

The Teachings of Marvin Moore on the Law and Standards

About a year ago, we received the following communication from southern Idaho:

"I attend one of the little country churches near Nampa, Idaho. Last Sabbath, Marvin Moore was the visiting speaker. Just as he has done on other occasions, he started in, telling us the law of God could not be kept, and that we should get 'perfectionism' (his name for obedience) out of our heads.

"Just then, a kindly old man in the audience spoke up and said, 'That is not right, Elder Moore. In the strength of Christ we must keep the commandments!'

"At this, Elder Moore became very agitated. Shaking his finger at the old man, Elder Moore's face looked terrible. Angrily he said to him, 'It is people like you that are the cause of all the trouble in our church!'

"I will never forget that experience. I thought the little old man was going to break down and weep,—as a leader in the church reproved him for defending the keeping of God's commandments! Elder Moore is one of those in charge of Pacific Press, in nearby Nampa."—*Idaho*.

Marvin Moore had been an influential editor at Pacific Press for a number of years, but in recent times was elevated to the position of senior editor of *Signs of the Times*, the denomination's leading North American missionary journal. As you may recall, for over a decade now, we have noted that *Signs* has carried articles in praise of Pope John Paul II. Now Marvin Moore is its editor.

Not long ago, Moore authored a full-length book, in which he stated his doctrinal position on how God's people should relate to the law and the standards of the church.

In this brief analysis we will provide you with an overview of Moore's teaching, so you can be forewarned. It is a tragedy how rapidly our historic beliefs are being trashed in articles and books published by our denomination.

If you were to read the writings of our old-time writers and leaders, you would find that they rarely

deviated from a direct presentation of our teachings, as found in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

But, from the mid-1950s onward (beginning with *Questions on Doctrine*), something strange and new began appearing: articles and books with sentences switching back and forth between truth and error. One line would teach some truth and the next line, some error. Marvin Moore's book fits this new theology pattern. The purpose is to keep you confused long enough to bring you over to the modernist position.

The book carries the ominous title, *The Gospel vs. Legalism: How to Deal with Legalism's Insidious Influence*. What is inside the book is just as strongly worded as the cover.

Nowhere in the book, does Moore have one good thing to say about the Spirit of Prophecy. Most of the time, he ignores it entirely. He says he did a research study in the book of Galatians, using the *New International Version*, and that, when he completed his study, he found that a commentary study on Galatians by a Protestant theology teacher (R.N. Longenecker, Wycliff College, Toronto, Canada) was in exact agreement with his conclusions. Frankly, that is not something to brag about, but Moore does. Elsewhere he says this:

"Believe it or not, sometimes the Lord can use these Christians of other faiths to help us in our ministry. Sometimes they can help us grow spiritually! In spite of what some of us may think, *Adventists do not have a corner on heaven*."—*GVL*, p. 44 [italics his].

The concepts Moore presents in *Gospel vs. Legalism* are remarkably liberal. Yet this book was penned by one of the three top administrators at our West Coast publishing house!

On page 12, Moore explains that, because the church still has standards on its books, legalism is a problem.

"Adventists can be, I believe, an excellent case study for anyone wanting to study legalism. That's another reason that I'm willing to be specific about Adventist legalism."—*GVL*, pp. 12-13.

From his comments on pages 12-13, it is clear

"Standards of Christian behavior are a yoke of slavery."—Marvin Moore.

that Moore believes our historic standards are just something our people inherited from earlier churches or thought up themselves. Yet you and I know those standards were given to us by the God of heaven, through the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

In one of his few comments about it, **Moore tells us that there is nothing inherently correct about the Spirit of Prophecy to identify it as from God.** The only reason, he says, that some of us adhere to it is because it agrees with our ideas. Using the same reasoning, **he concludes that it is impossible to find anything wrong with Joseph Smith.** He says it is simply a matter of “faith,” whether or not we accept or reject either prophet.

“Can Adventists prove that God spoke through Ellen White? Can the Mormons prove that God spoke through Joseph Smith? No. We can only accept these prophets by faith, and Adventists reject the Mormon claim that Joseph Smith was a prophet because we do not have their faith.”—*GVL*, p. 28.

On page 31, Moore explains that **the test of whether something is true depends on whether the local believers have developed their “spiritual gifts.” If they have not done so, they have no way to tell if something is right or wrong.**

Moore’s contention throughout the book is that, just as the contentious “Jewish party” was the problem in the churches of Galatia, so **the problem in our denomination today is the legalists—for it is they who are attempting to keep the church adhering to its earlier standards.**

“I will point out repeatedly in this book that the ultimate issue with the Jewish party was the law and their religion as a whole, yet I will also state that the Jewish party seemd obsessed with just the ceremonial aspects of that law. The answer to this apparent inconsistency lies, I believe, in understanding that the ceremonial aspects of that law were the Jewish party’s measure of one’s loyalty to the system as a whole. similarly, the issue with Adventist legalists is Adventism as a whole, with standards as a measure of one’s loyalty to all that Adventism stands for.”—*GVL*, p. 31.

