings can be without sin! **Hayden claims that "we need a righteous character that meets the infinite perfection of God's character in order to gain entrance into heaven" (p. 18). If so, even the angels need substitutional righteousness.** And certainly Lucifer did not aspire to be "like the Most High" in character, but in position! Such arguments on Hayden's part can only bring his beliefs into disrepute.

if Christians can live without the continuous need of substitutional righteousness, without a heavenly Mediator, they have adopted the spirit of antichrist

Hayden's dexterity in turning the truth upside down reaches new heights with his claim that if Christians can live without the continuous need of substitutional righteousness, without a heavenly Mediator, they have adopted the spirit of antichrist. In his own words:

"Think about it. Not to require Christ's substitutionary merits means that we ourselves must possess the qualifications of the Mediator. Instead of becoming like Christ, through such thoughts we become antichrist" (p. 21).

"Think about it" indeed! Anyone who carefully ponders this claim will understand just how absurd it is. **No angel or unfallen being could be our mediator, yet they are certainly without sin.** Does Hayden truly consider it blasphemy for someone to strive not to need forgiveness? **Must we sin in order not to blaspheme? He and others of his persuasion in Adventism seem to have the hardest time learning that living without a Mediator in no way means living without the need of Christ or the Holy Spirit.** It only means living without the continuous availability of forgiveness. What insanity to believe that depending on one aspect of Christ's righteousness is gospel security, while to depend on another aspect is blasphemy! The righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of Christ, whether imputed or imparted. **And the saints after probation's close, whose lives are free from all sin, will still be ever dependent on the Saviour's keeping power to endure that awful trial.**

In short, not to need a Mediator isn't the same as not needing Jesus. It simply means we don't need the continuous availability of Jesus' forgiveness. A mediator is only needed when differences arise. When Chrysler and the United Auto Workers get along just fine, no mediator is needed. Only when a dispute arises is a mediator required. The only disputes arising between God and man are called sins. And if these sins have been fully vanquished in believers' lives, Christ is no longer needed as a Mediator, though He is still needed to provide empowerment.

Hayden quotes an Ellen White statement which speaks of persons **"who compare themselves to Christ,** as though they were equal with Him in perfection of character. This is blasphemy. Could they obtain a view of Christ's righteousness, they would have a sense of their own sinfulness and imperfection" (p. 21) (30). Hayden comments on this passage with the words: "To think we can ever match Christ's character is a blasphemous thought" (p. 21). But that is not what Ellen White is saying. She is speaking of those who claim to be perfect, which none of us has the right to do because only God knows the heart (1 Kings 8:39). Job declared at one point: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet I would not know my soul: I would despise my life" (Job 9:20-21). **But while Job did not claim to be perfect, the Bible clearly says he was (Job 1:8), and that despite the horrendous tragedies brought upon him, "Job sinned not" (Job 1:22; 2:10).**

It is this principle that John refers to when he writes, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Hayden cites this verse as evidence that sinlessness is impossible for the Christian (p. 24). But as we see in the book of Job, **the point is not that sinless living is impossible, but that we can't know when we've attained it.** Moreover, quoting 1 John 1:8 to prove we can't stop sinning is foolish in the extreme. The verse just before

reads, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (verse 7). The verse just after reads, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (verse 9). What verse 8 is saying, and verse 10, is that if we say we don't need this cleansing we deceive ourselves and make God a liar, since God says "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). But verses 7 and 9 clearly teach that sin can be washed from us through the power Jesus provides.

Because only God knows our hearts (1 Kings 8:39), only He can declare regarding His saints, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). "They come! they come! holy, harmless, undefiled! they have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels" (31). **To claim to know if in fact we have reached this state is presumptuous, and therefore blasphemous. But it is most assuredly not blasphemous to affirm God's power to enable us to reach this state.**

Some often ask, "If we can't know when perfection is attained, then why talk about it? All it does is discourage people." We talk about it because it is a glorious hope for the converted heart. Though we will feel ever more defective as we come closer to Jesus, we nevertheless remember that God isn't willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). While experiencing the joy of the upward path of victory, we know that our God of love will supply all the strength for whatever struggles and victories remain before us.

Ellen White helps us understand the difference between the blasphemous claim to be without sin and the glorious hope that in fact we can be without sin through heaven's power. In one statement she writes, concerning Jesus, "Before angels, men, and demons, He had spoken, unchallenged, words that from any other lips would have been blasphemy: 'I do always those things that please Him'" (32). Yet in another statement she declares that this attainment must be ours:

"He [Christ] says, 'I have kept My Father's commandments.' 'I do always those things that please Him.' John 15:10; 8:29. The followers of Christ are to become like Him--by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification."

"This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God" (33).

Hayden seems not to remember that **the theology of living without a Mediator after probation's close, which he opposes so strongly, is based on very clear inspired evidence:**

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above, are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon the earth. . . . When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing" (34).

Hayden goes on to quote an Ellen White statement which speaks **of growth in perfection throughout eternity** (p. 22) (35). None would argue here. But this hardly proves the point he seeks to make

throughout his book--that sinless living is impossible this side of heaven. Of course we will experience character growth throughout the ages of our fellowship with the Lord. But in no way does this negate the Bible truth that before we get to heaven, heaven's power must be claimed to remove all sin from our lives (Zeph. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Peter 3:10-14; 1 John 3:2-3; Rev. 14:5). 6. "Christ's merits alone."

Hayden speaks of the need to trust in "Christ's merits alone, apart from my efforts to live a holy lifestyle" (p. 120). This statement, combined with his frequent references to Christ's "substitutionary merits" and "substitutionary character," imply that Ellen White's frequent references to the "merits of Christ" refer to justification only.

Scripture does not use the term merit as a synonym for righteousness, so the only inspired writer who uses this term is Ellen White.

The merits of Christ, in her theology, are just another term for the righteousness of Christ. These merits are accounted to us to cover our past failings (36), and are imparted to us to give victory over those failings.

The following passages make this plain:

"Becoming partakers of His divine nature, we are to learn to discern the temptations of Satan, and, in the strength of His grace, overcome the corruptions that are in the world through lust. He who was once a sinful human being may be refined and purified through the imparted merits of Christ, and stand before his fellow men as a laborer together with God" (37).

"The more we contemplate these riches, the more we will come into possession of them, and the more we shall reveal the merits of Christ's sacrifice, the protection of His righteousness, His inexpressible love, the fullness of His wisdom, and His power to present us before the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (38).

"When the law of God is thus implanted in the soul of the believer, he is approaching eternal life through the merits of Christ. . . ."

"Here in this life is the testing, trying time. The angels of God are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. The whole question is settled in this, Is he obedient or disobedient to the commandments of God? has the sinner been transformed, in this world, through the merits of Christ, so so that he is fitted to join the heavenly society?" (39).

"Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul" (40).

"Through the merits of His blood, you may overcome every spiritual foe, and remedy every defect of character" (41).

These statements clearly demonstrate that neither Hayden nor anyone else, reading Ellen White's admonitions about trusting Jesus' merits alone, can interpret those admonitions as referring to substitutional merit alone. As with her statements about trusting Christ's righteousness alone, the totality of her message and writings make it clear that sanctification as well as justification is being referred to.

Hayden tries to force the three angels' messages into the mold of his forensic-only gospel when he writes: "Revelation 14:6 declares that the gospel of Christ's substitutionary merits is an eternal truth, not a temporary one" (p. 21). But this verse says absolutely nothing about substitutionary merits, nor does the New Testament ever define the gospel as primarily a matter of substitutional righteousness.

7. Distorted Ellen White Statements.

Throughout his book Hayden distorts the teachings and statements of Ellen White, but never more so than in his discussion of perfection. We have cited some examples already.

What follows are other, equally egregious cases of distortion:

He writes on p. 17 of those Adventists who supposedly "lose touch with reality and convince themselves that they can actually live the law as perfectly as Christ did. Thus they create and attempt to live in an unreal world, because they fail to realize that such perfection exists only in their imagination (see 2MCP 636)."

The reference here is to volume 2 of the book *Mind, Character, and Personality*, p. 636. **Hayden doesn't actually quote the statement. Here is what it says, in context:**

"You may create an unreal world in your own mind and picture an ideal church where the temptations of Satan no longer prompt to evil, but perfection exists only in your imagination. The world is a fallen world, and the church is a place represented by a field in which grow tares and wheat. They are to grow together until the harvest" (42).

Nowhere in this context, or in the statement itself, does Ellen White deny the Bible truth that individuals can perfectly obey God's law through God's power. She is simply saying that until the church is purified, tares and wheat will be seen growing together, and we cannot therefore expect the church to be perfect until this ultimate purification. Elsewhere she is clear when "the harvest" here described will take place--"the harvest is the end of probationary time" (43). When that time arrives, the shaking will have purified the church so that it is perfectly united (44), and fully prepared for the latter rain.

And according to the same author, what is the nature of this preparation?

"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" (45).

Along similar lines, Hayden quotes another Ellen White statement where she writes:

"I do not expect others to be perfect, and if I could not associate with my brothers and sisters who are not perfect, I do not know what I should do" (p. 23) (46).

The theme of this passage, like that of the former, is simply that the church is composed of imperfect people who should not be shunned because of their imperfections. In no way is Ellen White denying that perfection of character is both possible and necessary.

Like others who deny the perfection doctrine, Hayden quotes Ellen White's statement that **"we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His"** (p. 17) (47). The implication of Hayden's argument is that "in our sphere" means sin will always be present to a degree, and thus our perfection will supposedly be relative to this "reality."

But again, Hayden violates the context of this statement. Here is what the context says:

"He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. 'In His borrowed goodness good,' we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His" (48).

In other words, **the "sphere" Ellen White is talking about is the environment in which we live, defined by the limitations of time and space. We cannot serve equally all the billions living on this planet.**

nor can we avail ourselves of unknown opportunities. Our physical strength, the time at our command, the hours in the day, only go so far. This is the "sphere" she is talking about in which we are to be perfect, just as God is perfect in His own much larger sphere. In no way does she say, in this context or elsewhere, that "perfect in our sphere" means within the limitations imposed by a presumably unconquerable fleshly nature.

