Consider the Lilies
Reasons for Having Courage
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A Breath of Fresh Air
Who Is in Control?

Birth of the King, see page 8
THE EVANGELICAL churches in America have come up with a supposedly great plan to evangelize the world, the gospel going to every neighbor, friend, and enemy. It's called church growth.

Their plan is to get anyone and everyone to confess (believe) on Jesus Christ and be saved. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9

A saving belief in Jesus takes action on the part of the sinner. Remember, the devils believe and tremble. See James 2:19. But their belief turns them to anger, wrath, and destruction. Belief in Jesus turns the sinner to righteousness and loving obedience to His perfect law. “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” 1 John 3:22–24

To the average evangelical, believing in Christ is going to church once a week, giving an offering, and being a good person. It just means don’t be a big sinner, but little sins cannot be helped. Do not sin in a big way. And because of this counterfeit gospel, many of the churches have become just another social club: listen to a psychological lecture and then have a good visit with your friends over cookies, tea, or coffee. But lives are not changed with this counterfeit gospel. They still have lustful thoughts. They still get angry and offended over the trivia of life.

The evangelicals have polished their church growth programs and thousands are gathered into a social club membership. But how many know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Friend? How many believe there is still power in the blood of Christ to give victory over all sin in the life? How many believe that the commandments of God are unchangeable and that when the judgment is set and the books are opened, their lives will be measured and judged by God’s righteous law? Let us always remember that belief in Christ comes from the faith of Christ which produces loving obedience to all of God’s commands. The prophet of the Lord speaks to us:

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:24–26. It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through Him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, “I am saved.” Many have said: “You must do good works, and you will live”; but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many at the present day say, “Believe, only believe, and live.” Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell—perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise—harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life; God requires of His child perfect obedience.” Selected Messages, book 1, 373–374

“Are there many who cry, ‘Believe, only believe.’ Ask them what you are to believe. Are you to believe the lies forged by Satan against God’s holy, just, and good law? God does not use His great and precious grace to make of none effect His law, but to establish His law.” Ibid., 347

One of the reasons the ancient church went continually into apostasy was that they fraternized so closely with the world. They adopted the policies and then the mentality, then the programs of the false religionists around them. In time they developed a worldly rationale because of continued compromise, and captivity and destruction were the result.

Let us remember in this shaking time into which the church has now entered that no church program will succeed until the church is on its knees seeking with all its heart the Holy Spirit’s power.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:20–23.

RON SPEAR—EDITOR
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Vol. 2, No. 12  December 1987

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About the Cover

Four scenes from the life of Christ are depicted in the cover-art collage. Beginning from the top, we see the Baby Jesus welcomed by the only dwellers in Judea ready to greet Him, the lowly shepherds of the fields. Center left is the visit to the Temple at age twelve. On the right is shown Bartimaeus, the blind beggar who could see more clearly than his sighted fellows. The final scene, at the bottom, shows Christ before Caiaphas as the priest rends his sacred robe.
Reasons for Having Courage

LET NOT your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” [John 14:1-3]

These words were spoken to the disciples just before the betrayal of Jesus. The disciples were filled with sorrow at the thought that Christ was to leave them — that they were to be deprived of His presence. Therefore He comforted them with the assurance that if He went away, He would come again. He also told them that He would prepare mansions for them, and would take them to Himself. When He ascended from the Mount of Olives, our precious Saviour said that He would be with them always; and as they beheld their Lord taken from them into heaven, angels addressed them, saying, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” [Acts 1:11]

Thousands and thousands of angels escorted Christ in honor to the city of God, singing, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” The angel sentinels at the gate exclaimed, “Who is this King of glory?” and the escorting angels raised their voices in chorus, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” Again the challenge rings forth, “Who is this King of glory?” and the escorting angels answer, “The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory,” and the heavenly train passes through the gates. [Psalm 24:7-10] The angels of God were about to bow in adoration before Him, but Christ waved them back; He must first hear from His Father that His sacrifice for man had been accepted. He had a request to present before the Father: “I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” [John 17:24] Although He ascended into heaven to the glory of His Father, our blessed Saviour did not forget us here on the earth. And what was the answer that the Father gave to the Son? — “Let all the angels of God worship him.” [Hebrews 1:6] And then they all bowed in adoration before Him; they worshiped Him, and their song of praise filled the heavenly courts. Honor and praise and majesty were ascribed to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.

Our Saviour promised that He would come again. Those heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and Christ as conqueror, with a thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, will march out of those gates in triumph, to honor those who have loved Him and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. And He says that He has not forgotten them nor His promise. The Lifegiver will call the dead from their prison-house, and as they come up from the grave, they will receive the finishing touch of immortality. They will rise from their dusty beds and exclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” [1 Corinthians 15:55] And they will be caught up with those who are translated to heaven without seeing death, to meet their Lord in the air. Then the crown of immortal glory will be placed upon each brow. What a wonderful sight are these exalted ones! The world knew them not, but they are the overcomers! Palm branches of victory will be placed in their hands, and again the gates will be opened, and they will enter into the city with Jesus, and all the angels of God will strike their harps, and the heavenly arches will ring with the victory achieved through their God. They will stand before the throne of God, clothed

Ellen G. White
with the white linen which is the righteousness of Christ.

Now, what is the work which we have to do in probationary time?—To purify our souls in obeying the truth. The law of God is to be exemplified in the character; and in order that man might keep the law, Jesus came down to our world to die man’s sacrifice. He did not, in this, detract from the dignity of the law, but made manifest the immutability of its character. Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” [John 15:10] That it really has been made possible for man to grasp the righteousness of Christ, and keep the commandments, should call forth from our hearts and lives hearty responsive offerings of praise to Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Now I inquire, Shall we go with our heads bowed down in gloom and sadness, because Christ is coming?—No; we have every reason to lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth nigh.

What is the work that we are to do here in the world?—We are to wash our robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We must sanctify ourselves and our house.

Is feeling more reliable than pure faith in God’s promises?

holds to God. We must bring Jesus into our hearts and our homes, and we must seek every day to instruct others in regard to the claims of the law of God and the plan of salvation, that they may have a knowledge of Jesus. You can neglect anything of a temporal character more safely than you can the spiritual interests of your household. Our Saviour wants you to keep in close relation to Himself, that He may make you happy. When Christ lets His blessing rest upon us, we should offer thanksgiving and praise to His dear name. But, you say, if I could only know that He is my Saviour! Well, what kind of evidence do you want? Do you want a special feeling or emotion to prove that Christ is yours? Is this more reliable than pure faith in God’s promises? Would it not be better to take the blessed promises of God and apply them to yourself, bearing your whole weight upon them? This is faith. It is by faith that we are to come into a sacred nearness to Christ, not depending upon feeling; we are to say, “I believe Thy promise, Lord, because Thou hast said it. Thy word is pledged; we know that we are the children of God because we comply with the conditions, because He has pledged His word.” There is not a friend in the world of whom you would require one-half the assurance that our heavenly Father has given you in His promises.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” [John 15:4–10]

You can see the condition on which you become the children of promise, and receive the love of God. Jesus knew that of yourself you could not obey God’s law; for you were sold under sin; therefore He came to our world to bring to you moral power, that through faith in His name you might live. He brings His divine power to combine with your human efforts, that through His righteousness appropriated to yourself, you can keep His law. Our liberty was procured by Christ, by His spotless, meritorious life and death. We receive the righteousness of Christ, and through His merits enjoy liberty, and are identified with Him. We have the promise that if we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. Is it indeed possible that Christ may abide in us, and we in Him? Christ says, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” [John 15:7] Would He tempt us and deceive us?—No, indeed. There is everything to encourage any soul who by faith claims the promises that God has given us, for through His grace we may be overcomers. The law cannot lower the standard or take less than its full demands; therefore it cannot cleanse us from one sin; but God’s Son, who is one with the Father, equal in authority with the Father, paid the debt for us. We are to add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. You are not to think that you must wait until you have perfected one grace, before cultivating another. No; they are to grow up together, fed continually from the fountain of charity; every day that you live, you can be perfecting the blessed attributes fully revealed in the character of Christ; and when you do this, you will bring light, love, peace, and joy into your homes.

Review and Herald, July 29, 1890
Consider the Lilies

Martha M. Odom

Who is not charmed by the exquisite perfection of a rose, an orchid, a lily of the valley? How wonderful that the Lord has “spared us the beauty of these wanderers from Eden” as constant reminders of His unfathomable love for us!

We are told that “Jesus plucked the beautiful lily, and placed it in the hands of children and youth; and as they looked into His own youthful face, fresh with the sunlight of His Father’s countenance, He gave the lesson, ‘Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow [in the simplicity of natural beauty]; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’” [Matthew 6:28–30]

Then followed the sweet assurance and the important lesson, “Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

Mrs. Ellen G. White tells of an experience she and her son had with water lilies: “These beautiful lilies come up pure, spotless, perfect, without a single mark. They come through a mass of debris. I said to my son, ‘I want you to make an effort to get me the stem of that lily as near the root as possible. I want you to understand something about it.’

“He drew up a handful of lilies, and I looked at them. They were all full of open channels, and the stems were gathering the properties from the pure sands beneath, and these were being developed into the pure and spotless lily. It refused all the debris. It refused every unsightly thing, but there it was developed in its purity.

Their lives may be like the pure white lily, fragrant despite the stagnant water

“Now this is exactly the way that we are to educate our youth in this world. Let their minds and hearts be instructed who God is, who Jesus Christ is, and the sacrifice that He has made in our behalf. Let them draw the purity, the virtue, the grace, the courtesy, the love, the forbearance; let them draw it from the Source of all power.”

In other words, let us fill our children’s minds from their earliest years with the thrilling truths of the Bible and nature. Help them to love the right and reject the wrong. We are all surrounded with the filth and debris of sin in this wicked world. Especially is it a time of great peril and trial to youth. They must have right principles so firmly established in their own hearts and lives that they will be able to lay hold of divine strength to resist temptation, for of themselves they will be overcome. Surrounded by the scum of skepticism, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pornography, immorality, fictitious literature, rock and roll music, the television screen depicting crime and the objectionable programs brought into the home—to mention only some of the wickedness prevailing in our world today—our Seventh-day Adventist children and youth need our sympathy, guidance, and prayers.

