

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GOD - NUMBER TEN *THE REMINDER OF THE EVIDENCE*

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Number Ten: "**The Reminder Of The Evidence**,"--another look at the Sabbath--in the larger setting of the great controversy over God's character and government. If God values nothing higher than our freedom, why has He placed right in the heart of the "royal law of liberty" (James) a command to remember the Sabbath? Is this possibly one instance where God has imposed an arbitrary requirement upon His people, just to show His authority and test their willingness to obey? But the whole message of Scripture is that there is no arbitrariness in our God. As Paul explained, God's laws were given to help us, to protect us in our ignorance and immaturity, to lead us back to trust.

Viewed in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God, the Sabbath was "made for man" (Jesus), not **before**, but **after** sin entered the universe. Repeatedly in the sixty-six books the Sabbath is connected with times of special demonstration of the truth about our God--the perfection and freedom of creation week, the freeing of His people from Egyptian bondage, the costly and convincing evidence of crucifixion week, the promise of peace and freedom in the earth made new.

The Sabbath is a monument to freedom. It sums up the good news about God. It reminds us of the everlasting truth that "sets us free" (Jesus) and will keep us free for eternity. It should always be a "delight" (Isaiah), to be enjoyed in the highest sense of freedom. Observed merely as obedience to an arbitrary command, the Sabbath could turn us against God--even lead us to "crucify Him once again" (Hebrews 6)--then hurry home to keep the Sabbath holy, as happened that sad Friday nineteen hundred years ago.

Welcome to the tenth of our Conversations about God--another look at our Heavenly Father in the larger setting of the great controversy over His character and government. The subject for our conversation this time is "**The Reminder of The Evidence**." The title was chosen to suggest the important meaning and purpose of yet another of God's provisions to help us during this crisis of distrust.

Unfortunately, the Sabbath has not always been understood as designed to help us in this way. On the contrary it has been widely misunderstood-- and misunderstood in such a way as to support Satan's charges against our God of being arbitrary, exacting, and severe. Even among devout observers of the seventh-day, the Sabbath has often been so understood, to our great loss, as on that very sad Friday 1900 years ago. But if we put the Sabbath in the setting of all Sixty-six books and in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God, I believe that all arbitrariness evaporates.

The best known biblical verse or statement about the Sabbath, I suppose, is in Exodus 20--right in the middle of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:8,11 RSV - Actually the commandment runs all the way from 8 to 11) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

It is significant to note that in the New Testament, James (1:25) called the Ten Commandments--the Decalogue--the "royal law of liberty"--not the "royal law of subjugation, surrender, and bondage", but the "royal law of freedom." Yet when we read this particular commandment, at first it could be understood as somewhat arbitrary, couldn't it? Is it possible that here we have one instance of God laying upon His children an arbitrary requirement just to show His authority and test their willingness to obey? Is not the message of all Sixty six books--and certainly of these conversations about God - that there is no arbitrariness in our God? What a price He has

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paid to disprove it!

As Paul explains (and this will be dealt with more under the titles "**God's Law is No Threat to Our Freedom**" and "**God's Emergency Measures**") God's laws were not given to be a burden or restrict us. They were given to help us, to protect us in the days of our ignorance and immaturity and lead us back to trust and on to freedom. God values nothing higher than our freedom.

When you go all the way through the Sixty six Books and you come to the last one, the book of Revelation, you note that God is still asking us to remember Him especially as our Creator. You remember in Revelation 14 the three messages of the three angels. The first angel says as recorded in Revelation 14:7 (NAB), "Honor God and give him glory, for his time has come to sit in judgment. Worship the Creator of heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and the springs." I hope you're able to recognize these versions. That is from the New American Bible--a Roman Catholic translation of very great quality. It is a fine translation of the verse.

Now when we read that first angel's message to "worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs", we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already up in heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust. Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world, this time ours.

How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the great controversy, He chose, this time, to do it in six 24-hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." (Gen. 1:3) That is all. Then day 2, 3, 4, 5, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish. Look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. We know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. He created us able to do it. God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden, He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Even would see it every time they came to that other tree. Look at Genesis 2:9 (NIV), "In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Of course the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. You know He would not do that. So, Satan was only allowed to approach them at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. Isn't that the meaning of that famous key text in 1 Corinthians 10:13 (GNB)? "But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm."

You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every one of God's gracious laws.

Then God stunned the universe by sharing with us, as far as He possibly could with mere created human beings, some of His own marvelous creative power. God so designed it that when a man and a woman come together in love, they are able to share their life--create little

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people in their own image. Isn't it interesting to watch our children and our grandchildren? They look so much like us. They behave like us--at our best points and our worst points. Truly, they do reflect our image and God designed it to be this way. You recall God's words there in Genesis 1:28 (GNB) "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control." That was His original plan.

The Song of Solomon right in the middle of the Bible reminds us that this whole thing was God's idea--that we should be male and female and feel the way we do about each other, and say the things we do to each other and come together in love and create little people in our own image. God thought that all up Himself. You know He could have created us to look like E.T., or little green people with antennae from Mars. Just think what He might have done. Babies could have come in test tubes or one of these other ways that are being devised. No, not the way that God designed it. It worries some people. Other people say, "What kind of a God must He be to design things in this way?" Then He put a whole book in the middle of the Bible that worries some people and delights others. Think what "the Song of Solomon" says about our God--reminding us of that creation week and of the Sabbath that came at the end of it!

Well, the universe watched all during creation week--the universe that had heard the charges against God. They watched all this. When it was over, they said, "That is very good." Love and admiration for God must have known no bounds. Where now were Satan's charges that God does not respect the freedom of His creatures? Or that He is very selfish in His use of authority and power? So we have the next verse, Genesis 2:2,3 (NEB), "On the sixth day God completed all the work he had been doing, and on the seventh day he ceased from all his work." (Rested does not mean that He was tired. It is like an attorney saying, "I have presented my case and all my evidence. I now rest my case." God just ceased from all His creative work.) "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he ceased from all the work he had set himself to do." (parentheses supplied).

Can you imagine how the universe spent the next 24 hours as they celebrated with God the first seventh-day Sabbath? Now it was **not** man's seventh day. It was our second day. And if the Sabbath were designed to give us a rest every seventh day since our creation, we should be observing Thursday. The first Sabbath was God's day of celebration. The universe joined with Him and we were merely visitors. In fact, a little time had to pass before we discovered all that had gone on that week, though the whole universe had watched. Now we are celebrating with God how good it was. God called on His family throughout the universe to join with Him in reflecting on the significance of what had been done, the answers that had been given to Satan's charges, the falsity of his accusations, and the truth about freedom, love, and generosity on the part of our gracious Heavenly Father.

You see, the Sabbath was given after sin, not before. If it was given before sin we might think of it as an arbitrary test of our obedience. But it was given after sin, because we needed it very much. It must have seemed to the universe looking on that Friday night that the great controversy had been won. But Satan's most serious charge against our God had not been dealt with. No event of creation week had dealt with his charge that God had lied to His children when He warned that the consequence of sin is death. Nothing during creation week, eloquent as it was, dealt with that most serious charge. God waited thousands of years to answer that question. Finally, in the fullness of time, God sacrificed Himself, in the Son, to demonstrate the truthfulness of His word. We considered that topic two presentations ago. He did not ask us to prove the truthfulness of His word. He could have, by leaving us to die. Instead, He came Himself and died that awful death.

Jesus knew why He was dying. He put it all in the larger view of the great controversy. He knew

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about Satan's charges. So as He died, He said, "It is finished" - just as God, at the end of creation week, said, "I have finished the work for this week." But when Jesus died on the cross He said, "We have finished it all." For the most important answer to the most devastating accusation had been given at such infinite cost.

Look at John 19:30 (KJV), "It is finished." What was finished? Well, look at John 17:4 (New KJV), "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." His work was to reveal the character of God to angels and to men. On Friday evening, when Jesus died, at the end of crucifixion week, all the major questions in the great controversy had been answered and all of Satan's charges against God had been met. How significant that the next day was the seventh-day Sabbath! Jesus could have gone to heaven on Friday to hear the universe tell Him that it was more than enough--everything is clear. Instead He waited in the tomb over the Sabbath hours.

Can you imagine what the universe was doing? Surely the whole universe paused to reflect on the significance of what they had seen. No doubt they joined with the Father in celebrating the costly victory that had been won, and in thanking Him for the costly evidence that had been presented. Now they knew that the universe was secure for eternity.

As I understand it, this is why God asked us to remember the Sabbath. We need to pause and be reminded of those truths in which the angels rejoice. This is certainly no mere test of our obedience. Caught up in the great controversy as we are, we need the message of the seventh day. Surely that is what Jesus meant when He said, "The Sabbath was made for us. We weren't made for the Sabbath." Look at Mark 2:27 (GNB), "The Sabbath was made for the good of man."--as were all of God's laws.

But as you read on through the Sixty six, the meaning of the Sabbath is repeated and enlarged. For example, at Sinai in the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath is connected with creation. Then when you read on, John and Paul make it plain that the one who created us, was none other than Jesus Christ. Look at John 1:3 (NIV), "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Put with that Paul's comment in Colossians 1:16 (NIV), "For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him."

Think of the significance of that. The One who came to save us, is the One who made us in the beginning. Who would know better how to heal the damage done? The gentle Jesus who walked so softly among men and then died the way He did on Calvary, is not some weak Person. He is the supreme all-powerful Creator of the whole vast universe. That is the One who died on Calvary. Nor did God send some subordinate person--not even the first of His angels. The Creator came Himself, the One who is equal with God, for He actually is God. Then for some of us, every time we observe the seventh-day Sabbath, we are publicly acknowledging to God, to our friends and to ourselves that we have faith in Jesus as our Saviour, as our Creator, and our God, no less.

So then when you raise the question about what kind of person our God is--"Could the Father possibly be as gracious as the Son?"--the reply comes every Sabbath: God is just as gracious as the Son. For Christ, the One we call the Son, is God. Or does anyone think that He is less than that? If Christ is our Creator God, then if we want to know what our God is like, just look at Christ. Every Sabbath is to remind us of theology **that** consequential.