In fact, earlier in this context, we find the following words, which comment on Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect":

"The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden--perfect obedience, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace" (49).

Again we see that the perfection here promised is not some forensic decree, but an intensely practical reality. We read of becoming like unto Him, which will happen unless we interpose a perverse will. Practical holiness is obviously the focus here, not blotches on a record book light-years away.

As in our study of the Bible, we need to compare inspired statements with each other in order to know their true meaning. Ellen White speaks of how "the testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture" (50). When we use this method of interpretation, it becomes amazingly easy to settle the myriad discussions in contemporary Adventism which generally arise from not permitting the inspired consensus to determine what we believe.

Hayden quotes Romans 7:18, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He then writes, "Ellen White declared that the carnal state of Romans 7:18 will be with us all the way to the Second Coming (2SM 32, 33) (pp. 17-18).

But the passage he refers to, from Selected Messages, vol. 2, pp. 32-33, refers to the Holy Flesh movement and its false claim that the fleshly nature of believers could and should be eradicated here on earth. Her reference to Romans 7:18 simply affirms that our fleshly nature contains nothing good and will require subduing as long as we live on this earth. **But she is not teaching, here or elsewhere, that the fleshly nature cannot be subdued through the Spirit's power. Nor is she teaching that the experience of the man in Romans 7 is that of a born-again Christian--a teaching plainly denied by Romans 8 as well as the totality of Paul's writings (see Gal. 2:20; 5:16-24; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 10:5). She is simply saying the fleshly nature won't be eradicated till Jesus comes. She is not here denying perfection of character, but perfection of the flesh, which Christ Himself didn't have in His human nature (Rom. 1:3; 8:3; 15:3).**

Along similar lines, Hayden cites (without quoting) a statement from Acts of the Apostles, pp. 560-561 (p. 24), which declares,

"So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained."

Too often this statement is misread as if it is saying all Christians will experience occasional falls and failures till Jesus comes. But it only says that the warfare continues till Jesus comes. It doesn't deny the possibility of uninterrupted victory. As the Russians in World War II learned between their victory at Stalingrad and the conquest of Berlin, continuous victory doesn't mean the absence of continuous, hard-fought struggle.

The ultimate, most persuasive answer to the Holy Flesh heresy is recognizing the truth of the incarnation--that Jesus didn't need holy flesh to live a victorious life, but in fact conquered evil in the same fleshly nature we all inherit at birth (Rom. 1:3; 8:3-4; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). Though Hayden attacks this truth as a doctrine of the devil (51), the consensus of Inspiration cannot be read as teaching anything else.

Hayden quotes a statement from Steps to Christ, p. 62, a sentence here and a sentence there, to prove that perfect obedience remains impossible even for the converted Christian (p. 18). Here is the entire statement, in context:

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which we meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same works--works of righteousness, obedience."

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us" (52).

Notice how this statement teaches so plainly that the problem created by sin, which has made perfect obedience impossible, is solved both by imputed righteousness put to our account to cover our past ("sinful as your life may have been"), and by transforming righteousness which enables us to do the same works as Christ--"works of righteousness, obedience" (53). Hayden does serious violence to this passage by isolating the sentence, "we cannot perfectly obey the holy law" (p. 18), from the context which makes it clear Ellen White is talking about pre-conversion man. Let Ellen White finish her thought on through the following page, and it is clear she teaches the exact opposite of Hayden's doctrine.

In another statement Ellen White uses language similar to the above passage from Steps to Christ, making it even clearer that fallen man's inability to keep God's law is corrected by the twofold process of legal righteousness to cover past sins and transforming righteousness to cleanse our lives of those sins:

"The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character, and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will

receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ" (54).

Without question, according to Ellen White, the obedience which is impossible before conversion is made possible by conversion.

Elsewhere Hayden quotes another favorite Ellen White passage among those who deny perfection is possible. This is the one where she writes:

"He is a perfect and holy example, given for us to imitate. We cannot equal the pattern, but we shall not be approved of God if we do not copy it and, according to the ability that God has given, resemble it" (p. 21) (55).

Here again, we see Inspiration wrested from context.

The Ellen White CD-ROM lists at least eight different statements which use this or similar language. The context of them all is similar if not identical. We will begin with the context of the above statement, and then show a couple others.

Just prior to the above statement we find the following:

"He [Christ] laid aside His glory, His dominion, His riches, and sought after those who were perishing in sin. He humbled Himself to our necessities, that He might exalt us to heaven. Sacrifice, self-denial, and disinterested benevolence characterized His life. He is our pattern" (56).

Earlier in this volume we find this:

"Our Lord and Saviour laid aside His dominion, His riches and glory, and sought after us, that He might save us from misery, and make us like Himself. He humbled Himself and took our nature that we might be able to learn of Him, and, imitating His life of benevolence and self-denial, follow Him step by step to Heaven. You cannot equal the copy, but you can resemble it, and according to your ability do likewise" (57).

Later in this same volume, we find similar words:

"He [Christ] laid aside His glory, His high command, His honor, and His riches, and humbled Himself to our necessities. We cannot equal the example, but we should copy it" (58).

In each of these statements, and in similar ones, the pattern we are told we can't equal is that of Christ's infinite humiliation and self-sacrifice, not the pattern of sinless obedience. We can't equal the pattern in question because we don't have the throne of God to give up. The sinless angels can't equal this pattern either!

Hayden writes, "Ellen White defined character as the direction of the life, not the incidental word or action" (p. 24). Then he goes on to quote an Ellen White statement that is often used to prove this point:

"A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts" (59).

But on the previous page Ellen White makes it clear that the issue in this context is how a person might know whether or not he has been converted in the first place. She writes:

"A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion, but this does not prove him to be unconverted" (60).

Then she goes on to make the statements Hayden quotes about the contrast between the past and the present, "between what they have been and what they are." Then she writes of how "the tendency of the habitual words and acts," rather than occasional good or bad deeds, tells whether or not the conversion process is genuine.

In other words, the subject here is the reality of one's initial conversion, not what God ultimately requires of the converted believer. In other statements Ellen White is clear what the latter requirements are:

"Christ has promised to make them [His people] harmonious on every point, not pleasant and agreeable and kind today, and tomorrow harsh and disagreeable and unkind, falsifying their profession of faith" (61).

"Are there those here who have been sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, and will they continue to do so till Christ shall come? May God help us that we may be truly united to Christ, the living Vine, and bear fruit to the glory of God" (62).

Elsewhere Hayden refers to another inspired statement, this one perhaps used even more often by those who believe the only perfect righteousness available to earthly believers is forensic. This is the well-known statement found in Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 344, which Hayden cites (again without quoting the words) on p. 19:

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned."

Hayden believes this statement proves that "we can meet the absolute standard of righteousness that the law demands only by faith, by accepting Christ as our substitute righteousness" (p. 19). In other words, like others who share his convictions, he sees the purification described in the above statement as a legal, forensic covering.

But again we must remember Ellen White's own principle for understanding her writings:

"The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture" (63).

Other Ellen White statements, which use the same or similar language to the above, must therefore be consulted for us to know what kind of purification she is talking about.

Following are some statements where we find the same or similar language used:

"Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault" (64).

"Man is permitted to handle the Lord's goods. Thus he is tested and proved. His heart must be perfumed with the incense of Christ's righteousness, the Saviour must work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure" (65).

"Shall we not, then, give to Christ that which He has died to redeem? If you will do this, He will quicken your conscience, renew your heart, sanctify your affections, purify your thoughts, and set all your powers to work for Him. Every motive and every thought will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ."

"Those who are sons of God will represent Christ in character. Their works will be perfumed by the infinite tenderness, compassion, love, and purity of the Son of God. And the more completely mind and body are yielded to the Holy Spirit, the greater will be the fragrance of our offering to Him" (66).

"The merit of Jesus must be mingled with our prayers and efforts, or they are as worthless as was the offering of Cain. Could we see all the activity of human instrumentality, as it appears before God, we would see that only the work accomplished by much prayer, which is sanctified by the merit of Christ, will stand the test of the judgment" (67).

"There is none too much of any of the workers, be they possessed of large or small talents, to render themselves to God that they may be sanctified and fitted for His service. Give all you have and are, and it is all nothing without the merit of the blood that sanctifies the gift. Could those who hold responsible positions multiply their talents a thousandfold, their services would have no worth before God unless Christ was mingled with all their offerings" (68).

All these statements give clear evidence that the purification by Jesus' blood and merit of our words, deeds, prayers, and service is an internal, sanctifying process. Our obedience does not arrive in heaven unpurified, needing some forensic covering to make it acceptable. Rather, it is purified while it ascends through the corrupt channels of our fallen natures, perfumed and made fragrant by Jesus' righteousness.

Finally, on p. 13

Hayden quotes a passage where Ellen White says, "Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies" (69).

In Hayden's view, this demonstrates that a certain degree of sin, of falling short of the law's demands, is inevitable for even the sanctified Christian. But again, we must look at the statement in context:

"Jesus is perfect. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them (His people), and He will say, 'Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with change of raiment.' Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies. When Christians are faithful to each other, and loyal to the Captain of the Lord's host, never betraying trusts into the enemy's hands, they will be transformed into Christ's character" (70).

What does Ellen White mean by "unavoidable deficiencies"? The key to this passage is the reference to the story of Joshua and the Angel in Zechariah 3, and the command to replace our filthy garments with a change of raiment (verse 4). In her application of this story to the experience of God's end-time people, Ellen White explicitly refers to the filthy garments being taken away as past sins, not present ones:

"'Are these,' he [Satan] asks, the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? . . . Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another.' The people of God have been in many respects very faulty. Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit" (71).

"Now he [Satan] points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins which he has tempted them to commit" (72).

"Israel was clothed in 'change of raiment,'--the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The mitre placed upon Joshua's head was such as was worn by the priests, and bore the inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord,' signifying that notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary" (73).

Notice that each of these statements refers to the sins of believers in the past tense. Ellen White is clear that Satan's accusations, while correct with regard to the past, are correct no longer:

"But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves to the control of evil. They have put away their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the Divine Advocate pleads in their behalf" (74).

In what way, then, are these deficiencies "unavoidable"? Because the past cannot be changed. It can only be covered by the Saviour's forgiving righteousness. But in no way does this mean that a certain level of sin is inevitable for the duration of the Christian's earthly life.