“If they will with faith and courage bring their will in submission to the will of God, He will teach them, and their lives may be like the pure white lily, full of fragrance on the stagnant waters.”

“The lily is a representation of Christ among men. He came to a world all seared and marred with the curse,
but He was not polluted by His surroundings. He is our Example, as well as our Saviour.

A visitor at a mine noticed a pure white lily growing close to the ground and surrounded by coal dust. But not a speck of the black dust was on its petals. The guide explained that the lily had something within itself that enabled it to throw off the coal dust.

So the Christian in this sinful world, young or older grown, like the lily on a slimy pool, by feeding his soul with the Word of God, the Spirit of Prophecy writings, secret prayer, and work for others, may develop a beautiful Christian character.

"Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged; and His followers are to manifest a faith of the same enduring nature. They are to live as He lived, and work as He worked, because they depend on Him as the great Master-worker.

"Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything. With the golden chain of His matchless love, Christ had bound them to the throne of God. It is His purpose that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the Source of all power, shall be theirs. They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame." 6

"The life of Christ's disciples is to be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter." 7

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1Education, 119
2Christ's Object Lessons, 19
3Child Guidance, 58
4Temperance, 187
5Youth's Instructor, January 21, 1897
6Gospel Worker, 39 (1915 edition)
7Testimonies, vol. 6, 307

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The work of publishing has been inextricably bound up with the growth and history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its influence, both in the strengthening of church members and as an evangelistic tool to reach those not of our faith, can scarcely be estimated. As this work and influence continue, it is the purpose of Copyright Berea to direct our readers' attention to publications of merit and usefulness.

Ellen G. White 1888 Materials. 1,812 pages in four paperbound volumes, Ellen G. White Estate, $34.95

As we near the new year, it is only to be expected that the events of a century ago will receive a good deal of attention. The Minneapolis General Conference, A.T. Jones, E.J. Waggoner, Righteousness by Faith—all these we may expect to encounter somewhat more regularly than usual. And well we should. Unfortunately, however, since Adventism is deeply divided on the significance of 1888, we may expect to encounter increasing confusion on the subject. One might wish for better, but it would be criminally naïve to suppose that longstanding differences of interpretation will not obscure the issues.

Fortunately there is a bright spot amid the clouds. Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, recently made available by the Ellen G. White Estate, presents a gold mine of authoritative information. We have before us now virtually every reference to the Minneapolis Conference to be found in the letters, sermons, and manuscripts of Ellen White. Other books will no doubt be forthcoming on the subject, but leave them alone until you have read this one. Admittedly, 1800 pages is a major undertaking. But 1888 was a major event. And Righteousness by Faith is certainly a topic worth the effort.

I wouldn't want to be understood as saying that every other volume on the subject is distorted (though some in the past have been), but if you understand the value of original source material, and especially inspired original source material, you will realize the benchmark nature of this new publication.

Simply put, spend your money where it will do the most good. I might also advise that you do so posthaste, as only two thousand copies are being printed. Probably there will be no shortage (a disappointing commentary on the reading habits of five million Adventists), but just in case, remember that you’ve been warned. The price is $34.95, postpaid. Make your check or money order payable to the Ellen G. White Estate. The address is 6840 Eastern Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20012.

Since you’ll be writing to the White Estate, take the opportunity to request a copy of their small catalog of “Documents Available.” You’ll find compiled counsels on everything from Adultery, Divorce, and Remarriage to Ellen G. White and the Role of Women in the Church. At pennies a page, these documents often provide one of the most helpful sources of specific information available.
Birth of the King

From Wichita, Kansas to Kongsberg, Norway, and around the world, the colorful sights and delightful sounds of Christmas once again pervade the earth. Many Christians observe Christmas as a commemoration of the birth of Jesus in lowly Bethlehem. Though in all probability it is not His birthday, let us use this time of Christian awareness to review the events surrounding that glorious occasion.

“When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son” of whom it was proclaimed that “of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.” He was to sit “upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever.” “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.” (Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 9:7, 6; Scripture texts are from the New King James Bible)

Thus, according to Scripture, when Jesus was “born,” He was to sit upon the “throne of David” and to establish the kingdom in justice and peace. Though the chosen nation should suffer economic chaos, theological apostasy, and political corruption, its members were sure it would ultimately recover, for the Messiah would once again bring justice and peace, prosperity and dominion to God’s people.

Was not “the government” to be “upon His shoulder”? And does the government not refer to the leaders and authorities of the nation? Thus the people confidently looked to their leaders to proclaim the Messiah King.

While the world of Israel thus looked expectantly toward Jerusalem for the birth announcement of their Saviour and King, a newborn babe lay sleeping on beaten-down straw, under strips of linen, in a Bethlehem barn. He was a normal-looking infant, born of peasant stock. He was the Messiah, the Creator of the universe. The future of Israel’s prosperity and existence lay huddled beside Him.

Angels, bursting with eagerness to tell the good news, flew from house to house, synagogue to synagogue, throughout the length and breadth of Judea, searching for receptive hearts, to announce the birth of this newborn son. They searched. Where were the 7,000 faithful of Elijah’s day? Though Elijah had not known their whereabouts, these angels had known every
name and address. But now they searched in vain! Yet the people of Israel were zealous Sabbathkeepers. They sent their children to the rabbinical schools and daily studied the Scriptures. And most of all, they were of the lineage of Abraham, loyal Jews, as demonstrated by their loyalty to their human leaders.

In one classroom an angel lingers as a scholar lectures his students. “It is nearly time for the Messiah to come,” he says. The angel starts forward with breathtaking joy—has he found a worthy group? He7eadies to lighten the room and share the good news, but the teacher continues:

“Be aware, however, that the historic beliefs, based upon simple Bible statements, must today be balanced with modern scholasticism. Rabbi Benikel, for example, in his recent dissertation on the linguistic origins of Daniel, which has received the endorsement of Rabbi Honohan, points out several exegetical problems with the theory of the Babylonian origin of Daniel. He asserts that portions of Daniel were written during the early Maccabean period and that the Messiah prophecy was an attempt to strengthen the support of Judas Maccabaeus in his resistance to the Antiochian occupation of Judea. The Sanhedrin Council has yet to decide on this theory, but Rabbi Benikel, understandably, has not wanted to submit it to their jurisprudence until he has more support in the council.”

The angel folds his wings and turns to leave. The professor drones on—Rabbi El-Stevens has also shown problems with the year-day theory. This theory, he says, developed as a result of Israel’s disappointment when the Messiah did not come when expected shortly after Cyrus’ decree... But the angel has gone. The rejection of the Messiah had already begun.

Thus it was that “angels came... unseen to Jerusalem, to the appointed expositors of the Sacred Oracles, and the ministers of God’s house... Yet Jerusalem was not preparing to welcome her Redeemer. With amazement the heavenly messengers beheld the indifference of the people whom God had called to communicate to the world the light of sacred truth... They rehearsed their meaningless prayers, and performed the rites of worship to be seen by men, but in their strife for riches and worldly honor they were not prepared for the revelation of the Messiah.” The Desire of Ages, 43-44

The angel returns from his search to the hayloft headquarters of Bethlehem: “I’ve searched the classrooms of Judea,” he reports. “The teachers are expounding the Scriptures, but they are very proud and degree-oriented. They need a new de
tect the needs of the teachers and we shall be not only respected but also beloved by the people.”

But who will listen to shepherds? They have no degrees, no preaching license, no literary or oratorical skills—if they preach this gospel it will turn many away!

love... to be called... Rabbi.’ (Matthew 23:6-7) The students’ minds are crowded with material that... is worthless and they are so busy with their biblical studies that they have no time for ‘quiet hours to spend with God.’ Thus they do ‘not hear His voice speaking to the heart.’ The Desire of Ages, 69. They have elevated human philosophy above simple faith and have ‘set human teaching above God’s Word.’ Christ’s Object Lessons, 304. They pray before every class, but there is no real desire for divine enlightenment. I am sad to report that I have not been able to find a single classroom of Judea within which I could give the glad tidings of Jesus’ birth. Even if I had told them, unless it was endorsed by the Sanhedrin and came through the official channels, they would not have believed it.”

“That’s the kind of reports we’re getting from all over,” was the answer from the co-ordinating angel. “It is pretty bleak. If we could even find some in individual dwellings with whom we could share the good news, but the angels visiting the homes report that the people have ‘respected the priests and rabbis for their intelligence and apparent piety’ for so long, that in all religious matters they [have] yielded implicit obedience to their authority.’ The Desire of Ages, 611. They have almost made their human leaders infallible.

“We have found two persons, however, named Simeon and Anna, who are ‘just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel’ and filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke 2:29, 36. Of course, they are so old that few will listen. What’s more, Anna is a proph-

December 1987 Our Firm Foundation 9
“But God is no respector of persons,” responds the angel. “They are worthy and I must tell them.”

“We’re all coming,” responds the commander. “You are the only one who has had success tonight—we’re joining you!”

That night the lowly shepherds became the best and only true theologians of Israel. They did not know four or five variant possibilities of prophetic interpretations; they could not quote rabbinical sources; they did not even know the dictionary definition of exegesis, but they knew the truth. True theology church, or individuals, permit themselves to be educated by these broken cisterns, they will be deceived and rejected by God as were the Jews in Jesus’ day.

As in Jesus’ day, “There are men among us in responsible positions who hold that the opinions of a few conceited philosophers, so called, are more to be trusted than the truths of the Bible, or the testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Such a faith as that of Paul, Peter, or John is considered old-fashioned and insufferable at the present day. . . . God has shown me that these

The question they asked both John and Jesus was, “By what authority do you do these things?”—what rabbi, priest, or synagogue has endorsed you?

is the process of humbly arriving at truth, not the process of proudly elucidating human speculation.

