



TESTIMONY / SOCIAL MEETINGS

# MISSION:

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:23-25

## Outline:

- Where have we been? - History
- Where are we now? - Signposts
- Where do we go from here?
- Why Social Meetings?
- What are Social Meetings?

## HISTORY:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have **nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.** { CET 204.1 }

## Important Events:

1831 – “Hour of His Judgement” Daniel 8:14

1844 – Oct. 22 – Cleansing Sanctuary

1845-46 – Seventh Day – Third Angel’s Message

1863 – SDA Church Organized for Service

1888 – Most Important Meeting Ever Attended

1890’s – Latter Rain Falling


1901 – We may have to remain here many more years

# The Great Second Advent Movement

ITS RISE AND PROGRESS



J. N. Loughborough

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*The Return  
of the  
Latter Rain*

Volume I

3rd Edition

A historical review of Seventh-day Adventist history  
from 1844 through 1891

Ron Duffield



**WOUNDED**  
IN THE HOUSE OF HIS FRIENDS

When will the Aborted Latter Rain Resume?

**Ron Duffield**

Foreword by Herbert E. Douglass, Th.D.

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. **There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.** { 9T 19.1 }





FAITH OF JESUS

**The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals** have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. { 9T 19.2 }

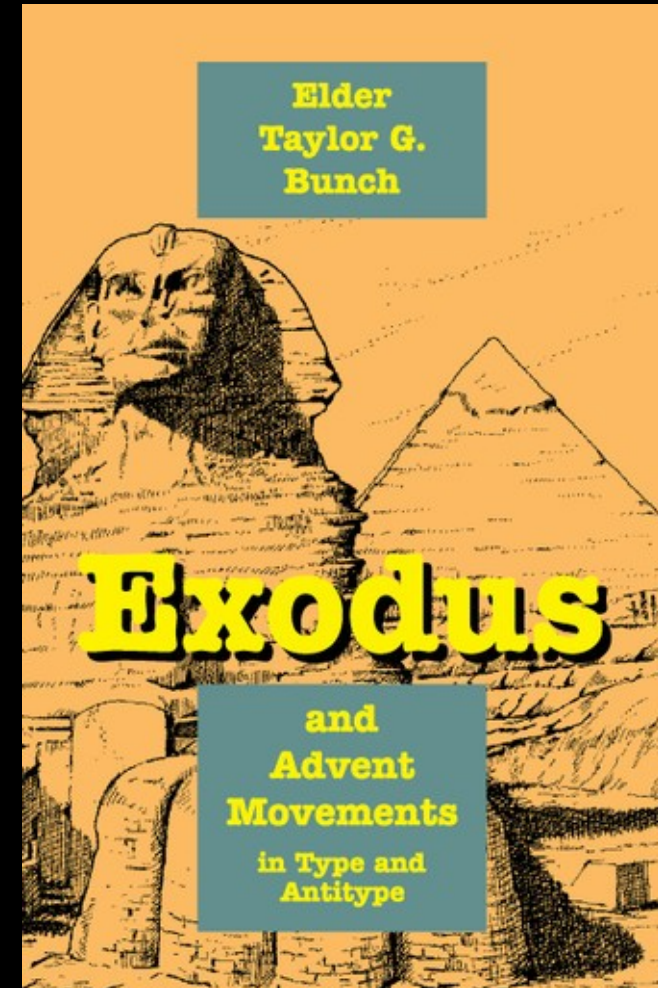
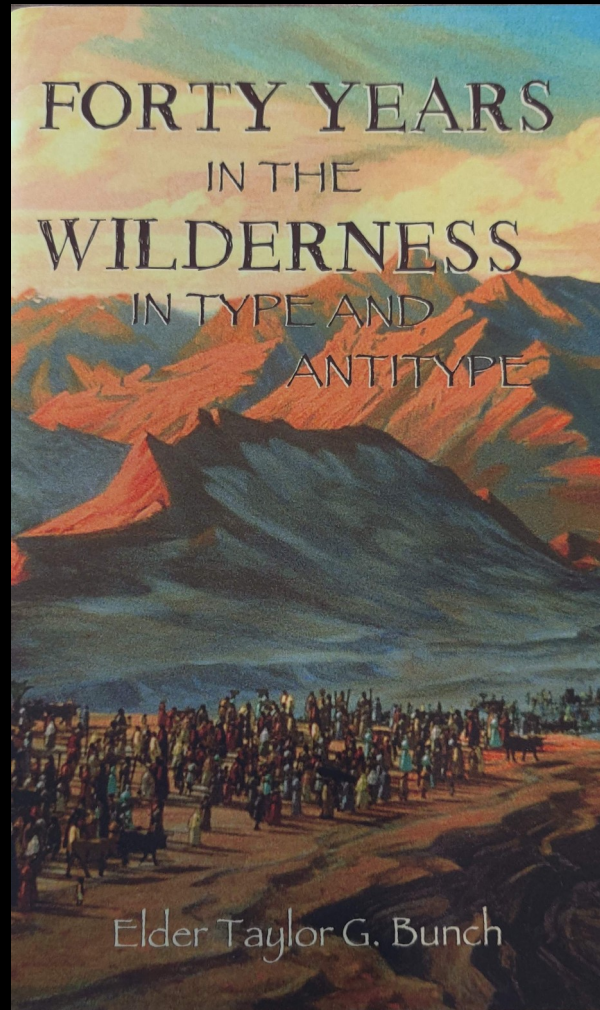
Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of **justification by faith is the third angel's message**, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." The prophet declares, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel's message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit.