The inspired testimony is crystal clear:

"There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God" (75).

"However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act" (76).

And even more powerfully:

"Every impurity of thought, every lustful passion, separates the soul from God; for Christ can never put His robe of righteousness upon a sinner, to hide his deformity" (77).

"When man transgresses he is under the condemnation of the law, and it becomes to him a yoke of bondage. Whatever his profession may be he is not justified" (78).

Again we note that Ellen White's theology envisions no objective, justifying righteousness as a cover for continuous, "unavoidable" transgression.

Discomfort With Ellen White

Ever since Desmond Ford tried to dismiss Ellen White's doctrinal role in the church as less than authoritative, other Adventists who--like Ford--teach salvation by justification alone and deny perfection is possible have demonstrated their nervousness with the authority of Ellen White in doctrinal matters (79). While these persons do occasionally quote Ellen White, as does Hayden, when they think she supports their position, their attempt to reduce her role--and at times question her consistency (80)--leads one to conclude that they have left themselves the option of setting her counsel aside should the weight of evidence finally indicate that she opposes their theology.

Of course, as we have seen, the doctrine of justification-alone salvation and its Siamese twin, the imperfection of Christian character, have as much to fear from the Bible as from Ellen White. But as in times of old, it is easier to garnish the tombs of ancient prophets than to heed the counsel of the most recent one (Matt. 23:29-30; John 9:28-29). What is more, for most of us in the present controversy, Ellen White wrote in our mother tongue, making it impossible to hide behind the perceived nuances of ancient languages should the inspired words run counter to our own opinions.

Though his belief on this point doesn't come through until his discussion of the jewelry question, **the following statement by Hayden casts a dark cloud over his professed faith in the Spirit of Prophecy:**

"Sooner or later every Seventh-day Adventist must ask themselves, 'Do we use Ellen White to interpret the meaning of Scripture, or do we use the Scriptures to interpret Ellen White?'" (p. 70).

Toward the end of his book he makes the following statement:

"What I desire to be is a commonsense Christian, identifying myself with both groups (liberal and conservative) on points that line up with Scripture. . . . I want to hang on to those traditional teachings and practices of our past that we can clearly substantiate from the Word of God. However, I also want to remain flexible enough to change my position once I realize that my present understanding rests more on Adventist traditionalism than on the Bible" (p. 120).

The authority of Ellen White regarding lifestyle or doctrinal issues is conspicuous by its absence here. Does Hayden consider Ellen White to be part of the "Adventist traditionalism" he considers negotiable?

Hayden quotes two Ellen White statements which warn us not to put the Spirit of Prophecy writings ahead of the Bible (p. 70) (81). We all agree here. But putting Ellen White's writings ahead of the Bible is not the same as Ellen White interpreting the Bible.

in the following statements she establishes beyond question the role of her writings as doctrinally authoritative and as an inspired interpreter of Scripture:

"God has, in that Word [the Bible], promised to give visions in the last days, not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth" (82).

"Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given" (83).

"The Lord has given me much light that I want the people to have; for there is instruction that the Lord has given me for His people. It is light that they should have, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. This is now to come before the people, because it has been given to correct specious errors, and to specify what is truth" (84).

"My accompanying angel presented before me some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors. That these discordant views, which they claimed to be according to the Bible, were only according to their opinion of the Bible, and that their errors must be yielded, and they unite upon the third angel's message. Our meeting ended victoriously. Truth gained the victory" (85).

"At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. . . . The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.

"As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation" (86).

Right across the page in the book *Evangelism* from the statements Hayden tries to use to reduce Ellen White's authoritative role (p. 70), we find this statement:

"In his teaching Elder _____ showed that the Spirit of prophecy has an important part to act in the establishment of the truth" (87).

Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders acknowledged Ellen White's doctrinally authoritative role in the Glacier View consensus statement of 1980, stating that "we believe that her authority transcends that of all non-inspired interpreters" (88). Reading Hayden's book, it is not at all clear that he holds to this position as enunciated by both Ellen White and denominational leadership.

Fanaticism and the Perfection Doctrine

Hayden writes: "As I have investigated the matter, I have concluded that a misinterpretation of what Ellen White meant when she says we are to perfect a Christian character propels some people to take extreme positions regarding the lifestyle counsels she gave to the remnant" (p. 16). By the time he finishes the chapter, this criticism becomes universal, as he writes that the perfection doctrine "produces a works approach toward salvation that always leads to extremes" (p. 24, italics supplied).

This accusation, though common among anti-perfection Adventists, is based on an easily exploded fallacy. **If Scripture and Ellen White are the means whereby we establish the possibility of sinless perfection in this life, it follows that these sources will define for us what sinless perfection is. And if these writings warn us from the perils of fanaticism and extreme behaviors, as Ellen White so strongly does, one must conclude that Ellen White's definition of sinless perfection does not include the fanaticism into which some have strayed. Contrary to popular myth, the problem with such persons is not too much Ellen White, but not enough!** If they would study the totality of her writings, fanaticism would be avoided. As

I often say when I preach on this subject, to talk of "Ellen White fanatics" is like talking about dry water--or "gay Christians." This is because

if Ellen White's writings are consistently followed, fanaticism is impossible. And if fanaticism is being indulged, this can only happen through a disregard of Ellen White's clear teachings.

But another, more important point is also ignored by Hayden and others of his persuasion.

If perfection is impossible in this life, peculiar Adventist lifestyle standards won't be the only casualty. If our Lord's sinless life is beyond the reach of even the sanctified Christian, earrings and hamburgers and contemporary music will be only part of the problem. If this doctrine is accepted, every category of Christian conduct is left vulnerable to the mercurial tides of a presumably unconquerable lower nature. Irritation, lust, temper, family discord, racial hatred, greed of possessions will urge their occasional presence as often--perhaps more so--than our desire to breach the unique taboos of classic Adventism.

This issue, more than any other in the contemporary church, strikes at the core of the Adventist Christian's moral credibility and witness to mankind, which is why so much of this response has been devoted to addressing this area of doctrine.

If we accept the premise that some sin will always be present in Christian lives, which sins will we be allowed to keep committing?

Will the sins allowed to one be different from those allowed to another? When we see the marks of abuse on the body of a battered child, or read of the racially-motivated burning of an African-American church, must our outrage be muted by the possibility that such sins might be among those over which the wrongdoer can't gain total victory? **The notion that "occasional misdeeds" will ever be the Christian's lot overlooks the reality that most sins, even the very heinous and brutal, are usually committed only occasionally.**

I cringe every time I see the bumper sticker, "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." The world knows this all too well. Every vile deed from inquisition to slavery to industrial brutality has marked the trail of Christian imperfection. **And if one kind of sin is excusable because our sinful natures are too strong even for the Holy Spirit, so is every other kind. Hayden speaks favorably of those Christians who "fail to measure up to the standard because we have, with good intentions, tried our best and fallen short" (p. 13). The problem is, the world has watched Christian good intentions for two thousand years, and is sickened by our perpetual falling short.**

Seventh-day Adventist Christianity, with its return to the Bible standard of total obedience, offers a better way. It is time the world knew it.

Basic Issues in the Standards Debate

Though Hayden's imperfectability doctrine is his most egregious error, it is but the start of the train of errors contained in his book.

The following principles underlie much of Hayden's discussion of standards. And it is these principles which leave his study vulnerable to false conclusions:

1. Naivete.

Hayden writes: "It's amazing how quickly we overlook all the things we do have in common as a people, such as the 27 fundamental doctrines" (p. 27).

The kindest thing that can be said of such a statement is that the author is incredibly naive. He obviously has read little of the literature of contemporary Adventism, either in published journals or on the Internet. **He seems not to notice the pastors and professors in some of our institutional centers who scorn the early chapters of Genesis, who deny Ellen White's doctrinal authority, who question the Bible basis of the investigative judgment, and who seek a more tolerant stand by the church on the subject of homosexuality. He apparently hasn't read the article recently written by a European Adventist official which denies our historic view of the Antichrist of Bible prophecy (89), nor a more recent article by a prominent North American pastor who comes close to denying the same thing (90).**

Hayden seems not to understand the depth of disbelief in our basic doctrines which characterizes much of the "creative thinking" now taking place in the church. When he writes, "I personally don't have a problem with those who choose either a conservative or more liberal lifestyle" (p. 123), one wonders just how familiar Hayden is with Adventist liberalism. One would hope a quick dip into such magazines as Spectrum and Adventist Today would dispel any benign illusions he might cherish regarding this particular strain of thought in the church.

2. The Lump of Play-Doh.

Hayden seems to fall into a popular but dangerous mentality in contemporary Adventism--**the tendency to see Christ and His love as distinct from the doctrinal and moral imperatives of God's written counsel.** At one point he writes:

"If this particular chapter helps just one person be better able to focus on Jesus in the midst of all the bickering that goes on in the Adventist Church over issues such as jewelry, then the price of being misunderstood has been worth it" (p. 74).

that doctrinal and moral clarity is optional so long as one enjoys a "relationship" with Jesus.

Few would deny it is possible to argue about theology or standards while missing the reality of Christ's love as revealed through all the teachings and standards of the written Word. **But unless we make it clear that all inspired truth is a revelation of the love of Christ, and that rejecting such truth (in either doctrine or lifestyle) is the same as rejecting Christ, we may leave our listeners vulnerable to the notion so popular in some circles now--that doctrinal and moral clarity is optional so long as one enjoys a "relationship" with Jesus.**

Too many of us raised in modern Adventism have grown up hearing such refrains as, "**doctrine is nice, but Jesus is better,**" "**Jesus is more important than standards,**" "**all we need is a relationship with Christ,**" "**doctrines and standards are fine, but they don't save you.**"

It is time, far past time, to explode these cherished myths, and to acknowledge that the only Jesus with whom true Christians may have a relationship is the Jesus of Scripture, defined and subject to the eternal truths there found.

The following Bible and Spirit of Prophecy references present a far different picture of the role of divine truth in our salvation:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hosea 4:6).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

"If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

"All truth is to be received as the life of Jesus. Truth cleanses us from all impurity, and prepares the soul for Christ's presence" (91).