Those who do not understand or believe in God’s holy Sabbath are not theologians. They may be sincere, but they are not theologians. The most common and illiterate person who understands and keeps the Sabbath is a greater theologian than the wisest scholar who is ignorant of such a basic, plain truth of the Bible. Those who do not understand the closing events of earth’s history as delineated in Daniel, the Revelation, and The Great Controversy, are not theologians. Those who do not understand the power of Christ to deliver from sin, or the plain and simple gospel story of who Jesus was—the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3)—are not theologians. Those who have known and rejected God’s voice through the Spirit of Prophecy may be applauded for their great speculative skills, but their wisdom is no greater than was that of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ day—they are not theologians. And if the men are . . . to prove a scourge to our people. They are wise above what is written. This unbelief of the very truths of God’s Word because human judgment cannot comprehend the mysteries of His work is found . . . in most of our schools and comes into the lessons of the nurseries.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 79

Few so-called scholars are true theologians, and few theologians are recognized scholars. Jesus said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.” Matthew 11:25

As with ancient Israel at Christ’s first coming, so with modern Israel “in the last solemn work” before His second coming—“few great men will be engaged.” They “have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent . . . [and] did not keep pace with the light. . . . God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those [like the shepherds] who are taught rather by the unceasing of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. . . . God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 80–82

In Jesus’ day the people had been led to believe that God’s work depended upon the priests and rabbis, as “we have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christian, but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 80

The Jewish people could not fathom the Lord ever forsaking them. Their leaders had emphasized the texts that spoke of their eternal heritage to the exclusion of texts that spoke of the conditions of prosperity. This led to a false sense of security in the system. They forgot that God has not made Himself dependent on any man, nation, or church. Anyone, such as John the Baptist, who said “God can raise up children to Himself from these stones,” was thought of as a schismatic and separatist. The question they asked both John and Jesus was, “By what authority do you do these things?”—what rabbi, priest, or synagogue has endorsed you?

The rejection of Jesus and the destruction of a nation followed a very simple path: 1) The leaders became political with only an outward appearance of piety in order to retain the people’s confidence and support. 2) The educational system elevated the human above the divine. 3) The people were taught that all questions of administration or policy must be submitted to ecclesiastical authority and that only those under such authority could preach, write, or teach. 4) The people were taught that the chosen nation would continue to be blessed regardless of what it did. 5) the people were led to believe that the work of the Lord consisted totally of the political system then in control of the nation. God was not recognized as the Head of His church as stated in Ephesians 1:22–23. The Lord Himself was obliged to go through the “proper channels” of the

Continued on 27
The current issue of Our Firm Foundation has to be the most enlightening you have ever produced. For several months now I have been puzzling over the question, What did I accept as truth that brought me to a sleepy attitude towards victory in my life? Now it is clear that I had a misunderstanding as to the nature of sin. I have always accepted the fact that I needed to gain the victory, but at the same time I saw the task as impossible because I was regarding sin as a state of being. I knew that some day the Lord would explain what appeared to be contradictions. Your magazine and tapes are slowly enlightening my mind. For that I want to thank you.

Breta White
Hendersonville, NC

I am a pastor on the east coast and have been receiving your magazine for almost two years. I find it so refreshing to hear the straight testimony every month. God bless you. You are constantly in my prayers.

I would like to request that you start sending my sister Our Firm Foundation each month. She and her husband are new Adventists and are going through a terrible time in their church with the “New Theology.” They greatly need your truth-filled magazine to keep them on the right track and to counteract this heresy.

Pastor

I have spent hours with your introductory issue of Our Firm Foundation and I think it is valuable to have so much important material in one single paper. I have thanked the Lord for this one. It is very good to read about our pillars of faith.

As you see I am writing from Sweden, and I don’t know of any others who have this valuable paper. I’d like to share this introductory issue with other Adventists. Will you please send me some of this one? I’m not quite sure about the financial part. If you want me to send you some money, please let me know. (The paper gives the impression that it is free.)

Lennart Wiberg
Sweden

Subscription information may be found on page three. Please note that the magazine is free to all who are unable to make the suggested donation. — Editors

Thank you for the shipment of back issues of Our Firm Foundation and Truth for Today. As a result of distribution, two ex-Adventists came to services, one the next day after receiving the July issue.

Bill Daniels
Indianapolis, IN

I was just sitting here, telling my wife what kind of a salesman I am. I’d have a difficult time selling twenty-dollar bills for a nickel. But this special issue, “A Time for Choosing,” that you sent out for October is material that every Seventh-day Adventist must have a correct understanding of, and maybe, if I try hard enough, I can manage to give away a hundred copies. If possible, please send them before the end of this month.

Ben Peoples
Kempner, TX

Errata: Two typographic mistakes in the October 1987 issue of Our Firm Foundation have come to our attention. On page 7, column one, paragraph one, the phrase “sin of deceit” should have read “son of deceit.” In the last paragraph on page 21, James 2:24 is misquoted, omitting the words “by works and not.” We apologize for any confusion which may have resulted from this. — Editors

Truth for Today Bible Students

You folks there at Hope have really given me a new outlook on life. . . . I am going to join one of your Sabbath churches here in — — —. I have already talked to the pastor here about it. I know that if it hadn’t been for you folks and these Bible lessons, I would never have made this step. Thanks for being true Christians.

B.E.
Mississippi

I find your studies more and more interesting and more comprehensive. As I go along, it will be necessary for me to become more inquiring and perhaps even become a nuisance.

A.M.
New Mexico

I always felt worshiping on Sunday was like a job, but since worshiping on the true Sabbath, it’s more like a rest, a joyful time, and I’m very happy that the Spirit of God has chosen me to know this truth. Thank God!

D.A.
California

I love this study course, because I am finally seeing with my own eyes what I have felt to be true in my heart. All my previous endeavors in my search for the way have always left me with a feeling of emptiness.

D.D.
Montana
Who Is In CONTROL?

Arnet Mathers

The most important question we each must settle is, Who is in control? The answer seems inborn in us, “I am. I know what I need to be happy, to be secure, to feel good, to enjoy life, and I am going to do everything I can to have a good life. It is my life and I am going to live it my way.” This is the attitude with which we are born.

Some time ago there was a king who had the same problem. God had blessed him with empire-building power and humbled other kings before him. In fact, God had delivered His own people, who were called by His name, into the power of this king from Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar can hardly he blamed if he thought he was in control; he had succeeded in everything to which he had set his hand.

But even in the lives of successful men such as he come moments when the dark, impenetrable future is troubling. Will their achievements endure? Will all be well tomorrow? Is there more to life than the eye can see? Nebuchadnezzar was wondering what the future held in store. God wanted him to know who is in control.

The lesson was taught not only by the vision, but also in the circumstances of its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream. He knew he had dreamed, and he very much wanted to know the meaning of the dream, but what he had dreamed simply escaped him. Confronted by such a problem whom else could he call on save the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans? These were men skilled in all manner of wisdom and science and were employed by the king to counsel him and to predict future events, to divine the will of the gods.

Unfortunately, the extent of the wisdom to which these men could attain was limited by their humanity and perhaps also by the finite limits of the prince of darkness. If only the king could recall the dream, then they could attempt to interpret it. The king could not remember, and he was becoming suspicious of them. If they could not tell him his dream, how could they reveal any other secrets beyond the power of men? The king declared, “If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.” 2:5

In desperation these wise men of the world tried to reason with King Nebuchadnezzar. After all, who can tell another man what that man dreamed in his own head in his own bed? This is something beyond the power of any mortal to do, and for this reason no king had ever demanded such a feat before. Thus they were forced to admit the limitations and insufficiency of human wisdom. All their plots to manufacture security for themselves and to have the good life are unmasked before the king and avail them nothing now. Nebuchadnezzar is thoroughly disillusioned and determined to destroy them all.

Daniel and his friends had not been consulted, perhaps because they were only novices. Nevertheless, they were to be included in the destruction of the wise men. When Daniel learned of this he immediately went to the king and asked for an appointment to come and make known the interpretation to the king. Only a fool would promise something he could not possibly deliver, but Daniel knew who was in control.

Daniel immediately made the matter known to his friends and they sought God in prayer, to reveal to them the king’s dream, that they and the other wise men might be delivered. That night God revealed the dream to Daniel. God taught Nebuchadnezzar by object lesson who is in control. Where man is powerless, the power of God becomes evident. It can be seen in
He discovered to his terror that the God of heaven rules the kingdoms of men

golden and silver vessels from the temple of the Lord, he discovered to his abject terror that it is the God in heaven who rules in the kingdom of men; He is in control.

Babylon was to fall and its dominion pass to Medo-Persia, the silver kingdom. Darius and Cyrus were to be as saviours to God’s people, and the angel of God would stand to confirm and strengthen them, and to battle against the prince of Persia. But though the kingdom they established was strong, as their successors departed from a knowledge of God their power diminished.

The next kingdom to be granted dominion was the golden kingdom, 3 the federation of Greek states under Alexander the Great. With amazing rapidity he conquered an enormous expanse of territory and transplanted Greek culture everywhere he went. The short time, however, which God granted Alexander, he used for his own pleasure and glory. Seemingly invincible, he could neither conquer nor control himself. He died of alcohol poisoning and the empire he had built disintegrated.

The last kingdom of men was to be an iron kingdom, having brutal power, which later partially disintegrated. Rome was given Pergamum, remnant of one of the Hellenistic kingdoms, and one by one the other Hellenistic states fell to her. By 168 B.C. her rule was dominant and by 30 B.C. the last of these states, Egypt, fell to her. In the effort to maintain control of their realm the Romans put power in the hands of Caesar. As their power dwindled they further estranged themselves from God by instituting emperor worship. In the centuries after Christ the Roman Empire deteriorated and disintegrated until the only overarching institution left was the Roman Church.