It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in “because of unbelief.” Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them. { Ev 696.1}

For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.—  
Manuscript 4, 1883. { Ev 696.2}

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Cor. 10:11

- Time Prophecy
- Delivered to Serve God
- Sabbath
- Health Reform
- Apostasies
- Prophet
- Promised Land
- Unbelief
- Wandering



**We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action. Now, have men who claim to believe the Word of God learned their lesson that obedience is better than sacrifice? "He hath shewed thee (this rebellious people), O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to **do justly, and to love mercy**, and to walk humbly with thy God?" [Micah 6:8].**

{ 20MR 313.1 } Dec. 7, 1901. to P. T. Magan



## CURRENT LOCATION

“Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. **Coming events cast their shadows before.** The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord’s appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win. { DA 636.1}



## CURRENT LOCATION

Are we in a similar situation?

Do we feel the need to change anything?

Is there space for the Holy Spirit in our midst?

What are social meetings?

This was the work of the great Master Artist, and we could but exclaim, "How wonderful are all Thy works, Lord God Almighty." We feel subdued and awed in the presence of such manifestations of the great God. I thought of the psalmist who calls upon everything, animate and inanimate to join in one chorus of thanksgiving to God. He, thus calling upon the senseless and irrational, is the most powerful rebuke to those blessed with intelligence if their souls do not glow and their lips proclaim the majesty and glory of God. "Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy winds fulfilling His word." LT 20 1884



MULTNOMAH FALLS  
COLUMBIA RIVER OREGON

ORANGE & SAUNDERS PHOTO

Portland, OR

Friday morning at five o'clock we commenced our meeting, and I arose and talked a short time telling them we had waited for these leading men to take a position which God could approve and let His Spirit into the meeting. We had no more appeals to make to them and no more time to lose in waiting for them. They had stood directly in the way of our work from the first, and now our work was for these who had come to this meeting to be benefited. I had two front seats cleared and asked those who were backslidden from God and those who had never started to serve the Lord, to come forward. They began to come. Other seats were cleared, and finally there was the whole body [of] seats of the tent filled; about one dozen were in the side seats.

Then the Spirit of God like a tidal wave swept over the congregation. Such solemnity! Deep, earnest, heartfelt confessions were made. These men who had stood like icebergs melted under the beams of the Son of righteousness. They came right to the point. They made thorough work. Confessions were made with weeping and deep feeling. We had a most solemn, blessed season of intercession, and then closed the meeting and took our breakfast and assembled again at eight o'clock to finish the work. Parents confessed to children and children to parents, husbands to wives and wives to husbands, brothers to sisters, and sisters to brothers. It seemed like the movement of 1844. I have not been in a meeting of this kind for many years. After the hard fought battle the victory was most precious. We all wept like children. {Lt20-1884}

