

13 MR No. 1002 "The Baker Letter"

13.1 [Most of "The Baker Letter" has been included in earlier manuscript releases. However, since this letter has become a focal point in the continuing discussions on Christ's human nature, the Trustees feel that it would be wise to release it all, so that interested students may have it in its complete form. That which appears here in smaller type has already been included in previous releases. We repeat Arthur L. White's introductory statement to Manuscript Release #414. [K. H. Wood.]

13.2 Considering the key nature of the statement excerpted from the Ellen G. White letter to W. L. H. Baker and used in QOD, 7BC, and elsewhere, it seems that more should be known of the context and of Elder Baker, the minister to whom it was written.

13.3 Baker at the age of ten joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church with his parents. At 24 he was employed by the Pacific Press and five years later he was sent to Australia to engage in the publishing work. Within a few years he was called to field evangelistic work. He was laboring in Tasmania in 1895 when Ellen White wrote this important 19-page testimony to him. Two years later he was the president of the New South Wales Conference, with W. C. White as vice-president. From 1893 onward, W. C. White was corresponding with Baker as a responsible worker.

13.4 Baker was to be called to the presidency of one conference after another, serving New Zealand, Victoria, Tasmania, and West Australia. Then in 1914 he was appointed Bible teacher at Avondale College. This was followed by evangelistic work in Sydney. In 1922 the Bakers returned to the United States where he engaged in college Bible teaching, and then served as a sanitarium chaplain. He died on February 5, 1933. See RH obituary, March 30, 1933.

13.5 Apparently Baker profited well from the 1895 testimony. Two years after receiving it he is referred to by Ellen White as a discreet, profitable worker in the field. In 1900 as she counseled a younger worker to seek his advice, she referred to him as "true as steel to principle."

13.6 A number of excerpts from the letter have been published in Evangelism. While there is a request from Dr. Dederen and one of his students in Christology, Lyle Heise, and a desire on the part of others for the fuller context of the important "nature of Christ" Statement, the length of the 19-page testimony and the personal counsel to Baker and his wife lead to a selection of that which is deemed particularly pertinent. Although portions have been released, we set the fuller statement forth in one release. [A. L. White.] (Introductory statement to Manuscript Release #414, February 12, 1975.)

14.1 In the night season I was conversing with you. I had a message for you, and was presenting that message. You were cast down and feeling discouraged. I said to you, The Lord has bidden me speak to Bro. and Sr. Baker. You are considering your work as almost a failure, but if one soul holds fast to truth, and endures unto the end, your work cannot be pronounced a failure. If one mother has been turned from her disloyalty to obedience, you may rejoice. The mother who follows on to know the Lord will teach her children to follow in her footsteps. The promise is to fathers, mothers and their children. (Acts 2:39) **These dear children received from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death.** The Lord has given to the world Jesus Christ, and His work was to restore to the world the moral image of God in man, and to reshape the character.

14.2 The truth is to be proclaimed in all places, and the human agents are to be co-laborers with Christ, building up a wall of security about the children, and cutting off as far as possible the strong current of evil. Parents who are thoroughly converted will seek the salvation of their children, training them to be sons and daughters of God. In doing this work in wisdom they are co-laborers with God. The responsibility of parents is great, and one father and mother converted makes Satan tremble, for he sees he will lose their children from under his control. The children of Christian parents are placed in their arms with the divine command, "Take these children and train them for Me." Give these youth special attention, and surround them with hallowed influences; teach the father and mother, as well as the children, to let no harsh words proceed from their lips, but let the

precious lessons of Jesus' love be given from babyhood to childhood, and from childhood to youth. The influence of Christian example will surround them like a holy atmosphere. The words that fall from the lips, the ear hears and the heart receives for good or for evil. Parents have a solemn, responsible work, for wise management from the earliest years forms the framework of the children's characters.

15.1 My brother, my sister, you can help parents to educate and train their families. By your earnest appeals, show them that they can illustrate to the world the power and influence of a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. Thorough Christian influence in the home will demonstrate to the world that the greatest amount of good can be done by sanctified, parental example, and religious training.

