

QUESTIONS ON THE SEALING MESSAGE

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Preface

The presentation of the following pages to our people, I deem to be in harmony with what is stated in "Testimonies for the Church," volume 7, page 288: "As those who have spent their lives in the service of God draw near the close of their earthly history, they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to recount the experience they have had in connection with His work. The record of His wonderful dealings with His people," etc.

Of the benefit to be derived from the bringing of such things to the attention of our people, we read from the pen of Sister E. G. White, in the South African Missionary of February 20, 1911, "We have nothing to fear from the future, except we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history."

In reference to the subject matter of this book - the sealed 144,000 -I have been greatly moved by the Spirit of God to write and publish the facts as to how the sealing message was obtained - not only

from the Bible, but by direct instruction in visions of Sister E. G. White; also as to how the message was received and taught by our ministers and people down to the year 1894, when the "new light" theory found its advocate in one who afterwards apostatized from the faith, and died without seeing the fulfillment of his expectation that he would live to the end of time, and hence be one of the 144,000. His claim was that later testimonies of Sister White taught that all the 144,000 would be made up of those who had never died.

When I found that some were teaching that "all of the 144,000 who will be sealed are now living," I thought it time that someone should speak, and show that it is not the manner of God's prophets to make positive statements at one time, and afterwards teach entirely contrary to them. Such surely was not the course of Bible prophets. The whole of this "new light" is produced by taking words out of their connection, and away from the things of which they are spoken, and giving them a general application, as you will see when we come

to the analysis of the matter.

I presented the substance of this tract in two discourses on the Stockton camp ground. Those who heard the discourses, requested that it might be published, so that they could have the reading of it. As the subject is one on which there is some controversy, I thought our publishers would not wish to print the matter in their papers, or take the responsibility of publishing it in any form. So I have decided to bring it out as a small book, to be obtained through the mail, from the author. I first thought I might get it into a five-cent pamphlet; but since revising for print, and enlarging, I find that five cents would not pay the expense of printing and postage. So I have placed the price at ten cents, with the promise to the Lord that all that may accrue from sales, after tithing, shall be divided between Eastern city work and foreign missions. May the Lord make the reading of the book a blessing, even as the searching out the copy for the same, in the past few months, has been to the author, J. N. Loughborough. Lodi, California, July 1, 1916.

Chapter 1

First question

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. . . . Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat." - "Testimonies," volume 5, page 81.

The Sealing Message

Before me are three questions which I am requested to answer:

First: When did the Adventists obtain light on the sealing message?

Second: When did the sealing work begin?

Third: Will any of the people of God who have

died since 1848, in the message, be reckoned with the 144,000?

As to the first question, we note that in 1845, some of the Adventists began the study of the third angel's message of Rev.14:9-12. They saw clearly that the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath was included in the keeping of all the commandments, as set forth in that message. Of the study of the message, we read in a statement from Sister E. G. White, in "Testimonies for the Church," volume 1, pages 78, 79. The statement relates to the situation in 1846, and onward, and reads: "When we began to present the light on the Sabbath question, we had no clearly defined idea of the third angel's message of Rev. 14:9-12.

The burden of our testimony as we came before the people was, that the great second advent movement was of God, that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given. We saw that the third message closed with the words: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God,

and the faith of Jesus.' And we as clearly saw as we now see (the now was 1868, when volume 1 was first published), that these prophetic words suggested a Sabbath reform; but as to what the worship of the beast mentioned in the message was, or what the image and the mark of the beast were, we had no defined position.

"God by His Holy Spirit let light shine forth upon His servants, and the subject gradually opened to their minds. It required much study and anxious care to search it out, link after link. By care, anxiety, and incessant labor has the work moved on until the great truths of our message, a clear, connected, perfect whole, have been given to the world."

Although, down to the year 1848, our people had clear light on the different features of the third angel's message, their attention had not been especially called to the sealing message.