## Battle Creek Revival 1892

That very next day a letter from Ellen White arrived for W. W. Prescott. In his absence Mrs. Prescott decided to have portions of the letter read to the student body the next day during the chapel period. Some phrases seemed to powerfully encapsulate the Gospel: the Christian was one “content to receive without deserving,” Ellen White wrote, God’s eternal with wonderful power. It was evident to the faculty that there was a better work to be done than academic classes, and they chose to continue the religious meeting, which continued for four hours. During that time, “there were between forty and fifty who made practically their first start in the Christian life.” Of the 350 students in the chapel, more than 300 took part in the meeting; “as many as fifty or more on their feet at one time.” In the end almost the entire student body was drawn in, resulting in thirty baptisms. Yet, wrote W. W. Prescott, “there was no excitement, but the deep movings of the Spirit of God were plainly discerned.

The revival spread from the college to the community of Battle Creek, as students began to share their new-found experience. W. A. Spicer reported that a “spirit of seeking the Lord for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit has taken possession of believers,” especially at the “College and Review Office.” He hoped that all “might experience some of the droppings of the blessed latter rain! It ‘awaits our demand and reception.’” The Review noted that the “work was not the result of any particular efforts of a revival nature, but it seemed to spring up in places and in hearts where it was least expected,” as the people realized “rapid fulfillment of prophecy in our country, and the evidence that the time has come for the loud cry to be given.” It was also noted that “the same work is going on in many other parts of the field, especially in Michigan. The refreshing is not to be confined to any one locality.”

W. S. Lowry acknowledged, of the week of prayer meetings in Springville, Tennessee, that he had “never witnessed such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we had during the whole time of the meetings.” The social meetings following each night grew better and better, and he had never seen “such great freedom as was manifested on the part of all present. Confessions were made, and souls revived.”

R. Duffield “Wounded in the House of His Friends”

## COUNSEL

**“ When you assemble in the house of God, tell your experiences, and you will grow stronger. While you speak in meeting, you are gaining an education that will enable you to labor for others. What a precious privilege it is to bring souls to Christ. It is the greatest work that mortals can do, for in so doing they are co-laborers with God. But of ourselves we can do nothing. If we try to work in our own strength, we shall fail completely. Jesus came to our world to bring divine power to combine with human effort. When God unites his power with man’s effort, the work is brought to perfection. God wants to do great things for his people; and if we only have faith in him, he will work for us mightily.”**  
{ RH May 7, 1889, par. 8 }



## COUNSEL

We should arouse every energy that God has given us, and should pray without ceasing. We should press our petitions to the throne of grace. We should plead with God to give us the spirit of supplication, that we may seek for those things which he has pledged himself to bestow upon us. If you pray in faith, you will gain a rich experience, because you will be living as in the sight of God; and **when you come together on the Sabbath in the capacity of a social or prayer meeting, the angels of God will accompany you, to be round about you in the house of worship. You will not be without a testimony to bear to the glory of God.**

{ RH October 22, 1889, par. 8 }

## COUNSEL

All heaven is keeping the Sabbath, but not in a listless, do-nothing way. On this day every energy of the soul should be awake, for are we not to meet with God and with Christ our Saviour? We may behold Him by faith. He is longing to refresh and bless every soul.

Everyone should feel that he has a part to act in making the Sabbath meetings interesting. **You are not to come together simply as a matter of form, but for the interchange of thought, for the relation of your daily experiences, for the expression of thanksgiving, for the utterance of your sincere desire for divine enlightenment, that you may know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.** (cont)

## COUNSEL

Communing together in regard to Christ will strengthen the soul for life's trials and conflicts. Never think that you can be Christians and yet withdraw yourselves within yourselves. Each one is a part of the great web of humanity, and the experience of each will be largely determined by the experience of his associates.

**We do not obtain a hundredth part of the blessing we should obtain from assembling together to worship God. Our perceptive faculties need sharpening. Fellowship with one another should make us glad. With such a hope as we have, why are not our hearts all aglow with the love of God? { 6T 362.3}**

## COUNSEL

Says the prophet, **“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”** You can see from this text that the burden of the social meeting does not rest upon one individual, but upon all. We are to speak one to another. There is nothing that will so completely kill out the true spirit of devotion in social worship as for one to occupy the time to the exclusion of others. When one person takes up twenty or thirty minutes in a long-drawn testimony, it is not for the glory of God, but that self may be exhibited; it is not for the prosperity of him who does it, or for the prosperity of the church.