On page 36, Moore says the test of whether or not a message is true, is whether or not it is approved by church leadership. But, of course, we know that the test of any doctrine is whether or not it agrees with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. Indeed, any new light should be clearly stated in those writings.

Throughout the book, an objective of Marvin Moore is to convince the reader never again to try to convince anyone else to obey standards or laws. He considers those who do to be controlled by Sa-

tan:

We’ve all known at least one person who’s the self-appointed guardian of the church’s integrity . . . If you read Galatians 3:1-5 carefully, you will discover that this is exactly the problem Paul had to deal with. Paul began Galatians 3 in an interesting way to say the least. ‘You foolish Galatians!’ he charged, ‘who has bewitched you?’ —*GVL*, p. 59.

What would you say if I told you that there was no way to tell what a Christian standard was? You would be shocked. Well, that is the position of Marvin Moore. After saying that it is all right to keep the Sabbath, he says that it is impossible to say how to properly keep it!

“For years Seventh-day Adventists have been called legalists because we keep the seventh-day Sabbath. I don’t think that is what makes us legalistics at all. there is no question that there are many legalistic Adventists, and there’s no question that many (if not most) legalistic Adventists keep the Sabbath legalistically. But the Sabbath itself is not what makes them legalists. It’s their whole emphasis on lifestyle . . .

“Because Sabbathkeeping is one of our lifestyle issues, let’s use it as an example for a moment.

“Is it okay to wade in the water at the seaside on Sabbath afternoon, or perhaps in a river or lake near your home? You just take off your shoes and let the water wash up on your feet. I hardly think any of us would say that that’s wrong. But suppose you let the water come up to your ankles. Is that wrong? How about up to your knees? Or you pull up your dress or your pant legs and let the water come up to your thighs? You even get your clothes a little wet. Is it okay to wade in the water on Sabbath as long as your clothes don’t get wet?

“ ‘Well, maybe it’s okay up to the thighs,’ you say. But suppose you get your whole body in the water and dunk your head under the surface. Then you start swimming around a bit. Is that bad? Suppose you swim across the lake. Is that worse than your neighbor who hikes around the lake on Sabbath?”—*GVL*, p. 61.

Although he takes a little while to build up to it, Moore’s point is obvious: **There are no standards! Do what you want on the Sabbath; it does not matter.** (Later in the book, Moore says he regularly buys gas and food on the Sabbath when he needs to. Near the end of the book he as much as says it is all right to eat out at restaurants after attending church.)

Forget about standards; you cannot figure out what they should be anyway. —That is Marvin Moore’s position.

After discussing swimming on the Sabbath, in the very next paragraph, **he defines the problem people as those who would express any concern about how to keep the Sabbath properly.**

"I'm sure that in any group of a dozen Adventists we would find a variety of answers to these questions [about going into water on the Sabbath].—The point is that these are the kinds of questions people who have a strict lifestyle start debating. Arguments like this can go on endlessly, until we realize that we're not talking about matters of faith at all. We're talking about obedience to rules and standards."—GVL, p. 61.

Notice that, according to Moore, obeying rules and standards has nothing to do with "matters of faith." By this he means that which saves us.

But he continues:

"The first thing you know, we're asking whether a person who swims across the lake on Sabbath afternoon is saved, whether the person who wears a little jewelry or who goes to a theater now and then is saved. And suddenly the Jewish party's line of reasoning begins to sound familiar!

"Let me assure you that the Jewish party would have felt quite comfortable in some Adventist circles. They would have found great satisfaction in debating whether people who wear wedding bands and earrings or who attend the theater can be saved."—GVL, pp. 61-62.

As Moore explains it, legalism occurs when anyone is concerned whether or not someone else is maintaining Christian standards. We are all supposed to totally ignore conduct. Do as you please, and let others do as they please. Moore firmly believes in the worldly philosophy expressed in Judges 17:6 and 21:25. Now, as in the days of Judges, everyone is to do that which is right in his own eyes.

"We may think fellow Christians who don't live the lifestyle quite the way we do are endangering their spirituality, but we have no idea what their spiritual life is like or their connection with Christ. We simply cannot judge each other on that level. The minute we do so, we are into legalism."—GVL, pp. 62-63.

Marvin Moore teaches that rules and standards were given by Moses, but a new system of religion was instituted by Christ.