They did not believe that, according to Rev.14:1-5, there would be 144,000 to stand

redeemed on Mount Zion. This company was also mentioned by Sister White in her first vision, recorded in "Experience and Views," old edition, page 12. But they had not as yet studied the light on the sealing of the 144,000.

As we shall see, it was the time of the conflict of the nations of Europe, in the early months of 1848, that light came to this people respecting the sealing message. In a brief consideration of that conflict, its cause and development, we shall see how the light on the message was obtained. In the "Library of Universal Knowledge," page 536, we read of that conflict in 1848: "That revolution was caused by the French people demanding a republican form of government from under Louis Philippe; and for a time, there was republican form, the revolution contagion spreading temporarily over most of the continent of Europe."

From the time of the Reign of Terror in France, the desire of the masses was, to secure for the people a greater control of the government, and to satisfy the craving of the people for national life -in

fact, to have a true government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Through the working of the papacy, a Bourbon, Louis Philippe, had been placed upon the throne, and it seemed to be an impossibility to induce the pope to submit to any government but that of his own devising. See Robinson's "Western Europe."

The situation caused animosity not only against Louis Philippe, but also against the pope, who was upholding the Bourbon ruler. At last, the pent up feelings burst forth in a conflict, as sudden in its developments as the bursting forth of a volcano. From facts stated in the public prints of the time, it would seem that Louis was not aware of the intensity of the feeling against his rule; for on the twenty-first of February, 1848, he said to his cabinet, "I was never more firmly seated in the empire of France than I am to-night." The next day, he had a review of his soldiers. After the parade, the soldiers, with guns stacked, were resting on the ground, when a little lad with a tricolored flag in his hand climbed upon a cannon. He waved the flag in the air, shouting: "Down with the pope!"

DOWN WITH THE POPE!" Probably this was what he had heard talked at home. The soldiers caught up the same, which, with increasing vigor, was passed up and down the line, and finally with the addition, "and down with the king."

Concerning the sudden outbreak of that rebellion, we read in Robinson's "Western Europe," chapter forty:

"The gathering discontent, and demand for reform, suddenly showed their full strength and extent. It seemed for a time as if all western Europe was about to undergo as complete a revolution as France had experienced in 1789. With one accord, and as by obeying a preconcerted signal, the liberal parties in France, Italy, Germany, and Austria, during the earlier months of 1848, overthrew or gained control of the government, and proceeded to carry out their program of reform in the same thoroughgoing way in which the National Assembly in France had done its work in 1789. The general movement affected almost every state in central Europe.

"On February 24, 1848, a mob attacked the Tuileries. The king abdicated in favor of his grandson. But it was too late. He and his whole family were forced to leave the country. The mob invaded the assembly, as in the Reign of Terror, crying: 'Down with the Bourbons, old and new! Long live the republic!'"

Of this revolution of 1848, and its sudden checking up, Horace Greeley said, in the New York Tribune, "It was a great wonder to us politicians what started so suddenly that great confusion in Europe; but a greater wonder still, what so suddenly stopped it."

I have a copy of a testimony given to Sister White in 1852, in which reference is made to the war of 1848. This was found among Brother Bates's papers, after his death. In it are these words: "That desire was, to dethrone kings; but that could not be, for kings must reign until Christ begins His reign. I saw in Europe, just as things were moving to accomplish their designs, there

would be a slacking up once or twice. Thus the hearts of the wicked would be hardened. But the work will not settle down (only seem to), for the minds of their kings and rulers were intent on overthrowing each other, and the minds of the people to get the ascendancy. I saw all minds intently looking and stretching their thoughts on the impending crisis before them."

There was one slacking up after the revolution of 1848. In the present war, beginning in 1914, is manifest on a still larger scale the determination to overthrow kings and rulers, and a still greater intensity in watching, than in that revolution of 1848. The testimony seems to indicate a second slacking up before the final conflict of the nations shall come.

Of that outbreak in Paris, we have read already that Louis Philippe and his entire family fled from France. The fury of the mob was such that he feared for their lives, and accomplished their escape by placing his family in a coach, while he disguised himself in the driver's clothes, and in the

twilight passed unrecognized through the gates of Paris, thus effecting his flight to England.