But then there are other ways in which the Sabbath helps strengthen our faith. These are mentioned in Ezekiel and Exodus. Look at Exodus 31:13 (GNB). Observe that this is God speaking. "Keep the Sabbath, my day of rest, because it is a sign between you and me for all

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time to come, to show that I, the Lord, have made you my own people." Move to Ezekiel 20:20 (GNB), "Make the Sabbath a holy day, so that it will be a sign of the covenant we made, and will remind you that I am the Lord your God." Look now in Ezekiel 20:12 (GNB), "I made the keeping of the Sabbath a sign of the agreement between us, to remind them that I, the Lord, make them holy." Note that the Sabbath is supposed to be a reminder. A reminder of a very important truth about the Lord our God and His relationship with His people. His people were an unholy, sinful bunch. Yet God is saying to them, I have not abandoned you. I am still working to save and heal you. I still regard you as my people. Notice that salvation is not merely forgiveness, but also the healing of the damage done--making us holy people.

Now some of us keep the seventh day Sabbath to show that only the Creator can heal the damage done. Only the One who made us in the beginning could restore us to what we used to be. He has the creative power, and it requires creative power. Surely it is no less a miracle to take damaged merchandise and restore it than to create it perfectly in the beginning. That is why when David prayed in Psalm 51:10 (KJV), He said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." It is the very same creative power that He used in the beginning that is necessary now to make us trustworthy, holy children of God once again.

Now we cannot do this by ourselves, although some try by self- discipline, restraint, and so forth. Surely we realize that that will not work. Only by faith and trust in our Creator can all the damage be perfectly restored.

But there are other ways mentioned in the Bible. When Moses repeated the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy he gave a different reason than he gave in Exodus for keeping the Sabbath. Notice in Deuteronomy 5:15 (NEB), "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out (the exodus) with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and for that reason the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." (parentheses supplied) Now this verse is no contradiction or lapse of memory on the part of the elderly leader. The Sabbath is about God. He created us free in the beginning. When we lost our freedom, He used His creative power to set us free again. Note that the Sabbath is always connected with freedom.

Then there is another way mentioned in Hebrews 4. If you recall the whole chapter, the Sabbath there is described as a type and a foretaste of the rest to come. If you can remember the argument, the apostle says that when Israel entered Canaan, they physically entered the promised land, but they certainly didn't enter into God's rest, because they didn't trust Him. There remains, therefore a Sabbath-like rest to the people of God. That is, if we have been led to really trust God, we begin to enter that Sabbath-like rest now.

But certainly in the earth made new, we will know what that Sabbath-like rest is all about. Look at Hebrews 4:9 (Goodspeed). "So there must still be a promised Sabbath of Rest for God's people." Look also at the translation in *the Jerusalem Bible*, "There must still be, therefore, a place of rest reserved for God's people, the seventh-day rest." Isn't that an interesting rendering in that great Roman Catholic translation, *the Jerusalem Bible*.

You see, the Sabbath has answered the basic questions of thoughtful people down through the years. Questions such as: Where have we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go in the future? Above all, what kind of a Person is our God? What does He want of His children? The Sabbath has always been there to answer those four questions:

1. Where have we come from?

The answer is found in creation, and all that happened then.

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### 2. Why are we here, and how do we attain to the greatest good in life?

Our whole purpose is the restoration, through faith in God, of the damage done by rebellion, learning to be His holy, trusting people and discovering all the good things that will come to those who trust God.

### 3. Where do we go in the future?

The Sabbath has always pointed forward to the second coming and the earth made new. And what about our God? Every Sabbath we are reminded that God is just like Christ, our Creator, because Christ is God.

Is there any information Satan would rather we **not** have than this? No surprise then that Satan would seek to confuse the meaning of the Sabbath day. I very much like Moffatt's rendering of that Exodus 20:12 text. "I gave them my Sabbath to mark the tie between me and them, to teach them that it is I the Eternal, who sets them apart." Most of the world has broken that tie. The last message of God to the world is the restoration of that tie. It's a message of love and faith. It is not legalism—"If you don't keep this day, I will kill you." Rather, whenever we preach Christ as our Creator, our Saviour, the One who is coming again, whenever we preach that God is like His Son, we are preaching the message of the seventh day.

As you know, when we come to the Sixty-sixth book, at the very end of time, the world is described as being divided into two sides. Revelation 12 speaks of the war up in heaven. Revelation 13 speaks of Satan's final campaign and that the whole world will be worshiping him, except the few described in Revelation 14. Look how they are described in Revelation 14:12 (GNB), "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." In that day, the intelligent, wholehearted observance of the seventh-day Sabbath will represent this very faithfulness and loyalty to Jesus. There will be a group who still worship Jesus as their Creator and their God.

You notice that the Sabbath is not about us. It is about God. I like to think that is why we put it in our name--Seventh-day Adventists. We didn't put it in there to say something good about us, but to say that we have taken a position about our God. **I believe a real Seventh-day Adventist is a Christian who accepts and believes all that the Sabbath has to say about our God.** I wish it always meant that.

Well, someday God will have to recreate our world and give it to His trusting saints. Look at 2 Peter 3:10 (KJV). We know that the world is to be purified by fire, and Peter says, "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." That would be no place to live, so there will be re-creation. Look at Revelation 21:1 (RSV), "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Isaiah adds in Isaiah 65:17 (NIV), "Behold I will create new heavens and a new earth." How do you think God will create our world the next time? You know He could do it in an instant, as He could have in the beginning, during creation week. But being the patient Teacher that He is, is it possible that He might do it in six days as He did the first time? Imagine watching creation in days 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 again? Just to say something to saints that have questions about that simple Genesis account. I can see Him doing it and smiling the whole week.

But there will be one difference about it when the earth is re-created. Will there be a need to create an Adam and an Eve? Not this time. Just open the pearly gates, and welcome His children home.

Isaiah describes how in the new earth we will be delighted to meet and worship our God. Isaiah

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66:23 (NEB), "Month by month at the new moon, week by week on the Sabbath, all mankind shall come to bow down before me, says the Lord." If on the first Sabbath in the new earth, God should say, "Children, would you like to join with me in celebrating? I would like to keep this first Sabbath as the most special one we have ever had."

Would you say, "Oh no! Here we go--back under the law again. Why do you need to put an arbitrary test of our obedience upon us? Haven't we proved that we can be trusted? I thought that 'Christ was the end of the law.' (Rom. 10:4) 'We are not under the law, but under grace.' (Rom. 6:14) How **could** you talk about the Sabbath still?" Would you say that to God? Think of all there would be to remember. Can you imagine the first 24-hour Sabbath in the new earth? What a celebration!

If at the end of that first happy Sabbath, God would say, "I have enjoyed this so much, I would like to do this every week from now on," would you say, "Well, one is surely enough. Do we have to do it again and again?"

I think God might say, "By the way, how did you get in here if you do not enjoy this kind of thing?"

No. Isaiah says it will be our delight to meet and celebrate with God. So, is Sabbath-keeping arbitrary legalism? It can be. It **was**, on that sad crucifixion Friday 1900 years ago. But as God designed it, it is supposed to be a monument to freedom. It is supposed to remind us of the evidence - that infinitely costly evidence - that God is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be. He is **not** arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving and severe. He has given us the Sabbath to remind us of that everlasting truth.

May our thoughts be of freedom, and peace, and love, and trust, but most of all about our God, as we celebrate each Sabbath.

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2ST 351 - "Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. . . The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. . . The father was revealed in Christ as altogether a different being from that which Satan had represented him to be. . . the whole purpose of his own mission on earth (was) to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, 'I have manifested thy name.' 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' When the object of his mission was attained, - the revelation of God to the world, - the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. Jan. 20, 1890

## ***Conversations About God - Tape #10B***

Venden: I hope this friend is with us: "As a searching agnostic, not a member of your church, but interested in your views, I would like to know when one knows God and has actually let Christ into their heart. Religions based on the notion that you will feel it in your heart, seem to forget that feeling is obtainable through cults and many other ways. What I'm actually asking is, Where does intellectual study, doubt, questioning--and I assume--feeling, all come into play?"

That's a good question, a thoughtful question.

Maxwell: That's a very good question. I think a lot depends on the meaning of the word "know." Have you ever met anybody who'd say, "Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" Or something like that. It might be on the beach, or in an airport. And if you say, "Well, tell me what He's like." [They say,] "See, you don't have to do that. Just accept Him, and you'll know inside." I say that isn't knowing God at all. If you can't talk about Him, you don't know Him.

But the word "know" is more than just knowing about Him. It means to love Him, to trust Him, to admire Him. It's all in that special word, as in the relationship between a husband and his wife, as "Adam knew Eve his wife." It's a very special word.

So if you're wondering about yourself, when you think about the picture of God, do you like what you see? It seems to me there are many who can say, even with a special sound to the voice, that they just love the Lord. I don't want to seem disrespectful. I know some who will say, "I just love the Lord," but I don't think they like Him very much. But to love Him is something, you know, a saint does. So they will say they love Him.

The word "know" means you can not only talk about Him; you're informed about Him; but you like what you see. You really admire Him. And you ask yourself that question. And I think there's evidence whether you admire Him or not. Do you like to talk about Him? Are you comfortable talking about Him? At a social occasion, is it easy to do it? I think there are ways in which one can find whether one really knows Him or not.

But when the Lord comes almost as just a mystical feeling within, you don't know anything. And that could have come from all kinds of sources, including counterfeit ones.

No, it is a highly rational thing. We use the best brains we've got to know the Lord. And to make it rational is not to make it irreligious. I'm scared about being religious about something I'm not rational about. That's where the cults come in, and all those strange things that were mentioned in the question.

I think our clearest thoughts, our most dependable information and evidence, our greatest heights of logic and reason, are involved in knowing the most important thing there is to know. And that's the truth about our God. And to know Him personally.

Of course, when you know the kind of person God is, it is very stirring, it's very moving, it's great Good News. There's a lot of feeling there. I'm just worried about people who have great feeling, but can't tell you a thing about it. You can get that out of a bottle. And they call it the spirit, too, by the way.

So brains are involved indeed. But I think the Bible offers many ways in which one can determine whether one really knows God or not. I mean, who has our best thoughts? You know that famous quotation? I mean, who do you like to think about? Who do you like to talk about? Is it a pleasure to speak about God? And when you do, how does it come across? Paul says, "I'm proud of the Good News." Jeremiah says, "I'm proud of it too." I think when that comes through when we talk about God, that's evidence that we know Him. So one could mention many, many

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things in that connection. I like the way he's suspicious of a shortcut -- through some cultic, you know, mystical thing. That's not dependable.

Venden: And includes the experience of doubt, uncertainty, and all of that, as part of what could be present in the experience of knowing Him of necessity.

Maxwell: Yes. Maybe he was here when we talked about those false prophets. The one who said so piously, "I too am a prophet of the Lord; and the angel of the Lord has told me thus and so." But he lied to him. Now, it pays to investigate that. We should be skeptical in the best sense.

Venden: Of someone just making claims.