"This life [of Christ] we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded. Thus we become one with Him" (92).

"The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ" (93).

Hayden rightly warns that "love is a word that we often use like a lump of Play-Doh, shaping it into anything we want and still calling it love" (p. 12). **Sadly, his book demonstrates a consistent effort to direct people's focus away from the clarity of inspired standards to a realm in which right and wrong are defined less by changeless truth and more by ill-structured categories of "love," "relationships," and "focusing on Jesus."**

Time and again, throughout his book, he upholds with one hand certain of our historic standards, then with the other tries to weaken their forcefulness by saying they really should be left to individual discretion (pp. 74, 76-77, 88-89, 92). Whether he wishes to or not, Hayden has placed the lump of Play-Doh he describes in the hands of his fellow believers, leaving them free to shape it as they wish, within or beyond the parameters of Inspiration.

Hayden is certainly correct in saying that preaching "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2) is the best way to lead others to lasting change (p. 29). He likewise quotes several Ellen White statements which speak of the need to "lay the ax at the root of the tree" rather than pick off leaves, specifically relative to the issue of dress (pp. 29, 52, 72-73) (94). **But we must remember that while Paul spoke of knowing nothing save Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), he spends the following 13 chapters giving the Corinthians a long, detailed lecture on right and wrong in matters of faith and lifestyle. And certainly Ellen White's concern that souls be converted as the best means of lifestyle change did not prevent her from giving, under divine Inspiration, a great deal of explicit counsel regarding dress, adornment, diet, and many other issues.**

By doing this, neither Paul nor Ellen White contradicted their goal of knowing and preaching nothing but Christ. Hayden rightly observes that "to promote lifestyle standards without presenting Christ will accomplish nothing more than to increase the population of Pharisees within the church" (p. 30). But unless we follow the inspired command to "preach Christ in the law" (95), our view of both Christ and the law will be distorted. **Too much of modern Adventism has endeavored to preach Christ without the law, thinking that somehow the law, the doctrines, and the standards will "take care of themselves." It has not happened. Instead, many have been brought up in the contemporary church with a largely subjective view of their walk with God. Such persons practice a religion defined by few if any absolutes, where self-identity, self-expression, and the whims of experience hold ultimate sway.**

3. Human vs. Divine Opinions.

Frequently, in his discussion of lifestyle issues, Hayden describes the current Adventist standards debate as a struggle between the opinions of church members. Throughout the book he discusses the standards debate in the church as a matter of what "we think,"

"our agenda," "the church's tradition," "traditional thinking," "human-made roadblocks," and similar terms (pp. 26, 27, 28, 33, 50, 59, 69, 74, 76, 119, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127). He quotes a number of Ellen White statements which warn against making our opinions normative for others (96).

This is good counsel, to be sure. Most assuredly there are times when human opinions rather than inspired counsel have become the basis for standards in the church. But there seems to be little awareness on Hayden's part that most of the lifestyle and worship issues currently dividing the church--including many discussed in his book--are not a matter of "our views" versus those of others, but rather, our views versus those of the Lord.

One is troubled by

Hayden's apparent conviction that the key to unity in the church is more the open-ended tolerance of diversity than the unconditional surrender of believers to the written counsel of God. Few seem to realize that prior to Jesus' prayer that His followers be one (John 17:21), He prays that they be sanctified through the Word of truth (verses 17,19). Hayden's book seems totally bereft of the unmistakable "purity before unity" sentiment of the following Ellen White statements:

"Christ calls for unity. But He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices. The God of heaven draws a sharp contrast between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. He calls sin and impenitence by the right name. He does not gloss over wrongdoing with a coat of untempered mortar. I urge our brethren to unify upon a true, scriptural basis" (97).

"We have a message to give, and I am instructed to say to our people, 'Unify, unify.' But we are not to unify with those who are departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. With our hearts sweet and kind and true, we are to go forth to proclaim the message, giving no heed to those who lead away from the truth" (98).

"Jesus prayed that His followers might be one; but we are not to sacrifice the truth in order to secure this union, for we are to be sanctified through the truth. Here is the foundation of all true peace. Human wisdom would change all this, pronouncing this basis too narrow. Men would try to effect unity through concession to popular opinion, through compromise with the world, a sacrifice of vital godliness. But truth is God's basis for the unity of His people" (99).

Where in Hayden's book is the spirit of the converted Saul of Tarsus, who inquired on the Damascus road, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)?

Why is peace with each other through mutual tolerance so much more conspicuous in Hayden's book than the necessity of peace with God through Spirit-led obedience?

By speaking so often of human opinion, "our ideas," "tradition," and the like, **Hayden leaves himself more open than he might wish to the charge of theological liberalism, a system of thought which sees most if not all religion as rival sets of human presuppositions. The liberal Adventist mind will read such Ellen White statements as the one where she speaks of being "thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts" (p. 32) (100), as an effort to reduce the absolute nature of truth and make "thinking" an exercise in placing all religion under the fog of open-ended doubt.**

Hayden's favorable reference to the so-called Valuegenesis study, with its claim that Adventist youth supposedly don't want the church to be a place to "park their brains" (p. 127), leaves him perilously vulnerable to the "open-ended search for truth" mentality, a philosophy not at all compatible with the absolute categories of spiritual reality found in Holy Scripture.

While both young and old can be assured, in the words of Ellen White, that God's "existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason" (101), the same author reminds us that Scripture contains "infinite truths which finite beings cannot fail to comprehend" (102). The twin doctrines of sin and salvation cannot exist without truth that is both absolute and accessible by mortal man. Neither sin nor salvation can exist without a law to define our shortcomings and thus show our need of a Saviour (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24; I John 3:4).

4. Reproof and Judgmentalism.

Almost totally absent from Hayden's book is the divine command, found so often in the inspired writings, to rebuke and condemn wrong while simultaneously loving the wrongdoer. Like so many in the contemporary church, Hayden badly blurs the inspired distinction between improper condemnation and proper reproof.

Following are three Ellen White statements which he cites on this subject:

"The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning wrong, even though the condemnation is just. He wants us to do something more than to hurl at our adversaries charges that only drive them farther from the truth. The work which Christ came to do in our world was not to erect barriers, and constantly thrust upon the people the fact that they were wrong. He who expects to enlighten a deceived people must come near to them and labor for them in love. He must become a center of holy influence" (p. 26) (103).

"Talk of the love and humility of Jesus, but do not encourage the brethren and sisters to engage in picking flaws in the dress or appearance of one another. Some take delight in this work, and when their minds are turned this direction, they begin to feel that they must become church tinkers. They climb upon the judgment seat, and as soon as they see one of their brothers and sisters, they look to find something to criticize. This is one of the most effectual means of becoming narrow-minded and of dwarfing spiritual growth. God would have them step down from the judgment seat, for He has never placed them there" (p. 44) (104).

"If Christ is in you, 'the hope of glory,' you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save" (p. 123) (105).

Certainly these are perfectly good statements. But Hayden neglects to quote the many other statements in which Ellen White, like Scripture (Isa. 58:1; Matt. 3:7-10; 23:2-39; Rev. 3:19), points out the need for the loving but pointed rebuke of sin. Of course, none of the above statements forbid Christians to point out wrongdoing. They simply exhort us to do more for sinners than merely point out their wrongs, and that we shouldn't nurture the tendency to go looking for people's faults.

The following statements, had Hayden cited them, would have given a much-needed balance to his emphasis in this regard:

"Today there is need of the voice of stern rebuke, for grievous sins have separated the people from God. Infidelity is fast becoming fashionable. 'We will not have this Man to reign over us,' is the language of thousands. Luke 19:14. The smooth sermons so often preached make no lasting impression; the trumpet does not give a certain sound. Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God's word" (106).

"Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others through exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own" (107).

"In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church. But the people desire smooth things spoken to them, and the pure, unvarnished truth is not acceptable. Many reformers, in entering upon their work, determined to exercise great prudence in attacking the sins of the church and the nation. They hoped, by the example of a pure Christian life, to lead the people back to the doctrines of the Bible. But the Spirit of God came upon them as it came upon Elijah, moving him to rebuke the sins of a wicked king and an apostate people; they could not refrain from the preaching the plain utterances of the Bible--doctrines which they had been reluctant to present. They were impelled to zealously declare the truth and the danger which threatened souls. The words which the Lord gave them they uttered, fearless of consequences, and the people were compelled to hear the warning.

"Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed" (108).

In a beautiful, comprehensive, but brief statement, Ellen White reveals the Biblical balance on this point:

"To speak the word of God with faithfulness is a work of the greatest importance. But this is an entirely different work from continually censoring, thinking evil, and drawing apart from one another. Judging and reproof are two different things. God has laid upon His servants the work of reproof in love those who err, but He has forbidden and denounced the thoughtless judging so common among professed believers in the truth" (109).

In one of the Ellen White statements Hayden quotes, he seems to overlook Ellen White's pinpointing of the key issue in this talk of judgmentalism. She writes:

"Since the Father 'hath committed all judgment unto the Son' (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogatives of the Son of God" (p. 122) (110).

Notice how the judgment forbidden to men and women involves motives, which God alone can read since He alone knows the heart (1 Kings 8:39). This leads us to a very sober, often ironic realization.

The above Ellen White statements which warn against judging and faultfinding speak of people who "look to find something to criticize" (111), who are "seeking to accuse and condemn" (112). In other words, these are persons who want to point out others' faults. Yet the statements we have read which speak of the need to rebuke sin, talk of those who do so because the Holy Spirit compels them to do what they don't want to do (113). Who but God is wise enough to know the motives of a reprover? Why do we so often assume that the one pointing out our sins enjoys doing so? Are we, perhaps, in our zeal to correct what we perceive to be judgmentalism, indulging in the very judgment of motives Inspiration warns against?

5. Distorted "Religious Liberty."

Repeatedly in his book, Hayden invokes such terms as "religious liberty," "people's rights," and "liberty of conscience" as his plea for greater tolerance in the church regarding lifestyle and worship issues (pp. 27, 67, 74, 77, 89, 123).