From a pamphlet entitled "The Seal of the Living God," published by Elder Joseph Bates, dated January 1, 1849, we gain some facts as to that 1848 revolution, and the reception of the light on the sealing message. On page 45 we read, "The public journals have stated that on the twenty-second of February last, France became disorganized, deposed their king, and burned up his throne, and himself and family fled to England for safety." On page 49, we read of the fury of that conflict: "See what a rushing and struggling has been and is going on among the people to overthrow the potentates of Europe; namely, Prussia, Hanover, Sicily, Naples, Venice, Lombardy, Tuscany, Rome, etc. See the account from the Boston Times of October 28, 1848, of the flight of the emperor of Austria from Vienna, the capital of his vast dominions, and of the insurrection and siege of that city for eight days, from the ninth of October; how they, in their work of slaughter, when they became victorious, tore up

the railways, and demolished bridges, to stop all further intercourse. See also a similar state of things in Berlin under the king of Prussia." This gives us some idea of the revolt which broke out on the continent of Europe on February 22, 1848.

In the month of March of the same year, in Hydesville, Wayne County, New York, spirit rappings began in the home of the Fox and Fish family, which was moved to Rochester, New York, for more public investigation. For a time, these rappings were called "the Rochester knockings." The first-day Adventists then said, with great zeal: "This conflict in Europe will culminate in the battle of Armageddon, and the Lord is about to come. These spirit rappings are the spirits of devils, going forth to gather the nations to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." As our people had the light of the third angel's message and the Sabbath, and were confident that this truth must be proclaimed to the world, they could not accept the faith made by the first-day Adventists, that the Lord was about to come. Those people would say to the Sabbath keepers: "You had better give up your Sabbath

message. You are too late with it. Join us in warning the world to get ready for the immediate coming of Christ."

Such was the situation in the summer of 1848. This led the Seventh-day Adventists to earnest, prayerful study for light. The Lord led their minds to the holding of the winds (wars) and the sealing work, with a determination to find the meaning of the situation. They found, in their study of the Scriptures, that the Seventh-day Sabbath was the sign of the living God, and the seal of His law. This newly received light from the word of God gave still greater force to the Sabbath message, and doubly assured them that this, as the sealing message, must be proclaimed to the world before the actual coming of Christ.

In Brother Bates's book, he refers to a meeting held in the home of Brother Otis Nichols, at Dorchester, near Boston, Massachusetts, on November 18, 1848, and says: "A small company of brethren and sisters were assembled in a meeting near Boston, Massachusetts. . . . We had made it

(the manner of publishing the message) the subject of the prayer at the Topsham conference meeting a little previous, and the way to publish not appearing clear, we (now) therefore resolved unitedly to refer all to God. After some time spent in prayer for light and instruction, God gave Sister White a vision."

Then he gives words which she spoke in the vision, which he copied down as she spoke them. From these words we quote the following: "He (God) was well pleased when His law began to come up in strength. That truth [the Sabbath truth] arises, and is on the increase, stronger and stronger. It's the seal! It's coming up! It arises, coming from the rising of the sun, like the sun, first cold, grows warmer, and sends its rays. When that truth arose, there was but little light in it; but it has been increasing. Oh, the power of these rays!"

Next came words that spoiled the claims of the first-day Adventists that "the angels were no longer holding the winds of war and strife, but were letting them blow." The words spoken in vision

were: "The angels are holding the winds. It is God that restrains the powers. The angels have not let go, for the saints are not all sealed. The time of trouble has commenced. It has begun. The reason why the four winds are not let go, is because the saints are not sealed. It (the trouble) is on the increase more and more: that trouble will never end until the earth is rid of the wicked. Why, they (the winds) are just ready to blow. There is a check put on because the saints are not all sealed. Yes, publish the things thou hast seen and heard, and the blessing of God will attend."