Maxwell: That's right. You know, "skeptical" unfortunately has come to have a negative meaning. "Skeptical" simply means to have the eye wide open. I think we need our eyes wide open, especially with the adversary going around seeking to confuse and deceive.

So all saints should be cautious skeptics - cautious Christian skeptics. And we're going to become more skeptical -- we'd better be! - as the end approaches, with the eye more wide open than ever. We're going to see and hear things we've never heard before. So that doesn't mean we're unbelieving. It means that we're just not gullible. To be too credulous is not a virtue; it means we're very vulnerable.

Venden: Here's another thoughtful question that we've had in hand for some time. This person pointed out that a human capacity to trust is developed very early, maybe about two or three years of age. But what happens when a little child is abused in some way and comes to be very distrustful? Their capacity to trust is damaged. And then, in the light of our whole series, and the crisis of distrust, and God winning us back to trust, how does the Lord go about restoring trust in a person, let's say, whose capacity to trust has been damaged? We talk about childlike trust. Is the trust that we have as adults the same thing? And how does God work to bring us, as damaged as we may have been, to a position of real trust?

Maxwell: Ah, there's much involved in there, isn't there? How terrible for childlike trust to be abused; so that even as a little child, the trust of a little child is impossible.

Did you read that story in the Reader's Digest? It says, "Weep while you read this story." It was a Laotian girl. Oh, that's a sad one, isn't it! I was amazed that she could behave the way she did. And I noticed the man who wrote the article, when she said, "What's going to happen to me?" -- as they sat there, he threw his arms around her; and the little girl accepted that. She didn't think he was going to hurt her.

And I think that's the point. That when we've been hurt that much, what chance is there we'll trust in God [when] we've never seen Him? And that's when human beings, I think, have a great deal to do with restoring the faith of a little child. You know, your parents have not proved trustworthy, the soldiers have not proved trustworthy. And who's God up there? He's the One who promised to look after you; and He hasn't. So what chance is there?

What a privilege then, to be the person that actually can win the trust of a little child like that. And some little children are sixty-five years old. So I do think we have a tremendous influence on each other in establishing this beginning trust.

And Jesus said, "Unless you have the faith of a little child, you will not see the Kingdom."

But the other part of the question was, I mean, should one settle for that? Paul is very eloquent on this subject. And he talks about people who still have just the faith of a little child. He says,

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"By now you should be teachers, teaching other people."

If all of us have the faith of a little child, who is going to look after us? Who is going to protect us? Religions that encourage that all the members have the faith of a little child, tend to develop a hierarchy of mature leaders. And we look to them to tell us. No one should come between us and our God.

So Paul said, "It's time that we grow up, and no longer be like little children any longer, easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men with their ingenuity in inventing error. Rather, let's grow up, and become mature," as [it says] in Hebrews 5; "People who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil."

I think the faith of a little child is so appropriate in a little child. But the faith of a little child in an adult, means that we're retarded. And yet how much religion encourages this immature, retarded faith in its members.

And that should be one characteristic of any church that claims to be really doing God's will in the world today, which is preparing people to survive the dreadful deceptions and confusions of the end. That church should be noted for encouraging the maturing of its members.

Now, you can't mature if you're told all the time what to believe. So I would be looking for a church that would encourage its members -- you know, within realms of politeness and respect -- to investigate everything. That even when our trusted pastor says something even from the Gospel of John - what better place these days in the pulpit! - you will investigate when you get home. You know, maybe he's wrong once in awhile.

Venden: It could happen.

Maxwell: I'll admit it! You know, it's so nice when you say something that you've studied for years, and someone suggests you might be wrong, you go home and look it up. Incredible! All these years! I did one this week. It's delightful to go and look it up. I'm never going to say a certain thing precisely that same way again. A student in one of my classes pointed out something. Oh, that's great!

So in a church that is maturing its members, you will find what needs to be done in these last days. So I hope we're noted for that. That means you don't dictate to the members. You don't discourage investigation and inquiry. In Sabbath School classes you encourage questioning.

In our schools, the young people are encouraged to ask questions. You would never say, as I hear one Bible teacher did, "The only question I will allow in my Bible class is the one question: How can I obey?" That will not produce grownups. That will produce retarded little ones who will be dependent upon these authorities, who may not be around in the time of trouble. We've got to come to the place -- ah, Ellen White puts it magnificently! Some think she'd like to keep people as retarded saints. On the contrary, she says, "We must come to the place where we not only know the truth, but know that we know it." And no matter who he is or in what position he may be placed, we look to no one as a criterion for us when it comes to the picture God. We work it out for ourselves.

Now, she says, "We should be subject to one another, and work together." Of course! To help each other. "But when it comes to the end, we will stand singly and alone, to give a reason for the hope that is in us." So we should be a church that matures its members, if we claim to be a very helpful church in the last days. By the way, I think Loma Linda is one of the very good places for that. Don't you feel that way around here? I really do. Yes.

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Comment: Are you acquainted with the book by E. J. Waggoner, The Gospel in Creation?

Maxwell: Yes. I have a copy.

Comment: Isn't that a delightful book! The whole idea that the Creation story is a story of how to be saved. Light. Development. Rejoicing. And fellowship.

Maxwell: It's a pity that a lot of those books from that period are collector's items now - rather hard to come by - though a number of them have been reprinted in paperback, haven't they, in recent years? Southern Pub. was doing some of it. There are a few more I wish they would do.

There's one - very striking one - that would pertain to the next two Friday nights; when Elder Butler, President of the General Conference, and Dr. Waggoner, had that exchange. Dr. Waggoner wrote a book entitled, The Gospel in the Book of Galatians. And the president of the General Conference, Elder Butler, wrote his book and entitled it, The Law in the Book of Galatians. And the titles suggest the disagreement. And you should just read those two.

Elder Butler would say, "Now, Dr. Waggoner is a very fine gentleman, and I love him, etc., etc. But is he WRONG!" You know, it's just so strong. And then Dr. Waggoner comes back and says, "I have nothing but deferential affection and respect for the president of the General Conference, but is he wrong!"

And then they both said, "We don't expect these little books to be circulated." When a book is marked like that, everybody wants to get hold of it! You ought to see those. I had to ask the Seminary to lend us a copy so we could Xerox it. And we made several copies and have them bound down at San Pasqual Academy.

You have that copy?

Venden: No.

Maxwell: It's really something to read. But one thing about it: In those days, in our history around 1886, 7, and 8, the leaders talked to each other with great candor. With respect, but great candor. I think there's a lot to be said for that.

Comment: I have two questions. 1) I didn't understand at the beginning of your talks about what you meant about the Tree of Good and Evil, as well as the Sabbath being created after the onset of sin.

Maxwell: Yes.

Comment: I thought that they were both at the conception of the world. The second thing that I don't understand in the context of the Bible. And it's very easy to get a legalistic approach of the Sabbath when you see Revelation, the final book of the Bible, saying that only those who are Sabbath keepers, or Commandment keepers, are going to Heaven.

Maxwell: Now, let's take the first one. If you take what I would call the "This World View," as if there were no other universe, if one does not recognize there has been a war up in Heaven, then you would say that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was placed in the Garden before sin— that is, before man sinned.

But there was already an enemy abroad. That's why the tree was put there. And he was limited to that tree. So if you take the larger, great controversy view, the Sabbath was given after sin. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was given after sin.

And if you take that larger view, so many of these things then cease to be arbitrary. See, at first the tree - if you take the tree as before sin, then it really was arbitrary. They knew no reason

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why. But it was marvelous benefit to them -- God not allowing them to be tested more than they were able to bear. The devil could only approach them there. And you could tell he was limited to that tree; because had he been free, he'd have met them in the middle of the Tree of Life, wouldn't he? But he was limited to that tree, which was nearby, in the middle.

So a lot depends on whether one takes the great controversy view.

Maxwell: Yeah. Then the other one on the legalism? You mean in the book of Revelation. Oh, it does say the saints keep the Commandments of God and are loyal to Jesus. What does it mean to keep the Commandments?

It's significant to note that the most faithful, it would appear, Commandment-keepers who ever lived on this earth, who kept all Ten, and had a whole book of rules for keeping the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, were no friends of God. They nailed Him to the cross. And yet after they had crucified Him, they rushed home to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy, because it was a very special day— it also was Passover.

They had missed the meaning of the Passover. They had missed the meaning of the Sabbath. And yet they did not work on the Sabbath day. So what does it really mean to keep the Sabbath, to keep the spirits of the Sabbath? So one gets into this whole question of what sin is; what obedience is; what God wants of us.

I think the only reason why God's people in the last days -- those who will survive; those who are so settled into the truth that they cannot be moved by the devil visibly here as Christ, you know, the false christ -- the only reason why they're keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is, that the meaning of that day is what's protecting them. You see? And if they don't know the meaning of the Sabbath -- I mean, quite apart from the Sabbath, if they don't know the things which we now realize are memorialized by the Sabbath -- if they're not clear on those things, they'll never survive the confusion in the end.

Now, it just so happens as you go through the scriptures, God identifies the Sabbath historically with the events which were the demonstrations of those everlasting truths that will keep us from collapsing in the end. So it simply will be, that's all, that those in the end who are able to survive, will be thoughtfully observing the seventh-day Sabbath because of its meaning.

Venden: Yeah, that ties in with something you said earlier in the evening, when you talked about the legal model. If a person thinks the issue is obedience, from that standpoint, it produces an altogether different kind of attitude and view. Plus those that keep the commandments: "Well, all right, they're doing it," sort of thing. Whereas if one accepts and sees from this larger perspective, then the issue is one of trust, of loyalty. And the Sabbath functions in a completely different way.

Maxwell: That's right.

Venden: It has a very important and very significant perspective.

Maxwell: Because I - you remember Jesus' words about those who arise in the wrong resurrection and find to their horror it's the wrong one. And they present themselves at the Pearly Gates, with their tithe receipts and their mission reports. And they say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us. Have we not done many wonderful works in Thy name? Think of all the devils we've cast out. We've been Your best evangelists. And think of all the tithe we've paid, and all the happy Sabbaths we've given up— all the baseball games and football games we did not attend. Surely, Lord, we deserve to be let in."

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He says, "I know you've worked hard. But you did it for the wrong reason. Go away; you never were My friends." "See, I never knew you."

If one cannot keep the seventh day and feel very good about God and feel very friendly; and feel unburdened with the thing; beware! You might be among those who arise and say, "Lord, let me in; I really deserve it. I mean, think of it! It's one-seventh of our time. Think of it. One-seventh of our life blighted by this thing we have to do! Isn't it terrible, you know, that we're no friends of God? I think every gloomy Sabbath observer lends support to Satan's charges that God is arbitrary, and is no friend of God.