15.2 The Lord will not judge you by the amount of success manifested in your efforts. I was bidden to tell you that your faith must be kept revived and firm, and constantly increasing. When you see that those who have ears will not hear, and that those who are intelligent will not understand, after you have done your best, pass on to regions beyond, and leave the result with God. But let not your faith fail.

15.3 We are sounding to the world the last message of warning. We are laborers together with God, living and working amid the closing scenes of this earth's history. From God's watchmen the world must hear the truth for this time. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has issued the command to us, Let your light shine before me. Go forth as a lamp that burneth. Diffuse light. Each period of the fulfillment of prophetic history is a preparation for the advanced light which will succeed each period. As the prophecy comes to an end, there is to be a perfect whole.

16.1 God requires that we give more whole-souled energy to the work. None who hear and receive the truth are to refuse to shine. Ye are the light of the world. Kindle your taper from the divine altar, and diffuse light. The inquiry is made, What shall the end of these things be? Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. [Revelation 19:5-8, quoted.]

16.2 There might be some improvement made in your delivery. Cultivate earnestness and positiveness in addressing the people. Your subject matter may be excellent, and just what the people need, but you would do well to mingle a positiveness with the persuasive entreaties. [1 John 1:5-8, quoted.]

16.3 There is need of decided personal effort to reach the people in their houses. Present the plain "Thus saith the Lord" with authority and exalt the wisdom of God in the written word. Bring the people to a decision; keep the voice of the Bible ever before them. Tell them you speak that which you do know, and testify that which is truth, because God has spoken it. Let your preaching be short and right to the point, and then at the proper time call for a decision. Do not present the truth in a formal manner, but let the heart be vitalized by the Spirit of God, and let your words be spoken with such certainty that those who hear may know that the truth is a reality to you. Your manner may be educated, and your words may be of that character that they will voice the words of Peter: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." With just as much assurance you may declare the message of God's truth. Those who believe sacred, eternal truth, must put their whole soul into their efforts. We must be stirred to the very heart as we behold the fulfilling of prophecy in the closing scenes of this earth's history. As our vision extends still further into the glories of eternity, the coming of Christ with power and great glory, and the scenes of the great day of judgment, we should not remain tame and unmoved. "I saw the dead," says John, "stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

17.1 After a short discourse, keep fresh, that you may give a Bible reading on the points spoken of. Come right to the hearts of your hearers, urging them to present their difficulties to you, that you may explain the Scriptures which they do not comprehend. Throw off all appearance of apathy, and lead the people to think that

there is life or death in these solemn questions, according as they shall receive or reject them. As you present testing truth, ask often, who is now willing, as they have heard the words of God, pointing out their duty, to consecrate their hearts and minds, with all their affections to Christ Jesus. "He that is not for me, is against me." As the Lord lays out before us the stirring scenes to be enacted in the last great conflict, can we contemplate them without catching enthusiasm, ardor, and zeal, knowing that heavenly angels are by our side.

17.2 Come close to the people; get into the families when you can; do not wait for the people to hunt up the shepherd. Bear with you the confidence and assurance of faith which evidences that you are not trusting in idle tales, but in a plain "Thus Saith the Lord."

18.1 Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden.

18.2 Bro. Baker, avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. Truth lies close to the track of presumption. In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity. His birth was a miracle of God; for, said the angel, "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his Father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

19.1 These words are not addressed to any human being, except to the Son of the Infinite God. Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called that holy thing. It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin. The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery. That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves: for it cannot be. The exact time when humanity blended with divinity, it is not necessary for us to know. We are to keep our feet on the rock, Christ Jesus, as God revealed in humanity.

19.2 I perceive that there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell on the humanity of the Son of the infinite God. He did humble Himself when He saw He was in fashion as a man, that He might understand the force of all temptations wherewith man is beset.

19.3 The first Adam fell: the second Adam held fast to God and His word under the most trying circumstances, and His faith in His Father's goodness, mercy, and love did not waver for one moment. "It is written" was His weapon of resistance, and it is the sword of the Spirit which every human being is to use. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"--nothing to respond to temptation. Not one occasion has been given in response to His manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground, to give him any advantage. Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances.