After coming out of this vision, Sister White said to her husband: "James, I have a message for you. Begin to print a little paper, small at first. Send it out free. The readers will send you money to print it. It will be a success from the first. I saw from this small beginning it was like streams of light that went clear around the world."

In a vision given to Sister White at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, January 5, 1859, she had another view of the sealing work. This view, written by herself,

is in "Early Writings," old edition, pages 29-31, and reads as follows: "I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands upward, and with a voice of deep pity cried, 'My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood.' Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, 'Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.'"

The explanation made to her by her attending angel was "that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go, but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the

Father, and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels, and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God."

Being thus fortified with light from the Scriptures, and the testimony of the Spirit of God, those having the light of the third angel's message were shielded from these claims of the first-day Adventists, with their "new time message," and were filled with new energy to press forward with the third angel's message, being confident that the God whom they trusted would clear the way for this, the last message to the world, to accomplish its purpose.

Chapter 2

Second question

When Did the Sealing Work Begin ?

The testimonies already quoted as to the reception of the sealing message by the Seventh-day Adventists is also good proof as to the time when the sealing began. The four winds of war were about to blow when that commotion among the nations of Europe broke out. The four angels had their commission to hold those winds of war, that the work of sealing be not hindered. "A check was put on," so that the sealing might advance.

We will note other testimonies showing that the sealing work was going on at that time. In "Experience and Views," "Early Writings," old edition, page 35, speaking of what was then occurring, we read: "Satan is now using ever device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth, and cause them to waver. I saw a covering that God was

drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth, and was pure in heart, was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty."

From the same testimony, page 36, we read: "I saw that Satan was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people, just now in this sealing time. . . . Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God's people, and they left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter."

I will quote from a tract published in 1852, a vision given to Sister White, at the home of Brother Harris, at Centerport, New York, August 24, 1850: "I saw that Satan will work now more powerfully than ever before, for he knows that his time is short, and that the sealing will soon be over. And he will now work in every insinuation to get

the saints off their guard, and get them to sleep upon present truth, and doubting it, so as to prevent their being sealed with the seal of the living God." We read in "Early Writings," "Experience and Views," page 49, old edition: "The sealing time is very short, and soon will be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure."

It was because of these plain statements, that our people and ministers, down to 1894, believed and taught that the sealing work had been going on since 1848, and that the 144,000 were being sealed. I do not see how we could draw any other idea, from the testimonies we have quoted, than that the sealing work had begun in 1848-1850.

Chapter 3

Third question

Will any who have died in the faith since 1848, when that message was received, be reckoned with the 144,000?

Some persons, more especially since 1894, have claimed that none will be reckoned among the 144,000 but those who lived until the second coming of Christ; and that this must be so, for according to Rev.14:3,4, they are "redeemed from among men," and "from the earth." According to Daniel 12, there is a partial resurrection in the "time of trouble," just before Christ's second coming. We read: "At that time shall Michael stand up, . . . And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Surely those who awake to everlasting life will be alive and "among men," when Christ comes.

If, in 1848-1850, persons were being sealed, we

would naturally expect they would be of those wakened to everlasting life, and so be with the 144,000. Of this resurrection we read in "Early Writings," "Spiritual Gifts," old edition, page 145: "There was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, shaking the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law."

In "Spiritual Gifts," pages 145, 146, we read: "As God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming, and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upwards, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. At the end of every sentence the saints

shouted, Glory! Hallelujah! Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God, and they shone with glory as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai (glorified). The wicked could not look upon them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God, in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image."

Of the same we read in "Testimonies for the Church," volume 1, page 59: "Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number (remember that the resurrected Sabbath keepers are then among the living saints), knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spake the time, He poured upon us the Holy Spirit, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai.

"The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly

united. On their foreheads were the words 'God.' 'New Jerusalem,' and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground."

If it be claimed that none will be numbered among the 144,000 but those who live until Christ's second coming, without tasting death, what about those Sabbath keepers who in 1848 to 1850 were being sealed? There are not a half dozen of those now alive who were then keeping the Sabbath. If they were then sealed, they will be among those resurrected to eternal life at the voice of God.