Nebuchadnezzar, of course, did not know the names of all these kingdoms; the point for him was that the kingdoms of men pass away, but God is in control of history. The modern reader can verify that God is indeed in control of the affairs of men, for the events foretold from the beginning have been happening just as God said. The remainder of the vision will come to pass just as surely as the portion already fulfilled.

In the days of the kingdoms of clay mixed with iron all the kingdoms are yet alive. Their dominion has been taken away, yet the religion and culture of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome live on in the teachings of the Roman Church and her daughters, those churches which have not abandoned all her errors. But this is not the last kingdom. The kingdom of Christ which comes is not a human kingdom, nor does it inherit anything from the kingdoms of men. When Christ leaves the temple, God’s holy mountain, to establish the kingdom of God on the earth He destroys the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay all together; they are blown away like chaff and no trace can be found of them any more.

The message is clear: what is human will pass away, what is of God will endure.

The message is clear: what is human will pass away, what is of God will endure forever. Who is in control? All who respond, “I am,” all who insist on maintaining control of their own lives, are building with human wisdom and human materials. All who wish to last forever must say, “Lord, please be my master; all the things I have and do to be happy, to be secure, to feel good, and to enjoy life, all these things I give to You. You are my master, I want only what you give me.” Anything a person won’t allow God to remove from him, whether in itself it be harmful or not, becomes his lord. To be Christ’s, to be part of His kingdom, requires total trust in His wisdom and goodness, for without Him one can do nothing.

1Jeremiah 51:28; Daniel 5:30-31
2Daniel 11:1; 10:20. The prince of Persia is the evil angel opposing the work of God.
3Daniel 8:20
4Daniel 7:11-12 states very clearly that these kingdoms live on after their dominion is taken away. Revelation 13:1-2 confirms that they are all present in the fourth kingdom—the Roman Church—all being present in the amalgamated beast there pictured.

5The stone cut out of the mountain is Christ. See Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 61:14; 28:16; Zechariah 3:9. The mountain from which it comes is the temple of God in heaven. See Psalm 15:1; 99:9
6The Aramaic is very explicit. It says they are ground up “as one,” Daniel 2:35.
A Right Use of God’s Gifts

Ellen G. White

Dear Brother: There are many of our young physicians who in obtaining their education have accumulated a burden of debt, and who, by their association with self-indulgent men, have come to look upon expensive living as a necessity.

When these students consecrated themselves to the medical missionary work, they were sincere in their determination to become Christian physicians, to be workers together with God, united with Him in unselfish ministry for the sick and the distressed; but in the multiplicity of their studies, and as they associated with worldly teachers and students, their Christian zeal weakened, and a zeal for self-advancement imperceptibly took its place.

It is when school work is ended, and decisions must be made as to the field and the character of future labor, that it is of the utmost importance that our young physicians shall realize that their talents are not their own, that they belong to the Master. Let them determine that they will not accept the praise and flattery of men, but that they will use wisely, judiciously, and with the strictest integrity, all the gifts God has lent them. Their talents are to be increased by wise use, and returned to the Giver. This the Word of God specifies as their duty. They are to be producers as well as consumers.

My brother, you have grown to manhood without learning the lesson that all should learn in childhood and youth, the lesson of self-denial and self-sacrifice. For your present and future good, remember that you are responsible for the use you make of your Lord’s gifts. God has given you genius and capabilities. Ever realize that you must make the best use of your talents, because they are not your own. They are entrusted to you by God, not to be used in pleasing and gratifying impulse, but for Him and Him alone, because they are His.

The Lord has given you your work. He expects you each week to interview yourself, to find out how you are trading on your Lord’s goods. Are you putting to the tax your physical, mental, and spiritual powers in an effort to please the Lord, who desires you to accumulate talents by right use of those He has given you?

Your being a physician in no wise releases you from the necessity of practicing economy. There are new fields to be entered, and to enter these fields requires the closest economy. Will you be content to let others lift the cross and practice self-denial, while you indulge your fancies, spending money freely to make a show? God requires you to accomplish good with every jot of your influence and with every dollar of your money. Then will be seen the most blessed results.

You need to learn the art of using your talents for the glory of Him who has lent them to you. This requires study, and prayer, and consecration. You should learn the science of handling money aright. Then you will not allow it to pass through your hands without producing anything for God.

Not Our Own

My brother, we are not our own. We have been bought with a price. If we cooperate with God, we can advance His kingdom. Neither you nor I nor any other soul should feel at liberty to underrate the talents God has given us, be they many or few. God demands a faithful return of His entrusted goods. He calls upon us to enter His school, and learn day by day how to do the work He has given us. No soul is to be an idler. If we fail to use God’s gifts aright, how shall we answer Him when He calls upon us for an account of our stewardship? He says, “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12

I have written plainly. Many, looking at the outward appearance of your work, would praise and flatter you. But I have no words of flattery to offer. I
know that means which should have been sacredly devoted to the work of the Lord have been used in other ways.

God calls upon you to be a man, and put away your extravagance. Extrava-
gant ideas must not be indulged under the name of medical missionary work. It is high time that we became Christians in heart. Integrity, self-denial, and humility should characterize our lives. Study diligently to learn the meaning of the words, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

While laboring in this world as the great medical missionary, Christ charged to convey to the world, without delay, God's saving mercy. This is the trust that He has given us, and it is to be faithfully executed. Medical missionary work is to be done. Thousands upon thousands of human beings are perishing in sin. The compassion of God is moved. All Heaven is looking on with intense interest to see what character medical missionary work will assume under supervision of human beings. Will men make merchandise of God's ordained plan for reaching the dark parts of the earth with a manifestation of His benevolence? Will they cover mercy with selfishness, and then call it medical missionary work?

The Lord will put His people in possession of good throughout the world, if they will unselfishly use their ability for the uplifting of humanity

denied Himself every luxury. He suffered that you might secure salvation. For you He endured death on the cross, despising the shame. He descended to the lowest depths of humiliation that you might sit in heavenly places. Behold His love. Does it not put to shame your extravagant outlay of means, that you may make a show in the world? How much owest thou unto thy Lord? Can you compute the sum? All that He possessed, He gave for your salvation, and He calls upon you to consecrate yourself to His service. Review from the first your service to God, and henceforth follow the example of the Saviour, not the example of worldlings. Unless you study the Saviour's life, and practice His lessons, you will never enter the courts of the blessed.

The Need of Earnest Effort

There is a great work to be done. Are you doing all that you can to help? God has given us a commission which angels might envy. The church has been

Medical missionary work is a sacred plan of God's own devising. After Adam's transgression, a costly price was paid to rescue the fallen race. Those who will co-operate with God in His effort to save that which was lost, those who will work on the lines on which Christ worked, will be wholly successful.

John writes, “I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.” Revelation 14:6. This represents the speed and directness with which the church is to prosecute her work. In the medical missionary work done by His followers, Jesus is to behold the travail of His soul. Human beings are to be snatched as brands from the burning.

All Heaven is watching with intense anxiety to see what is to be the outcome of the work that is large and so important. God is watching, the heavenly universe is watching; and souls are perishing. And a change has come that has hindered the work which God designed should move forward without a trace of selfishness. Is the enterprise of mercy through which in the past God has manifested His grace in rescuing the ignorant, the sick, and the sorrowing, to become a matter of selfish merchandise? Shall God's agency of blessing be used by those who profess to believe the truth, in buying and selling and getting gain?

The experience of apostolic days will come to us if men will be worked by the Holy Spirit. The Lord will withdraw His blessing where selfish interests are indulged; but He will put His people in possession of good throughout the world, if they will unselfishly use their ability for the uplifting of humanity. His work is to be a sign of His benevolence, a sign that will win the confidence of the world and bring in resources for the advancement of the gospel.

God will test the sincerity of men. Those who will deny self, take up the cross, and follow Christ, will have a continual work to do in the line of restoring. Those who sacrifice for truth make a deep impression on the world. Their example is contagious and convincing. Men see that there is in the church that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. But when those who profess to be working only for God seek to benefit themselves, they greatly retard the work, and cast reproach upon it.

My brother, use every advantage possible to secure the salvation of souls. Never forsake the true standard, even though to cling to it makes you a beggar. God has set up a high standard of righteousness. He has made a plain distinction between human and divine wisdom. All who work on Christ's side must work to save, not to destroy. Worldly policy is not to become the policy of the servants of God. Divine authority is to be acknowledged. The church on earth is to be the representative of heavenly principles. Amid the awful confusion of injustice, deception, robbery, and crime, she is to shine with light from on high. In the righteousness of Christ, she is to stand firm against the prevailing apostasy.

Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 1, 16-21

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Two Kinds of Paths

Francis McClellan Wilcox (1865–1951) served the denomination as pastor, sanitarium chaplain, and editor. During his years as editor of the Review and Herald from 1911 to 1944 he also served as a member of many committees and boards, exerting a strong and enduring influence on the work of the church. Author of many books and pamphlets, he was also a member of the original Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate, and was the last of the original group to survive. Though the following article, originally addressed to the General Conference session of 1936, is presented from the perspective of 50 years ago, we believe Elder Wilcox's admonitions speak eloquently to us today. — EDITORS

Thus Saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16

It is by subtle, insidious temptations that Satan seeks to draw the disciples of Christ away from their allegiance to Him. If Satan can lead them to lose their first love in Christian experience, if he can induce them to form alliances with the world, if he can corrupt the simplicity of their faith, if he can influence them to adopt worldly policy and principles in the operation of God's work, if he can persuade them to substitute for the Bible truths belonging to this day and generation, subtle philosophies or a beautiful idealism, his purpose will be achieved. It is against dangers of this character that we need resolutely to steel our hearts and safeguard our souls.

I recognize many evils threatening the church, many false paths to divert her from the way of life, but the limits of this hour will permit the consideration of only a few. You may recognize other and greater evils than I shall mention. Even so, I can only give you my convictions, praying God to bless my humble message to your good and to the good of His worldwide church. Permit me, then, to point out these dangers as I see them, in the following order:

Lowered Standards

The menace of false standards, of changing emphasis in Christian experi-

ence, threatens the remnant church today the same as it has the church in every period of its history. Israel of old affords a striking illustration. Joshua and the elders who outlived him had hardly passed away before there came onto the stage of action a new generation who knew not the Lord and who turned to the worship of Baal. Similarly, the early disciples of the Christian Era had scarcely retired to their graves before their children, with new con-

verts from heathenism, sought to remodel the gospel cause.