20.1 As teachers we need to understand that the object and teaching of our Lord was to simplify in all His instruction, the nature and the necessity of the moral excellence of character which God through His Son has made every provision that human agents should obtain, that they may be laborers together with Jesus Christ. This God requires, and to this end the ministers of the gospel should work, both in their education of the people, and in the ministry of the word.

20.2 There are many questions treated upon that are not necessary for the perfection of the faith. We have no time for their study. Many things are above finite comprehension. Truths are to be received not within the reach of our reason, and not for us to explain. Revelation presents them to us to be implicitly received as the words of an infinite God. While every ingenious inquirer is to search out the truth as it is in Jesus, there are things not yet simplified, statements that human minds cannot grasp and reason out, without being liable to make human calculations and explanations, which will not prove a savor of life unto life.

20.3 But every truth which is essential for us to bring into our practical life, which concerns the salvation of the soul, is made very clear and positive. The question asked Christ by the lawyer, was turned over to himself to answer; for Christ knew that the law was understood by him. "He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?" To the lawyer's plain scriptural statements, Christ said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." To his question, "Who is my neighbor," Christ answered by the parable of the good Samaritan.

21.1 Christ revealed to His hearers their deficiency in fulfilling the law of God. With them self-love was supreme. These same principles Christ had spoken to Moses from the pillar of cloud: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded you. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

21.2 This corresponds with the instruction given to the multitude in answer to the lawyer's question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The same answer was given to the young ruler who asked a similar question, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, ... If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." By quoting the precepts of Jehovah He showed that He referred to the ten holy precepts.

21.3 The young man claimed to have kept all these, and asked, "What lack I yet?" Jesus then pointed him to duties he had not done, which the law of God plainly specified--to love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions." This man loved his possessions above God and His service and more than the souls of his fellow-men. Riches were his idol.

22.1 Then let none say that there are no conditions to salvation. There are decided conditions, and everyone is put to the strenuous task of diligently inquiring and searching for the truth from God's word. At the peril of our souls we must know the prescribed conditions given by Him who has given His own life to save us from ruin. We will certainly be lost if we float along with the current of the world, receiving the saying of men. By our selfish love of ease and by our indolence we endanger our souls and the souls of others. We are to seek earnestly to know what saith the Lord.

22.2 Human assertions, even from priests and rulers, will not help my case. I must know what conditions are imposed on me, that I may cooperate with God in the saving of my own soul. I cannot satisfy the claims of God upon me as his human agent, by meeting the ideas and opinions of even teachers of doctrines, unless they harmonize with the voice of God. "What saith the law? How readest thou?" is the question from the greatest of all teachers.

22.3 The popular opinion of what saith the Fathers will not help my case. My work is given me of God to know and understand His will for my own individual self. By thoughtful, prayerful study, I must seek to know for myself the true meaning of the

Scriptures. We should thank God every day that we are not left to human traditions and man-made assertions. We cannot be safe in trusting to any other word except "It is written." We cannot float with the current; we cannot build our faith on any human theory, lest we come under condemnation as did the Jews. "Ye teach for doctrine the commandments of men," said Christ to them. And this statement is made decidedly plain to us in these last days.

23.1 In Sunday observance the commandments of men are made supreme. Human authority and church pretensions are made as the word of God, to which all must bow. Should we do this, we would be laborers together with the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who exalted himself above God and all that is written in the word of God.

23.2 All who would have the seal of the living God, must be laborers together with God to make up the breach that has been made in the law of God by the man of sin, and to raise up the foundation of many generations. "Ye are laborers together with God." They will turn away their feet from trampling on the law of God, and by precept and example turn the feet of many others from the path of disobedience. They will keep the Sabbath from polluting it; they will call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and will honor him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words. "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

23.3 We are living in perilous time, and we need that grace that will make us valiant in fight, turning to flight the armies of the aliens. Dear Brother, you need more faith, more boldness and decision in your labors. You need more push and less timidity. You will ever meet with disappointment unless you move forward with determination. You must not fail nor be discouraged. You need in every place to study the situation. Read less, and do more actual service. Circulate round, and practice the truth you do know. Our warfare is aggressive. Your efforts are too tame; you need more force in your labors, else you will be disappointed in its results. There are times when you must make a charge against the enemy. You must study methods and ways to reach the people. Go right to them and talk with them. Study tact, how you can reach them: and be determined you will not fail nor be discouraged.

