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The Loving Letter Part 2

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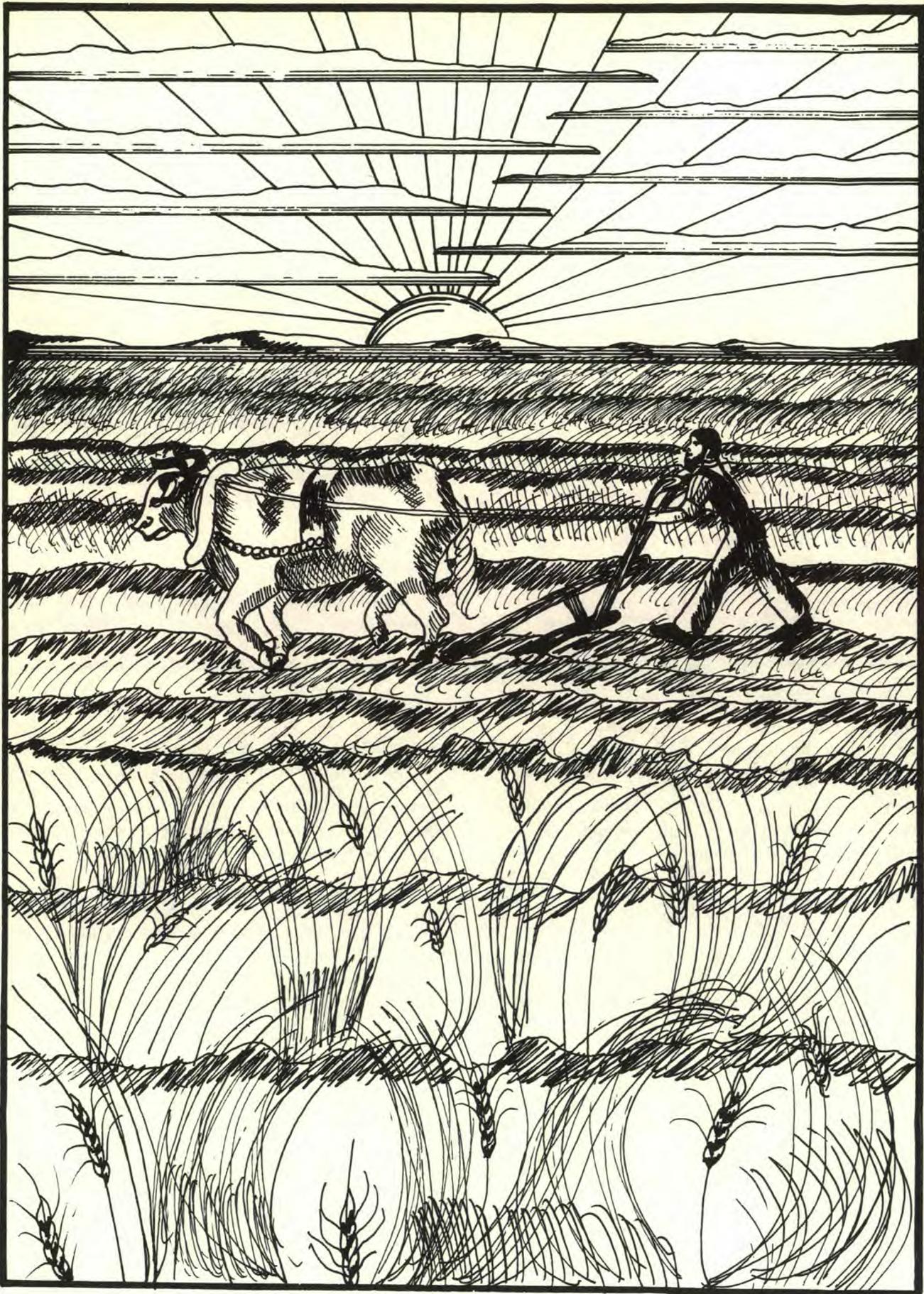


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Recommended Citation

Maxwell, C. Mervyn, "The Loving Letter Part 2" (1978). *Faculty Publications*. 3960.
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The Loving Letter

by C. Mervyn Maxwell
illustration by June Nowlin

The story of how the loving letter to Laodicea came to the Adventists in Waukon, Iowa, is being told in the Lake Union Herald in four installments. In the first installment John Loughborough gave up selling Arnold's Patent Sash Locks to dedicate his life to the ministry.

After their experience with Arnold's Patent Sash Locks, John and Mary Loughborough happily entered the ministry. First in New York State, and then in Michigan, Illinois and Indiana, John and Mary won souls for the Lord; but they were paid almost nothing for their pains.

John was compelled to labor all day to meet expenses, even when preaching every night. After the believers in one place in 1856 presented them with a particularly meager "token" of their appreciation, Mary exploded.

"John," she shouted, "it's too much!"

"I expected you to say it was too little."

"Don't tease me, John! I mean it's too much of a sacrifice. When you and I accepted the Sabbath four years ago, everyone shared alike. But our church has changed. Some Adventists are now worth \$10,000—and they 'pay' us with a few bushels of apples and corn!"

"We can hardly gauge ourselves by other people's sins, Mary."

"You know what's happening, John. The folk who used to sacrifice are moving west to Iowa and Illinois. They plan to make money and give it to the cause, but farming

is so good they buy one acreage after another and stay in debt. Look at the Andrewses and the Stevenses and the Lowells and the Hazeltines and the Butlers. They've all moved to farms in Waukon, Iowa. Why don't we join them and wait for the Lord in a garden of Eden?"

"But, Mary, they were farmers to begin with. I'm a minister."

"Josiah Hart and Elon Everts were ordained to the ministry before you were! Now they're farming in Round Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois. If it's all right for them, it's all right for us."

"But, Mary, I'm free to travel wherever there's a need. Josiah Hart and Elon Everts are tied to their farm chores like tethered horses."

"I don't know about horses, John, but I know about ministers. J. N. Andrews is a man of God, and he's in Waukon, Iowa, too, on a farm."

"But John Andrews is deathly ill!"

"Yes, and you know why. He's had to work too hard. And you have to work too hard. In a couple of years, when you're his age, you'll be deathly ill. And then I'll be left without a husband. Oh, you don't care about me!"

Mary sobbed awhile. "I'm sorry," she apologized. "We don't need to leave the ministry for ever. Why don't we farm until we get ahead, and then go back into the work?"

John capitulated. By October 1856 he had moved to Waukon, Iowa, and turned himself into a tethered horse.

Snow came early, so John took up carpentry. On December 24 he was atop a ladder when something vital happened. We leave him there for a moment—a thoroughgoing Laodicean.

C. Mervyn Maxwell is professor of church history at Andrews University's Theological Seminary, and author of Tell It to the World, released last year by Pacific Press Publishing Association.