So that's why I really think in imagination -- on your way to church, you know, in the morning, ask why you're coming. Well, you know, you'd better. Lots of reasons why maybe you should. But turn around and walk the other way until you get to the end of the long procession coming in. And then stand there and decide whether you want to come or not. And then decide, "I sure do!" and walk into the back of the church, and stand there in the highest sense of freedom.

And maybe the pastor wouldn't mind if you'd speak up and say, "I'm here because I want to be; how many of the rest of you are?" You know, it might do us all a world of good. Because if you don't really want to keep it, it's lost a lot of its benefit.

I still though, would say to the little child - as Elder Venden said - "Little children are not ready for this. We take them there, and we hope they'll discover how good it is. But by and by, they get old enough, they can pack their bags and go their own way." But in the meantime, we hope they'll discover how enjoyable it is. And once again, it's parents most of all -- more than pastors, Bible teachers, or anybody -- that really can sell that thing.

Comment: I went overseas to Korea; on our ship we passed the International Date Line on Friday, and the next day was Sunday. What would you do in that case?

Maxwell: Ah, that's good! I would say, Oh happy day! I have skipped one burdensome Sabbath! [Laughter]

No, you see, if one is a legalist, one is troubled by that. What if you live on one of those islands in the middle there, and they can't decide where to put that Date Line? And they move it here, and they move it there.

It's the meaning of the day that counts. As a matter of fact, they may have that line in the wrong place. And you have been observing all these significant meanings conscientiously on Friday all your life! And when you meet the Lord, you'll be the nicest saint He's ever had on this planet. And God will say, "You know, this is so sad. You're exactly the kind of person I want to have in My Kingdom. But you kept Sabbath on the wrong day. You're out!" Not a chance! Not a chance! He won't do that.

No. But I would want to approach this very, very thoughtfully. You know, I would want to just be as close as I possibly could to the memorial of that first week, and the Exodus, and all these other things. By all means. But you might be on the line and there would be a problem.

I would say, coming the other way, oh what a misfortune! You've got to keep two Sabbaths! [Laughter] I mean, that's overdoing it, isn't it? Or how many of you have reached the age when you wish the sun would go down a little later Friday [Sabbath?] evening? It catches me too soon now.

You know, when you're little, you can hardly wait to get dressed for the Saturday night program. But as we get older, don't you prize the hours and wish the sun would go down a little later? How would you like to feel this Sabbath that the next day has been declared a Sabbath day?

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And you have to do it all over again.

I think some of us would be rather pleased to have that happen. I notice students under heavy pressure here are prizing the Sabbath more and more. Do you realize, students, under heavy pressure from your parents - for example - to work hard and do well, when those bells ring in the Hill Church, you can phone home and say, "Look, Mother and Dad! You can't make me study the next twenty-four hours. It's the Sabbath day."

You know, it's a wonderful release. That's not all there is to it. But that's one of the nice things about it. That really, God says, "Please, enjoy the next twenty-four hours."

Comment: How would you respond -- I heard a comment as we were tearing down tonight -- something that the work we were doing in the church -- we're tearing down the platform, tearing down the cameras. About fifteen people working over there for half an hour. How would you respond?

Maxwell: Well. Apart from the fact that it was for a very worthy cause -- that does enter into the matter of what's work on Sabbath. "In it thou shalt not do any work." Of all the days in the week, the pastoral staff work harder on Sabbath than any other day, as far as that's concerned.

And those of you on rotation, you know -- the rest are all in church, and it's your time to be up there in the hospital, or what have you. You'll work extra hard that day. So really, Sabbath is kept in here. It all depends what you're thinking about as you do it.

I love what Dr. Wareham said one time. You know, he's so often out of the country in Saudi Arabia. I haven't seen him in my Sabbath School class too often lately. But when he's in town, he's there. And he says, "Sabbath morning, I want to make it seem like a more special day. I go extra early so I can take a little more time to talk with my patients. Of course, if it's my day to be there, it's extra work; so I deliberately make it special."

I think that those who practice the healing arts and those who preach the word, are in the greatest danger of the Sabbath becoming just like any other day. And therefore we really have to keep it up here. I know I'm usually more tired at the end of Sabbath than any other day in the week. I like to go for these weekends where you don't just speak Sabbath morning and leave. Who knows what's happened? Turn up Friday evening, and then you speak, and you have discussion afterwards. And then people want to talk until 12:01. And then you prepare for the next day. And maybe you speak during Sabbath School, and speak during Church. And during potluck you talk for a couple of hours. And then you speak for an hour and a half. And then it's discussion until the sun goes down. And then a special meeting in the evening. And then folk want to talk until after midnight Saturday night.

You're almost a stretcher case. But oh, you've had a magnificent day! You drop into the car, you know, and think, "Ah, I have never been so tired! But what did we do these twenty-four hours? We talked about it the whole time. Magnificent!"

I don't think that's violated the spirit of the Sabbath. It's what's in your head at the time. It would be sad if we would say when patients are uncomfortable in the hospital on Sabbath; they've just had a disaster in the bed-- "That's too bad. Don't do that on Sabbath; because you know we not going to fix you on Sabbath."

We don't want patients hating to be admitted on Friday because we don't care for them on Sabbath. We want them to think Sabbath is the nicest day to be in our institution. Which might mean that the ones in charge will work even harder. They have to be very careful what's going on in here.

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And you know, you physicians and others, you could be sitting in the middle of Elder Venden's sermon tomorrow morning, and your beeper goes off. And you'll get up, you know, looking so, so disappointed that you have to leave and miss the rest of the sermon. And so you hurry out and get home and get changed to get down to the beach.

You know, these beepers. The rest of us, we all assume you're doing this, because you're self-sacrificially going to look after some dear, needy patient. Nobody knows the difference. You see, the chances for a doctor to cheat are tremendous. He even has the money to cheat with, you know. So when you meet a practitioner of the healing arts who has the wherewithal and all the alibis for cheating, and he's really loyal, you've got a super saint in my book. And there's lots of them around here. I'm very impressed with them.

So ministers and others alike -- and I'm sure you could match this for everybody -- If you want to cheat, you can. But you don't loaf on Sabbath. It's just you don't do the things that you might do during the rest of the week.

Except with the minister. What you do the rest of the week, you do even more on Sabbath. You know. Sabbath for a minister can be just another day. He really has to be careful that he's keeping the Sabbath holy.

Now, we've fixed the things in front. Well, we calculated that. It would be nice to have more of them done in advance; but with program following after program, that all had to come down afterwards because of the next program. Maybe we have too many programs.

But I'm thinking of one or two people who put it up and take it down. I don't know people more devoted to keeping the Sabbath, and honoring God, and spreading the good word, than those who look after that backdrop. You know. So I have to remember that too.

One thing's sure, Who am I to criticize another? And I love the way Paul did that. Before the Damascus road, he not only criticized people; he imprisoned them and stoned them to death when they didn't keep the Sabbath the way he thought they should. Later on he said, "Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind." He'll give account of himself to God. In the meantime, I'm not going to criticize him. I'll go help him take the thing down, probably, you know.

Venden: All right.

Maxwell: I'm glad you raised the question; because we're right there doing it.

Comment: You just mentioned— could we go back just a little bit, about this feeling that you were talking about, and that question that you read? You used to mention about going to a doctor. And whether he knew what he was doing or [just going by?] feeling. Would you like to mention that? Maybe that might put a little light on that feeling.

Maxwell: What you're remembering is this tendency to trust an inner sense of conviction without investigating it thoroughly. We let that go in religion. You know, we'll call that inspiration, or insight, or the Holy Spirit, or what have you. That's with respect to your soul and your eternal welfare. But when it comes to your physical well-being, you know; if you go to a doctor and say, "I think maybe I have appendicitis," and the doctor looks at you with kind of a glassy stare and says, "Yes, I have a warm feeling of conviction deep down in my heart that you have appendicitis; and we're going to operate right up here. I mean, I just have a warm conviction it should be up here." I mean, I'd be out of that office and down the road as fast as I could go! I mean, it's so obviously wrong. I'd say, "Look, you mean no X-rays? No tests?" "I don't need one. I have this warm sense of conviction deep down in my heart."

You'd never tolerate that in any other area of knowledge. But when it comes to religion, if

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someone can just, you know— you have this warm sense of conviction deep down in the heart. It's too dangerous! Absolutely too dangerous! I wouldn't trust it for a minute.

Now, does that get rid of the warm feeling? No! If you really know God and the way He is; you know, sometimes when you're describing Him, it's hard to continue, it gets that warm inside. It's overwhelming that He's that way. I like to have people feelings in response to fact and truth, rather than interpreting their feelings as the source of truth and fact. That's too dangerous.

But that's very, very popular right now. In fact, that's sweeping the world at the present time. You know, it's a certain kind of— called "the charismatic movement." And it's very, very dangerous. The very best leader of that movement today, asked a girl on television -- I watched the whole thing.

He said, "Have you been converted or not?"

She said, "I don't know."

"Well," he said, "you'd know it if you had."

She said, "How would I know it?"

"Oh," he said, "you'd feel that electricity sweep over you from your feet right up to your head. Have you ever had that feeling?"

She said, "No, I haven't."

"Would you like to have it?"

"I would."

He says, "I'll pray for you." And he worked her over on the platform, right on television -- some of you watched it, I'm sure.

And eventually she said, "I'm getting it. I feel it! I feel it! I feel it!"

"Praise the Lord!" he said. "Now you're converted."

That whole thing is hocus pocus, and I wouldn't trust it for a minute. She hadn't learned a thing she didn't know before. Nothing had happened.

And I'd rather read Paul's advice: "Let everything be done decently and in order." The Spirit does not bypass the mind. He is the Spirit of Truth. I mean, there are many, many ways to judge this. And yet that's the thing that's sweeping the world. People want the shortcut of feeling. Feeling is not faith. And faith must be based on truth and evidence, or you will be believing all kinds of weird and crazy things.

Oh, I love the way the Bible is so utterly rational. And yet as you read it, with your mind working better than at any other time, the feelings that come are simply tremendous. Don't worry about the feelings. But I think fact and truth should come first, or we will be deceived.

Venden: All right, we have a gentleman right here.

Comment: It almost seems in the Bible, that Christ purposely did things on the Sabbath just to rile up the Jews.