How many times has this history been repeated through the centuries!

Francis McClellan Wilcox
Will it be repeated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? The fathers of this movement have passed to their rest. Standards fallen from their hands have descended to us. Will we prove true to our holy heritage? Will we bear these banners on to triumphant victory, or will we permit them to trail in the dust?

This question was propounded to the ministry of this church in solemn appeal by the president of the General Conference at the last Autumn Council. It is well for us to face the question on this occasion. Before me is the leadership of our world church, the men and women who above all others shape and mold this movement. Will we resolutely stand for the faith once delivered to the saints? Will we faithfully oppose the inroads of worldliness, of unbelief, of apostasy? Will we keep to the old paths of Christian faith and experience? I cannot believe otherwise than that we will. If we do, we may expect the divine blessing upon our endeavor. If our hearts become faint and our tongues palsied, and we fail to proclaim the whole counsel of God, crying out against sins in the church regardless of who may be involved, we shall lose our power, and Heaven must raise up others from the ranks to take our places.

That many in the church are living by greatly lowered standards is too sadly evident. We recognize this as relates to Sabbath observance, which by many has been lowered to the level of the observance of Sunday, and is made an occasion for social visiting, outings.

Protests against these innovations come from many faithful brethren and sisters

and pleasure seeking. In growing instances members of the church, in order to hold their positions, continue their secular employment during the Sabbath, minimizing as much as possible their hours of labor. I refer in this to employment other than the necessary care of the home and livestock, and needed ministry to the sick.

We see the drift in standards in the attendance of some of our church members at the theater, the movies, and commercialized sports; at public bathing resorts; at bridge parties, dances, and other gatherings of worldly pleasure; and even more serious than this, we see being enacted in some of our churches, our schools, and our sanitariums, dramatic plays and costumed exhibitions which, in the minds of many, especially the young, break down all objection to the theater.

Surely the departure from the experience of our past history, and the strange paths upon which many are entering, should lead us to deep concern. Protests against these innovations come from many faithful brethren and sisters. For this we thank God and take courage, knowing there are thousands of our people in every division of the world field who are loyally standing for the faith once delivered to the saints. May God hasten the day when, in the words of Zephaniah, “the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.” [3:13]

The character of the church will be determined in large measure by its leadership. Of unfaithful watchmen in days of old, the Lord through Jeremiah says, “If they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.” [23:22] These watchmen failed because they lowered their own standards to meet the standards of the people. This is our danger; like people, like priest. God asks of us to take His standard as our own, regardless of the ideals of those about us, and then to call the church up to the standard of divine appointment. I quote this statement from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“At a certain battle, when one of the regiments of the attacking force was being beaten back by the hordes of the enemy, the ensign in front stood his ground as the troops retreated. The captain shouted to him to bring back the colors, but the reply of the ensign was: ‘Bring the men up to the colors!’ This is the work that devolves upon every faithful standard-bearer — to bring the men up to the colors. The Lord calls for wholeheartedness. We all know that the sin of many professing Christians is that they lack the courage and energy to bring themselves and those connected with them up to the standard.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 46

In order for our ministry to prove effective, as we preach, so must we live. The minister of Christ who denies in his own practice the principles he preaches to others, will become like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

How can we hold our people back from the pleasures of the world if we are engaged in worldly pleasure? How can we ask of the church a higher standard of Sabbath observance if we ourselves, so far as our time may permit, make this day one of pleasure riding, of picnicking, of social visiting? How can we discourage the use of the radio in listening to jazz if we ourselves take pleasure in this kind of music? How can we lead the church in the principles of healthful living, in following the earnest admonitions we have received from the messenger of the Lord, if we, in our own homes or as we sit at the tables of others, violate the very principles which we have been admonished to obey?

If I appeal to you, I appeal also to myself, because personally I feel the need of this deeper consecration. If we can but demonstrate in our lives and in our teaching that we truly and actually
believe in the near coming of the Lord, I say, if we can only demonstrate this faith in our own lives, the fire of holy devotion burning on the altar of our hearts will kindle a new flame in the hearts of our brethren and sisters, and the inspiration moving our lives will move them to deeper consecration and greater earnestness.

Disintegration of the Family

We have come to a time, as never before in the history of the world, when there is a great lessening of natural affection. The spirit of alienation is dividing husband and wife, is coming in as a separating wall between parents and children. Many influences are at work to disrupt the old-time family life. The theater, the movie, the automobile, the radio, the social engagement, impure literature, and a thousand and one other devices are employed by Satan to bring divided interests to the inmates of the home.

The divorce evil presents another false path. The marriage relationship is lightly regarded in the world around us. Divorce is secured on the most trivial pretexts, whereas the Scriptures set forth only one reason for which the marriage tie may be severed, namely, the violation of the commandment forbidding adultery.

There is great danger that these influences will vitally affect the lives and homes of our church people. We believe that the time has come when as workers in this movement we should emphasize as never before the sacred integrity of the family relationship. We must cry out against those sins of marital unfaithfulness which would undermine this holy institution. We should refuse to retain as members of the church those securing divorce and marrying again on other than Bible grounds. God calls for a clean church, a holy people.

Marriage to those not of the same religious faith and practice is wrecking the Christian experience of many of our young men and women. It is a false path, a pitfall, a trap for unwary feet. Such unions are directly contrary to the plain and definite instructions contained in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy. We need constantly to sound a warning against this evil, instructing our youth as to the sacred character of the marriage relationship and their duty to unite their life interests only with those whose religious faith and practice are in harmony with their own.

We should teach fathers and mothers and sons and daughters to be at peace among themselves, to bear and to forbear. They should be made to understand that the family life constitutes one great test of true religion; certainly that man who is not a Christian in his home is not a Christian anywhere. I care not how high and holy may be his profession, what official position he may occupy in the church or in the conference, how active he is in missionary work, how liberal in tithes and offerings, how kind and courteous to his neighbors; the real test of his religion is in the love and courtesy he manifests to his wife, to his children, to his cows and horses and hens, to his dog and cat.

I appeal to those present here this morning, even though many of you are gospel workers: Are you Christians in your home? Do you know the power of Christ in Christian living that will keep you calm and patient in the grind and wear of everyday affairs? Do your loved ones who know you best have faith in your Christianity? I have asked this question of my own heart many times through the years. Only as God gives us power in Christian living in our own homes, can we help other homes that need our ministry.

The Menace of Commercialism

We live in a commercial, materialistic age. Keen competition, jealous rivalry, sharp business bargaining, characterize the marts of trade and the avenues of commerce. We must be careful to keep this spirit out of our work. There is danger that it will intrude itself into the relations governing our schools, our publishing houses, and even our conferences, in efforts to secure advantage in better equipment and facilities, in higher accredited teaching force, in more successful evangelists, in the printing and promotion of books and periodicals.

Only the spirit of the unselfish Christ will enable us to labor unselfishly. Actuated and moved by this spirit, we shall recognize the department of the work with which we are connected as only one part of the great whole, and that if success comes to a sister conference or sanitarium or college or publishing house, we will rejoice as though it came to the organization with which we are connected. This spirit will take out of our schools all emulation, all desire to be first; it will take out of our publishing houses all spirit of rivalry in the production and sale of literature. It will keep out of our Sabbath services the spirit of commercialism.

It is necessary at times to promote various denominational objectives at the Sabbath service hour. The character of such promotion should be carefully guarded. When such promotion includes the selling of publications in exchange for money, even though such publications are meritorious in their spiritual presentation of vital truth, I do not feel that Heaven can...
bless such publicity. We need ever to bear in mind the lesson of the cleansing of the temple and the solemn admonition of Christ: “Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” John 2:16

The spirit of divine guidance will lift the work of the raising of funds either in our own church membership or among our friends and neighbors, from the plane of cold commercialism to the higher level of service for Christ, love for whom will sweeten toil and glorify sacrifice. Only laboring in this spirit of brotherly love and unselfish endeavor can we pray for and confidently believe in the greater infilling of blessing which our hearts crave and for greater success of the work of God.

Danger of Centralization

We have received through the years from the messenger of the Lord definite instruction against the evil of centralization—centralization in numbers and facilities to the neglect of needey fields, and centralization of authority. We have repeatedly been admonished not to erect mammoth buildings nor continue to add building to building in enlargement, but to establish many centers. This instruction needs constant review and present-day application.

The messenger of the Lord faithfully warned us against building up modern Jerusalems such as our headquarters was of old. Do we face this danger today? This, in my humble judgment, is worthy of serious study.

Our large centers, especially our institutional centers, exert a great influence upon our smaller churches. This is particularly true as relates to such questions as Sabbath observance, social ethics, dress, and the principles of healthful living. Thus these centers may become savor's of spiritual life or of spiritual death.

More and more the spirit of paternalistic supervision is dominating the governments of earth, resulting in centralization of authority and in the discouragement, if not the suppression, of individual or group initiative. Those of us who occupy official position in either conference or institutional work must be careful that this spirit does not enter the church or influence our relationship to our brethren. “Be not many masters,” is addressed to the leaders in the church of Christ. They must be careful not to oppress the humblest member of the church. “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren,” is the divine definition of the true relationship which should exist among the members of the church of Christ. [James 3:1; Matthew 23:8]

Mistaking License for Liberty

But if there is danger in centralization of authority, there is greater danger in independent or irresponsible action or movement. We are told: “God

In order that the Lord's work may advance solidly, His people must draw together

has a church upon the earth, who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people.” Testimonies to Ministers, 61. Again we are told: “God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and there as the only

Continued on 30

Bob Vun Kannon

Subject: Drugs Causing Trouble

It was reported in Science News, June 6, 1987, 358, that the drugs routinely fed to livestock are causing a loss of grazing land.