In one of the boldest of his many bold statements, Hayden suggests that those in Adventism who seek to uphold standards of diet, dress, music, etc., will in the end join forces with those promoting Sunday laws, since they will supposedly have "nurtured a character that thinks it knows best for everybody else" (p. 123).

This isn't the first time someone in Adventism has presumed to distort the cherished principle of religious liberty in the name of doctrinal or lifestyle pluralism within the church.

For starters,

by his own admission, Hayden believes the church does teach some absolute principles worth upholding (p. 79). If so, it is fair to assume that he would consider protracted violations of such principles to be deserving of loving but firm correction by the body of Christ, including possible removal from church office or fellowship. Those seeking to uphold standards which Hayden thinks aren't so black-and-white believe in doing no less concerning those issues. Both Hayden and his theological opponents agree that there are standards worth upholding, even if division is the result. They only differ on which issues should be made such points of division. At the bottom line, if removing people from church office or fellowship on the basis of doctrinal or lifestyle issues is a violation of religious liberty, it is fair to say Hayden too believes in violating such liberty.

If Hayden wishes to speak of essential versus non-essential issues in current church discussions, that is one thing. But to talk as though religious liberty is at stake when standards are upheld is to badly confuse the issue. The basis of the principle of religious liberty is God's reverence for individual choice, represented best by God's planting of both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge in the midst of Eden (Gen. 2:9). This principle is extended to those practicing false worship as well as the true, to those whose private lives disobey God as much so to those who obey. This is why Ellen White writes:

"Why did God allow all this fearful iniquity that men might be made free? To this there can be but one answer. It was because He knew the worthlessness of all forced obedience, and that, therefore, the freedom to sin was absolutely necessary to the possibility of righteousness" (114).

Hayden may not consider drums and drama to constitute false worship (pp. 77-79), but we assume he would favor the removal from employment of an Adventist pastor who decided Sunday was the true Sabbath. Would such removal violate religious liberty? Certainly not, because the church is a voluntary organization, membership in which is a privilege, not a right. If by contrast, Adventists were to try to enact laws to force the public to worship on Saturday, or to put rock music producers out of business, that would be a coercive violation of the rights of others, since in free America no one need subscribe to any religious faith or related lifestyle principles.

In short, violating religious liberty involves forcing the will, not the acknowledgement by the church of a person's voluntary acceptance or rejection of its principles, whether by admission to or removal from leadership or fellowship. It is fine for Hayden to urge that members be granted liberty in lifestyle questions not clarified by Inspiration. But to compare the church's normative application of any standard to the future Sunday-law crisis is to mix apples and oranges. Even the most conservative Adventists would defend the right of a disfellowshipped member to practice his or her convictions without fear of civil intrusion. (Conservative church members, in particular supporters of the outspoken self-supporting ministries, demonstrated such tolerance by their opposition to the GC trademark lawsuit against SDA Kinship, an organization of so-called "gay Adventists." While conservative Adventists certainly favor the

disfellowshipping of such persons, they don't believe such persons should be forced not to use the Adventist name, even if such use is obviously hypocritical.)

The church is not violating anyone's liberty if it removes a member from office and/or fellowship once a member persists in rejection of a doctrine or standard after having been lovingly labored with. Hayden's use of this concept in pleading for more tolerance of variant lifestyles serves to confuse, not to clarify, current issues. Adornment

In discussing specific lifestyle issues, Hayden often straddles the line between clarity and ambiguity so as to leave readers wondering where he really stands.

Nowhere is this confusion more obvious than in his **discussion of jewelry**. Hayden's chapter on the subject is replete with unproved assumptions, efforts to weaken the plain words of Scripture, as well as arguments both discredited and irrelevant.

Hayden tries to water down the forcefulness of the Old Testament passages in which speak against adornment, claiming these were not so much warnings against jewelry as against ornaments dedicated to idolatry (pp. 57, 60). He cites the speculation of scholars, rather than evidence from Scripture itself, as the basis for his conclusions (pp. 57, 60). Such arguments are hardly consistent with his desire to "let the weight of Bible evidence determine our conclusions" rather than human tradition (p. 59).

Interestingly, Hayden neglects to quote perhaps the strongest Old Testament passage against the wearing of ornaments, the one immediately following the golden calf apostasy:

"When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man put on his ornaments. For the Lord had said to Moses, Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what to do with you.' Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward" (Ex. 33:4-6, RSV).

Hayden particularly criticizes the practice of conservative Adventist evangelists in asking baptismal candidates to remove jewelry before baptism (pp. 67,70). Yet if we read the above passage, together with Genesis 35:4 and other Biblical appeals to remove these things, our historic practice in this regard is seen to be Bible-based. It is well to remember that many practices in people's lives are private, known primarily to themselves, those closest to them, and in many cases to God only. Unless the church becomes aware of such infractions, only God can deal with them. But conspicuous violations of the Lord's counsel in people's lives must rightly be addressed by soul winners, though in the right time and place. The reason the jewelry issue has been so prominent in our discourses on the standards issue is precisely because it is so conspicuous.

Hayden asks, at one point, "What is it that makes the driving of a prestigious car sometimes respectable while we would condemn a young woman for her \$10 pair of earrings?" (p. 58).

Though this argument is commonly heard among critics of our historic stand on jewelry, it is both unsound and dangerous, and for the following reasons:

First, only God can be sure whether a prestigious car is being driven for show, or whether it may be more reliable in the long term and thus a better use of the Lord's money. At the bottom line, a luxury

car at least provides the practical function of transportation. Ten-dollar earrings, by contrast, are purely ornamental, worn entirely for show, and thus a detraction from the humility in dress which God, in Scripture, asks of the Christian (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4). And even if some may not consider ten-dollar jewelry "costly array" (1 Tim. 2:9), it is fair to say even inexpensive jewelry is made to appear expensive, and is thus not easily distinguished by the casual observer from that which is truly expensive.

A second reason the argument in question is unsound is the way **it ignores God's method of acting in history regarding issues or events. God often uses certain issues or events in the sacred record to illustrate His view of a larger principle.** We remember, for example, how God struck Uzzah dead for touching the ark (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Yet during the French Revolution, infidels shook their fists at God, burned Bibles in the streets, and replaced the God of heaven with an immoral woman (115). To my knowledge, none of these blasphemers were struck dead, though their sacrilege certainly seems to have exceeded Uzzah's. And what about Ananias and Sapphira, who kept for themselves money pledged to God's work (Acts 5:1-11)? Why did God strike them dead, and yet not do the same to televangelists in our time who embezzled much more?

Is God inconsistent by singling out some for direct punishment and not others?

God is never inconsistent. Just as He illustrates His view of larger principles in the cases of Uzzah and Ananias, so He illustrates His view of a larger principle in the Bible's stand against bodily ornaments. Just as many worse deeds of a nature similar to Uzzah and Ananias have seemingly gone unpunished, so many issues of adornment much larger than jewelry go unmentioned in Scripture. **God simply expects us to use sanctified judgment in applying this principle to other practices, just as He expects us to understand the need for reverence and stewardship from the stories of Uzzah and Ananias. But we can't ignore the Bible's specific application of the adornment principle in the matter of jewelry simply because Scripture doesn't specifically apply this principle to a host of other practices. In other practices we might not always know exactly where to draw a line. But where the Bible draws one for us, we do well to honor it.**

But perhaps the greatest danger in the argument in question is its implication that the hypocrisy of some in relating to an issue is a legitimate excuse for ignoring the issue altogether, or at least letting everyone do as they please concerning it. But another person's inconsistency is never an excuse for our own disobedience to the counsel of God. It isn't permissible for me to trash one of God's standards simply because others are hypocritical in the way they uphold that standard. The answer to hypocrisy and inconsistency is not to let everyone do what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). Rather, the answer is to be consistently obedient to all of God's principles and standards, through the power He freely offers (Phil. 4:13).

Hayden describes the jewels which bedecked the unfallen Lucifer (Eze. 28:13-15) (pp. 59, 62), the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10-12) (p. 59), as well as the jeweled foundation and structure of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21) (p. 61). His use of these verses is quite beside the point, as he himself unwittingly acknowledges when he writes of how, in heaven, God "will entrust us with these good things because then we will then be able to handle them properly" (p. 66). Quite true, but we aren't there yet. And the counsel of Scripture on this matter makes it evident that we aren't able to handle such gifts until we enter the courts of glory.

In fairness to Hayden, he points out some genuine flaws in the argument often made in comparing the pure woman of Revelation 12 to the harlot of Revelation 17 (pp. 61-62). But he falls into a similar trap when he uses such passages as

Isaiah 61:10 and Ezekiel 16:7-14 as evidence that God looks favorably on jewelry (pp. 60, 61). Both of these passages are as symbolic as those in Revelation describing the true and false churches. Isaiah 61:10 speaks of how God "hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." In other words, jewels in this case represent the righteousness of Christ, just as Jesus used the metaphor of new wine to represent the gospel

(Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37). But Isaiah's statement can no more be seen as permission to wear jewelry than Jesus' statement about new wine symbolizing the gospel can be taken as just cause for drinking wine. (The phrase "new wine" in the New Testament is clearly used to refer to fermented wine; see Acts 2:13,15).

The passage from Ezekiel 16 is likewise symbolic. Jerusalem was not literally a newborn girl baby with an uncut navel, lying in blood somewhere (verses 4, 6). Nor did Jerusalem become a literal adult female with breasts and long hair (verse 7). The ornaments described in verses 11-13 are also symbolic, representing the prosperity God gave His people.

Like the passage in Isaiah, this is not a discussion of what Christians should or should not wear. To use these verses to prove the appropriateness of jewelry would be like using the parable of the eleventh-hour workers in Matthew 20 to prove that paying workers by the hour is contrary to Scripture. **Symbols, like parables, are not meant to be taken literally.**

Hayden asks at one point, "Is it too far-fetched, then, to think that there may be someone whose commitment to God would remain unaffected if they wore jewelry? What about that big gold chain that the king of Egypt put around Joseph's neck (Gen. 41:42)? Did it affect his commitment to God? (pp. 66-67).