Maxwell: That's good! I'm glad you pointed that out. Yeah, He ran great risks on the Sabbath. You think of the healings on the Sabbath. You remember the paralytic? Was that an acute emergency, or was that elective healing? How long had he been paralyzed? Thirty-eight years, wasn't it? How about the man who had been blind from birth? Could He not have waited till after

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sundown? How about the man with the withered hand, and some other cases? Not a one of those was an emergency.

And now, did Jesus seek to avoid controversy? Didn't He often say to people, "Don't tell anybody; don't tell anybody," because they would do a poor job and stir up trouble. He kept such a low profile all the time. He only ran risks with respect to the Sabbath. And that would suggest to me that the meaning of the Sabbath is important enough to run those risks. And He risked His life; in fact, He was crucified as a Sabbath-breaker.

See, He was a liberal, heretical Sabbath-breaker. And He was crucified as a Sabbath-breaker, by people who ran home to keep it holy; and were terribly troubled because His corpse was still on the cross. And so they were very exercised to get Him buried. See, they saw nothing wrong with murdering a heretic. But they were terribly concerned to keep the Sabbath. It almost blows the mind to think of what their thoughts were on this subject, of what was important and what was not.

I think that the seventh-day Sabbath is so potent a force for truth, but misunderstood, can be such a potent force to misrepresent our God, that the devil on the one hand has really lent his hand to twisting the meaning of that day; and on the other hand, Jesus risked His life to clear up its meaning.

He said, "Of all the things you could do on the Sabbath that reminds you that I am your Creator and your re-Creator, and your Healer, healing the sick is most appropriate. Of course, you're "not pursuing your own gain, or doing your own business", Isaiah says. But to help people? There's no day in the week that should be more calculated to improve our health and our well-being. And our ministry to others can take place on that day. So I think He ran that risk.

He's not saying, "Doing all your elective work on Sabbath." But under the emergency circumstances, He went out of His way to do these elective things on Sabbath, to clear this day of all this accumulation of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. And He knew it would cost Him His life. And it did. That was his Number One sin and crime: breaking the Sabbath.

So I wouldn't say He did it to irritate and annoy. He did it, knowing what it would cost; because this matter of the meaning of the Sabbath absolutely had to be clarified. And He was willing to go that far.

I would say, if He would risk His life to clear that up, how far should we be willing to go to clear up the meaning of the Sabbath? I mean, I think we really have to do it.

And now, what's the reputation around the circle? That those who keep the Sabbath are legalists and worship a fussy God. We have dear Christian friends who pray for us Adventists, that someday we'll see the truth that sets men free -- that we're not under law but under grace, and all those things. You know, it's in many, many books.

The Knights of Columbus Radio Bible Correspondence Course -- have any of you signed up for up? It's a beautiful program. They write to you all the time. And a number of my students have taken that program. And these letters come back, "Dear John, We're praying for you here at the Knights of Columbus" - that great Roman Catholic organization - "we're praying for you, that someday you'll see the truth."

So there's a lot of conscientious people out there who are really convinced the Sabbath is not what we think it is. And are we clearing this up? Have we made much gain in clarifying the meaning of the Sabbath when we go in print and say, "The Sabbath is totally arbitrary; and that makes it a perfect test of our obedience." We're losing ground every time we do that. And that's

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in print again this year.

But that's because we are preoccupied with proving that we are the chosen few. And that's not the Good News, you know. We want to say something about God. We keep Sabbath to say something about God. It's around the other way. And the best way to make the break, is to advance from the narrow, this-worldly view, to the larger, great controversy view. It seems to me the best way to go. And that's the Sixty-six book view.

Comment: Will the feeling, the gloriousness and the joy of the Creation; and the peace and the rest that Jesus Christ gave to us also be felt the other six days of the week?

Maxwell: Oh, absolutely! That's well-said. Absolutely. All seven days. But life is busy. We have many responsibilities, and while we do think of that all week. God has said, "One day in seven. Try to stop other things as much as you can, and concentrate on this. It will do you a world of good." And we need the confirmation from experience that that is so. Anybody here say it's so? I mean, it really works.

But the Jews had a very good way of regarding this. They reckoned all the days in the week from the Sabbath. And then when you come to Friday, it's the Preparation Day for the Sabbath. That's a pretty good name for Friday. In other words, you relate all the days of the week to the culmination of the week, the Sabbath Day.

So yes, it would be too bad if we only felt good about God on Sabbath; we only worshiped Him on Sabbath. I would say, the more one enjoys the Seventh Day, the more likely one is to carry this over through the other six as a natural consequence.

Yes. Did you want to ask more about that? That's a very valid point you've raised.

Comment: Well, something else that [?] the keeping of the Sabbath and the working on it. You were saying that you shouldn't work for your own gain. How, therefore, do you justify a nurse working in a hospital? Because that is her job. And she does gain monetarily from working on the Sabbath.

Maxwell: Yeah, and I think the Pastor isn't paid for what he does Sundays through Friday. Because if he can't function well on Sabbath, he won't be around very long. So in a sense, many of us get paid for that. I think it's what's predominant in your mind.

Now, if one is legalistic, one will never solve this. There are books that have tried to. I mentioned the Mishna earlier, where they really split hairs over all these tiny details. You really can't resolve this on a legalistic basis.

But I think we know when we're cheating. If that nurse - it's her turn to be up there - and she's doing her best on that day, as she does on all days; but in her mind she's remembering, "This is the Sabbath Day; and I'm not going to lay that heavily on these people either. But if the opportunity should come, I'd love to relieve them of misunderstanding of this matter. And I don't mind being up here making your bed and making your comfortable. I'm pleased to do it on the Sabbath Day."

I mean, you could so behave that day, you'd really do a lot of good. But if you get into the legalistic aspects of this, it gets very complicated, and it's a dead-end street. Why, I'll give you an illustration.

During the years I was studying at the University of Chicago, since my program was entirely in the Biblical field; any Sabbath that I would read my Bible, I would be preparing for my comprehensives. So Friday night I usually spoke somewhere. And then Sabbath morning I'd

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teach the lesson, and preach, and so forth.

Now I had the afternoon. If I were to sit down and do what I was recommending to everybody else -- as well as what I was doing all the rest of the week in Biblical studies -- then I'd be preparing for my final exam.

So I went out of my way not to study the Bible on Sabbath afternoon. Can you imagine? We did other things to make it special; to make it different. Which shows you can't just have one rule for this. The day was mine. I could abuse it, or I could enjoy it. And by doing other things -- when the weather was good, we went walking down in the parks nearby, and we had lovely times on Sabbath afternoon.

And I think one should use devices like that. I'm always grateful of what my parents did. When we were little, we didn't have good reasons for enjoying the Sabbath. As little tiny kids, you know.

So Mother always had a special supper Friday evening. And in England there were things called cakes. Actually, I don't know what you call them here. I know mine was a rectangular thing, with pastry on the bottom, coconut in the middle, and some jam on top. No, the jam was in between to hold the coconut-- coconut on top. Ah, marvelous thing! There's even a Bedtime Story about the time I didn't get to eat mine because I ate the gooseberries. Perhaps you remember. Well anyway, I remember looking forward to Sabbath primarily for that cake. I'll admit it! I loved that Friday evening supper.

I have better reasons now. In fact, I haven't found that particular cake since we left England forty-eight years ago. I'd love to eat one now, because it'd bring back all those memories of the past.

But for a little child, I think parents need to do that. Sabbath's fun, you know. Good to look forward to. We've published some books lately, haven't we, on happy Sabbaths? That's a very good idea.

Now I have much better reasons; but that was a very good reason at the time. I think we should use all the ingenuity we can as children are growing up, to make them look forward to the day. Nicest day in the week.

Venden: Graham, there's a young lady back over here that talked to me a little bit earlier about a question she wanted to ask. It ties in with a couple of weeks ago. Lisa, do you want to go ahead with that question?

Comment: My question has to do with a text in Hebrews that I was reading earlier, in Hebrews 9:15. And he, well actually, the text is mentioned and the question comes a little later. He's talking about New Covenant. "Therefore, he is a mediator of the new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant."

And he goes on to discuss covenant, and the First Covenant, and Moses's handling of that, how after the covenant was given he took the blood and sprinkled on the book and on the people. . .

Maxwell: That's where he says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

Comment: . . . I was wondering, how do you?— What you've been talking about, you've been talking that God came to show us— Christ's death was to show us God's love.

Maxwell: More than that?

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Comment: Yes.

Maxwell: Yes. Much more than that.

Comment: Some people, you know, I've had teachers who said that it was a legal canceling out of sin. And I was wondering how you equate the two ideas? This seems to support the idea that — you're, like, crossing off black marks.

Maxwell: Well, unless you read on in Hebrews— and a little later it says, you realize, that God does not desire sacrifice. What He wants is what David perceived. He wants truth in the inner man. And that the provision of the New Covenant is that His Law be written in our hearts. You remember?

"Sacrifice You have not desired; but a body You have prepared for me. Mine ears Thou hast opened so that I might obey." What God wants is obedience, and trust, and a willingness to listen. And I find that we get into complications in Hebrews when we stop. Don't ever stop! These books are not written to be read piece-meal. There were no chapters. There were no verses. Just solid.

Same way with Romans. You remember, we had a discussion one evening about stopping in Romans. I find it very hazardous to stop anywhere. Because if you read on, you come to the author's own conclusion. And his own conclusion there in Hebrews 9 is, what really matters, is that the New Covenant be fulfilled -- which is that God's Law of Love be written in our hearts.

Now, when you think how legalistic that is, Romans 2 says that among the Gentiles are those who have never heard the Plan of Salvation. They've never read the Law, the Old Testament. But they have shown that the law is written in their hearts; and they're recognized as the children of God.

And as you know, Ellen White really warmed to that. And she says, "Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly; those to whom the message is never brought by human instrumentality. They've heard the voice of God speaking to them in nature. They've done the things that the Law requires. They've shown that what the Law requires -- which is love -- is written on their hearts. The Holy Spirit has touched their hearts. They are recognized as the children of God, and they will be in the Kingdom, where they will receive instruction in the Plan."

In other words, all God has ever asked of us, is what Micah says. I mean, "Shall I bring rivers of oil, and calves a full year old? Shall I bring my own son to atone for my misdeeds?" And Micah says, "You know very well what you're supposed to bring. You're supposed to bring the right blood." No, doesn't say that. "All God asks of you, is that you come yourself, in integrity and in love, and walk humbly before your God." Anybody who will simply come and be willing to listen, and having listened, likes what he hears, and decides to trust and listen some more, will be in the Kingdom, perfectly safe to save.