There are some things connected with the case of Sister White that have a bearing on the matter of the 144,000. She is now at rest. But as reported in her first vision, "Experience and Views," is an account of what is to take place in the kingdom: "Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other

mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. . . . As we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, 'Only the 144,000 enter this place,' and we shouted, "Alleluia." It seems, however, that in this view of things to occur in the new earth, she entered that temple; for she said: "This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw, I cannot describe. . . . I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple we went out, and Jesus left us, and went to the city." From this we would surely conclude that in the new earth, Sister White would be one of the 144,000. [1]

On page 33 of "Experience and Views," old edition, she speaks of what the angel told her while she was viewing Saturn: "I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, 'You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall

have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God." That surely looks like some of the 144,000 being of those who will have been raised from the dead.

Notwithstanding these facts in the testimonies presented, it is still urged by some, that what is said in "Great Controversy," page 649, shows that the 144,000 will be composed wholly of those who have never died. Let us see what is said, and the condition under which the said statement occurs. Here it is: "These having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.' (The Sabbath keepers resurrected to eternal life will surely be among the living at Christ's second coming.) 'These are they which came out of great tribulation;' they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." That trouble of the nations will be under the sixth plague; and it is at that time, according to Dan.12:1, that the partial resurrection will take place, bringing up the sealed Sabbath keepers. This will be when the seventh plague is yet to come. Of

the situation at that time, we read in "Experience and Views," page 29: "These plagues enrage the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. The 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God." We have already seen that this glorification takes place with the resurrected Sabbath keepers, as well as those who had not died, when God delivers the everlasting covenant on those who had honored Him by keeping His Sabbath.

Of this scene we read in "Spiritual Gifts," page 143: "I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty,

after a certain time, to put them to death. . . . Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade His angels watch over them. God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected Him." Keeping the law "in the sight of the heathen" was in the sight of these inquisitors who had the decree to put them to death, and not to death in an ordinary sense, under calm conditions.

It is from this testimony, "translating, without seeing death," that the claim has been made that none will be among the sealed 144,000 but those who live until Christ's actual second coming. We see that the death they are saved from is the death permitted by the "papers circulated." Bear in mind that the resurrected Sabbath keepers are included among the covenantees. So they are to be translated at Christ's coming, without suffering the threatened death. By this decree, they are brought into "the

time of Jacob's trouble." His trouble was the news that Esau was coming with four hundred armed men. Unless the Lord should aid him, it looked like death to him and his whole family.

There is another testimony from "Great Controversy," page 649, used by those who claim that none who have died in the message will be among the 144,000: "They have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have 'washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' . . . They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst." This is what is said of the whole of 144,000, and in part will be true of the resurrected Sabbath keepers; for they endure the time of Jacob's trouble. They are raised under the sixth plague, and see the final outpouring of God's judgments under the seventh plague, and are among those delivered from this decree of death.

In "Spiritual Gifts," pages 146, 147, we read still further of what will take place with the living resurrected and living Sabbath keepers, after the voice of God declaring the everlasting covenant, when the wicked were enraged against them: "Soon appeared the great white cloud, upon which sat the Son of man. When it first appeared in the distance, this cloud looked very small. The angel said that it was the sign of the Son of man. As it drew nearer the earth, we could behold the excellent glory and majesty of Jesus as He rode forth to conquer. . . . His countenance was as bright as the noonday sun, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet had the appearance of fine brass. His voice sounded like many musical instruments. The earth trembled before Him, the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. . . . Those who a short time before would have destroyed God's faithful children from the earth, now witness the glory of God which rested upon them. And amid all their terror they heard the voices of the saints in joyful strains, saying, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He

will save us.' The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call, and came forth clothed with glorious immortality, crying, Victory, victory, over death and the grave! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Then the living saints and the resurrected ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death, came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the resurrected ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated, were united, never more to part."