"In its time, the law that God revealed at Sinai was the best He had to offer . . . Here's something else I want you to notice about both Sinai and Calvary. Each was the beginning of a new religion. Sinai began the Israelite religion. Calvary began the Christian religion. And each was God's true religion for its time. Notice also that each of these religions replaced the system that preceded it, and each was a great improvement over the preceding system."—GVL, p. 80.

Moore brings us back to his theory that you can keep standards—and even the Ten Commandments—if you want, but doing so has nothing to do with salvation. All that matters is accepting Christ;

so do as you please; behavior matters not.

In the paragraph which follows, he tells us that, keeping the Sabbath and following standards, is "introducing a system of our own devising:"

"Are we in danger of introducing a system of our own devising? And the answer, I believe, is yes. How easy it is to think that our adherence to dietary laws, rules for adornment, and standards for entertainment and Sabbathkeeping assures us of a place in God's kingdom. How easy it is to think that these form the basic system that leads us to Christ and the experience of righteousness by faith. How easy it is for us to think that those who obey the rules are the good people and those who violate them according to our perception are the bad people."—GVL, pp. 111-112.

Moore's view is that we should not return to the old system.

"The Jewish party was trying to force Gentile Christians, and indeed themselves, back into a system that had once helped God's people experience salvation but which Christ's death had abolished."—GVL, p. 119.

Moore questions whether we should be keeping the Bible Sabbath at all.

"We need to consider the possibility that the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments might be included in Paul's comments in [Galatians] 4:10 about days, months, seasons, and years."—GVL, pp. 122-123.

Here is the passage he is referring to:

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."—Galatians 4:10-11.

But he relents and says it is all right to keep the Sabbath after all, as long as we pay little attention to what we do on that day.

"The issue is how we keep the Sabbath. Do we keep it by the rule book, with our primary attention given to what is right and wrong to do on the Sabbath? . . . Sabbathkeeping by the rule book is a reversion to the 'weak and miserable' basic principles of the world that Paul spoke about in Galatians 4:9, just before his comments about days and months and seasons and years."—GVL, p. 123

He goes on to explain that the only people who need rules are little children. But, when we grow up, we no longer need rules, such as the Ten Commandments.

"Please do not think that I'm doing away with rules. Rules have a very important place in life, especially for children and those who are young in the Christian faith . . . Children need these rules to get them started on good habits."—GVL, pp. 123-124.

Following rules is for children, Moore says. but now that you are grown up and a Christian, you no

longer need such childish things.

Moore pauses to castigate independent ministries. The principle problem with those people is that they are trying to get people to live by Christian standards:

“Another thing I’ve noticed about many of these zealous independent ministries is their fascination with standards . . . The problem with these independent ministries and the people who join them is that standards seem to be the major focus of their religion, the chief way by which they judge whether others are Christians. Anytime we allow rules and regulations about lifestyle to become the focus of our religion, we have fallen into the trap of the Jewish party, even if we are not insisting on their particular laws”—*GVL*, pp. 126-127.

A sodomite, prostitute, or a saloonkeeper could have written the above paragraph. Such people are worldlings; they say, “Stop dwelling on behavior. We want to live as we please, and we do not want you praying for us or trying to change us.”

From the time of Cain, on down to our own generation, the wicked have wanted freedom to do as they want, and the righteous have wanted conformity to the pattern Christ gives in the Inspired Scriptures. Christians pray, “Father in heaven, I love to do Thy will.” The wicked declare, “Obeying God takes the joy out of life!”

“Never exchange the joy and freedom that you have in Christ for a joyless religion that is centered on rules and regulations!”—*GVL*, p. 127.

“Yet even the most pure form of Judaism [with its rules], which was such a great blessing to God’s people before Christ, was slavery to remain in after Christ had come. Hagar represented Christians who believed that it was necessary for Christians to place themselves under the jurisdiction of law the way God’s people did in the Old Testament.”—*GVL*, p. 132.

Moore warns us against another great evil: people who try to get other people to live Christian lives! Beware, he says, lest you yourself be found doing it! Here are danger signs to watch out for:

“If you find yourself frequently complaining about people in the church who lower the standards, and if you find yourself bewailing the downward drift of the church, then watch out. You may be a legalist persecuting other Christians. Your greatest need is to let God take care of His own church. Give these people the freedom to live their lives the way *they* think they should, even if it’s not the way *you* think they should.”—*GVL*, p. 134 [*italics his*].

Do you sense something missing in the above paragraph? Moore talks about *our* lifestyle and *their* lifestyle, but not about God’s requirements.

Everything is made subjective. His message is “Do whatever you want, and let everyone else do as they want. To take a stand for anything is legalism.” Later in the book, he says it is the legalists who are the persecuting power in the church, and they need to be kicked out.