The manure of livestock is normally broken down by dung beetles and earthworms. Although these lowly creatures don't normally get much respect, they play a very important and indispensable role in ecology. They break down dung and return it to the soil. Without their help, the land becomes littered with dung and is unusable by animals. It has been discovered that the antibiotic drugs being fed to livestock are killing off the beetles and the earthworms. The result is grazing land that is unusable.

Subject: Hyperactivity

According to the latest theories in scientific circles, (ibid., 376) hyperactivity in children should be controllable with “strong doses of phenylalanine.” In actual tests, however, the drug completely failed to have any measurable effect on hyperactivity.

It was additionally pointed out in the article that aspartame (sold as NutraSweet and Equal), contains phenylalanine. And a caution was added that “long-term effects of phenylalanine levels have not yet been examined.”

I, for one, do not expect anything good to come of eating aspartame. Quite the opposite, in fact. As far as controlling hyperactivity goes, that is very easily and simply accomplished in the great majority of cases: get the refined sugar completely out of the children's diet and the hyperactivity will disappear. Better still, get all of the refined foods out of the diet and the good results will astound you.
The Shaking

The Church is being and is to be "shaken." Much of the dross is to be taken out and the chaff separated from the wheat by heresy, apostasy, and persecution. Many people will be shaken out of the last church, but there will be those who "cannot be shaken" and will "remain." The elect will be those who "remain"—the unshakable ones. Hebrews 12:25-29

Satan has come down with great power to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; and everything that can be shaken will be shaken, and those things that cannot be shaken will remain. The Lord is coming very soon, and we are entering into scenes of calamity." Testimonies, vol. 9, 62

Many members of the seventh and last church of time will be "spued out" of the mouth of Jehovah because they are satisfied with their condition, refuse to open their eyes to see themselves as He sees them and correct the deficiencies in their Christian experience; their knowledge of prophecies and doctrines cannot save them.

"Great blessings and privileges are ours. We may secure the most valuable heavenly treasures. Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth ruins if it does not save. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring the soul." Testimonies, vol. 5, 134

To listen to truth but refuse to heed and follow it hardens the heart, and it will meet us in the judgment. This is the way truth "ruins if it does not save." It is unsafe to delay to heed the voice of God when He speaks and gives us light.

Shaking From Within

The last church will be shaken by influences operating within the church: "I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people." Early Writings, 270; read pages 269-273, Testimonies, vol. 1, 179-184.

In other words, there will be those who teach and follow the "straight testimony," and others who will not, and the agitation and conflict resulting will shake and divide the church. The bone of contention will be the standards fixed by the "straight testimony."

The present and future conditions in the remnant church were faithfully, minutely portrayed many years ago in Testimonies, vol. 5, 76-84, 207-216.

In those pages are revealed conflicting influences operating within the church, one toward the world and the other toward holiness; widespread unbelief in the Testimonies; "supreme homage" given to "science falsely so-called"; the light of many "stars" going out; "few great men" engaged in the closing work because "they are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them"; men finishing the
work who were “taught rather by the union of His spirit, than by the outward training of scientific institutions”; popular apostasy; shaking and sifting which separate the false from the true and thus purify the church; the sealing of the true ones; the coming of the power of the latter rain; the last gospel message completed, and the final victory of the church. These pages reveal that many of the same conflicts which are raging between the church and the world are being repeated within the church. The enemy presses his battle over eternal principles into every quarter, including the remnant church.

Shaking by Heresy

“Until Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, men will become perverse in spirit and turn from the truth to fables. The church will yet see troublous times. She will prophesy in sackcloth. But although she must meet heresies and persecutions, although she must battle with the infidel and the apostate, yet by the help of God she is bruising the head of Satan. The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 594

“God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat.” Gospel Workers, 299

“God’s Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is imperfectly understood. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand.” Testimonies to Ministers, 112

Shaking by Apostasy

Here are a few outstanding statements in the Testimonies concerning a strong tendency toward apostasy in the remnant church.

A Small Portion Sanctified. “We are living in a most solemn time. In the last vision given me, I was shown the startling fact that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get above the simplicity of the work. They will conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead. The humble, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus will pass on to perfection, leaving behind the indifferent and lovers of the world.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 608–609

Disobedience Greater Than Jewish Church. “The same disobedience and failure which were seen in the Jewish church have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from Heaven in the last messages of warning. Shall we, like them, squander our opportunities and privileges until God shall permit oppression and persecution to come upon us? Will the work which might be performed in peace and comparative prosperity be left undone until it must be performed in days of darkness, under the pressure of trial and persecution?” Ibid., vol. 5, 456–457

The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts

Following Ancient Israel. “Gather up the rays of light that have been slighted and rejected. Gather them up with meekness, with trembling, and with fear. The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.” Ibid., 94

Not One in Twenty. “Not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God but they are more earnestly serving Mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians. Those who claim to be Christians and will confess Christ should come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing, and be separate. . . .

“I lay down my pen and lift up my soul in prayer, that the Lord would breathe upon His backslidden people, who are as dry bones, that they may live. The end is near, stealing upon us so stealthily, so imperceptibly, so noise-
who think they know so much. ‘If thou hadst known,’ said Christ, ‘even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.’” Testimonies to Ministers, 409–410

Few Preserve Faith in Purity. “The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and
doctrine. Though the world will thickly tread the path of sin and fraud, and catch at fancied blessings, the true mind will look up to the stars of God—will look up to Him, who is the only true Light, and will ever shine brighter and brighter.” Testimonies to Ministers, vol. 5, 210

Help Sufficient for Our Needs

God does not thus describe the conditions in His church to drive anyone to despair; He offers the remedy, but it will not be accepted and used unless we know our need; therefore He is trying to help us to understand how desperate is our need.

Shaking by Persecution

Many Stars Go Out. “The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments in the shame of their own nakedness.

“When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful, will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God’s people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’” Testimonies, vol. 5, 81–82

Will Be a Division. “As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith. But, on the other hand, when the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd’s voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril, strife for supremacy will cease; there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest. No one of the true believers will say: ‘I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas.’ The testimony of one and all will be: ‘I cleave unto Christ; I will rejoice in Him as my personal Saviour.’

“Thus will the truth be brought into practical life, and thus will be answered the prayer of Christ, uttered just before His humiliation and death: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ John 17:21. The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.” Ibid., vol. 6, 400–401

The Shaking Followed by Great Power

A Reformation Movement. “In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families, and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The
world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844.” Ibid., vol. 9, 126

Great Power—Loud Cry. “The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Evil angels still pressed around them, but could have no power over them.

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’” Early Writings, 271

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from Heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. [Revelation 13:13] Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

“The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.” The Great Controversy, 611–612

The Final Victory

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust, as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe

Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them

after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried with a loud voice: ‘Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’ [2 Corinthians 6:17–18; Judges 5:23]

“The battle raged. Victory alternated from side to side. Now the soldiers of the cross gave way, ‘as when a standard-bearer fainteth.’ Isaiah 10:18. But their apparent retreat was but to gain a more advantageous position. Shouts of joy were heard. A song of praise to God went up, and angel voices united in the song, as Christ’s soldiers planted His banner on the walls of fortresses till then held by the enemy. The Captain of our salvation was ordering the battle, and sending support to His soldiers. His power was mightily displayed, encouraging them to press the battle to the gates. He taught them terrible things in righteousness as He led them on step by step, conquering and to conquer.

“At last the victory was gained. The army following the banner with the inscription, ‘The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,’ was gloriously triumphant. The soldiers of Christ were close beside the gates of the city, and

with joy the city received her King. The kingdom of peace and joy and everlasting righteousness was established.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 41–42

Thus God in His church triumphs under the power of the latter rain which comes upon purified people. ■
A Breath of Fresh Air

THE NEEDS of our body consist of the requirements of each of the millions of cells making up our body. These basic needs are nutrients, water, oxygen, and the elimination of waste products. Of these necessities, oxygen is the most critical. We can go weeks without eating, and days without drinking, but our tissues can store only minute amounts of oxygen, and thus our cells must have a continuous supply of fresh oxygen from outside of our bodies. Each cell must have oxygen in order to burn food to obtain energy and heat. Without oxygen for only a few minutes, the cells die. For this reason a good supply of oxygen and good habits of respiration are very important for our health.

“Respiration” is what we normally think of as breathing, but includes all bodily activities related to obtaining oxygen from outside our bodies and its use by each cell. It also includes the removal of carbon dioxide gas, a waste product of the cells. Though it may seem so simple as to be beneath our notice, our lives and the quality of health we enjoy depend far more than many realize on just this simple matter.

Good breathing begins with the air around us. The air normally contains 20 percent, or one-fifth part of oxygen. It also contains small amounts of carbon dioxide, the waste product expelled by the breathing of all animals, and man. This balance is maintained by a very important relationship between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms.

Plants produce and liberate oxygen into the air, where it is inhaled by animals and man. In return, man and animals produce and exhale carbon dioxide, which is then absorbed by the plants for their sustenance. That which is waste to one is food to the other. Man needs the plants for oxygen, and the plants need man and animals for carbon dioxide.

As air circulates around the globe approximately forty times each year, it passes over the centers of population and industry, literally millions of tons of smoke, dust, and a wide variety of chemicals are added to it each year. In many areas the air is so polluted that it irritates the eyes, the nose, and the lungs, causing a great increase in respiratory diseases.

“...The very atmosphere of the cities is polluted... From the standpoint of health the smoke and dust of the cities are very objectionable.” Testimonies, vol. 7, 81-82

Persons with a history of respiratory

Those who live next to busy streets or who walk, jog, drive or ride a bicycle in heavy traffic, also get increased amounts of carbon monoxide.

Vernon Sparks

This all-important mixture of air or heart disease are especially susceptible to the problems of air pollution, which can result in their early death.
Children are also affected to a great extent by unpure air. One study showed that children with parents who smoke suffer twice as many respiratory problems as do the children of nonsmoking parents. Research also shows that those with respiratory problems when young have a greater incidence of respiratory diseases when older.