If there is still a doubt of the resurrected Sabbath keepers' being numbered with the 144,000, consider the following from Sister White's words in 1909. At the general Conference in 1909, Elder Irwin had a stenographer accompany him in a call upon Sister White. He wished to ask her some questions, and have an exact copy of the words of

the questions, and the exact words of the replies. Among other questions was this one: "Will those who have died in the message be among the 144,000?" In reply, Sister White said: "Oh, yes, those who have died in the faith will be among the 144,000. I am clear on that matter." These were the exact words of question and answer, as Brother Irwin permitted me to copy from his stenographer's report.

Chapter 4

The number of the sealed

The query may now arise: "If the sealing message is to go to all the world with a Pentecostal power, and the earth to be lighted with its glory, and if, as recently stated by Brother Blank, it is to result in 'millions' being prepared for Christ's second coming, is not 144,000 a small number to be sealed? It is only a fraction of one million." In His word the Lord has spoken of those to be saved at His coming as a "little flock." Luke 12:32. They are also a people who have been subject to a very rigid test. The prophet Daniel speaks of them: "Many shall be purified, and made white and tried." Dan.12:10. Some translate this "thoroughly tested." It may be true in this case, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Matt. 22:14. In "Testimonies," volume 5, page 136, published in 1881, we read, "The great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal." On pages 213, 214, we read: "Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed.

There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads.. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. . . . By their lack of devotion and piety, and their failure to reach a high religious standard, they make other souls contented with their position. . . . Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." On page 136 of the same volume we read: "Soon God's people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers."

In "Spirit of Prophecy," volume 4, page 426, we read: "As the storm approaches, a large class

who have professed faith in the third message, but have not been sanctified through it, abandon their position, and take refuge under the banner of the powers of darkness. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls." The same is in "Great Controversy," page 609.

In "Testimonies," volume 5, page 216, we read: "The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of . . . the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God - candidates for heaven." On page 81 we read: "Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat."

In volume 6, pages 400, 401, we read: "As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare, will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improve them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith."

Whatever may be true of the millions that will hear the third angel's message, the 144,000 seem to be a peculiar group, with peculiar characteristics, gathered in groups of 12,000 each, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, "without guile in their mouths," "without fault before the throne of God." They are not all Americans, nor all users of the English language; but they are "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing."

If, as lately expressed by Elder Blank, the preaching of the message "prepares millions to be saved at the coming of Christ," and the Lord in compassion pardons the sins of ignorance in converted heathen who have not had the opportunities of those more enlightened, praise to His name. That does not excuse us who have had greater light, and might attain to one of the twelve groups of the sealed 144,000.

In the Review of May 22, 1889, Sister White said: "In a little while, every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. O that it may be placed upon our foreheads! Who can bear the thought of being forever passed by when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads?"

Among the lacks on the part of professed Sabbath keepers, we read in "Special Testimonies for Ministers," No. 7, written September 10, 1896: "A curse is pronounced upon all who withhold

their tithe from God. He says: 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.' . . . God help us to repent. 'Return unto Me,' He says, 'and I will return unto you.' Men who have a desire to do their duty, have it laid down in clear lines in this chapter. No one can excuse himself from paying his tithes and offerings to the Lord." Of non-tithe-payers we read in volume 2, page 199: "They are withholding, and robbing God. . . . This is one reason that, as a people, we are so sickly, and so many are falling into their graves. The covetous are among us." In volume 3, page 398, we read: "There are but few who consider the binding claims that God has upon them to make it their first business to meet the necessities of His cause, and let their own desires be served last. There are but few who invest in God's cause in proportion to their means."