In the next paragraph, he adds:

“But in matters of dress, diet, entertainment, Sabbathkeeping, and other lifestyle standards, I am convinced that the less advice we give others, the better, except when we are asked.”—*GVL*, p. 134.

Notice that it is all said to just be “lifestyle,” and that includes Sabbathkeeping. None of it, according to Moore, has anything to do with salvation.

By this point in the book, Moore feels the reader has been sufficiently well-grounded in anti-standards theology, that he can be introduced to a deeper truth. It is this: You need to do more than resist the fanatics who defend standards; you need to get rid of them!

Commenting on Galatians 4:30, Moore says this:

“I heard recently of a church leader who makes himself the guardian of the purity of the church. If someone does something on the Sabbath that is wrong by his standards, or comes to church wearing a piece of jewelry that he considers inappropriate, within a week that person will find a letter in his or her mailbox advising him or her of the sin. Each year this man goes over the nominating committee report with a fine-tooth comb to be sure that every candidate for church office conforms to his personal standards.

“Notice how Paul said we should deal with this problem: ‘But what does the Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.’ ” That’s pretty tough advice, but it’s right to the point. Paul told the Galatian Christians to get rid of the Jewish party. Have nothing more to do with them, he commanded. Send them packing.”—*GVL*, pp. 134-135.

That is a logical conclusion of his thinking, considering that **Moore considers the “free woman” to represent those who are free from the law in Christ, and the “slave woman” those who still enslaved to obeying rules. As Moore sees it, the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance of heaven.**

Might others be right when they urge you to return to Bible-Spirit of Prophecy standards? Moore’s counsel is to not consider the possibility—but cut

Continued on the next tract

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

them short and “send them packing.”

“Today if someone is trying to send you on a guilt trip because of something you do that he or she doesn’t think you should do, follow Paul’s advice and ‘get rid of the slave woman and her son.’”—*GVL*, p. 135.

By this time, the reader might be wondering about Matthew 18, which urges Christians to try to get others to return to obedience to Christian principles. In reply, **Moore boxes in Matthew 18 with his own set of rules: The person must only mention one item, mention it once, never mention it again—and never tell it to the church. But, if it is something unusually serious, such as adultery, it can be told to the church.** (*GVL*, p. 136).

Marvin Moore writes like a man who lives in a dark cave of skepticism and hatreds. It must be difficult for the workers at Pacific Press to associate with such a man. It must harden the soul to have to work closely with him or edit his book, as Richard Coffen has to do, or run the presses to print it.

Somewhere in the *Testimonies*, Ellen White says the printers in our publishing house should refuse to print vile things. Marvin Moore’s book, *Gospel and Legalism*, is such a book. It was purposely written to destroy moral standards.

On page 137, Marvin Moore lists ten items in a “short quiz.” Reading it over, we see that the list covers a variety of things which would concern any normal Christian. Here is this ten-point quiz:

“1. I’m concerned about the increasing worldliness in the church, especially as seen in the lowering of standards by so many of our members.

“2. I have friends who are also concerned about this, and we discuss it quite often.

“3. I wish somehow God could use me to bring the church back to its original purity.

“4. I feel that some ministers put too much emphasis on righteousness by faith and not enough on obedience.

“5. Sometimes I wonder how members who wear jewelry, do wrong things on the Sabbath, attend theaters, and do other worldly things can have a relationship with Jesus.

“6. The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy seem so plain about our standards that you wonder sometimes if people have even read them.

“7. I’m concerned enough about these people that I have encouraged some of them to be faithful, or I have thought maybe I ought to.

“8. I try hard to bring up my children to follow the standards given us by the pioneers.

“9. Sometimes I wish there were a way I could make our members obey the standards, and I sure do wonder why the church can’t take a firmer stand.

“10. I try to encourage my older children to be faithful to what I taught them.

“Near the end of this chapter I’ll say a few more words about this quiz, but for now I’d like to depart from our study of Galatians and spend some time discussing legalism.”—*GVL*, p. 137.

Quickly turning to the end of that chapter, we find what Moore has to say about your response to the ten items:

“Before we move on to the next chapter I need to keep my promise and discuss the quiz you took at the beginning of this chapter. Count the number of yes answers you gave on the quiz . . . The closer your number is to 10, the more serious you need to ask yourself, ‘Am I a legalist?’ . . . If you scored anywhere near 10—and especially if you scored a 9 or a 10, I urge you to ask God to help you understand yourself and your attitudes. Ask Him to show you what your words and actions are doing to others.”—*GVL*, pp. 152-153.

So, fellow Advent believer, having answered yes to all ten, you are a legalist. According to Moore, you are among the sons of the slave woman who will not be going to heaven.