(cont)

## COUNSEL

It is death to the meeting. Those who are willing to let some one else do their talking for them, are willing to rob themselves of the blessing that God has for them, and they are failing to obtain the experience which it is necessary for them to have in order that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. It is essential that every member of the church should keep himself in working order, so that he can have freedom in speaking his thoughts intelligently to the members of the church.

{ RH October 22, 1889, par. 9 }

## COUNSEL

“The Lord has shown me that great interest should be taken by Sabbathkeepers to keep up their meetings and make them interesting. There is great necessity of more interest and energy being manifested in this direction. All should have something to say for the Lord, for by so doing they will be blest. A book of remembrance is written of those who do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but speak often one to another.

## COUNSEL

The remnant are to overcome by the **blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony**. Some expect to overcome alone by the blood of the Lamb, without making any special effort of their own. I saw that God has been merciful in giving us the power of speech. He has given us a tongue, and we are accountable to Him for its use. We should glorify God with our mouth, speaking in honor of the truth and of His unbounded mercy, and overcome by the word of our testimony through the blood of the Lamb. **We should not come together to remain silent; those only are remembered of the Lord who assemble to speak of His honor and glory and tell of His power; upon such the blessing of God will rest, and they will be refreshed.**" EW 114

## COUNSEL

"Where bodies of believers are brought out on the truth in new places, we would not recommend the immediate formation of a church. In such cases let a leader be appointed (this can perhaps best be done by the evangelist when he raises up the church), and let social meetings be continued till such time as the individuals become thoroughly acquainted with each other, and ascertain with whom they can have fellowship, and who are qualified for the important duties of officers of the church. As to the particular manner of organizing a church, when the proper time comes, we shall be allowed to avail ourselves of the experience of several ministers who have already adopted the following plan, and testify that it works well." J.N. Loughborough



## COUNSEL

“There are times when it is fitting for our ministers to give on the Sabbath, in our churches, short discourses, full of the life and love of Christ. But the church members are not to expect a sermon every Sabbath.

Let us remember that we are pilgrims and strangers on this earth, seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Let us work with such earnestness, such devotion, that sinners will be drawn to Christ. Those who have united with the Lord in the covenant of service are under bonds to unite with Him in the great, grand work of soul saving. **Let church members, during the week, act their part faithfully, and on the Sabbath relate their experience. The meeting will then be as meat in due season, bringing to all present new life and fresh vigor.** When God’s people see the great need of working as Christ worked for the conversion of sinners, **the testimonies borne by them in the Sabbath service will be filled with power.** With joy they will tell of the precious experience they have gained in working for others.” 7T 19

1931 RH

Is the so-called social meeting, going out of practice in some of our churches? We fear it is. It is still held as a part of the prayer meeting, but we have wished many times that it could be made a part of the regular Sabbath service.

As we hark back to the Sabbath services Of our boyhood days, we vividly recall that no Sabbath service was considered complete unless opportunity was given for the members of the congregation to speak of their Christian experience, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to God for His many mercies. And this was a general practice, whether the Sabbath services were conducted by the local church elder, or whether some minister was present and gave a sermon for the occasion. The rank and file of the church had an opportunity to express, in an after meeting, their thanks and hopes and purposes in connection with the service of Christ. And we can recall how we were thrilled by some of the humble testimonies borne. They did us more good than some of the sermons to which we listened. We wish there could be a revival of this in some, of our churches. (cont)

We wish that once more opportunity could be afforded at the Sabbath service for praise and thanksgiving on the part of the congregation. It might require a shortening of the long announcements, which would be indeed refreshing; it might require that the minister should shorten his discourse, which sometimes would make it more forcible and appealing. We recognize, of course, that in some of our large churches this might not be practicable. But in the great majority of our congregations, services could be conducted in this way. It might not be best to follow this plan every Sabbath, but we believe that occasionally this could be done with great profit.