"But," you may say, "it is some time since

those testimonies were written. Have not matters improved since that time?" During the year 1915, when the church treasurers were asked, "What proportion of your members pay tithes?" Now are we to conclude that the half do not have anything during the whole year, or are they like a wealthy farmer who said to me, "When I have boarded and paid my farm hands, met the expense of my family, bought a new reaper and a new threshing machine, there is not much left on which to pay tithes"? In response to this, a brother who had embraced the truth from infidelity, and who thought the tithing system "fine," said: "You farmers will work a farm for one half or one third the crop for the use of the land. Now when you have life, land, and all, from the Lord, to whom yourself and all things belong, you think one tenth of your income a heavy tax. You must be very poor renters." Do we expect those who withhold the tithes, who the Lord says are "robbers," to have the seal of the living God placed upon them?

Chapter 5

An impressive dream

The first work of Elder D. T. Bourdeau and me in California, in 1868 and 1869, was in Petaluma, Windsor, and Piner District, five miles west of Santa Rosa. The ministers preached against us in all these places. Finally a noted Christian minister defiantly challenged us for a debate on the Sabbath question. This debate came off on March 29, 1869, at Piner.

We had been very anxious to start the work in Santa Rosa, the county seat of Sonoma County, and we prayed earnestly that the debate might open the way. The first day of the debate, there was a fair attendance from the city; but on the second day, as stated by the editor of the Sonoma Democrat, "everything that could go on wheels went to the debate." After the first day of the debate, Brother Bourdeau and I had an earnest season of prayer that the Lord would make the next day tell mightily for His cause in California. And

so it did. On the night of the twenty-ninth, the Lord was pleased to give me a very impressive dream. In the dream, we seemed to be endeavoring to get over a mountain, and were making some progress in the ascent. Having gone a few hundred feet from the valley, we were confronted with an abrupt rise of high rocks before us, apparently fifty feet high, and as straight up as the side of a house. We saw at once that there was no way we could scale the obstruction. We looked to the left. There was a slanting slope up, but so smooth and glassy we concluded that to attempt to go that way would be a hard undertaking, and a failure. Just then a messenger appeared, and informed us that we had reached the height we were to ascend, and we would find a pathway around this difficulty and down into the valley to which we wished to go.

We followed the directions, and found that the perpendicular rock was like a high wall at our left, extending around the rock, and that on our right was a deep chasm. The path on which we were to go, while gradually descending, grew narrower and still narrower as we advanced, requiring constant

care and watchfulness that no misstep be made, and we thus be plunged into the abyss at our right. There seemed also to be a foggy cloud before us, which prevented our seeing more than fifty feet ahead. As we advanced, the cloud moved on, so that our immediate pathway was clear and our progress undisturbed.

By and by, as is often the case in a dream, there was a sudden change in the scenery. We were down in the valley, and the misty cloud was up the hill on the pathway by which we had come. When and how we got through the cloud, I did not know; but the interpretation given to us was, that the Lord had come, and His people had been resurrected. There was a vast company of people in the valley, and they were getting aboard a long train of cars, on which all the framework seemed to be of the brightest nickel plate, more beautiful than any millionaire's car I ever saw.

Our train glided gently out of the valley with its happy load of passengers. We had gone only a short distance when we came into a broader valley,

where seemed to be a railroad with four tracks. On three of these tracks were trains of cars which extended as far as the eye could reach, loaded with people whose faces shone with the glory of the Lord. The trains were so near together that one could step from one train to another as they passed along, for they all kept exactly even with each other. I saw Brother and Sister White passing from one train to another, greeting the redeemed saints from different states. As our train swung around onto the fourth track, and in line with the others, Brother White exclaimed: "And here comes the California train! We are all going to the city!" At this time I awoke, thrilled from head to foot by the thought that this was a token of victory for California. Not only was that debate the turning point in our first efforts in California, but since the infirmities of age creep on me, there has been much thought as to what was meant by Brother Bordeau and me going unconscious through that cloud, and coming out on the resurrection side.

Now a little history of my case: Two years ago, I was under doctor and nurse five days with

pneumonia; last year, with pneumonia again, under doctor and nurse eleven days; this year, with a severe attack of la grippe, under doctor and nurse five weeks, and left in so feeble a condition that I venture to attend only one camp meeting this year, the one just past, at Stockton.