Within this chapter, Moore rather clearly summarizes his antinomian teaching. It is startling. He tells us that it is those who believe God helps them obey the divine law and put away their sins who are the legalists (who, elsewhere, he tells us will be lost). **According to Moore, those who believe that they will be saved in their sins—are the only ones who will be saved!**

Moore can write in a complicated style, but a careful reading of the following reveals a broad theological system—not of truth—but of error:

“[This is] a statement a man made to me once: ‘God saves us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins.’ [Mat-

thew 1:21.] Legalists of this variety agree that God accepts sinners just as they are when they first come to Christ. He does not require them to overcome certain sins or reach a particular level of character development before He will save them.

“But what does God do about the sins that Christians commit after they have been forgiven and have experienced conversion? This is where the ‘God saves us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins’ theology takes over. The idea is that the power of Christ is sufficient to give Christians the victory over every known sin. Therefore, once people have been converted, perfect performance is not only possible but necessary in order to retain the assurance of salvation. The moment people sin, they break their relationship with Jesus, so the theory goes, and that relationship is not restored until they confess their sins and ask for forgiveness. Sin and justification become an on-off switch for salvation. Justification turns salvation on, and committing a known sin turns it off.”—*GVL*, pp. 139-140 [italics his].

In the above passage, Marvin Moore is unashamed about it: If you believe God saves you from your sins, not in them,—then you are a renegade, a legalist, a son of the slave woman whom God is going to cast out from His presence.

Moore next turns his attention to, what he considers to be, an important aspect of the twisted thinking of the legalist. **He says the legalist tends to think that behavior has something to do with sin. But Moore says that is not true!** Sin, according to him, has nothing to do with what a man thinks, says, eats, or does. Here is Moore, explaining one of the flaws in the legalist’s thinking:

“A behavioral definition of sin—At the bottom of this misunderstanding of the gospel, I believe, is an incorrect definition of sin—the idea that sin is what we do (behavior) rather than what we are (the heart).”—*GVL*, p. 140 [italics his].

Moore goes on to explain that the true definition of sin is based on the concept of Original Sin: Man is born sin. It is not something he does, but something he is. —But it is clear that this theory conveniently removes the responsibility of sin from us. It really blames God for making us as we are.

The truth is that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 5:4). The Spirit of Prophecy declares that 1 John 5:4 is the only true definition of sin (*Great Controversy*, 493:0). **But Moore tosses aside that great truth—and, in its place, uses the definition of sin invented by Augustine, a Catholic priest who by his own admission could not stop associating with prostitutes and mistresses.**

Moore goes on to theologically link sin with godliness, in order to separate our life from either. He says that our thoughts, words, and actions have nothing to do with sin—or with righ-

teousness.

Here, according to Moore, is the falacious position of the legalist (but it is a correct view, according to God’s Word):

“A behavioral definition of sin—A behavior definition of perfection arises naturally out of a behavioral definition of sin. Accordingly, growth toward perfection is a matter of learning which behaviors are wrong and obtaining the power of Christ to overcome them. Ultimate perfection is reaching the point where one no longer does wrong things—sinlessness.”—*GVL*, p. 141 [italics his].

Moore then goes on to point out that legalists are always concerned about standards. These people, he says, actually think it wrong to wear jewelry, go to movies, and break the Sabbath!

“Many of the legalists I know have an obsession with lifestyle and standards of behavior . . . The frequently make an issue about people in the church who wear jewelry, attend the theater, do certain things on the Sabbath, etc. . .

“Arising out of this obsession with standards is another attitude that is closely related to it. Legalists tend to put a great emphasis on lifestyle standards as a measure of progress in the Christian life. When they see a woman in the church wearing earrings and a necklace, their first thought is that she must be slipping in her Christian experience . . . Why should we pass judgment on a person’s Christian experience because of earrings and a necklace?”—*GVL*, p. 142.

You are reading the words of one of the three top administrators of Pacific Press—and its most important editor. He holds the place held 40 years before by Arthur S. Maxwell.

Moore says that, by their evil attitudes towards fellow church members who do not have standards, these legalists practice “some of the worst forms of social cruelty, and all in the name of keeping the church pure!” (*GVL*, p. 143).

Moore says the underlying problem is that legalists are the ones who “take every inspired statement about behavior as a command that is to be literally obeyed for all time.” (*GVL*, p. 143). **According to his view, just because Adventists, a century ago, did not wear earrings and jewelry and break the Sabbath, is no reason they need do the same today.**

Actually, Moore says, the Bible does not tell us is what right and wrong. Instead, we are to do whatever we think best—whatever is right in our own eyes. (But the “right in our own eyes” is not supposed to include believing in standards enough to talk about them.)

