

# **BAAL-WORSHIP AND THE LONG DELAY**

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# Introduction

Recently a group of school children came to the campus of Andrews University and made a tour of the newly refurbished Horn Archaeological Museum. They came away very impressed. More than one was intrigued by the ancient enemy of Israel after-seeing the image of Baal on display. One child said, "I really liked the image of Baal, he's just so skinny." Another child said, "I really liked ... that miniature figure of Baal." Not only children have been fascinated by this false God. The idol of Baal; the worship of Baal; and the subtle far-reaching influence of Baal has held the children of men in sad secret bondage throughout all the ages.

History tells us that the devious path of Baal-worship leads back to the Garden of Eden. Of course there was no actual image set up in that beautiful place, but that in itself is a part of the delusion that we have inherited. The last thing anyone needs for Baal-worship is an actual image of Baal.

Visible evidence of the deep seated enmity towards God began to be seen very soon after the Eden episode. The record says the world's first city was founded by the world's first murderer. It was Cain who "builded a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch" (Genesis 4:17). Men began to praise men and build monuments to themselves. Cain had little confidence in God's assurance of protection. His faith would be put in the works of man, the splendor of buildings, the protection of stone walls. The root of this counterfeit allegiance, the mystical delusion of Baal-worship was established when the holy pair in Eden called in question the word-of the Lord.

"Hath God said," was the sinister insinuation of the serpent which laid the foundation for the great controversy in this world. There followed the fateful nibble of the forbidden fruit which has until now shackled the human race in depravity. On the surface this may appear not to have anything to do with Baal-worship. But the work of the enemy has

always been shrouded in mystery and darkness. We must pursue this.

Even the heroes of faith who hold places of esteem in the sacred record testify to the duplicity of human nature and rarely does spiritual triumph stand untarnished because of either open or secret Baal-worship. The wisdom, love and justice of God made provision to overcome every vestige of this false allegiance. The promise is that the time would come when the Israel of God would understand the terrible sin of Baal-worship, and "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14). In this positive pronouncement is good news. It proclaims that a process is envisaged that will free forever mankind as well as God Himself who will stand separated and cleansed from the stigma of sin.

## Chapter 1

# **Baal-worship over the centuries**

All too many Seventh-day Adventists are prone to think that Baal-worship has something to do with sun-worship but most of all they think it was only the terrible apostasy in the days of Elijah. That denial of the Creator was merely evidence in that day which shows the long-standing enmity of the human heart that has roots in Eden.

The apostasy of Adam's firstborn son bore a harvest so corrupt that "it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth" for "the wickedness of man was great ... every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:6, 5). Cain became the father of the unfaithful who established a system of rebellion that culminated in the flood. It was a way of life, a strategy that rejected the word of the Lord.

It took only three generations after the flood to lay the cornerstone of the great apostasy so deep and tenacious it would endure until the end of time. Ham, one of Noah's three sons who was saved in the ark, seems to have learned little from his experience. The descendants of Ham are notorious for their depravity. His son Canaan was the father of Israel's implacable enemy, the Canaanites. His grandson was Nimrod, and Nimrod was "a mighty one in the earth" (Genesis 10:8) who became the founder and first mayor of Babylon. It was this city that was destined to become "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). It was not the splendor of the buildings that was to be great, although archaeologists to this day are amazed at the ruins of the city, but it was the "abominations" that would be great and make the world drunk. The charter of this city would endure until the sanctuary is cleansed. We live in that cleansing time now.

After about another thousand years the children of men had reached the place that the Lord was

again faced with a crisis. The faithful line of Shem had nearly disappeared from the earth. What could the Lord do? He seems to have been left with only the family of Abraham. He was constrained to try again. He would need to get him out of his own land, away from the idol-worship, away from false ideas, into a land that the Lord Himself would show him. And so it was.

And after this there was the destruction of Sodom; Joseph in Egypt; Moses to lead Israel; the Passover; the exodus; the sanctuary and its services; the spies, faithful and unfaithful; the apostasy at the borders of the promised land; the lusting for a worldly king to take the place of the Heavenly King which eventually brought Ahab to the throne. And then came the deplorable display of deception and blindness at Mt. Carmel. The crisis was the fruit of years of failure to heed the words of warning and reproof the Lord had sent. Each refusal to repent had deepened their guilt and driven them farther from heaven. Year after year, for about a century, Israel had been departing from God's way.