One particularly troublesome pollutant of the modern age is carbon monoxide, a colorless and odorless gas produced by burning fuel without adequate air. Tobacco smoke and the exhaust from motor vehicles are probably the most common sources. This poisonous gas unites with our red blood cells and prevents them from carrying normal amounts of oxygen. It can also affect our judgment, and in high doses result in death. Smokers have increased amounts of it in their blood as do the nonsmokers who breathe their smoke-polluted air. Those who live next to busy streets or who walk, jog, drive, or ride a bicycle in heavy traffic, also get increased amounts of carbon monoxide. Persons with anemia, heart disease, or respiratory illnesses are especially affected by it.

Unfortunately, carbon monoxide is not the only problem we have made for ourselves. Modern man pollutes his air with many chemicals, the results of which may take years to discover. Harmful effects appear in unexpected ways. Lead poisoning can be a problem for those who are exposed to large amounts of exhaust from motor vehicles. A chemical used in indoor air fresheners is a potent cancer-causing agent in animals. Aerosol hair sprays cause a temporary constriction of the airways of even healthy persons. In some, the effect is so marked that they suffer tightness of chest and other respiratory distress.

Fortunately, not only man’s respiratory system but also the rain and the plants of the earth serve as purifiers of the air we breathe. The rain helps to wash out the impurities of the air, and when it leaves the cities and passes over the farms and forests, the plants remove excess carbon dioxide and re-plenish the oxygen. The farther we live from cities, factories, and busy streets, the better quality of air we will generally breathe, and certainly it will be better for our health. Pure, fresh air is indeed one of God’s natural remedies.

It is not sufficient, however, that our homes be where there is pure fresh air. We must permit this fresh air to enter our homes and buildings both day and night.

“In the construction of buildings, whether for public purposes or as dwellings, care should be taken to provide for good ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Churches and schoolrooms are often faulty in this respect. Neglect of proper ventilation is responsible for much of the drowsiness and dullness that destroy the effect of many a sermon and make the teacher’s work toilsome and ineffective. . . .

“In the building of houses it is especially important to secure thorough ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Let there be a current of air and an abundance of light in every room in the house. Sleeping rooms should be arranged as to have a free circulation of air day and night. No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine.” The Ministry of Healing, 274-275

If we use an air conditioner, especially if it is primarily recirculating the internal air, it is necessary for our best health to frequently air out the building. In addition we must eliminate the disagreeable odors from our surroundings, not with a deodorant, but by replacing the contaminated air with fresh air. We are counseled to clean up the waste and decaying vegetation from around our homes.

“Shade trees and shrubbery too close and dense around a house are unhealthy; for they prevent a free circulation of air, and prevent the rays of the sun from shining sufficiently through. . . . Numerous shade trees cast off many leaves, which, if not immediately removed, decay, and poison the atmosphere. A yard beautified with scattering trees, and some shrubbery, at a proper distance from the house, has a happy, cheerful influence upon the family, and, if well taken care of, will prove no injury to health.” Selected Messages, book 2, 463-464

We nearly always breathe without thinking. So much so, that we tend to believe that breathing is automatic, just as is our heartbeat. It is true that our breathing is sufficiently automatic to prevent us from dying from lack of air, but good breathing requires a conscious development of good habits.

Breathing is the act of increasing the size of the thoracic cavity so that the air containing oxygen will be sucked into the lungs. It also applies to the action of decreasing the size of the thoracic cavity resulting in an exhalation of old air, which carries the waste product, carbon dioxide. In order that our cells can have good respiration, we must have good habits of breathing.

Many of us have the custom of hunching over, permitting our shoulders to fall forward while sitting or standing. Thus we prevent the full expansion of the chest, causing pressure upon the lungs and preventing their most healthful function. Poor posture is a habit, and a bad one. Good posture can also be a habit and a great help towards good health. We should sit and stand erect, permitting a fuller use of the lungs.

It is true that our breathing is sufficiently automatic to prevent us from dying from lack of air, but good breathing requires a conscious development of good habits.
Another factor in good breathing is the appropriate use of the diaphragm and the abdominal muscles. Many of us, from habit, tend to breathe superficially, using only the upper chest. This most common way to breathe is also the most inefficient.

The best form of breathing is to increase the size of the thoracic cavity (the chest, in layman’s terms) by contracting the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a muscular wall separating the thoracic cavity from the abdominal cavity and forming a dome-like protuberance up into the thoracic cavity. When it contracts, it moves down toward the abdomen, expanding the lungs and introducing fresh air.

Each time the diaphragm contracts toward the abdominal cavity, the digestive organs must be able to move out of its way. For this to be possible, the abdominal wall must be able to expand outward. Unfortunately, the clothes we wear many times hinder correct breathing. Clothing which tends to constrict the waist does not permit the up-and-down movement of the diaphragm. Some are so accustomed to clothes being tight around the waist that they have formed the bad habit of breathing almost entirely with the upper chest instead of using the diaphragm and abdomen. The Lord has given us good counsel:

“The lungs should be allowed the greatest freedom possible. Their capacity is developed by free action; it diminishes if they are cramped and compressed. Hence the ill effects of the practice so common, especially in sedentary pursuits, of stooping at one’s work. In this position it is impossible to breathe deeply. Superficial breathing soon becomes a habit, and the lungs lose their power to expand. A similar effect is produced by tight lacing. Sufficient room is not given to the lower part of the chest; the abdominal muscles, which were designed to aid in breathing, do not have full play, and the lungs are restricted in their action.

“Thus an insufficient supply of oxygen is received. The blood moves sluggishly. The waste, poisonous matter, which should be thrown off in the exhalations from the lungs, is retained, and the blood becomes impure. Not only the lungs, but the stomach, liver, and brain are affected. The skin becomes sallow, digestion is retarded; the heart is depressed; the brain is clouded; the thoughts are confused; gloom settles upon the spirits; the whole system becomes depressed and inactive, and peculiarly susceptible to disease.” The Ministry of Healing, 272-273

“Every article of dress should fit easily, obstructing neither the circulation of the blood, nor a free, full, natural respiration. Everything worn should be so loose that when the arms are raised, the clothing will be correspondingly lifted.” Ibid., 293

Many of us breathe from 12 to 18 superficial breaths per minute, when with proper exercise and effort, we can learn to take only 8 to 10 deeper diaphragmatic breaths per minute. William Knowles of England developed the efficiency of his breathing to such an extent that he normally breathed only four times per minute. Professional singers and public speakers must learn to breathe properly. They learn to breathe in with a downward movement of the diaphragm and an outward movement of the abdominal wall. They learn to exhale, by means of a contraction inward of the abdominal muscles thus squeezing the diaphragm upward into the thoracic cavity and expelling the air from the lungs.

“Air is the free blessing of heaven, calculated to electrify the whole system. Without it the system will be filled with disease and become dormant, languid, feeble. . . .

“Air, air, the precious boon of heaven which all may have, will bless you with its invigorating influence if you will not refuse it entrance. Welcome it, cultivate a love for it, and it will prove a precious soother of the nerves. . . . The influence of pure, fresh air is to cause the blood to circulate healthfully through the system. It refreshes the body and tends to render it strong and healthy, while at the same time its influence is decidedly felt upon the mind, imparting a degree of composure and serenity. It excites the appetite, and renders the digestion of food more perfect, and induces sound and sweet sleep.” Testimonies, vol. 1, 701-702

Many of us breathe from 12 to 18 breaths per minute, when with proper exercise and effort, we can learn to take only 8 to 10 deeper breaths per minute

Breathing properly of fresh pure air decreases the incidence of chest colds, bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma. Deep breathing not only helps to prevent these diseases, but also helps to improve the health of those suffering from them. The correct use of the respiratory organs will improve speaking and singing. Correct breathing provides a better quantity of oxygen and a better elimination of carbon dioxide from the cells. Each of our organs will function better. We will have better digestion, our minds will be clearer and more active. We will have less fatigue and will rest better. Our whole state of physical and spiritual health will improve by correct breathing of God’s pure air. We will be better able to witness to those about us of how to give glory and honor to our Creator.

All told, there are too many benefits from proper respiration to neglect any one of them. Take the Lord’s counsel and put it into practice. It’s worth the effort.
Birth of the King
Continued from 10

church. No one could ever hope to be the Messiah without the Sanhedrin's recognition.

Following the anointing of Jesus at His baptism, the Father gave proof after proof of Jesus' Messiahship. But the one proof He was lacking was the official approval of the church—or at least what the people thought was the church.

Of course, Jesus was the church. He was the government. For "where Christ is, even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church." The Upward Look, 315

No human council or organization, either today, in Martin Luther's day, or in Jesus' day can either establish or annul a church body by mere human fiat. The true church in Jesus' day was not the temple in Jerusalem, but the believers that surrounded Jesus. This has constituted the church "in every age." This is the church that "the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against," and "is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard." Acts of the Apostles, 11–12. But to even suggest such a thing in Jesus' day would have been considered divisive, insubordinate, and apostate. Thus the leaders were able to take a whole nation with them to ruin in their rejection of the humble king of Israel. The leaders were too proud, entrenched, and educated to follow Jesus or to submit to His authority, and the people cast their lot with the priests.

Witness one of the most dramatic of Jesus' healings. The man was born blind, the result, supposedly, of a curse for the parents' or grandparents' sins. But Jesus made clay, packed it upon his eyes, and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

The man came seeing and rejoicing. Though he had never seen Jesus, he knew that He was the Messiah, and acknowledged him so before the priests. The priests knew this man. They knew he had been blind from birth. They had tried to suggest in previous healings of Jesus, that it was by sleight of hand, but they could not deny this miracle. Neither could they accept the One who performed it, for it was done by Jesus, who was not under their authority or jurisdiction. To acknowledge Him would mean to humble themselves. It could possibly lead to the whole moral and economic collapse of their system. Tithes and offerings would probably start flowing to Jesus. Their own authority would be limited. If they should yield their authority here, what would prevent any and every other upstart from beginning his own ministry?