“The Bible does not so much define right and wrong behavior as it does right and wrong motive, often leaving the determination of what is appro-

private behavior up to the individual.

“But legalists find the idea of making up their own minds about what is right and wrong quite threatening. This is particularly true when common sense would suggest a course of action contrary to what Scripture seems to say.”—GVL, pp. 143-144.

Do you make up your own mind about what is right or wrong, or do you submit your thoughts and feelings to the Word of God?

As an example of what he means by using “common sense” to violate the command of Scripture, in the next paragraph Moore says he regularly purchases food and gas on the Sabbath “with a clear conscience.”

Let us pause for a moment and apply Moore’s teaching, stated above, to David’s experience: David took another man’s wife and then slew the man. According to Moore, David’s behavior would not be sinful (which is on par for Moore; it appears that to him no behavior is sinful—except that of putting away sin). It was David’s motive which was wrong. But wait! David only used common sense in an unusual situation, so, in accordance with Moore’s position, although David’s actions would seem contrary to Exodus 20, the adultery and murder may have been expedient.

Marvin Moore wants no fixed standards; he wants everything nebulous so he can do as he pleases. His goal is to bring members and workers down to his own level. He may say it is wrong to urge one’s standards on others, but he is trying to force his view of standards on an entire denomination.

“Another trait that is common among legalists is the tendency to make a standard for all time out of scriptural statements that were almost certainly intended for the culture in which they were written.”—GVL, p. 144.

As an example, he cites the thinking that women should not wear clothes which look like those men wear.

“I hear every now and then about Christians who insist that it’s wrong for a woman to wear clothing that fits around her legs like a tube (we call them pants).”—GVL, p. 145.

Whatever is right in Marvin’s eyes—is right. That is the stand we find throughout this book. Not God’s Word but Moore’s thinkings is the standard. We find no quotations in his book from the Spirit of Prophecy, and, aside from the NIV of Galatians, only a few scattered ones from the Bible.

“I have a hard time believing that God intended to make a moral issue out of women wearing men’s garments and men wearing women’s garments.”—

GVL, p. 145.

It is clear from the above that, as far as Moore is concerned, men could go to church wearing women’s bras. Everything is right and nothing is wrong. Moore appears to have no standards of any kind!

“I believe that many of the debates we hear today over music, adornment, the length of a woman’s dress (should it be above the knee or below the knee?), modes of Sabbathkeeping, how much sugar to eat, and styles of worship have far more to do with personal preference, cultural conditioning, or both than with biblical morality.”—GVL, p. 146.

Defending sliding standards is Moore’s way of undercutting standards entirely.

“This leads to another attitude that is characteristic of many legalists: absolute certainty that there is only one correct way to interpret the Scripture regarding standards.”—GVL, p. 146.

“Women who wear jewelry or pants, Adventists who eat at a restaurant on the Sabbath, people who go to see a motion picture at a theater, will all hear about it from legalists.”—GVL, p. 147.

Did you ever meet a starving Adventist who had to go to the restaurant on Sabbath in order to keep from dying? You never will. Wearing jewelry, eating at restaurants after church, and going to movie houses are all preplanned activities. They are intentional violations of clear Bible-Spirit of Prophecy statements. (It has been known for years that many church members in southern California eat at restaurants after church service and order wine. Is this being done at Nampa, Idaho also?)

In the course of our spring 1983 studies on the Pacific Press crisis, we were told by workers at Mountain View that **nothing is published by Pacific Press which the General Conference does not approve of.** We were told that the leverage used to maintain this control is the ongoing threat to withdraw permission for Pacific Press to print certain very saleable books which the General Conference alone can authorize (such as certain magazines, quarterlies, Spirit of Prophecy books, etc.)

Therefore Marvin Moore’s book, endorsing these various violations of godly standards—were approved by the General Conference prior to publication.

“The use of candles, crosses, Bible versions other than the King James, Christmas trees, and certain styles of music are among the many practices that will bring on the legalists’ criticisms.”—GVL, p. 147.

“Legalists feel that they are personally responsible for the purity of the church and that they must speak out about every departure from biblical standards.”—GVL, p. 148.

After you finish reading this eye-opening presentation by Marvin Moore of the non-moral theology that the liberals in our church are teaching in church publications and meetings,—turn to 5 Testimonies 212-216 and 472-475 and read living truth! This is how you and I are to be conducting ourselves right now!

“The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God’s people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God’s law.”—5 Testimonies, 474-475.

If he could, Moore would even forbid parents from instructing their children in right principles.

“Parents talk about their values and the lifestyle that goes along with it; they pound their views in with quotations from the Bible (and in the case of Adventists, with quotations from Ellen White).”—GVL, p. 149.