Elijah could face King Ahab only because he exercised strong genuine faith in the unfailing power of God's word. He did not seek the job. At the same time he dared "not hesitate to obey the divine summons." He recognized that "unbelief was fast separating the chosen nation from the Source of their strength. ... Oft-repeated appeals, remonstrations, and warnings had failed to bring Israel to repentance. The time had come when God must speak to them by means of judgments. ... The apostate tribes of Israel were to be shown the folly of trusting to the power of Baal for temporal blessings."



## Chapter 2

# **Do we recognize Baal-worship?**

It needs to be repeated that many Seventh-day Adventists are under the delusion that Baal-worship primarily has something to do with sun-worship and climaxed with the apostasy at Mt. Carmel. Others would add that it is also the infiltration of worldly and even pagan influences into our church. It would be mentioned, for instance, the growing trend to have Easter sunrise services; the increasing display of symbols of the cross in various arrangements in our church architecture but which was shunned in former times as a sign of the Roman Church. Others would refer to the growing fashion of ear rings, wedding bands and other jewelry. Some would suggest that the ordination of priestesses in the Adventist Church is to accept the heritage of Baal-worship with roots in Babylon and cannot in any sense be supported from the Bible.

A growing number of "traditional" Adventists readily enumerate increasing apostasy, financial and theological corruption and label this Baal-worship. In a certain crude sense all of this and much more may be true. But in reality these evils are but altarpieces in the temple of Baal. They constitute the outer trappings that conceal a deeper and more subtle deception; a deception so refined as to situate itself in the midst of the most conservative orthodox Pharisees that we have in our church. Every last one of us stands in danger!

Of all the perils that Jesus foresaw as He looked beyond Olivet into the future, none stand larger than the warning against Baal-worship. Listen to Him:

"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

Who are the "elect"? If we are not the very ones

to whom this special warning was sent by Jesus, then we have no reason to exist. Surely the Lord would not stoop to send us in 1888 "a most precious message" that was to be brought "prominently before the world," if He did not want us to understand clearly the difference between truth and error. 4 The confrontation at Mt. Carmel is but a dim shadow of the terrible battle facing God's people today. A false Christ is nothing more than a modern Baal. The struggle facing the Remnant Church is not just one of apostasy and deteriorating standards, but rather the commandeering of the whole system of salvation by the great archenemy himself, or as we have been told, "Satan ... trying to carry on the work of God."

A mere denunciation of backsliding and worldliness, or a call to more fervent Christian experience, or what some would call a "relationship," is not enough. The thrust of Satan's deception is to erect Baal in the heart of every believer without the believer being aware of the transfer of allegiance. This accounts for thousands

praying to a Jesus who has left His former work and now ministers in the holy of holies within the veil-and they know it not. The "elect" must know the lie of Baal-worship. The truth they have been given must overcome Laodicean stupor, destroy it and cast down every idol of Baal.

The resolution of this conflict and the perfection of God's people involves more than celestial book work. Merely opening the heavenly archives and checking the books will not resolve the issues of sin and righteousness. The "elect" must know Baal-worship for what it really is. Truth is being contested. The struggle to assimilate and understand this truth constitutes the "shaking."

## Chapter 3

# **Baal-worship is not yet dead**

It is now about twenty-eight centuries since the Lord called Elijah to stand for truth and denounce Baal-worship in high places. It would seem logical that ancient history of that sort could be filed away in the archives and forgotten. From the human view point it could. But the Lord works on eternal principles. The chain of history stands unbroken. The contest continues between truth and error.

In our history it is now about one century since the Lord sent a message to us that has a strange resemblance to the one of many centuries ago. Two years after the 1888 Minneapolis meeting, Ellen White saw one of the most penetrating and serious of all her visions. She was in communion with God, the room was filled with light, and she saw herself "bearing a message to an assembly that seemed to be the General Conference. I was moved by the Spirit of God to make a most earnest appeal; for I was impressed that great danger was before us

at the heart of the work."