Caiaphas said, "It is [more] expedient for us that one man should die for the people, . . . [than] that the whole nation should perish." John 11:50

Corruption and political maneuvering they could permit; but someone calling for repentance, someone speaking without their authority, they could not tolerate. When the decision came to choose between Barabbas or Christ, they unanimously, save for Niodemus and Joseph of Arimthea, demanded Barabbas, and the multitudes followed suit.

Corruption and political maneuvering they could permit; but someone calling for repentance, someone speaking without their authority, they could not tolerate

What would preserve the "purity" of the church? To their way of thinking, the whole prosperity of a nation depended on their handling of this case in such a way as to deprive Jesus of His glory and yet retain the confidence of the people. It would require the utmost skill in administrative tact and crisis management.

"So they . . . called the man who was blind, and said to him, 'Give God the glory! We know that this Man [Jesus] is a sinner.' " But the healed man would not relinquish his faith in Jesus. "Then they reviled him and said, 'You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.' " John 9:24, 28

As one last attempt to break through the stubborn resistance of the Jews, Jesus raised a man to life who had been dead for four days. The priests knew that they could not refute this miracle. In their heart they knew He was divine. But to acknowledge Him now would destroy their whole social, economic, and political system. And to their way of thinking, it would therefore destroy God's church. That, as "faithful stewards," they could not allow. Thus

"At the time of the first advent of Christ to our world, the men who composed the Sanhedrin exercised their authority in controlling men according to their will," and the people blindly accepted their dominion. Testimonies to Ministers, 301. In their acceptance of human authority they rejected God's. And though the true church of Israel never fell, the human machinery that the people thought was the church did.

"The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the express will of God and following their own way according to the leading of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them." Testimonies, vol. 5, 94

"The religion of many among us will be the religion of apostate Israel, because they love their own way, and forsake the way of the Lord. . . . I know that a work must be done for the people, or many will not be prepared to receive the light of the angel sent down from heaven to lighten the whole earth with His glory." Testimonies to Ministers, 468–469
When the earth was lightened with the glory of the angels at Jesus’ first coming, few were ready to receive it—only the humblest were lightened by their glory. Just so, another angel is to lighten the earth before Jesus’ second coming. Again, only the humblest will receive his glory. The church, purified, is going through. But not everything that purports to be the church today is going to triumph with it. Only the pure and holy are going to triumph. Nothing that in any way bespeaks corruption or political maneuvering will survive.

“The Lord Jesus will always have a chosen people to serve Him. When the Jewish people rejected Christ, the Prince of life, He took from them the kingdom of God and gave it unto the Gentiles. God will continue to work on this principle with every branch of His work. When a church proves unfaithful to the work of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no long work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities.” The Upward Look, 131

“Let a church become proud and boastful, not depending on God, not exalting His power, and that church will surely be left by the Lord, to be brought down to the ground.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 127

Throughout the land it’s Christmas time again. Though the origins of Christmas preceded the Christian Era, let us review the meaning of the Bethlehem scene. While all eyes were fastened upon Jerusalem for the official birth announcement of their Saviour and King, a newborn babe lay sleeping on beaten-down straw, under strips of linen, in a Bethlehem barn. While the church went on with its forms and ceremonies and Sabbath rituals, the lowly shepherds were bowing beside His cradle. They were the true theologians of Israel, but none would accept their inspired announcement. There in that cradle of Bethlehem lay the government of Israel. The prosperity of a nation, a church, a people, lay huddled beside Him. Though many rejected Him, God’s true church accepted Him. That church still lives!

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**Times of Change and Opportunity**

**Chris Ezell**

**EVERY NOW and then certain events take place that reflect and solidify minute, often imperceptible, attitude changes that have occurred in society over a period of several years, and even decades. These events sometimes have far-reaching consequences for us as a nation, as a church, and as individuals.**

One example is the nomination of a Supreme Court justice to fill the seat left vacant when Judge Louis Powell retired this past summer. Right now there is an approval process going on in the United States Senate over the person whom President Reagan nominated to fill that position. The judicial philosophy of the one chosen is more important than who the person is or his gender type. Conservative groups from the Moral Majority to Concerned Women of America have been chafing at the bit for several years, awaiting the opportunity for President Reagan to appoint enough conservative Supreme Court justices to have a solid block of votes and thereby begin to have a greater influence in promoting a closer tie between religion and government. The issues involved include allowing spoken prayer in schools, permitting tuition tax credits, and outlawing abortion, just to name a few. These groups now seem to have their chance. The swing vote of retired Justice Powell in many instances was the deciding factor in an otherwise split court. Since he was moderate to liberal in philosophy, many of his votes balanced the Supreme Court away from a closer tie between church and government and from allowing the government more intrusion into people’s lives. Because the next Supreme Court justice will have this power, there is now a battle raging between the liberals and the conservatives over this particular nomination. The next justice who sits on the court will also be a swing vote to help mold the court in either a more liberal or a more conservative fashion. And whoever eventually is approved will likely be a conservative man or woman who will try to influence the court in deci-
A few years ago an ultra-conservative minister would not have been tolerated. Pat Robertson has accomplished something even more stunning than that achievement. Of the 3,843 people that voted in the presidential election straw poll in Ames, Iowa, in late September he received 34 percent of the vote, whereas Robert Dole received 25 percent and the front runner, George Bush, only 14 percent. The Bush campaign, along with those of Dole and Jack Kemp had gone all out to pack the vote with their supporters and what surprised many people was that Pat Robertson’s organization was powerful enough to get people involved in the voting process who normally stay away from politics.

The steady tread of events that God ordained are now happening around us. Pat Robertson won a similar victory in the State of Michigan last year with the selection of precinct delegates. He upset George Bush, who had won the event in 1980, and it is now likely that Robertson will win the most delegates in the Michigan primary next year. (Some material in the above paragraph was taken from Time magazine)

Ever since the 1960s there has been a growing wave of conservatism. All this of course doesn’t mean that Pat Robertson is going to be our next President. But he could end up with enough electoral votes to have some genuine influence in the Republican Party platform for 1988, just as Jesse Jackson had for the Democrats in 1984. This is another indicator that the United States is more tolerant of national figures that don’t have the “old respect” for the basic principles of our constitution such as separation of church and state and individual liberty. It also shows that the general public is beginning to look to other people than the familiar political figures for assurances that the United States isn’t about to go off the deep end with such problems in society as AIDS, the threat of nuclear annihilation, increasing crime, pornography, child abuse, another world war, or the possible collapse of the world economy.

The nomination of another conservative Supreme Court justice and the toleration of Pat Robertson as a presidential candidate are just two of many events taking place today that reflect small changes occurring in our society in the last 25 years that by themselves were merely ripples and somewhat insignificant. But as a whole they can be seen as establishing a definite pattern.

When Jesus was arrested, the prevailing common community conscience of the Jewish nation was that it would be better for one person to suffer than for the whole nation to perish. This same compromise will take place when in order to restore prosperity and peace to our nation people will pressure their elected officials to enact laws that will in effect say it is better for one group of people to suffer and even die than for the whole nation and the world to perish.

The steady tread of events that God ordained should signify where we are in time have been and are now happening everywhere around us. There is a path in the Garden of Gethsemane. A path of opportunity open for the church to walk which already has been trodden, beaten down, and marked clearly by the footprints of one who walked ahead of us, who is not ashamed to call us His brethren. His specific call right now for His church is the same as it was in Noah’s day, in Elijah’s day, and John the Baptist’s day—to “be zealous therefore and repent,” and for the church to “hide not thyself from thine own flesh.” This call has special significance for us as we begin in the next year to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Minneapolis General Conference session in 1888. Shall we begin now to walk down that path of repentance which will bring honor and glory to Christ and ultimately end the Great Controversy?
Two Kinds of Paths
Continued from 19
ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 291

Some have wrongly argued that we would come to a time before the coming of the Lord when organization would be discarded and every man would work independently, as directed by the Holy Spirit. This I believe to be a pernicious error, and one by which Satan would seek to bring confusion into the work of God. We are told that organization will have its place in this movement even until the end of time. I quote again from the Spirit of Prophecy:

Strengthened, Established, Settled

“Let none entertain the thought, however, that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study, and many prayers for wisdom that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord, I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled.” Review and Herald, October 12, 1905

“Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people, and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential, and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings, and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time.

“Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.” Testimonies to Ministers, 489

“Follow Peace With All Men”

Our workers especially must associate with various nationalities, each with its own peculiar mentality and characteristics, with religious beliefs of every kind and quality, with political parties of varying aims and purposes, with those of every sort of social status. God wants us to stand free from every entangling alliance, free from any national spirit which would provoke racial jealousy or animosity on the part of others, free from political agitation or discussion which would create prejudice against the gospel message we bear to the world.

We cannot do effective Christian service primarily as Americans, as Englishmen, as Germans, or as Democrats or Republicans. First of all, we should be Christians. Christ recognized no national lines, no social castes, no political parties. He was the ambassador of Heaven to a fallen race. He labored for high and low, rich and poor. He saw in Pharisee and in Sadducee, in Jew, Samaritan, and Syro-Phoenician, a soul needing God, a prospective candidate for the heavenly kingdom. In the ministry of the gospel herald “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” [Colossians 3:11] In recognition of this gospel truth we shall be at peace with all men so far as our purpose can make this possible.

Review and Herald, June 1, 1936

Concluded next month

Line upon Line

In order to gain that benefit which they should gain in the Sabbath school, both parents and children should devote time to the study of the lessons, seeking to obtain a thorough knowledge of the facts presented, and also of the spiritual truths which these facts are designed to teach. Counsels on Sabbath School Work, 41; Sabbath School Worker, April, 1885

There are mental as well as physical dyspeptics. Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the wellspring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction will then cease, satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind, and health and vital energy to the body. Ellen G. White Pamphlets in the Concordance, vol. 2, 304

God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. Steps to Christ, 43
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