In Moore’s eyes, how terrible it is that Christian parents all over the nation teach Biblical standards to their children! How terrible it is that Advent believers read the Spirit of Prophecy to their children!

Moore then turns his attention to something he values very much: freedom. Freedom from what? Not freedom from sin! —He speaks only of freedom from standards and freedom from those who mention them!

“Paul said it was for freedom that Christ set us free. What does it mean to be free?”—GVL, p. 155.

Christians would reply, “It means to be free of sin.” But Marvin has something far different in mind:

“It means to be free of the mistaken idea that our salvation somehow depends on keeping the standards.”—GVL, p. 155.

Notice that little word, “somehow.” That is the same as saying “in any way.” **Moore’s teachings corrupt the young, as well as the older ones. Yet what a time in history for men like Marvin Moore to gain the ascendancy at Pacific Press! Immo-**

ality of all kinds is burgeoning [Diane: sp?] in our world and in the church. We recently reported on the fact that a shocking number of the young adults attending our colleges regularly drink liquor. —And here we have Moore writing a book, approved by the General Conference, presenting a “sliding scale” of morality, to be selected by personal preference!

Moore’s standards are really no standards.

“Standards do not save us. Keeping them does not save us.”—GVL, p. 155.

“Freedom in Christ sets us free of the notion that keeping the standards saves us.”—GVL, p. 155.

For Marvin Moore, freedom in Christ is freedom to sin.

“Standards of Christian behavior are a yoke of slavery.”—GVL, p. 156.

But Moore qualifies that statement. **When are standards a yoke of slavery? —His reply, essentially, is that it is when we obey them and when we believe that God approves of our obedience!**

“Standards of Christian behavior are a yoke of slavery when we impose them on ourselves and use them as a measure of our spiritual experience and our standing with God.”—GVL, p. 156.

Moore has a one-two punch to eliminate morality in church members: (1) Stand free of obedience to standards, and (2) do not allow others to convince you that you should change.

“The only way I know to handle this [danger of “yielding to moral pressure” from others] is to follow Paul’s advice: Stand firm. Don’t allow it.”—GVL, p. 156.

“It’s just as wrong as it was then either to impose our view of morality onto others or to allow them to impose their convictions on us.”—GVL, p. 157.

Moore says no one should discuss personal views of standards. —Yet he, himself, has written a book, sold in Adventist bookstores around the world, intended to impose his convictions about standards on everybody!

Woe be to any parent who believes what Moore writes!

“Anyone should be free to drink, smoke, and behave sexually the way he or she wants to, so long as that behavior conforms to the law of the land.”—GVL, p. 157.

Moore concedes that there may be a few serious sins. He says adultery is one of them. (Earlier we found that Sabbathbreaking was not one of them.) Most everything else is merely “differ-

Continued on the next tract

More WAYMARKS - from —

PILGRIMS REST

HCR 77, BOX 38A - BEERSHEBA SPRINGS, TN 37305 USA

The Teachings of Marvin Moore on the Law and Standards

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

ences of opinion.”

“The difference with respect to lifestyle issues is the degree of ‘sinfulness’ involved and the possibility for differences of opinion that can exist among converted people. The church must discipline serious sins such as adultery, but we should respect differences of opinion about less important matters, especially where there are no clear guidelines and it’s a matter of personal judgment what is right and what is wrong.”—*GVL*, p. 157.

Moore’s position is that “guidelines” refer only to official church statements, and never to the Spirit of Prophecy. The truth is that the Spirit of Prophecy is full of excellent guidelines. Yet you will not find one time in his book where Moore quotes or refers positively to one of those statements. **To him, if it is not a church pronouncement, it is “a matter of personal judgment” as to “what is right and what is wrong.”**

In the very next paragraph, Moore says everyone has a different conscience. One person’s good conscience is another person’s bad one. —But, beware, following Moore’s sliding-scale morality, will ere long lead you down the slope to perdition.

He then says that those not agreeing with his new morality are emotionally damaged and retarded:

“Some people seem to be emotionally and intellectually incapable of acknowledging that such differences of opinion can be tolerated and still have a ‘good’ church.”—*GVL*, p. 158.

“They cannot allow for a variety of views—what we sometimes call pluralism. Such people are among the worst legalists in the church.”—*GVL*, p. 158.

As Moore sees it, on one hand is Judaism, which is in the law; on the other is Christianity, which is out of it.

“But enough of legalism for the moment. What is the true Christian like? Paul said: ‘By faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.’ The righteousness ‘for which we hope’ is in contrast to the righteousness according to the law, taught by the Jewish party.”—*GVL*, p. 159.