The danger she saw had its roots in the 1888 failure and the consequences were tied to the unbelief and apostasy of ancient Israel. She warns:

The prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis are not dead by any means; the seeds sown there in some hearts are ready to spring into life and bear a like harvest. The tops have been cut down, but the roots have never been eradicated, and they still bear their unholy fruit to poison the judgment, pervert the perceptions, and blind the understanding of those with whom you connect, in regard to the message and the messengers. ... Infidelity has been making inroads into our ranks; for it is the fashion to depart from Christ, and give place to skepticism. With many the cry of their heart has been, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Baal, Baal, is the choice. The religion of many among us will be the religion of apostate Israel, because they love their own way, and forsake the way of the Lord. The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that teaches forgiveness

only through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, that advocates righteousness by the faith of the Son of God, has been slighted, spoken against, ridiculed, and rejected. ... What kind of future is before us if we shall fail to come into the unity of the [1888] faith?

After nearly a century we can answer very clearly that the future she saw is the condition in which we now find ourselves. It would be so much more comfortable if the things portrayed in the post-1888 experience of the church could be applied to the world or completely overlooked. But the word of the Lord will not go away. Satan persists in his endeavors to destroy the uniqueness of this people's mission. His deceptive methods are laid bare in these words:

Everything may move forward amid apparent prosperity; but Satan is wide awake, and is studying and counseling with his evil angels another mode of attack where he can be successful. ... The great controversy will wax stronger, and stronger and will become more and more

determined. Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which, if possible, will deceive the very elect. ...

Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. They are praising Christ and the god of this world in the same breath. While professedly they receive Christ, they embrace Barabbas, and by their actions say, "Not this man, but Barabbas."... Let the son of deceit and false witness be entertained by a church that has had great light, great evidence, and that church will discard the message the Lord has sent, and receive the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. ...

Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. ... The conflict is to wax fiercer and fiercer. Satan will take the field and personate Christ. He will misrepresent, misapply,



and pervert everything he possibly can, to deceive, if possible, the very elect.

This solemn evaluation and prediction of Baal-worship concerns our church, our members, our ministry. Baal-worship did not die at Mt. Carmel. Indeed we may not really understand what the children of Israel were saying when they cried, "O Baal, hear us." In the Hebrew this meant, "O Lord, hear us," for Baal simply means, "lord," or "master," and the name with slight variations is found in numerous ancient languages, from Babylonian to Greek. In particular, Baal was the god of the Canaanites, the apostate children of Ham. The false and rebellious idea of Cain that the fruit of the ground would suffice for a living sacrifice was handed down to the Canaanites and Baal was accepted as their chief god who ruled nature; hence they had a religion of pantheism.

The pantheism of the Canaanites was no different than the pantheism which crept into our church almost unnoticed at the turn of the century. Pretentious sophistries, brilliant, sparkling ideas

were produced by the great deceiver and passed from mind to mind so that without knowing it the pillars of our faith were being destroyed. We were saved by the insistent warnings of the Lord's messenger at that time. The startling thing is, Ellen White tells us that this was only the "alpha of deadly heresies" and that the "omega" would follow and "be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given." She "trembled for our people." 11

It took about a century for Israel to reach their unconscious apostate condition of Baal-worship. It will soon be a century since we were deceived by the "alpha of deadly heresies." Clearly then we have the warning that God's people can change leaders and not know it. The peril is magnified when it is understood that the apostasy of the Israelites did not reside only in Ahab and Jezebel, but there were four-hundred and fifty priests of Baal plus another four-hundred prophets of the grove who formed the steering committee for the nation. Elijah recognized that Baal had usurped the place of Yahweh. When he threw down the

challenge, "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him," (1 Kings 18:19) we have in their answer a vivid video tape of the last church. The Record says, "The people answered him not a word." This means they were not for, they were not against, they were not hot, they were not cold, they were "lukewarm." They did not know their condition. Unconsciously they had changed leaders.