Large numbers of our congregations never attend prayer meeting, unfortunately, and so they are deprived of the privilege of social worship ? Why not afford them the opportunity of telling what God has done for their souls? We believe that the effect would be most wholesome, even upon those not of our faith who might be present.

FMW Advent Review and Sabbath Herald May 7, 1931

# Early Adventist “Social Meetings”

A call for testimony revival

Early Adventist worship had different essential elements that connected people to God and each other. Bible study in Sabbath School and preaching the Word through a Bible-based message were complemented by the “social meeting,” or planned sharing time.

It might occur in connection with Sabbath School, follow the morning sermon, or appear in an afternoon meeting. There was a culture of speaking in church with sincere testimonies of encouragement, experience, providence, answered prayer, and praise, as well as confession and even exhortation.

As a young girl Ellen Harmon was introverted and shy. During 1843 or early 1844 she found the courage to pray out loud for the first time during a meeting at her uncle’s home in Portland, Maine, United States. She had struggled with doubts about her conversion. This prayer transformed her Christian experience.

She said, “As I prayed, the burden and agony of soul that I had so long endured left me, and the blessing of the Lord descended upon me like the gentle dew. I praised God from the depths of my heart. . . . The Spirit of God rested upon me with such power that I was unable to go home that night.”<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this, at a Millerite meeting in Portland, she shared her testimony: “The simple story of Jesus’ love to me fell from my lips with perfect freedom, and my heart was so happy to be liberated from its bondage of dark despair that I lost sight of the people

around me and seemed to be alone with God. I found no difficulty in expressing my peace and happiness, except for the tears of gratitude that choked my utterance as I told of the wondrous love that Jesus had shown for me.”<sup>2</sup>

Levi Stockman, an Adventist minister who had privately talked with young Ellen about her struggles, was present at this meeting. He was so affected that he “wept aloud,” praising God for the blessing given to the girl he had recently seen so overcome with discouragement and fear.

Ellen, later to be called to prophetic ministry as the Lord’s messenger, was soon asked again to share her testimony at a nearby Christian chapel. As she expressed her love for Jesus with subdued heart and tearful eyes, the “melting power of the Lord came upon the assembled people. Many were weeping and others praising God.” A call for sinners to rise for prayer was made with wonderful effect.<sup>3</sup>

## PLANNED TESTIMONY TIMES

These dynamic expressions of living faith and revival as illustrated by Ellen White’s early experience were characteristic of early Adventist worship. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Seventh-day Adventist worship included planned testimony times. People were invited to respond to the message given and share their own experience with God.

The “social meeting” was a significant feature at the organization of the Michigan Conference in 1861 and of the General Conference in 1863. “Our ministers had unusual freedom in preaching the Word, and the social meetings were excellent, especially the general conference meeting on Sunday evening. . . . The time was filled up with short testimonies from many brethren and sisters. A calm, sweet, melting spirit pervaded the meeting making it the best of the kind we ever witnessed.”<sup>4</sup>

Church leaders at those conferences placed social meetings at the heart of evangelism and church organization. They recommended that when an evangelist held meetings in new areas, “a leader be appointed, and let social meetings be continued till such time as the individuals become thoroughly acquainted with each other, and ascertain with whom they can have fellowship, and who are qualified for the important duties of officers of the church.”<sup>5</sup> Then the congregation would be organized.

This approach was affirmed by Ellen White in Australia in 1894. J. O. Corliss introduced the personal sharing time to the small “Seven Hills” congregation following a moving message from Ellen White. “We then had a social meeting. This was a new exercise to those who had newly come to the faith, but Elder Corliss called upon one after another to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus until

**Sharing personal experiences with others helps us understand our need of God’s blessing and builds relationships between people.**

all but one of the believers bore testimony,” Ellen White observed: “We keep before them the fact that the social meeting will be the best meeting in which they may be trained and educated to be witnesses for Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

## SHORT AND MULTIFACETED

She gave practical counsel that these sharing times should not be dominated by one or two people. “There should be a spirit of confession to God, and an acknowledgment of His blessings, with thanksgiving.”<sup>7</sup> “In conclusion I would say, on the Sabbath, when the people assemble for worship, let the discourse be short, and let all be given an opportunity to bear testimony.”<sup>8</sup>

Sharing personal experiences with others helps us understand our need of God’s blessing and builds relationships between people. It provides a living way for the Holy Spirit to impress hearts and connect people to God.