Yes, it is too far-fetched, because the Bible asks us not to wear these things in our fallen state (Ex. 33:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4). To use the example of Joseph's gold necklace is to ignore the fact that the life of only one Bible character is given to us as an example, and that is Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 John 3:2-3,7). One might just as well ask whether David's multiple wives affected his status as a man after God's own heart, or whether Philemon's owning of slaves affected his commitment as a Christian. The specific counsel of Inspiration regarding how we should live cannot be countermanded by evidence from the lives of Bible characters, since none of these characters except Jesus is given to us as a lifestyle example.

Hayden ignores this point entirely when he tries to weaken the strength of 1 Peter 3:3-4 on the jewelry issue, reminding his readers that Abraham provided jewelry for Rebekah (Gen. 24:22, 50, 53), and that Sarah--stated by Peter in this context to be a role model of submission by Christian women to their husbands (1 Peter 3:5-7)--probably wore jewelry also (p. 68). But as Hayden himself admits (p. 68), this is speculation. And for him to allege that if we fail to allow Sarah's presumed wearing of jewelry to affect our conclusions about jewelry which arise in part from this passage, "then Peter made a poor choice of a role model to deliver his anti-adornment message" (p. 68), is to make speculation countermand the explicit counsel of God's Word. It is truly sad when such flimsy arguments are set forth as serious solutions to conflict in the church.

Hayden writes at one point, "Just as some cover up their lack of relationship with Christ (pride) with outward adornment, conservative Christians can cover up their void of Christ (pride) by abstaining from ornaments" (p. 65). Certainly this can happen. But the Pharisee in Christ's parable boasted that he wasn't an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer (Luke 18:11). **Merely because pride can replace humility in our adherence to standards doesn't mean the standards themselves aren't valid.**

Hayden tries to weaken the strength of **1 Timothy 2:9-10** relative to jewelry just as he tries to do concerning the passage from 1 Peter. He reminds us of how 1 Timothy 2:8 speaks of lifting holy hands to the Lord, and how verses 11-12 speak of women being in silence (p. 69). He protests how many Adventists would claim Pentecostalism was being introduced if people raised hands in prayer, and how we obviously don't take this passage literally since we allow women to teach and speak in church. Here again, Hayden creates needless confusion. **The totality of Paul's writings make**

clear his meaning on the role of women in the church, including the issues of silence and authority, and few if any would quarrel about the lifting of hands in prayer were it not for the irreverent worship and cheap-grace theology which so often accompanies this practice.

In raising the sensitive issue of the **wedding ring**, Hayden refers us to Ellen White's statement about people wearing the ring conscientiously in countries where the custom is imperative (p. 71) (116). But his claim that the 1986 decision by the North American Division to allow the use of the ring in its territory was "because large numbers of church members from countries where the ring was customary had moved to North America" (p. 71), will be rightly disputed by many in North America who continue to be troubled by this practice.

It does us well to compare the record of the wedding ring's use in North America with its use in other regions of the Adventist world. A native of Ethiopia, once commented that while Adventists in his country wear the wedding band, they remove all other jewelry when they accept our faith. Others from different parts of the world have confirmed this to be the pattern among Adventists in their homelands also. **But while the practice of Third World Adventists in this regard appears to be more a grudging compliance with a cultural imperative, North America appears to be more a case of eager compliance. In contrast with the Third World, acceptance of the wedding ring in North American Adventism has led to acceptance of engagement rings, earrings, necklaces, etc.** It is therefore difficult for many North American Adventists to see Ellen White's comments on conscientious compliance with imperative social custom as applying to the church's home Division.

A church has just been shaken by the announcement that he and his wife are getting a divorce. Certainly this is tragic in the extreme, whenever it happens. But what makes this tragedy supremely ironic is that this couple has repeatedly defended their right to wear wedding rings and still hold church office, despite repeated counsel from fellow members as to the divisive impact of their actions. Another couple in that church, who likewise flaunted their gaudy rings when a former pastor preached against jewelry, has since broken up. **This is not to say that wedding rings break up marriages, only that the increased popularity of the ring appears not to have increased respect for the relationship it supposedly signifies. The bottom line is that the spirit of self-expression and self-fulfillment which defies all restraint--whether from inspired counsel or the consciences of others--is destructive to our relationships with each other as it is to our relationship with God.** To Hayden's credit, he rightly points out the need to subdue such a spirit so as to not cause others stumble (pp. 71-72).

Hayden quotes an Ellen White statement, presumably on the subject he is addressing, "It is too late now to become enthusiastic in making a test of this matter" (p. 72) (117). But in context, this statement is referring to those who were trying to revive the reform dress as the exact pattern for all Adventist women to follow. Bodily ornaments were not the issue she was talking about in context. Though related, these issues are not identical.

Hayden writes, "Just because the Adventist Church may lose its battle over jewelry doesn't mean we have to lose the battle over souls" (p. 74). But he seems not to realize that departing from inspired counsel is to lose the battle over souls! Hayden sees this and other lifestyle issues addressed in his book as minor (p. 126)--and perhaps, when compared with many others, they are. He writes, with a tone commonly heard among modern Adventists, **"The real issue is not jewelry--it is Jesus Christ" (p. 74). But it was Jesus who stated, concerning minor matters, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).** If we truly seek a Christ-centered approach to issues, it is time we considered these words of Christ Himself.

Worship

Other than jewelry, this may be the most contentious issue of standards in the church just now.

Unlike his discussion of jewelry, where he at least tries to address the inspired evidence used to support our historic stand, **Hayden leaves totally unmentioned the very strong Ellen White statements which warn against the worship forms now dividing contemporary Adventism.**

Hayden doesn't help his credibility or the maturity of dialogue in the church when **he nurtures the myth that the debate over music is a clash between generations. He writes of "a more contemporary style of music in an attempt to reach the younger generation" (p. 25), and of "accommodating young people's choice of music" (p. 98). But this is not an issue of young and old, and to portray it as such needlessly divides both churches and families. Many older people in the North American church see nothing wrong with some of the controversial music styles, and many more young people than some realize oppose such methods as an insult to their spirituality and a frivolous substitute for true worship.**

Concerning theatrical drama, Hayden writes that "it is the nature of the impressions the drama makes that determines whether it is good or bad" (p. 78). "There can be sanctified Christian drama, because not all drama leaves evil impressions" (p. 79).

But how can we reconcile these comments with the following statement from the pen of God's servant?

"Not one jot or tittle of anything theatrical is to be brought into our work. God's cause is to have a sacred, heavenly mold. Let everything connected with the giving of the message for this time bear the divine impress. Let nothing of a theatrical nature be permitted, for this would spoil the sacredness of the work."

"I am instructed that we shall meet with all kinds of experiences and that men will try to bring strange performances into the work of God. We have met such things in many places. In my very first labors the message was given that all theatrical performances in connection with the preaching of present truth were to be discouraged and forbidden" (118).

We hear a great deal today of **"clown ministries"** being conducted by and for children and youth in the church. But Ellen White has offered a very specific warning here also:

"We need to study methods whereby we may preach the gospel to the poor and downtrodden and degraded of humanity. But let no one think that God will approve of a method which will require a man to act the part of a clown, or like a man who has lost his senses. Such methods as these are wholly unnecessary and inappropriate" (119).

Who in the contemporary church can doubt the forcefulness, solemnity, and relevance of the following Ellen White prediction?

"The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be

shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit."

"The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. . . . No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. . . . I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations demons in the form of men are present,"

"Those things which have been in the past will be in the future. Satan will make music a snare by the way in which it is conducted. God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed" (120).

Just this past week I conducted a young adult vespers at which I addressed the subject of worship, and quoted the above statement. The young people were amazed that Ellen White had made such an explicit prediction of events now happening in the church.

Hayden writes at one point, "When the instruments and loud screaming eclipse the intended message, then it matters not to me if the song is supposed to be about Jesus. I personally have a problem with it" (p. 80). Good as this may sound, the above Ellen White statements make it clear that "personal problems" with such approaches to God aren't the issue. **Reverence to the mighty God of heaven is at stake.** Hayden's ambiguous appeals for "religious liberty" and open-ended tolerance on the music issue (pp. 76, 77, 82) offer little hope of settling Adventism's current discussions on this point unless the very clear counsels from Inspiration, noted above, are considered. Conservative church members know these statements well, and won't likely be persuaded by ambiguous talk of "liberty" to politely allow services where Ellen White says demons are present. **No amount of clever rationalizing or parsing of words can counter the reality that this prediction by God's prophet is being fulfilled in many of the worship forms and "church growth" techniques now being brought into contemporary Adventism.**

Hayden wisely advises in one part of his book, "It is imperative that we learn to be guided and governed by holy principles instead of following popular fads, movements, and opinions" (p. 35). No counsel could be more relevant to the current "church growth" excitement in contemporary Adventism, much of which traces its roots to popular mega-churches like Willow Creek and others, which downplay obedience and the harder truths of Christianity for the sake of filling the pews (121). **It is truly amazing to see Adventists wandering beyond our borders to sample methods of soul winning, when so many of us permit books like Evangelism, Christian Service, Welfare Ministry, and Ministry of Healing to gather dust on our shelves!**

But how, some will ask, can we draw the line on the music issue? I believe the key lies in the statement we have just quoted, where Ellen White speaks of making of none effect "the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time" (122). In other words, if what some call a "worship revitalization" program is causing church members to ignore or deny the "sanctifying truth for this time"--a phrase consistently used by Ellen White to describe our unique, Bible-based, Christ-centered message--we can be sure a false revival is taking place.

We need to ask some very pointed questions about the current "seeker-sensitive," "culturally relevant" worship styles some are promoting among us--questions which move beyond the admittedly-important specifics of music into the more basic issues of doctrinal and moral seriousness. In these new, "seeker-sensitive" Adventist churches, is our unique doctrinal message being stressed? Are the members being reminded that since 1844 we are living in the antitypical Day of Atonement, in which we

are to afflict our souls and search our hearts to assess our standing with God? Are the signs of Jesus' soon coming emphasized in these churches? Are the Bible-Spirit of Prophecy standards concerning relationships, health, adornment, Sabbath observance, etc., being promoted in these churches? Do these churches emphasize the Bible doctrine of complete victory over sin this side of heaven? Or is their primary focus a "gospel" of grace and salvation which overlooks and marginalizes the necessity of obedience?

Here is where the worship and church-growth issues meet their bottom line.