## Chapter 4

# **Does Baal-worship exist today?**

A quick check of the Index of the writings of Ellen White, shows that there are over 100 references to Baal. We have already mentioned the 1890 Salamanca vision which revealed that in consequence of our 1888 unbelief in the true Christ, a false christ would sneak himself in among us. Adventists have long known that at the very end Satan would not only try to carry on the work of God, but he would try to appear in the likeness of God. This counterfeit impersonation referred to by Christ, is explained by Ellen White in this familiar setting:

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. ... as a majestic being of dazzling brightness. ... unsurpassed by anything mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air,

"Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them. ... His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. ... This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.

Long before this final act of deception, Satan will have conditioned the people to accept his methods. This means the use of "brilliant, sparkling ideas," "charming philosophical speculations," "principles of Satan" pitted against "principles of heavenly origin," "unsanctified ministers ... arraying themselves against God ... praising Christ and the god of this world in the same breath." As the vision pointed out, "The religion among us will be the religion of apostate Israel"-Baal-worship.

Since Baal was solely the creation of man, counterfeit from the beginning, an insult to the Creator, made to fit the desire "to be mighty ... in the earth," and to build cities and make Babylon the capitol-so it must be plain that Baal-worship is none other than self-worship. The verbal use of the

name of Christ and all other Christian terminology means nothing so far as establishing and identifying truth. Baal is a false christ and it should be obvious that all worship of self, even though disguised as worship of Christ but which evades the principle of the cross is in reality Baal-worship. The roots of this Satan-inspired worship go deep, often unknown to us and beneath our consciousness.

One current refined and subtle manifestation of Baal-worship, is the cult of self-love. Through a clever manipulation of Scripture, the love of self has been transformed into a virtue. In recent years it has been strenuously taught as a supposed Christian duty. The divine command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves is twisted into a command to love self, when in fact the Lord taught that our natural-born sinful love of self is redirected through genuine faith to a Christlike love of our neighbor.

Genuine self-respect is another matter. It becomes authentic only through an appreciation of

God's self-emptying love revealed at the cross. True self esteem is therefore rooted in Christ's atonement. But the love of self is antithetical to devotion to Christ and His work. It is understandable that an enemy would promote the cult of selfism as though it were Christ's teaching. This is foreign to a people who are preparing for translation.

No matter how much we may profess to serve Christ, no matter what our position may be in the church, wherever self becomes the object of devotion, there we have Baal-worship. The myriad forms that this takes are frightening. In a certain sense the ministry is in greater peril than any other segment of the church. It is among the ministry that a kind of ladder-climbing fraternity has been established- as if office could enhance character. Where we have a coveting of promotion, office seeking, with prestige and power as the motivations of ministry, there we have the prophets of Baal.

This denial of the true Christ and glorification

of self is to be found in many of our now-standard practices. Why does the Remnant Church need plaques, trophies, certificates, and all the other trappings the world uses and loves? Where the true message of righteousness by faith is understood and believed, these emblems of greatness will fall away. Baal-worship is the fruit of a species of corrupted teachings that encourage a profession of faith in Christ while self refuses to be crucified with Him.

Just how we can find ourselves in the present confusion is made clear by the word of the Lord through His messenger:

The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; ... Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.

In this age antichrist will appear as the true



Christ. ... But the true leader of all this is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him.

Christ will be personified, but on one point there will be a marked distinction. Satan will turn the people from the law of God.

Those who are not wholly consecrated to God may be led to do the work of Satan, while yet they flatter themselves that they are in the service of Christ.

The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet's day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal.

## Chapter 5

# How long will Baal-worship prevail?

God's people have the assurance from Malachi that before the Lord can return there will again be a great work performed by Elijah (Malachi 4:5). Surely it is needed. In a morning talk given by Ellen White at Battle Creek, January 29, 1890, she intimates "Elijah" is that message begun in 1888.<sup>18</sup> It is no wonder the battle lines have been so sharp and Satan longs to maintain indefinitely a counterfeit position.

It must be understood that the confrontation on Mt. Carmel was the climax of a long dialogue between Elijah and Israel. In vain he had tried to turn them from their blasphemous blind idolatry. His soul was grieved and his indignation was aroused. His heart was wrung with anguish as he went before the Lord and implored Him to save His people-even "if it must be by judgments. He

pleaded with God to; withhold from His ungrateful people dew and rain ... that apostate Israel might look in vain to their gods. ... The Lord told Elijah that He had heard his prayer and would withhold dew and rain from His people until they should turn unto Him with repentance." Thus it was by faith that Elijah went before King Ahab and solemnly proclaimed "there shalt not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1).