One day on the camp, a sister came to me, saying: "You will live till the Lord comes; for a sister told me that on one occasion, when Sister White was speaking in the Tabernacle in Battle Creek, Michigan, a number of ministers were on the platform, and you among them, when Sister White said, 'Some of you ministers will live until the Lord comes,' and pointing to you, said, 'And you, Brother Loughborough, will be one of them.'" I replied to the sister, "It is the first I ever heard of it." She turned away, saying, "Oh, these hearsays!"

Words frequently come to mind that Sister White did speak to me in the winter of 1858. Brother White had a two-seated carriage and a span of horses that he used in visiting the churches in Michigan. He was necessarily detained by duties in

the office of the Review and Herald, and he said to me, "You take the horses and carriage, and your wife and my wife, and visit the churches in Michigan." As we traveled from place to place, there was opportunity for much religious conversation. At one time, the conversation was on the situation when war against the Sabbath keepers would be so that they would have to hide away in desolate places. She looked at me most earnestly for a minute or more, and then said, "Brother John, the Lord has shown me that these early workers (meaning the ministers) who have labored and sacrificed for the building up of the cause will all be laid away before that time when the people will have to flee," or words to that effect. All the ministers then (1858) preaching the message are laid in their graves, except J. N. Loughborough. When I think that "all" does not mean all but one, and think of the earnest look she gave me when she spoke those words, it seems to cut off the idea that I will live through all the decrees that will be passed against Sabbath keepers. Nevertheless, I hope to be among those who will be raised to everlasting life (Dan.12:2), and see the Lord come,

as set forth in this little book.

Chapter 6

Time of the plagues

The question is asked, "How much time is occupied by the seven last plagues?" The faith and teaching of the Seventh-day Adventists has ever been that it would be the space of one year. They based their faith on such texts as Rev.14:19,20, where this is likened to the treading of the wine press, comparing this with the wine press as set forth in Isa.61:2; 63:3,4. It is there called "the day of vengeance" and the year of the redeemed. Taking the acknowledged rule, the day would be one year. Some persons take the position that the pouring out of the plagues cover a period of many years. This seems to be refuted by the fact that under the fifth plague, the people are still suffering from the sores of the first plague. Rev.16:10,11.

During the time of these plagues, according to Rev.15:6-8, there is no intercessor in the heavenly temple. The condition of the people of God in that time is thus set forth in "Great Controversy," page

620: "In the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they would not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment." It would hardly seem like the Lord's merciful dealing with His people to subject them to such a state for a series of years. Sister White does connect this period of no intercessor with those texts which speak of it as day and year; and often, in her exhortations to us, she has spoken of the year that we should stand without an intercessor.

Chapter 7

A tribulum

We are told that the word "tribulation" is derived from the word "tribulum," an instrument for threshing grain, something like a flail. When I have heard the word "flail" used in connection with such texts as 2Cor.1:3,4, "The God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," and connect it with the knocking of a man down with a flail, I have wished I knew just what a tribulum was. On the twenty-fourth day of August, 1909, I saw two of these ancient instruments. I was attending the French camp meeting at Vergese, fifteen miles west of Nimes, France.

As Brother Bond and I were walking toward the side of the village, we came to a very smooth, round piece of land, some fifty feet in diameter. He said, "That is an ancient threshing floor, still

preserved, but not used." By the side of the floor lay a stone, like granite, some four feet in length, perfectly round the whole length. One end was about two feet in diameter, the other end probably three inches less in size. Brother Bond said, "That is a tribulum ." There was a deep hole in each end of the stone, wherein had been attached the irons connecting with the tongue for drawing it around the threshing floor, as shown in the picture. One end of the stone being larger than the other would cause the stone to turn the circle when passing over the ground. Going to another part of the outskirts of the town, we saw a second stone, similar to the first; but the old threshing floor was cultivated ground. So I no longer think of the Lord as going after Christian men as with a flail. A man might be caught hand or foot, as under the tribulum, and not be smitten down by one stroke with a flail.