Faithfulness to inspired truth is the only way to grow the church and win back former members. Certainly there have been times when harshness, unkind words, and a condemnatory spirit have driven members or interests away from the church. The blending of our Lord's compassion with His courage must ever be the goal of God's laborers. But any effort to minimize the sharper aspects of truth for the sake of numbers is a betrayal of our Saviour, who--as Hayden rightly admits (p. 81)--instructed His followers to worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The following Ellen White statement offers a sober warning in this regard:

"Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the character of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, We will first get them into the church, and then reform them. But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray for them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God's people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts" (123).

At one point

Hayden suggests that we baptize people into the church who haven't fully relinquished the use of tobacco (pp. 50-52), calling this one of the "human-made roadblocks" Adventists have traditionally set up for new members (p. 50). He quotes a statement where Ellen White counsels against removing people from church fellowship who may fall in their struggle with tobacco but show a desire for reform (p. 51) (124). Hayden thinks this means people who haven't quite conquered smoking should therefore be allowed into fellowship for the first time.

But the following Ellen White statements give very different counsel regarding the initial acceptance of tobacco users into church membership:

"The victims of strong drink and tobacco are corrupted, body, soul, and spirit. Such ones should not be received into the church until they give evidence that they are truly converted, that they feel the need of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The truth of God will purify the true believer. He who is thoroughly converted will abandon every defiling habit and appetite. By total abstinence he will overcome his desire for health-destroying indulgences" (125).

"We do not take into the church those who use liquor or tobacco. We cannot admit such ones. But we can try to help them to overcome" (126).

Diet and Dress

Here Hayden offers some very appropriate, balancing advice regarding lifestyle issues where some conservative Adventists have gone beyond the counsel of Inspiration. Sadly, long before they reach these

portions of Hayden's book, conservative Adventists who might otherwise benefit from his thoughts on these matters will likely be so turned off by his unscriptural salvation theology that they'll never get that far.

Hayden accurately describes certain issues of dress and diet where some in Adventism have either failed to consider the totality of Ellen White's counsel and/or gone beyond the counsel altogether, in pursuit of an ever-stricter lifestyle (pp. 39-47, 89-91). It is truly unfortunate when the labors of reform-minded Adventists have been tarnished by extremism of this kind. Hayden's protest against such imbalance is one in which all careful students of Inspiration can safely join.

But even on these issues, Hayden continues to blur the clarity of some very plain inspired counsels. **One blatant distortion of the Bible** occurs twice relative to this topic, as Hayden claims that the focus by Adventists on standards of outward conduct violates the spirit of the verse, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7) (pp. 20, 53). **But the Bible is crystal clear what the problem was in Samuel's examination of Jesse's sons, and it had nothing to do with conformity to God's standards of outward behavior:**

"But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

In other words, Samuel's mistake in thinking Eliab was the Lord's anointed had to do with his physical attractiveness, not his obedience to lifestyle standards.

While Hayden admits that **health reform** is the right arm of the third angel's message (p. 98) (127), he then writes, "However, please notice that it is not the message itself but that it simply opens doors to deliver the true message--the third angel's message. And that message is not about what you eat, but about the saving power of Jesus Christ experienced in the life by faith" (p. 98).

Here we see again the effect of the unscriptural divide between Christ on the one hand and doctrine and lifestyle on the other. **The right arm is not the whole body, but most assuredly it is part of it. And whatever is the difference between "the saving power of Jesus Christ experienced in the life by faith" and the practice by faith of the principles of good health, including diet? These distinctions, though popular just now in contemporary Adventism, are really quite frivolous.**

Ellen White is as clear as she can be that health reform is a part of the gospel, not merely its result:

"When temperance is presented as a part of the gospel, many will see their need of reform" (128).

"The Lord has given instruction that the gospel is to be carried forward; and the gospel includes health reform in all its phases" (129).

Hayden again distorts Scripture with his reference to Romans 14, which he claims is violated by zealous Adventists who call the church to a higher standard in matters of diet and health (pp. 88-89). He is quite wrong in saying, "We Adventists are not really comfortable with this passage" (p. 89). What we aren't comfortable with is its distortion. **Paul is not speaking here of the Bible doctrine of health, but of those who were imposing the Jewish ceremonial law on Gentiles.** This is what he refers to when he speaks of how "one man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike: Let every man be fully

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persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). **If Hayden is prepared to go beyond the ceremonial issue and apply this passage to genuine health reform, what about those who apply verse 5 to the distinction between Sabbath and Sunday?** Hayden is treading some very dangerous ground here, whether he realizes it or not.

Another passage misused by Hayden is his reference to Peter's refusal to eat with Gentiles in order not to offend the Jews (Gal. 2:11-14), claiming that Paul's rebuke of Peter in this instance meant that perhaps he [Hayden] should have gone ahead and eaten cheese at a campmeeting and not concerned himself that some might have taken offense (pp. 97-8). In his own words: "Sometimes Adventist minds that are cemented into extremism need to be blasted out with a radical witness of that which might offend them" (p. 98). Here again we see a mixture of apples and oranges. **While Hayden rightly observes that some Adventists go to extremes in advocating abstention from dairy products (pp. 90-91, 96-97), Ellen White is clear that the time will come when this will be necessary (130).** Certainly the proliferation of disease in animals right now indicates that that time is more likely here than at any time in the past. **Giving up dairy products shouldn't divide churches, to be sure, but it is still a prospect Inspiration points us toward as we near the end. The same cannot be said, obviously, for Peter's refusal to fellowship with Gentiles. Peter's action threatened to hold the church backward. Advancement in health reform, rightly done, moves the church forward.**

While Hayden is correct in citing Ellen White references which warn against overemphasis on the diet issue (pp. 89, 93) (131), his passion for making lifestyle issues discretionary causes him to miss the very strong counsels of Ellen White on issues like meat-eating.

Why, for example, does Hayden not quote such passages as the following?

"Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet" (132).

"While we do not make the use of flesh meat a test, while we do not want to force anyone to give up its use, yet it is our duty to request that no minister of the conferences shall make light of it or oppose the message of reform on this point" (133).

"Can we possibly have confidence in ministers who, at tables where flesh is served, join with others in eating it?" (134).

"Let not any of our ministers set an evil example in the eating of flesh meat" (135).

"Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God's people to walk no more with them" (136).

The imbalance in Hayden's approach is seen in his repeated warnings against overstressing the diet issue, to the almost total neglect of warnings to those who think diet doesn't matter to their walk with God. Again one senses that Hayden, because of past negative experiences with conservative Adventists, sees the needs and challenges of the church largely through the lenses of his own background, even if the problem of laxity and carelessness gives every evidence of being the greater danger in the contemporary church.

Other Matters

One is amazed at how Satan causes us to ignore timely issues right at the moment of their greatest relevance. Despite the fact that world events give more evidence now than ever of pointing to the soon return of Jesus, Hayden is convinced that Adventists are plagued by a **"time of trouble mentality"** which supposedly "erodes away at our church like the relentless waves of the ocean" (p. 105).

Never mind that many North American Adventist churches go for months, even years, without hearing sermons on end-time events, Hayden seems to think prophetic speculation, "reading something apocalyptic into every little piece of news," is the church's big problem (pp. 105, 106). Hayden seems oblivious to the unique acceleration of apocalyptic fulfillment in the news just now. If so, the world isn't. Worldly science magazines have lately noticed the unusual volume of natural disasters taking place (137). Ellen White's prediction about disease in animals steadily increasing is no longer seen only in isolated cases (138). Catholic-Protestant harmony, once unheard of, is now the order of the day. **Why does Hayden appear to give no thought to the possibility that the focus by conservative Adventists on end-time prophecy might just be due, not to paranoia, but simple awareness of reality?**

True to his pattern of seeing the molehills of conservative extremism as mountainous church crises, Hayden can't neglect to remind us of **"the fanatical elements among us who from time to time try to predict the dates on which certain end-time events will take place"** (p. 105). Certainly Hayden is right in condemning such activity. But such fanaticism has never been more than a minor blip on the radar screen of modern Adventism; the vast majority even among the staunchest conservatives reject such speculation. Again we sense that Hayden is speaking more from the confined universe of his personal experience than from an objective survey of contemporary church conditions.

Hayden writes of how Adventists throughout our history have viewed world events from the Civil War to Y2K as signs of the end (p. 105), apparently viewing this as an unhealthy obsession (pp. 105-106). He seems not to understand that the accelerating world crises which he lists as occurring through Adventist history have gotten worse and worse, with no hint of any relaxation of tension or bettering of world conditions. Elsewhere he writes scornfully of "all this end-time stuff" (p. 116), apparently wishing it would all go away.

Hayden is right to counter the foolish behavior of some Adventists who, for example, have neglected to save for their retirement because they thought the Lord was coming right away (p. 106). **What he fails to consider is that once Adventists recognize the ultimate determiner in the timing of the Advent--the spiritual preparation of God's saints (2 Peter 3:10-14; 1 John 3:2-3; Rev. 14:5)--unhealthy speculation about future events is avoided, since it is understood that God is not waiting so much on world conditions as church conditions. Wise preparation for the future is necessary despite increasing global signs of the end, because we must always bear in mind the chance that the church's unreadiness might yet again cause delay.** In Ellen White's words: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" (139). But since Hayden's theology rejects this Bible truth, he cannot appreciate the proper balance between the readiness of the world and the readiness of the church in our anticipation of the end-time.

Hayden spends some time on the subject of city versus country living (pp. 106-107, 114-115). Here again he offers some good points, reminding us that many have stood for the right in less-than-ideal circumstances (pp. 107, 114). But again he opens himself to misunderstanding with sarcastic questions like the following,

"How are we going to be a witness from our time-of-trouble hideouts in the wilderness?" (p. 107). One wonders how he relates to Ellen White statements such as the following:

"The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, 'Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth'" (140).

Ellen White's counsel recognizes, of course, that while country living is ideal, it is not possible for all, which is why she writes of the need to keep young people "as far as possible" from the contamination of city life (141). This statement recognizes that what is possible for some may not always be possible for others.

Moreover, she presents the following counsel regarding what God's people are to do when the image to the beast is enforced:

"As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains" (142).