An underlying issue is the basis of standards. The truth is that true standards are founded on the

Inspired Word of God—the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy; they are not the pronouncements of the church or the opinions of the members. But **Moore considers the sources of standards to be uniformly inferior:**

“Legalism is actually the effort to use our intelligence, which is adequate, to judge others based on data that is inadequate.”—*GVL*, p. 162.

On page 165, Moore begins a chapter on how to have victory over—not sin, but legalism. He says that we need to “live in the spirit” in order to have this victory. I do not believe I wish to have anything to do with the spirits that guide Marvin Moore. He wants neither children nor adults to live by standards. Throughout the book, the only “sins” he speaks about are adultery and legalism!

“If find it most significant that legalism is a demonstration of very sinful nature that legalists are so eager to condemn in others. That’s why it is such a difficult sin to recognize in ourselves.”—*GVL*, p. 167.

“Legalists tend to be the last to recognize their own legalism or to understand that it is a sin.”—*GVL*, p. 168.

“Legalism is a sin—a manifestation of the sinful nature—just as much as adultery.”—*GVL*, p. 184.

We know that the seventh commandment is the commandment against adultery, but which one is the commandment against defending Bible standards?

Moore says it is useless for any sinner, including legalists, to try to repent of sin until the spirit convicts them to do so. Until then, they should just wait for the spirit.

“I can tell you one way that won’t work: forcing yourself . . . You can’t actually repent until the Holy Spirit ‘picks you up’ and helps you do it.”—*GVL*, p. 171.

On the next page, Moore says that there never had been a way to overcome alcoholism—until Alcoholics Anonymous was organized in the 20th century.

“Only in the past 50 years has the world known of a way that alcoholics could be certain of controlling their habit.”—*GVL*, p. 172.

And he adds that Alcoholics Anonymous has nothing to do with religion and works for any-

one, including atheists!

"The 12 steps of AA work with people of all religious faiths who really try them. They work with people who have no particular religious faith. They even work with people who don't believe in God!"—GVL, p. 172.

According to Marvin, not even the power of God can change an alcoholic or help him stop the habit. But a religion acceptable to atheists can do it.

Moore goes on to say that an underlying problem of legalists—is that they treat the Bible as though it were a bookful of instructions to be obeyed!

"[Something that is] characteristic of many legalists is a rigid, overly literal interpretation of Scripture—using the Bible as a rulebook, often in ways that seem ridiculously extreme to everyone else. An example of this is the idea that Deuteronomy 22:5 means women shouldn't wear pants."—GVL, p. 185.

It is difficult for Moore to tolerate those who defend standards. But he is quick to defend his right to oppose them for doing so. He calls it "pluralism".

"Pluralism . . . means tolerance of a variety of ideas."—GVL, p. 184.

"Pluralism does not mean that all ideas are right. It means that we should respect the right of others within the church to hold views that differ from ours. Some teachings cannot be tolerated, of course."—GVL, p. 185.

He believes his no-standards theory should be the norm, and those who believe in standards should only mention their strange ideas in private conversation.

"As long as legalists are willing to hold their views privately, our approach should be more gentle than firm."—GVL, p. 186.

He then fills two pages with a method to use to sidetrack those expressing godly principles or concerns—to get them off the subject. Here is a summary of that method:

"Even if you have a good answer, sharing it right then would probably get the two of you into an ar-

gument that could easily lead straight back to your behavior. Just smile and say, 'Let's talk about my Bible evidence next time.'—GVL, p. 186.

The above method is particularly useful, since the no-standard advocates have no Bible evidence supporting their position. So, Moore says, it is crucial to terminate each conversation as soon as possible.

"Thank you for your interest in my spiritual well-being. However, I have strong personal convictions about this matter, and I'll appreciate your not speaking to me about it again."—GVL, p. 187.

"The firm part is setting a limit on what you will allow that person to say to you. That's how you 'get rid of the slave woman and her son' gently."

"This approach will stop 95 percent of the harsh legalists in their tracks. Many of them will feel that they've done their Christian duty by talking to you, and you'll never hear from them again." . . . The third time you should say, 'We've discussed this before, and I've told you what I expect from you.' Then walk away."—GVL, p. 187.

He says the next step is to get the pastor to take action: first a visit, and then taking it to the church board (so they can take steps to kick the faithful member out).

When you stop to think about it, Moore is teaching church members a way to harden their hearts in a shell that cannot be reached. **He is helping them commit the unpardonable sin. First, he teaches them the satanic error that they can personally invent their own standards, and then, second, he teaches them how to so encase themselves that they cannot be reached by pleadings of Christian friends and loved ones.**

I challenge anyone who reads this to find a book or magazine, published by a major denomination in America, which contains teachings as demoralizing and evil as this! Not even the Protestants or Catholics print such trash.

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"I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourish-

ing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

"The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere."—5 Testimonies, 217.