Now, where did the whole legal thing come from? I think the legal thing came from God's deliberate, very wise use of the emergency measures of next Friday Night. I think one has to go into that. And the beauty of the larger, great controversy view is, it may not leave anything out. You see, it is a model that must be built on everything; or it's not an honest, truly Biblical model.

So all Sixty-six books must be in there. God's very wide use of law must make sense in this model, for it to be the right one. And I observe God making use of law, and seeming to encourage the idea that sin is breaking the rules; virtue is obeying the rules; "and if you break the rules, the penalty is that I will destroy you. But I'll give you a second chance." Because like these animals in the Old Testament — that the shedding of the blood somehow makes possible

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remission of sin. But their blood really didn't work. They were just anticipating the day when really important Blood would be shed, so that you can be forgiven. See how that whole thing could build up? The whole thing is an emergency measure.

Comment: What about it is emergency measure?

Maxwell: Well, supposing you had been in charge. How would you have handled things with a group of people so disposed to think of things that way? Like, you don't like to raise your voice; but people won't listen. Would you be willing to raise your voice and shake the ground beneath their feet? Especially if you've got an enemy standing by who's just longing for a chance to ridicule you for not being able to hold the attention of your children.

God says, "I know the devil will mock Me for this, but I'm going to raise My voice; and I'm going to shake the ground; and there will be thunder and lightning; and I'm going to get their attention. And I'm going to scare them in the process, and I don't like that. But after I've got their attention, I'll tell them there is no need to be afraid. And then when they find there is no need to be afraid, they won't be reverent anymore; so I'll shake the ground again."

And that's the whole history of the Bible. God raising His voice, getting attention, telling them not to be scared, losing their attention, raising His voice again. That's the whole history of the Bible. Until finally Jesus came and talked softly. And how many listened? Hardly any! And so God says, "See, people don't listen when I talk softly. But I want you all to know, that I am not going to shout anymore in the hereafter. I simply will not run My universe that way!"

"Therefore, can you understand why, `Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth?' Only people who are willing to pay attention without thunder and lightning, will be safe to have in My Kingdom; because there will be no more thunder and lightning."

But when you go back through it all, you see a God who doesn't want to raise His voice, willing to raise His voice. You see, that is magnificent of your God to do it! "Forgive me for holding that against you. That is, when you run risks, like on the Sabbathkeeping issue; I mean, you're risking your reputation before the whole universe! You've got an enemy." I mean, everything God does, He does in a glass house. It's all open before the universe. And one-third of the angels have sided with Satan against Him. And yet He runs this risk.

When you think that the charges are of His being arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving and severe, isn't the whole Bible in apparent support of most of that? And the devil must say, "God, I can't understand it. You feed me evidence every day. It just doesn't make sense!"

Well, it does to some of us who realize that God was willing to run that grave risk to keep in touch with some of us, get our attention, and hold it long enough to tell us He never wants to do that again. But He says, "I do have a serious word about this. If I'm never going to raise My voice again, I am going to have order, and peace and freedom in the hereafter. Therefore, you will understand, since I'm never going to raise My voice, I can only save people who are willing to treat the Still, Small Voice with great respect."

So that's what we have to put across. But the difficulty here is, when we find people who are not willing to pay attention, are we willing to run God's risk? I think to be God-like, yes. And hopefully, at least our colleagues will understand. Except that when we raise our voices, sometimes we're really angry. And He was not. I think that's the difference. He knew what He was doing.

So the best thing for us, is to not that among ministers there are people with all kinds of gifts; there are ground-shakers, and there are still, small voice types. There are all kinds of preachers,

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and we need every one. So here comes Ellen White who says, "Someone will accept the truth as presented by one person, only to turn it down as presented by another. There is need in the vineyard of the Lord for all kinds of workers."

We need evangelists who can go into a tough city and put up advertising that may make you wince; but they get the crowds, and they shake the earth, and there's thunder and lightning. And you say, "Oh, isn't that terrible!" You know. But then you come next. And you come with a still, small voice. But who got the congregation for you? So you thank God for the earth-movers among us. Can you name a few? Well, better not!

So I really think there's room to be very respectful toward all kinds of preaching, and assume that they're really honestly trying to help. You know. Can't you think of some preachers. . . ?

Venden: That opens up a whole interesting subject. I remember one statement about a fellow who had to race right straight along, and wouldn't pause, because he'd lose the inspiration. And Ellen White said, "If that's inspiration, the sooner you lose it the better."

Maxwell: Let them lose it and the sooner the better. That's right. So there's a wrong way to do it. There's a wrong way. I really respect the man who knows what he's doing, and he'd rather speak in the still, small voice. Now, that's the man; and will go into a difficult place and do a little earth-moving. I mean, that's really something. The Lord could do it. Most of us aren't that versatile.

Comment: Would you elaborate on the meaning of the tree called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Where do we get our knowledge?

Maxwell: My understanding would be that God would love to have spared Adam and Eve the experience that they passed through. Now, up in Heaven, God had already passed through this. He had watched the rebellion. He had seen that whole thing. And while the angels, I believe, walked with them in the Garden, and Christ walked with them in the cool of the day and talked about these things, it's different hearing about them, than being involved in them. And here they got right involved in the maelstrom of the whole thing. And God would spare them. That was the thing.

Then it's interesting, remember, God says, "Now they have partaken, and they have become like Us, knowing good and evil." It's real interesting to think about there. I don't think it means they'd become more God-like.

I think that God had passed through great agony in watching His family divide. You just imagine what it felt like to see one-third of your brilliant angels decide against you, that you cannot be trusted. And God was aware, of course, of all of this. I even make room for His total foreknowledge anyway. So let's not compare too closely.

But what He wanted to spare them from, is pretty clear. He wanted them never to be involved in what the disloyal angels had been involved in. And had they stayed away from the tree, they never would have. They could have read of it as a history of something happening somewhere else.

Comment: What do you think of those two texts that suggest that by the Law is the knowledge of sin; and by the Law is the knowledge of good? Now was this a similar. . .

Maxwell: Yes. I like the way it worked with Paul; where Paul in Romans 6 describes - Romans 7, particularly — describes his struggle.

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And he says, "I was alive once without the Law." Actually, he grew up with the Law. He knew the Ten Commandments inside out, or so he thought. He had had them posted on his bedroom wall, you know. And every morning Saul - not Paul yet - Saul would kneel before the Decalogue and say, "Lord, help me keep Thy Law today. Keep me from committing adultery," you know; "keep me from murdering anybody, and keep me from breaking the Sabbath."

And then that night he'd come back to see if he needed to confess his sins. And he'd look at the Decalogue - because sin is the transgression of the Law. And he'd run down through, "I haven't murdered anyone in Loma Linda today. I haven't committed adultery today. I haven't broken the Sabbath; because it's Wednesday anyway. Lord, I thank Thee I'm not like others - like this publican over here."

And he lived for years like this. And then he looked at number ten one day. And he mentions the tenth Commandment. He talks about the law--"nomos"--and the tenth "entole" commandment.

He said, "I started reading that one through. After I had experienced the enlightenment of rebirth," you know, on the Damascus road, and he says, "I see things in a new light. I never realized Number Ten says, 'You shall not even want to.' Oh," he says, "I thought I got extra credit for the fact that a young, vigorous man - I had wanted to break the Ten, but I never had! I thought I deserved many medals for that.

"You see, if I were old and tired" --this is, you know, a hallucination of many of the elderly, that they're now overcoming sin. They're actually just exhausted and don't have the energy to sin anymore. Saul was in the prime of life, and Saul was saying, "Lord, since I wanted to do what's wrong so badly, but I never did it, don't I get credit for that?" In the legal model, you want credit.

God says, "What do you want credit for? Wouldn't you love to come to the place where you don't even want to do what's wrong?"

And at first, Paul said, "That Tenth Commandment irritated me beyond words. Sin revived and I died." He says, "That Number Ten is what taught me what sin is. Sin is not just breaking the rules. Sin is even wanting to. Sin means there's something wrong inside me that needs to be healed."

Now we're into the trust/healing model, you see. And lots of legalists think they've done pretty well. Ten years -- haven't committed adultery once!

The Lord says, "Did you want to?"

"Hey, now You've gone to meddling. What do You mean? Sure, I wanted to; but I've never done it, Lord. Don't I get credit?"

He says, "What do you want credit for? Don't you want to come to the place where you'd never even want to do what's wrong?" That's salvation in terms - not of forgiveness - but of healing. That's the other model.

So then Paul said, "I looked at Number Ten again. I thought, 'You know, I love that one. I delight in the Law of God in my inner man. Because now I know in the hereafter, I'll live next door to neighbors who not only won't steal my stuff, they won't even want to. They not only won't murder me, they won't even hate me.'"

You see, the Tenth Commandment is the one that says we'll be really safe in the hereafter. People won't be reading the Decalogue every morning and promising to be good, and maybe forgetting one morning. No, they won't need the Decalogue on the wall at all. It'll be in the Museum. Because nobody will want to do what's wrong. Everybody will want to do what's right.

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That Tenth is a tremendous one!

And that's what he meant when he said, "Without that knowledge, I didn't know what sin was all about. That Number Ten says, Sin is not breaking the rules; it's something wrong inside.

So it's very crucial, I think. And Paul's chapter 7, which troubles many, is a magnificent one. Because some will say, "Is that before conversion? Must be, because you don't struggle like that after conversion." How many of you are converted and have struggled? Some will say, "Shame on you; you aren't really converted."

When I wrote the Commentary on Romans, I tried to suggest a solution to this. It doesn't matter whether you're struggling before conversion, during conversion, or after conversion. If you're struggling, who only can help? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So I refuse to be drawn into the argument whether the struggle is before, during or after. If you're ever struggling -- and what saint doesn't? -- then what's the solution? "Who will deliver me from this exhausted body? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

So I think that's a needless argument. It's a legalistic argument. In the reality of human experience, what saint doesn't struggle? Isn't it true? All of us? Well, who will deliver us from this doomed body?

"Wretched man that I am," -- it's such an interesting word in there. It only occurs elsewhere in the Laodicean message, "wretched." The Greek word is "talaiporos" which means worn out from hard work.

Paul says, "Oh, the good that I would do, I don't do. And the evil that I don't want to do, is what I do. Exhausted-from-hard-work man that I am, who will deliver me from this doomed body with all its bad habits. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Now, who can't identify with that? Unconverted? In the process of conversion? Or after conversion? I think it's idle to determine which.

So I think [Romans] seven fits in beautifully, once one gets away from this legal model. The legal model is very narrow and limited. But God does seem to have led in that direction. And that's why we need to consider His emergency measures. I think it's very crucial, as you know of course.