24.1 God help you to daily hang your helpless soul on Jesus Christ. Speak the truth in no hesitating, halting style; but speak it with boldness and assurance and with the spirit of the Holy Ghost resting upon you. Let the people understand that you have a message that means life, eternal life to them if they accept it. If any subject should enthuse the soul, it is the proclamation of the last message of mercy to a perishing world. But if they reject this message it will be to them a savor of death unto death. Therefore there is need to work diligently, lest your labors be in vain. Oh that you would realize this, and that you would urge the truth upon the conscience with the power of God. Give force to your words, and make the truth appear essential to their educated minds. Please make your labor a subject of earnest prayer, that it may be approved of God, and that you may be a successful worker in His vineyard.

24.2 Your ideas are altogether too narrow, too bound about; you need to widen and broaden. Do not educate your mind to see afar off, thus making the subjects on which you dwell not of enough consequence to engage immediate attention. Carry your hearers with you. You can change your manner of labor; you can put energy and deep interest into your subject. You can allow the Holy Spirit to work the man. You can bear responsibilities which you are inclined to neglect.

25.1 Please read and apply most earnestly and thoroughly, for your own benefit, the following Scriptures. [Philippians 1:25-28, quoted.]

25.2 When a laborer is set in a certain portion of the Lord's vineyard, his work is given him as a faithful laborer together with God to work that vineyard. He is not to wait to be told at every point by human minds what he must do, but plan his work to labor wherever he is needed. God has given you brain power to use. The wants of the believers and the necessities of unbelievers are to be carefully studied and

your labors are to meet their necessities. You are to inquire of God and not of any living man what you shall do. You are a servant of the living God, and not a servant of any man. You cannot do the work of God intelligently and be the shadow of another man's thoughts and directions. You are under God.

25.3 When a minister is appointed to a certain work, he is not to consider that he must ask the president of the conference how many days he shall labor in a certain locality, but he must seek wisdom from One who has appointed him his work, One who promised to give wisdom and unerring judgment, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He must carefully consider every part of the vineyard apportioned to him, and discern by the grace given what he shall do, and what he shall not do.

Circumstances will arise, which, if carefully studied, with humility and faith, seeking wisdom of God, will make you a wise and successful laborer [Ephesians 1:17, 19, quoted.] Read this whole chapter, my brother. The prayer of Paul was for the Ephesians that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. [Ephesians 1:19; 2:4-6, quoted.]

26.1 This is, and has been, your privilege, and the privilege of every shepherd of the flock. As the shepherd is to go after the lost sheep, he is not to have merely a casual interest, but an earnest travail for souls. This calls for most earnest heart searching, most earnest prayerful seeking for God, in order that we may know Him and the power of His grace. "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus."

26.2 Our religious history should not be tame and common place, but an experience marked by the grace and decided working of the power of God with our efforts.

Please read Ephesians 3:7-21. Read carefully and prayerfully; for this is for you, and for me, and for every minister in every Conference, whether they have or have not been formally ordained to the work.

26.3 Bear in mind that no living man can tell the precise work, or bound the work of a man who is in God's service. No one can prescribe the days, the weeks that one should remain in a certain locality before pushing on to another place.

Circumstances must shape the labors of the minister of God, and if he seeks God, he will understand that his work embraces every part of the Lord's vineyard, both that which is nigh and that which is afar off. The laborer is not to confine his work to a specified measurement. He must have no circumscribed limits, but extend his labors where-ever necessity demands. God is his co-laborer; he should seek wisdom and counsel of Him at every step, and not depend upon human counsel.

26.4 The work has been greatly hindered in many fields because the laborers ask counsel from those who are not working in the field, and who see not and feel not the demand, and therefore cannot understand the situation as well as the one who is on the ground.

27.1 Your labors, Bro. Baker, need to be improved in order to be successful. You shun responsibilities. Where there is a variety of talent engaged in the work your deficiency is better supplied, so that the want in you is not so clearly recognized, but in the field where you and Brother Teasdale were the only laborers, you should have put forth every part of your being to make a complete whole, and given lessons of practice to Brother Teasdale. A part of the moral vineyard was assigned to you. The whole field in Tasmania was under your supervision, and in need of your most earnest labor. You could have connected with believers in the truth near Hobart and Bismarck, and laid out your plans before them, soliciting their suggestions. You could, and should, in every place seek counsel and give counsel much more graciously, even if you obtain but little enlightenment.