Who, in this day, would dare go before the Lord with such a prayer? Yet the Adventist conscience is impressed that current events in the church cannot be construed as blessings from the Lord. The financial losses, the political intrigue, the theological uncertainties, the confusion of plans, all run counter to heavenly approbation. It is all too much like a land without dew or rain in the midst of a famine. We need to appreciate that now as then "the Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work." But the Lord has not left us without help. Indeed, it seems that He has given modern Israel just the warning

needed to know what to expect. Take note of this admonition:

Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility, and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth, and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed.

Notwithstanding the frightful apostasy portrayed in these words, there is hope. When our boards, our committees, our conferences, and our churches as corporate bodies, and our members as individuals come to see our "backsliding," we can take our place beside Peter. His Lord knew that "which was unknown even to himself."

The Master's solemn warning of denial so quickly forgotten, revealed in due course his own ingratitude, his falsehood, his perjury, and his heart

was pierced with grief and bitter remorse. Then Peter repented in agony of soul. This was the hour of his conversion. A similar experience awaits God's church today, and the promise is, "she will be healed." But "until she shall abhor herself," and truly experience remorse and repentance, Baal-worship must prevail.

## Chapter 6

# **The 1888 message destroys Baal-worship**

The temptation to look upon Adventism as just another religious option, simply a church among many churches, is to degrade the truth we have been given. Such an attitude unconsciously affirms that Baal-worship is good enough for us, whereas we have been told that "so long as time shall last, we are to cherish the sacred, denominational distinction placed upon us. ... In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and lightbearers."

Our view of the popular churches grows out of a misunderstanding of the 1888 message. Because of "preconceived opinions" and "opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message," a vacuum was created which we tried to fill with our methods, and borrowed plans. The result is, "Satan has succeeded in shutting away

from our people in a great measure the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart." The enemy has prevented us "from obtaining that efficiency which might have been [ours] in carrying the truth to the world." There is no way that research, Madison Avenue techniques, growth seminars, or any other man-made programs can ever replace the "power" and "efficiency" the Holy Spirit would bring to God's people.

For years, and especially since the 1950 General Conference session there has been much talk of the Latter Rain. But in the 1888 message we were to have been given the ability to carry the gospel to the world, "as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost." 25 Why did this not happen? Almost unbelievably, we get the answer: "The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world."

It is terrible to think that Baal-worship has infiltrated modern Israel as it did ancient Israel, but

the Lord's servant insists it is true. Our tendency has been the same as our ancient kinsmen-to assimilate and imitate the thinking and customs of the people around us. The rejection of the 1888 message set the pattern for nearly a century of such assimilation, beginning with the exposure of counterfeit ideas at the 1893 session that purported to be the same as genuine righteousness by faith. Over the years we have turned again and again to the popular churches and their leadership for ideas and inspiration which we have assumed was the true message, not discerning fundamental distinctions. Already in the 1890's there were tendencies to confuse Roman Catholic justification by faith with the genuine. More recently Fromm's Movement of Destiny, boasts that the 1888 message was essentially the same as a vast array of Evangelical preachers were teaching.

This is not to suggest that there are not countless good, sincere people and ministers in the popular Sunday-keeping churches. They are happy, loving, zealous, devoted and in some cases more missionary-minded than we. Their success in



church growth outstrips ours in many cases. But they do not have the three angels' messages because "we" have kept it away from them, from the world Ellen White says, and the vacuum we have filled with Baal-worship. When we understand our situation, our relation to the "most precious message" the Lord sent, Baal-worship will be destroyed.