The Bible is filled with stories of struggles and personal faith. The Holy Spirit uses these stories, along with our own, to bring personal and congregational revival. One of the reasons we love the Psalms is that they honestly express heart need, confession, petition, promise, praise, and stories of the mighty acts of God.

In these last days the wonderful promise to us is clear: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Rev. 12:11). What would happen if every church had sharing and testimony meetings? Satan would be overcome through both the redeeming blood of Jesus and the word of our testimony. ☉

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> [James White], “Michigan General Conference,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 8, 1861, p. 148; see also [James White], “The Conference,” *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1863, p. 204.

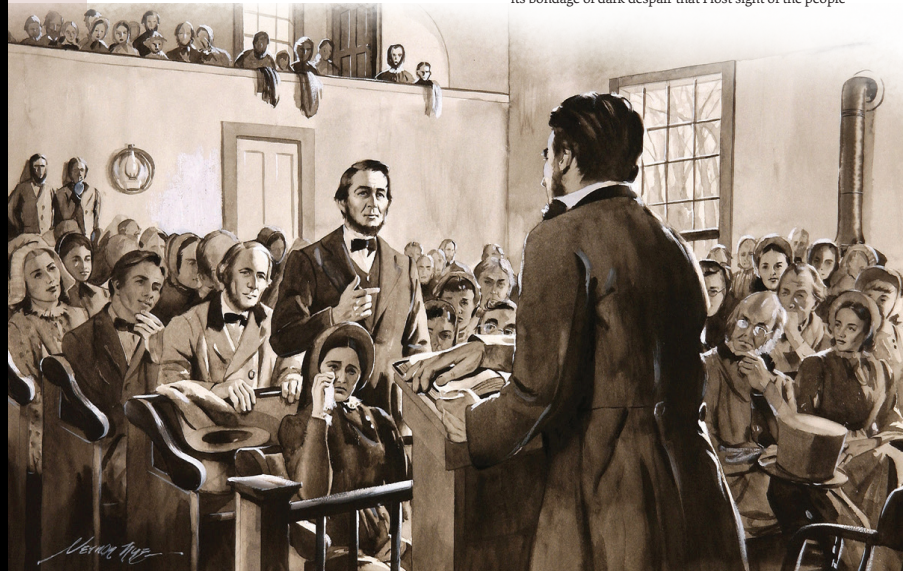
<sup>5</sup> J. N. Loughborough, Moses Hull, M. E. Cornell, “Conference Address,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1861, p. 156; see also *Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (1863), pp. 8, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, “Meeting at Seven Hills,” manuscript 32, 1934.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White letter 279, 1905, in Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 9, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White letter 187, 1904, in *ibid.*

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- Keep them short, long testimonies are death to the meeting.
- Recent, last few weeks, and we want fresh bread, not stale bread. Not bringing attention to yourself.
- God blesses us so that we can bless others, and God gives us experiences so that we can be a blessing to others.
- Not for prayer requests, that is a different meeting.
- It can be very short, A few words are still praise.
- In response to message.
- What God is showing you.
- Confession.
- No Rants.

It is earnest Christian zeal that is wanted,—a zeal that will be manifested by doing something.... No more could a soul who possesses Christ be hindered from confessing Him, than could the waters of Niagara be stopped from flowing over the falls.—  
Testimonies for the Church 2:233. { ChS 229.6}

While we are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, these assemblies are not to be merely for our own refreshing. **We are to be inspired with greater zeal to impart the consolation we have received.** It is our duty to be very jealous for the glory of God and to bring no evil report, even by the sadness of the countenance or by ill-advised words, as if the requirements of God were a restriction upon our liberty. Even in this world of sorrow, disappointment, and sin the Lord desires us to be cheerful, and strong in His strength. The whole person is privileged to bear a decided testimony in every line. In features, in temper, in words, in character, we are to witness that the service of God is good. Thus we proclaim that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7. { 6T 365.1}

- Testimonies -