27.2 Our workers cannot be over-moderate and over-retiring. They must speak in season and out of season, seeking the acquaintance of those not of the truth.

[Ephesians 5:1, 2, 8-10, quoted.] This is our individual work. No one can do this for us. There has been a kind of education that has led men from being taught and led of God. Man has looked no higher than man, who has no greater wisdom than himself unless he humbly seeks it of God, who is our Light, and Counselor, and exceeding great reward.

27.3 Let no man become another man's shadow. The promise is, "Ask of God," and if

you present the divine credentials, He will hear your petition. Asking counsel from men too largely robs one of that experience he can and ever should obtain for himself from God. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of some other man? No. "Let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him" [James 1:5].

28.1 I point you to Jesus. Stand forth in moral power in God. You are doing service not for man, but for God, who is to bless you. As we consult one with another and compare ideas, all our propositions are to be fully considered, frankly discussed, and acted upon; but one man is only a part of the great whole, and he is not to be mind and judgment for the whole body of believers. Our great weakness is in placing men where God should be, to be looked up to and confided in. What are these men? Only bruised reeds unless they put their confidence and trust just where it is your privilege to put your trust and dependence. Why is the caution given, "Trust not in man, neither make flesh your arm"? For the very reason that men have failed in a time when it was necessary for them to be entirely shut in with God, walking with fear and trembling before Him, true as the compass to the pole.

28.2 There is danger, great danger with all men of becoming self-deceived. There are certain circumstances when Satan will cunningly and with artful talent, work to hinder the cause of God. Some influence not proceeding from the throne of God will introduce itself. Inborn and cultivated tendencies are fostered that Satan finds a chance to stir up and strengthen. If not discerned by the possessor these will lead to a development of weakness. When a man is not steadfastly following the Light of Life, he knoweth not at what he stumbleth.

28.3 Men must keep their own souls in the love of God, else they will fail to teach others these precious lessons, and will prove the worthlessness and power to form a character after the divine similitude. Great learning and talent will not make a man sufficient for a responsible position which will make him a wise master workman, unless he is proportionately balanced by a symmetrical character, and by making Jesus his heavenly Guide, not trusting to his supposed smartness or his talents. Men should never exchange the heavenly Guide for an earthly guide, who is himself only a part of the great web of humanity, like unto themselves, finite and fallible.

29.1 We often find in human character strong contrasts of light and darkness. The only safety for men and women to whom God has given reason, is to subdue an ambition that is earth-born, and they themselves feel the necessity like Mary, of choosing the better part, which shall never be taken from them; sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of him meekness and lowliness of heart; dying to self, that their life may be hid with Christ in God.

29.2 We all need and must have pure religion, not borrowed from another, but from Christ Jesus, the source of all heavenly grace. Then we are to honor God by looking to God, trusting in God, and keeping the truth in the heart pure and undefiled, having that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The truth, when practiced, is a guide. Christ is truth. We must yield to him who alone is truth, and who alone can give to the troubled heart assurance and peace. To every one of the human family, confident, boasting, or desponding, God the searcher of hearts declares, "I know thy works," God speaks, "know Him." There can be hypocrisy on the one hand or deception on the other. God sees and knows.

29.3 My dear Bro. and Sr. Baker, whom I love in the Lord, the Lord will guide you if you will only trust in Him. He has given you every encouragement to do this. Our youth must not be educated to make finite man their dependence. The first principles of holiness, (wholeness), to God are yet to be learned. God's will and God's way should be made our will and our way. There is not one rule for the supposed superior and another for the inferior; one way for the supposed lordly, and another for the more humble. Keeping the commandments of God means more than we are inclined to suppose. Of those who would find peace it is said, "They shall keep the way of the Lord; then peace and holy joy will be theirs." Letter 8, 1895.

(Written to Brother and Sister [W.L.H.] Baker, North American workers in Australia, probably from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, N.S.W.)