Our Loving Father in Heaven,

All of us here have read Thy word. And we have received various impressions about Thee and Thy will and Thy methods. We realize Thou hast in many and various ways sought to communicate with us; maybe as little children at the foot of Sinai; maybe as the still, small, Voice at the mouth of the cave. And in many, many places in between.

Wherever we are, and however Thou hast spoken to us, how grateful we are that Thou hast not gone away and left us in our predicament. But that, on the contrary, Thou art willing to run serious risks to meet us where we are, and speak a language we can understand, and lead us no faster than we are able to follow.

Perhaps we thank Thee most for the risks that have been run - all along. For there is an enemy there, eager to misinterpret and lead us to misunderstand; and to even use these, Thy most gracious efforts in our behalf, to lead us to misunderstand those as evidence in support of his charges.

For some of these methods have seemed severe, even arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving. Forbid that we should misunderstand. But may we read the Bible as a whole, and

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see Thy purposes through it all. And if there are still any misgivings, surely nothing could be clearer, than Thy coming to this earth in Person, and saying, "If thou hast seen Me; thou hast seen the Father." We accept the testimony of Jesus, that the Father is just as gracious as the Son.

And though there are all the pictures in the Bible of intercession and priestly, mediatorial ministry in our behalf, as if we need a Friend between us and Thee, we accept the testimony of Jesus, that behind it all, there is a God who needs no intercession. "There is no need for Me to intercede with the Father on your behalf, for the Father loves you Himself." Those stunning words in the Gospel of John, that Jesus labeled as plain and clear— may they be plain and clear to us, even as we thank Thee for all those emergency measures.

Help us to understand You these weeks of Conversation, we pray,

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GOD, Questions #10

Louis Venden and A. Graham Maxwell

Venden: As I've listened to what you've said thus far, you've laid a great deal of emphasis upon the fact that you don't see the Sabbath as arbitrary, something imposed as a kind of test to see whether you'll just buckle down and obey, and you've certainly given a great deal of meaning. But I've heard people raise this question: All of that may be true, and I can see that it's true, but isn't the seventh day of the fourth commandment - Why couldn't it be another day? Does it really matter? Does it have to be the seventh day? What would you say to that? You know, a person might, say, look up the Ten Commandments and say, "Well, now here are nine of them, that if you really love God and you love your fellow human beings, that's the way to act. That's the way we ought to act. But as far as a seventh day particularly?

Maxwell: Yes. I'd like to \* the meaning of the word "arbitrary." Arbitrary suggests there is no reason, that God just because He wanted to, just to show His authority, said, "We'll do it this day." I would say if He really were arbitrary, it could be any day. But it's the seventh day because it's so loaded with reasons. Did you ever try on Marjorie, "It doesn't matter when we celebrate our anniversary. This year, why don't we have it some other day?" I don't think. . .

Venden: She thinks that only the fifth of June is important.

Maxwell: The only day. It makes sense. But then the Bible adds meaning after meaning and reason after reason for the seventh day, which makes it less and less arbitrary. It seems that no other of God's commands is associated with so many meanings. It is the least arbitrary of them all. What bothers me most about considering it as arbitrary is the thought that if it is arbitrary, the only reason why we keep it is to prove that we are God's good people. We are the only ones who obey. Whereas I understand the purpose of the Sabbath is to say something about Him. But those who keep the Sabbath as meeting an arbitrary requirement are simply saying to the world, "Look, there aren't many in the world who are good, but we keep the seventh day. The seventh day is not to say something about us. It is to say something about God. So that is an important difference.

Venden: So the meaning inherent in the seventh day makes that \*

Maxwell: Because He chose to create the world the way He did, yes. Now He did make that decision, but I think to do it slowly is not arbitrary. The universe was watching. The charges were to be met. And God in His own good time and in that very dramatic way unfolded His plans for our world. And every day was saying more of the truth about Him and the falsity of Satan's charges. That was a dramatic week!

Venden: Just a \* in here, but maybe someone might be asking this. You spoke about the fourth commandment.

Maxwell: Ah, yes.

Venden: In some \* and list of commandments, isn't the citing of the Sabbath the third commandment? How did that happen?

Maxwell: I remember once my father wrote to me and said, "I've just had a letter from a Lutheran reader of the Signs of the Times about an article on the fourth commandment in the magazine, and the Lutheran reader said, "That's the third, isn't it?" Well, that's true. Our Roman Catholic friends numbered the commandments so that the Sabbath commandment is number three. They didn't want to leave any out. They just divided number ten into numbers nine and ten. Strictly speaking, the ten commandments read the same all versions of the Bible. No one has tampered with the Decalogue, not at all. Now maybe in some catechisms maybe or

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Bible studies lessons based on the Bible where the Ten Commandments are abbreviated, then they may read a little differently. But the Decalogue has not been tampered with. It reads the same everywhere. Of course, there's nothing inspired about numbers one, two, three, four, nine and ten. Who said the Sabbath is the fourth? Well, it called the Sabbath commandment.

Venden: Well now isn't there in some listing, isn't one of the commandments about the graven images left out?

Maxwell: Well in the catechism, the commandment is left out, but not in the Bible.

Venden: Not in the Bible, the important point.

Maxwell: In the Bible, it's all there. You note tonight I've used two excellent Roman Catholic translations. They're superb.

Venden: I noticed that.

Maxwell: They're really superb.

Venden: I can hear one of our friends asking as has been asked before: "In the light of all this, do I have to keep the Sabbath to be saved? If I don't keep the Sabbath, am I going to be lost?"

Maxwell: Ah, that reflects on our discussion earlier of what sin is. If you think of sin as just breaking the rules, then one might follow that line of thought: If I break that rule, I'll be lost. It all depends whether there is a distrust and a rebelliousness involved in a failure to keep the Sabbath. I think rather, the Sabbath was made for us to be of great benefit. If I don't observe it, I lose. If I don't take my medicine, I lose. God offers it to us. There are some who have never heard of it. I don't think the thief on the cross ever kept one.

Venden: Didn't have much of a chance.

Maxwell: No. So in the legal model, if you violate that rule like any other, then you're out, because sin is a breaking of the rules. Sin is the internal distrust and rebelliousness and unwillingness to listen.

Venden: So the meaning that God has in the Sabbath for us, it makes it very important whether I say, "Well I don't want to be involved with that," just as you were illustrating as you concluded that presentation. Now Graham,

Maxwell: If you address yourself to the gift that God has given us and it inspires a hostility within you, a rebelliousness within you, an unwillingness to listen, that would be the serious there.

Venden: Because that's where the problem began.

Maxwell: Exactly.

Venden: Someone has asked this question: "Wasn't the Sabbath, though," and in spite of all that has been said, "wasn't the Sabbath in Colossians 2, doesn't Paul say that the Sabbath has been nailed to the cross? And in the light of that, that no one should judge you regarding what you eat or drink or religious festivals or even a Sabbath day. What about that Colossians 2?"

Maxwell: That's so significant, it's worth several hours. How to do it in a moment or two -- . I think the first thing to do there is to not what was nailed to the cross. The King James says "the handwriting or ordinances," and that's taken to be the Law. Now actually that word "handwriting," I'll pronounce it to show you I know it's there Karographon. "Ka" is hand and "graphon" is handwriting. That's a very technical term for an agreement, for a bond. It's the

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sentence that stood against us that was nailed to the cross. But to suggest that the Sabbath was nailed to the cross suggests that the Sabbath was against us, because it says that "when this handwriting was nailed to the cross, it is what was contrary to us, against us. He took it out of the way because it is bad. Now nowhere in the Bible is the Sabbath pictured as against us, contrary to us. It was given to help us. Here Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for you, and in a moment I'm going to nail it to the cross because it's been against you." He says it's for you. So they've been nailing the wrong thing to the cross. Rather, when He died He took care of the sin problem. He took care of the sentence, or whatever word you want to use there. "Therefore let no one judge you in these legal matters." And I think when it says, "Don't let anyone judge you with respect to the Sabbath either," He said, "You're right. Don't you go around condemning people who disagree with you on the Sabbath." Sometimes we say, "That's ceremonial sabbaths. Don't criticize people when they disagree on the ceremonial. But when they disagree with you on the seventh day, you can go condemn them all you want to." You can't condemn anybody for anything. That's not our business. Somewhere in Romans 14 Paul says, "One man esteems all days alike. Another man esteems one day above another. And I'm about to come in and preach at some of you who don't agree with me." No! He says, "Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. And who are you to criticize another?" I include the seventh-day Sabbath in that. We are in no position ever to criticize or condemn anybody else who disagrees over this matter of the Sabbath. Oh, He says, "We shall each give account of ourselves to God." So going back to Colossians, something that was against us was nailed to the cross. And once we understand how God has handled this thing, this distrust-rebellion problem, then we don't go around condemning other people. But in my own heart I'm very much persuaded that the Sabbath is for me. I wouldn't want to waste it. I hope I can make it look good to other people so they won't waste it, and we present it as a gift not an obligation.

Venden: Well Graham, some of our friends of other denominations, other backgrounds, have raised the question about Sabbath keeping being legalistic. When you set out your concern about sundown and the time and when is the Sabbath over and what is appropriate to do on the Sabbath, aren't you back into a kind of worrying about and a kind of bondage where you're so careful about these things? Isn't that legalism?

Maxwell: Well, that word "legalism" needs to be defined, and I'm thinking maybe the next two Fridays we might have a chance to talk about that. To me, the essence of legalism is preoccupation with one's legal standing with God. And so many of these people who think Sabbath keepers are legalistic are themselves utterly concerned with their legal standing with God and thank God that His Son came and paid the penalty so that they could be in good legal standing. So you see, if you have a legal model, you're a legalist. If you have the other model, you're saying, "God, I don't want to miss a thing You have given me." God says, "Well, among other things I give you the Sabbath. It was made for you." You say, "What for?" Well, read the Bible through and read some of the things that we've looked up tonight. And you say, "God, I need that. I really do." So we keep the Sabbath as a blessing. It makes so much difference whether a person is keeping the Sabbath as something that is required to be fulfilled, or whether it's a celebration of God . . .

Venden: Yes!

Maxwell: . . .of God of glorious things that the Sabbath stands for.

Venden: Yes!