## Chapter 7

# The long delay must end

Babylon has not yet become what it will be when the loud cry is proclaimed. Its fall is not yet complete. The truth of the antitypical Day of Atonement is not understood. The churches of the world "have no knowledge of the way into the most holy [place]" and so they "can not be benefitted by the intercession of Jesus there." It would seem that this truth is being forgotten by Adventists. The unique work of the High Priest has been replaced by the counterfeit supplied by Baal. This self-centered Baal-worship makes our Lord nauseated. He feels like throwing up (Revelation 3:16, 17). But His nausea can be cured by our repentance (verse 19). There are many in the church who also are nauseated-maybe 7000 of them. They see on every hand the self-centered Baal-worship as it has sneaked into our midst. They see the vanity, the emptiness of sermons, the praise and flattery of men and women, the gospel jazz and swooning crooning with screaming and

shouting into the microphones, the joking and jesting, the egocentric gospel with roots in legalism, plus the material ostentation of palatial offices and appointments, along with dramatic entertainments to please every fancy-no wonder our Lord is nauseated! It is like being on Mt. Carmel and hearing the cry from "morning even until noon, saying O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered" (1 Kings 18:26).

Our spiritual impotence can be traced to our history. The truths inherent in the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness are not comprehended by us or by any segment of Christians who do not understand the two-apartment ministry of the heavenly High Priest. The "gospel" proclaimed by the "little horn" power virtually justifies sin and therefore logically upholds Satan's rebellion. This is the secret of the lawlessness that pervades the modern world on all levels. All churches, indeed, the whole world desperately needs the three angels' messages in verity.

This message proclaims a Saviour who

"condemned sin in the flesh," offering the only valid rebuttal of Satan's charges against God. It effectively "condemns sin," that is, demonstrates that sin in human nature is unnecessary and is doomed to extinction. It confirms the truth stated by Ellen White: "The righteousness of God is absolute. This righteousness characterizes all His works, all His laws. As God is, so must His people be." This message will cast down every idol of Baal and prepare a people for the Lord's return and sin will not arise again because the redeemed perceive and appreciate the true character of God.

All of this means that there is nothing in Babylon for Israel. It is indeed "the habitation of devils, and, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2). It denies the perpetuity of the law of God, including the Sabbath; it denies the mortality of the soul; it denies the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and consequently is not able to appreciate Christ's ministry on the final Day of Atonement ministry. These "landmarks" of truth support the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is not

Babylon. God never planned that it become Babylon any more than ancient Israel was to become Babylon. Baal-worship was and still is a disease of the body that is foreign to it and makes it sick. But healing is possible through repentance and reformation. The solution is not the destruction of the church but its spiritual recovery. We have encouragement in this assurance:

God is leading a people. ... He would reprove and correct them. The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. ... The message to pronounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church Babylon, and call the people of God out of her, does not come from any heavenly messenger, or any human agent inspired by the Spirit of God. ... God...has a work for His church to do. They are not to be pronounced Babylon, but to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world ... to proclaim a living message in these last days.

Yes, we have hope! The problem is when pride and self-seeking masquerade as devotion to Christ,

there we have Baal-worship. And it has penetrated all levels of the church body. Solemnly we are told: "Honesty and policy will not work together in the same mind. In time, either policy will be expelled, and truth and honesty reign supreme, or, if policy is cherished, honesty will be forgotten. They are never in agreement; they have nothing in common. One is the prophet of Baal, the other is the true prophet of God."

Christ cannot come until we fully understand the truth of our history and Baal is completely unmasked. He has a fixed perpetual smile of indulgence for his people. He is an idol with a frozen smile. In terrible contrast the face of the true Christ registers the pain of acute nausea, a divine sickness of heart with our terrible lukewarmness, our self-love, our professions of a devotion that we do not really have. But this can change-it must change-it will change.

The Record is clear; the Lord has told us the sanctuary shall be cleansed. But more than this, the work of cleansing is laid bare for the whole

universe to see. After millennia of Baal-worship and after the end-time century when open defiance of the Lord's plan was evident, when Baal-worship took its most subtle defiling forms in all history, then the Lord provides us the positive cure in a beautiful promise:

"It shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi [My husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [My master]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. ... And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hosea 2:16, 17, 19, 20).

The long delay is over. Baal is cast down. The Divine Bridegroom has at last won the heart of His bride. "That day" can come whenever the Bride says she is ready to be married. "That day" could be sooner than you think.