In other words, while as many of us as possible should try to find places to live in the country, the above statement recognizes that many will not be able to do this, and that for them the national Sunday law will be the final sign to leave the big cities.

Hayden is not wrong in warning conservative Adventists against extremism in this regard, but unless he places the various aspects of inspired counsel side by side in his writing, he leaves himself open to needless misunderstanding. Again we should note that the group in the church to which he directs the vast proportion of his book are well acquainted with the writings of Ellen White. If Hayden wishes to explode what he thinks are misconceptions based on certain Ellen White counsels, it is imperative that he address those counsels directly and place alongside them those inspired passages which he thinks offer a balance and reveal the harmony of the whole.

We noted earlier Hayden's reference to the so-called Valuegenesis study of the opinions of Adventist youth (pp. 124-125). It is quite beyond the scope of this response to examine this study in depth.

But what should disturb any faithful Adventist is the following comment by Hayden, relative to the Valuegenesis assumption that our historic standards on jewelry and entertainment "will not hold in the near future of the church" due to the presumed rejection of these by young Adventists (p. 125):

"If we continue taking a hard-line, unbending stand regarding less morally defined issues such as jewelry, dictating to our youth what kind of music they are to listen to, and condemning their participation in such activities as dancing and theatergoing, we can expect to continue seeing them leave our church, many of them never to return" (p. 125).

Several observations are in order.

First, what tragic malaise has come over our precious church to the point where we advise the scuttling of standards because they aren't popular any more? Can we truly imagine Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, or the apostle Paul taking surveys to see what lifestyle issues people considered important?

Second, the results of surveys are often extremely subjective, unreliable, and prone to rapid change, as such former U.S. Presidents as Thomas Dewey and Michael Dukakis can attest.

Third, religious surveys in particular have built-in factors of unreliability which go beyond the problems with all surveys. From my own observation, answers on such surveys are often marked with a variety of motives which often surface when you talk with those surveyed. Some young people will give certain answers because they know they should give the "right" ones; others may mark wrong answers just to tweak the noses of authority figures; still others may hurriedly mark the surveys with little thought as their minds race with a hundred priorities they find more pressing at the moment.

Thus, for reasons of both spiritual faithfulness and statistical accuracy, religious surveys are of dubious value. How much better simply to allow the written counsel of God to determine what we believe, how we will live, and how we will teach the young! **And as for Hayden's notion that high standards are likely to drive the youth away and supposedly "handicap our ability to bring new converts into the church" (p. 125), how is it that those religious communities with the highest standards of faith and practice--some of them more severe in certain aspects than conservative Adventism--have been growing in membership during the past twenty years, while those of a liberal, more tolerant bent have steadily declined (143)?**

Hayden's concern about too much apocalyptic emphasis in the church is not only misplaced among the ease-loving, comfortable majority of First World Adventism; it fails to consider Who the real source of such emphasis is. It was Christ Himself to admonish His followers, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth night (Luke 21:28). Once more, if we truly achieve the Christ-centered focus Hayden and all of us wish for, we had better pay attention to the words of Christ Himself.

A far cry from Hayden's fear of too much stress on end-time preparation is the following, oft-repeated admonition from the prophetic pen:

"I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message. My accompanying angel cried out with awful solemnity, 'Get ready! get ready! get ready! for the fierce anger of the Lord is soon to come. His wrath is to be poured out, unmixed with mercy, and ye are not ready. Rend the heart, and not the garment. A great work must be done for the remnant'" (144).

While it is fair to note that Ellen White does warn us not to rein ourselves up to "a time of trouble beforehand" (145), such warnings occur with far, far less frequency than her exhortations to agitate this subject and to call our people to get ready. The conviction grows, as one ponders the theme and burden of Hayden's book, that his priorities in spiritual emphasis are not those of Inspiration.

Conclusion: Trailing in the Dust

Years ago George Vandeman wrote a book called *Sail Your Own Seas*, with a chapter titled "Fire Trucks and Floods" (146). While this book was intended for the non- Adventist public, it is too bad more Adventists didn't read it.

In this chapter Vandeman recalls a book titled **The Screwtape Letters, by C.S. Lewis**, in which a demon called Screwtape is giving advice to a less-experienced demon on how to ensnare human beings.

"The game," said Screwtape, 'is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood.'"

"Get people to crowd to the side of the boat that is already nearly under. When people are lukewarm and apathetic, get them stirred up about the dangers of enthusiasm and emotion. If they are lazy, talk to them about the hypocrisy of the working community. If they are cruel, warn them against the evils of sentimentality. . . ."

"In other words, let them hear loudly and repeatedly the warnings they don't need" (147).

No analogy could better describe the obsession of such as Keavin Hayden with the dangers of legalism, excessive rigidity, and apocalyptic paranoia, in the midst of a church where its most popular preachers and mainline literature constantly hammer at such perceived evils. The heightened intrusiveness of the world and its indulgences in this age of technology seems to matter little to these folks. Neither the world's deepening degeneracy nor its increased impact on the church gets much notice; Hayden still writes in dire tones of "our standard-oriented church" (p. 41).

Like the designers of France's ill-fated Maginot Line, Hayden and those of like mind persist in fighting yesterday's war, despite the threat of a far different, more dangerous enemy. Even a cursory study of the sacred record shows that worldly conformity has bedeviled God's people far more often than conservative extremism.

Like others of his persuasion, Hayden takes a liberal stance on a variety of issues while professing himself to be somewhere in the middle (pp. 120, 123). He asks that the church accommodate "the individual needs and choices of the differing groups that make up the church" (p. 126), insisting that the liberals and conservatives "are not so vastly different. . . . It is just that they have different ways of reaching the desired result" (p. 123). Again, as we noted before, he is afflicted with either an incredible naivete regarding what is going in the church, or he is deliberately seeking tolerance for the blatant rejection of SDA Fundamental Beliefs in some of our circles.

Hayden protests at one point that he is not some "out-of-control liberal" (p. 67). No argument. If he were, his book would be far less dangerous, and might never have been approved by an Adventist book committee. A compromiser in pseudo-conservative garb is much deadlier than an unabashed liberal.

Hayden writes, as do others in contemporary Adventism (148), that the church's present challenge is finding some middle ground between the liberal and conservative alternatives among us, just as Jesus avoided the camps of both Pharisees and Sadducees in His day (p. 123). He writes, without a single inspired statement in support, that "so in our day it will be those who manage to steer clear of both the conservative and liberal ditches that the world will eventually single out as 'troublers of Israel'" (p. 123).

But Inspiration does not depict the faithful of God at the end of time in such terms.

Most assuredly we do read of division in the church of the last days:

"Divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and the tares grow up together for the harvest" (149).

Notice she doesn't describe the two camps in the end-time church as two equally undesirable extremes. Rather, she speaks of the two camps as wheat and tares. In another passage she writes even more pointedly about the two classes at the end:

"The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes" (150).

We need to ask, Why, in their warnings to the church of the last days, are both Scripture and Ellen White so devoid of the legalism obsession so common in contemporary Adventism? Both Scripture and Ellen White are aware of the problem of legalism; Paul writes of those seeking to be saved by the "works of the law" (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9), and Ellen White wrote of those who preached the law until they were "dry as the hills of Gilboa" (151). She writes elsewhere of how the papacy appeals to "two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world--those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins" (152). **Why, in her writings as well as the Bible, is far more attention paid to the latter problem, while so many contemporary Adventists pay far more attention to the former? Never do either Scripture or Ellen White describe the main problem of professed believers at the end of time as one of works-righteousness, excessive attention to standards, or the dry preaching of the law.**

It is true, as Hayden points out, that Ellen White warns of fanaticism in the church at the end of time (p. 36) (153). But in her many discussions of the church in the last days, she never mentions this as a major challenge. Far more often does she speak of

"those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs" (154), the "careless and indifferent" (155), those "not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth" (156), those who "have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, . . . uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit" (157). Again we ask, Why does Hayden almost totally ignore this element in a book dedicated to a discussion of Adventist lifestyle?

Amazingly, Hayden's quest for a middle posture in the current Adventist landscape reminds us of the strong warning to the end-time Laodiceans against being "neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3:15). His book complains, regarding the issues in question, "Too often such issues have divided us into separate camps" (p. 25). But not only does Ellen White declare that this will happen (158), so did Jesus Himself (Matt. 10:34-36). Divisiveness of this sort is always heart-rending. And it requires the possession by us all of the sweet spirit of our Lord. But in the prophet's words:

"This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place" (159).

In summary, Hayden's book is a tragic, destructive document, one of the most shameful books ever to be released by an Adventist publishing house. It strikes at the core of our faith with its denial of character perfection through the Spirit's power, making a mockery of our denominational banner, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). As noted at the beginning, we can at least thank Hayden for candidly admitting that denying this key doctrine is directly tied to a more lenient approach to lifestyle issues. Sadly, as we stated earlier, he fails to consider that all other issues of Christian living--not just unique Adventist ones--are left vulnerable if Christianity is reduced to just another "do the best you can" formula among countless others. Hayden's book is the clearest possible demonstration as to why we see, just now, so many of our cherished standards trailing in the dust.

In his recent Review article, Hayden cites an Ellen White reference which denies that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon (160). Unashamedly I too affirm the continuing truthfulness of these inspired statements. Unfortunately, the approach to theology and standards found in Hayden's writings is a key reason so

many faithful Adventists just now are lured by the temptation to call the church Babylon. Most certainly this temptation must be resisted, for the present apostasy has not only been foretold, so has its ultimate defeat within the ranks of our precious church (161). But the despair and heartsickness of the faithful would be far more easily subdued if books and theology of this sort encountered the rebuke and prohibition they deserve at the hands of those in responsible positions.

We close with the following inspired forecast of the present conflict, and the hope it offers through the struggle we now endure:

"In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust, as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe, and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. . . ."

"The battle raged. Victory alternated from side to side. Now the soldiers of the cross gave way, 'as when a standard-bearer fainteth.' Isaiah 10:18. But their apparent retreat was but to gain a more advantageous position. Shouts of joy were heard. A song of praise to God went up, and angel voices united in the song, as Christ's soldiers planted His banner on the walls of fortresses till then held by the enemy" (162).

Endnotes

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