Maxwell: And it's supposed to be all about freedom. If a person in the middle of church tomorrow morning while you're preaching does not feel free, maybe he should get up and walk

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out and take a fresh breath of air and decide whether he wants to come back in or not. Nobody should be sitting here because he has to. Everybody should be sitting here because he feels so good about it. You might lose your audience. \*

Venden: Might have some boys and girls walk out tomorrow. Fear that message that maybe some \*

Maxwell: When it comes to the little children now, that does come under next week, "God's Emergency Measures." You can't expect little children to understand these things. Like, they won't brush their teeth because it's good to brush their teeth. They brush their teeth because Mommy says so. I don't want to upset Mommy. She might take measures. So our little children might not gladly follow us to church. You want to preserve their freedom and teach them responsibility, but when it gets to be time to go, you say, " \* we're leaving, and you're coming too." So you may have children sitting in the pews under some duress. But you have to sit there long enough to hear the pastor tell them that God values nothing higher than their freedom and they will feel good about it.

Venden: They need not only the pastor to tell them but the parents to help show them.

Maxwell: Oh yes, that's most important of all. That's the most important.

Venden: When we talk about the seventh day, we're talking about a long period of time, millenniums, and the question has been asked, "How do you know what day is the seventh day?" Could we be mistaken?

Maxwell: Well, one thing for sure, nothing has meant more to a devout Jew than the week and the seventh day. And he could look back certainly to when the manna fell. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and double on Friday, and none on Saturday. You knew that was the seventh day. By God's direction. And no devout Jew has lost the weekly Sabbath since that time. I would say that's not debatable. We still, we still know.

Venden: Jesus didn't seem like He could when He was here too.\*

Maxwell: Yes. Yes. Wouldn't Paul have researched it, godly man he was?

Venden: And even the idea of Sunday as a day of resurrection would even confirm again the consistency of the weekly cycle.

Maxwell: That's the most serious question of all, I think.

Venden: While the Sabbath command, the fourth commandment, talks about, "Thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy manservant" and so forth, is the Sabbath a day to just sit in a rocking chair in total idleness? What is the meaning of this, "Thou shalt not do any work?"

Maxwell: It almost seems hazardous that God would say, "In it thou shalt not do any work, and I'm not going to tell you what work is." I take that as a compliment. He says, "The day is yours. I have suggested its many meanings. If you don't want to keep it, I can't make you keep it. Because just merely to sit there and do nothing all day under duress is not keeping it. It's supposed to be a delight." And so God leaves it up to us to decide what work is. But many devout people through the years, as you know, have consulted their theologians to determine what work is, and there's a very large volume I have which describes Sabbath work. This book is called the Mishna. It says, "There are forty kinds of work save one." Thirty-nine kinds. And each of the thirty-nine is broken down into tiny details. How far may you walk on the Sabbath? May you carry a pencil on the Sabbath? How many letters can you write on the Sabbath? I don't mean epistles; I mean letters in the alphabet all spelled out. The beauty of it is, you

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always know whether you're keeping it or not. Actually, those rules leave you with such a fear that you've broken the Sabbath, that Jesus said, "You have placed burdens on people that are heavy to bear. I just said it's your day. In it you shall not do any work. Remember Me." So it is left up to us, and I like that.

Venden: So then how would one take that statement in terms of the work to \* , that kind of thing? How would you understand that?

Maxwell: Well, I think that's in the verse in Isaiah, "Not doing your own business." And not working for gain, because that's in there.

Venden: That reminds me of something we were talking about earlier. I've been told that "Dear Abby" a couple of weeks ago in her column in the L.A. Times was responding to a girl who wrote saying she was going to marry a Seventh-day Adventist, and she wondered what that might mean. Abby suggested that she ought to talk to the man's pastor and find out, but then another person wrote in and said, "Aha, I know about Seventh-day Adventists, and if you marry a Seventh-day Adventist, there a whole lot of things you won't be able to do." Among these, and the person went on to list some of these, and then they suggested that you and your husband (END OF SIDE 1;BEGIN SIDE 2 WITH) as far as the Sabbath, would never on the Sabbath have any kind of marital relationships.

Maxwell: Yes. I read that. That was number seven on the list.

Venden: And the idea was that Isaiah 58 says that you shouldn't do anything that's your own pleasure on the Sabbath. Does that mean we are to be unhappy on the Sabbath?

Maxwell: Well, the day my middle daughter read that, she phoned me up and said, "When you're down in West Covina tonight for Book-by-Book, stop by the house. I want to write a letter to Dear Abby." So I did a little research on the meaning of the verse, and I brought that along in the back of my Bible. If you look at a good translation of Isaiah 58:13, it really reads, "If you restrain your foot on the Sabbath from doing your business on My holy day, if you call the Sabbath delightful and Yahweh's holy day, honorable, if you honor it by refraining from business, from pursuing gain and from excessive talk (interesting enough), then you will delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth." That translation is in the Anchor Bible. There's no more scholarly translation ever, and by the way, that's by John MacKenzie S. J. You know, the Anchor Bible is jointly produced by Catholics, Protestants and Jews. But in other versions, I wrote down quite a few, and they all agree that the word "pleasure" is better translated "business." That on Sabbath you are going to enjoy yourself all you like, but you don't do your own business on that day. You don't pursue your own interests on that day. It even says, "If you value My holy day and honor it by not traveling, working or talking idly on that day." And on this talking idly, the Jerusalem Bible says, "Abstaining from travel, from doing business and from gossip." And the Septuagint says "from malicious talk."

Venden: Oh, when you said "too much talk," I thought he was talking about Sabbath sermons.

Maxwell: Look that up with care.

Venden: It says, "You will not gossip or engage in malicious talk," whether in pew or pulpit.

Maxwell: But the point there is, at the very first it says, "If you call the Sabbath a delight." We're supposed to enjoy the day, but we'll not pursue our own business and our own worldly gain on the day, and then it makes good sense, doesn't it?

Venden: Well now, here's a command that you should "call the Sabbath a delight." How can you command something like that?

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Maxwell: Well, that's what shows me that it can't be arbitrary. God says, "If you really enjoy it, and I'm telling you you have to." Now we know from experience you can't do that. When your girls were growing up, I don't know how they felt about spinach or other vegetables. I mean, did you ever say to one of your girls, "Now look, don't make any more faces. I want you to eat your spinach." "Yes, Daddy." "Yes, but I want you to enjoy it." "Yes, Daddy." "I want you to tell me how delicious it is." "Daddy, I'd be fibbing if I did and breaking one of the other commandments." There's no way you can order somebody to enjoy something. This is what I like. The things that God desires the most: Love? You can't command it. Trust? You can't command it. The enjoyment of the Sabbath. You can't command it.

Venden: It's an invitation.

Maxwell: It's an invitation. We either do it or we don't, and if we really observe the day, we do it the highest sense of freedom and it is truly a delight.

Venden: One of our friends has written this question, Graham, that takes us just a bit away from the subject of the Sabbath but still, I think, tied into it. "The Larger View," this person writes, "seems very intricate, very subtle and needing of a lot of study. Does this imply that a simpler view is still necessary for the masses of people who do not have the time or the knowledge to understand the Larger View?" Now another card has come in similar. Let me read this. "What is the truth about God? I hear it must be simple, and yet it seems so complicated, almost too complicated to encompass. Please help me understand." How would you explain this?

Maxwell: Ah, those are very fair questions. I think that the number one characteristic of the Larger View is its simplicity and it is not complicated. However, it might require a good deal of study. The more one studies, the less complicated it becomes. I don't think there is any substitute for taking time to study.

Venden: So maybe the plea for simplicity is perhaps a temptation to flee from the hard work of thinking.

Maxwell: Yes. There is no shortcut to this. But what I like is that when you apply the very best scholarship you can muster, I mean maybe you know the Biblical languages and you know all about textual criticism and the history of religion, everything you possibly can, you have all the tools for Biblical research, then if you do a thorough job on the Sixty-six, you come up with this view about our God, and all He asks of us is trust, and that He doesn't ask us to trust Him as a stranger, or to trust mere claims, but demonstration, I don't think anything could be simpler than that. But I see validity to the question. Paul on Mars Hill delivered himself of a magnificent address. He quoted the philosophers. He quoted the poets. He used long words. In fact, he used the longest word in the Greek New Testament. To the Athenians he said, "Oh, you are dasedimonusterus." That's all one word. Then he won a few, but he got to thinking, "I'll never preach like that again, magnificent as it was." And in I Corinthians he says, "I will never preach again in long words making things so philosophical and complicated. This one thing I do from here on: I will preach the message about Christ and Him crucified." So Paul, with his scholarship, eventually focused on the all-important thing. But when he preached Christ and Him crucified, he was preaching the Larger View. The One who died for angels as well as men. So the focus led him to the Larger View. But he was quite a scholar. I believe the thief on the cross knew enough to be saved, but I wouldn't want to settle for that. I'd like to learn what Paul did, and as long as life shall last, I'm going to investigate, but if my discourses become more complicated, I'm moving in the wrong direction. So I like the implication here. It ought to be clear. It ought to be simple. But there are no shortcuts to that.

Venden: A question came in last week that really touched my heart. This person wrote, "How

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are we who have been raised as Seventh-day Adventist Christians and have been taught to fear God and His judgments, to change to a love relationship? When you asked last Friday night, 'Would you be comfortable if the Father walked in?', I hesitated to answer, and then I said, 'I hope so.' I am afraid. How do I dispel this fear?"

Maxwell: Oh, I know the One who would love to hear that question would be God Himself. You know, if you'd look at God and say, "God, I hesitate to tell You this, but I'm scared." And He'd say, "I appreciate that." I wonder what He would do. Would He say, "I think maybe I'd better not talk to you any longer, you're so scared. I'll send for My Son." You know. Well, in practicality I think the solution is to become convinced in Scripture that the One who came is fully God. We're not afraid of Jesus. But to realize the One who was with us is no less than God. And that's what the Sabbath reminds us of, that gentle Jesus, who was afraid of Him?, He is the Almighty Creator. And then if we could just come to the place where we'd truly accept what we call the "testimony of Jesus." The ultimate testimony of Jesus is, "Do you want to know what My Father is like? If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." We find it hard to believe that. So I think we need to read it over and over and come to the place where we really are convinced. You want to know what God is like? Look at Christ, for Christ is God. And as we think of it, number one, it seems incredible, for it takes a little time; and number two, the enemy is opposed to our knowing this, so he will throw up every roadblock he can to keep us from believing this incredible truth.

Venden: Now, next Friday night you're going to talk about God's Emergency Measures. That will important in helping us to understand some things that have raised questions.

Maxwell: Ah, because these measures can be misunderstood as supporting Satan's charges, when I think His use of the measures speaks very well of Him.

Venden: We'll talk about some of the risks that God has run in the things that He has done.

Maxwell: Right.

Venden: So next Friday night,

Maxwell: "God's Emergency Measures."

Venden: Seven o'clock here at the University Church.

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