**Editorial**

"From Darkness to Light"

As the darkness of the night slowly turns to the morning light, as the morning sun begins its daily journey across the heavens, and as the mist of the night evaporates before the morning sunrise, the chill of night is warmed by the glow of the new day. And so, the human race arises—to the work of the fields, to the workbench, to the office, to the chores of the household, to preparing children for school.

Yes, generations are born, live, suffer, grow old, and die—some young and some old. And they stand at the graves of their loved ones and weep and mourn their passing. Flowers grace the headstones as they remember their dead.

But let us look beyond today to the moment when time and eternity will meet, and this mortal shall become immortal. May God help us now to hasten that day.

Before us now lies the end of all things of this earth. The signs of the times hang ominously over the horizon of our doomed world. We are now approaching the moment on which all the prophets focused their attention—the close of probation, the plagues, and the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The books of Daniel and Revelation are the living oracles of our time. But so very few are aware of the time in which we are privileged to live. So few are making the preparation that is needed in order to stand in the day of the Lord—the day of judgment. So few know what it means to live a victorious life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Days of terrible persecution are now just before us—a time such as there never was before. Daniel saw it and warned us: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

The questions are, Is our name written in the book? Do we now, by the Holy Spirit’s power in our daily lives, measure up to God’s great standard of righteousness? “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Revelation 21:27.

Have we forgotten that there is a careful recording of every thought, word, and action of our entire life from childhood to the present day? Have we confessed every sin? Do we mourn over our mistakes? Do we plead with God to reveal to us our sins of ignorance? All must soon, very soon, face the moment of God’s eternal justice.

“...A book of remembrance” is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.’ Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says: ‘Remember me, O my God, ... and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.’ Nehemiah 13:14. In the book of God’s remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake is recorded. Says the psalmist: “Thou testest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?” Psalm 56:8.” Great Controversy, 481.

Do we understand God’s high moral standard of right-doing that we must reach in our daily character development by the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ, through the Holy Spirit’s power? Inspiration reveals it to us in these divinely appointed words:

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ Matthew 5:48. This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.” The Desire of Ages, 311.

Soon, very soon now, the rising morning sun will burn away the mist of the night for the last time. The dew will no longer linger upon flower and grass. The deadly wound of Revelation 13 is soon to be completely healed; persecution will rage; Satan will impersonate Christ. The sun will soon arise, to lift its head for the last time upon a rebellious world; the world will convulse and shake; the rivers will cease to flow; mountains and islands will disappear; and the world will cry for the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne—from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is coming, and who shall be able to stand? See Revelation 6:12-17. Only God’s righteous saints will stand.

Where do you stand today, dear reader? Let us examine ourselves today, while it is still day, for the night is soon to come—for the final tomorrow of the great controversy is fast approaching. □

Ron Spear, Editor
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—Editors

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Moving?

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The framers of the American Constitution were not atheists and secular humanists seeking to destroy Christianity. They were largely Christians seeking to protect government from religion, and religion from government. They did not see congressional neutrality in religion as hostility toward religion. In fact, their neutrality was in respect to Christianity. As Christians, they knew that in any open and free debate Christianity would always prove that it is the true religion.

They desired neither to support religion nor to be antagonistic toward religion on the federal level, so that they could maintain civility between believers and nonbelievers. Congress was not to pass any religious laws which would favor any one church or fifty churches, so that they could maintain civility between the various Christian denominations and between Christianity and other beliefs.

However, there are those who advocate that the First Amendment only prevents Congress from establishing a national religion. What these advocates and many others fail to understand is that, at the time of the framing of the First Amendment in 1789 and the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791, none of the states had an established religion. There was no particular denomination preferred above another. We had no Lutheran Sweden or Catholic Spain in America. In Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, there never was an establishment of religion at all. Therefore, at the time of the framing of the First Amendment, the issue was not primarily preventing Congress from establishing a national religion, but keeping Congress from passing laws that tax people in the support of any religion and from the establishment of any religious laws.

As an example, let us use New York to show the progression of American thought on church and state relations.

When New York was known as New Netherlands under Dutch control, there was an established church, the Dutch Reformed Church. When the English conquered New Netherlands in 1664, they renamed it New York, in honor of the Duke of York, James II. The Duke's Laws of 1664 "disestablished the Dutch Reformed Church and established in its place a multiplicity of churches. Any church of the Protestant religion could become the established church. . . . Under the Duke's Laws every township was obliged publicly to support some Protestant church and a minister. The denomination of the church did not matter. Costs were to be met by a public tax. . . . In other words, this was an establishment of religion in which there was a formal, legal, official union between government and religion on a nonpreferential basis and without the establishment of any individual church." Levy, The Establishment Clause, 10-11.

In 1683, the New York Assembly enacted a Charter of Liberties, stating that "the churches already in New York do appear to be privileged churches . . . Provided also that all other Christian churches, that shall hereafter come and settle in the province, shall have the same privileges." Ibid., 11.

In 1664, there was the disestablishment of a singular established church. Any church, thereafter, could become the church that received the tax in support of the Christian religion. Any Protestant church could have become that established church within a district. However, your tax dollars in support of religion might very well go to a church in your district that you could not conscientiously support. If the Presbyterian Church was the established church for a district, then the tax dollars of the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Catholic, the Lutheran, the Mennonite, and all others, went to the Presbyterian Church. This practice continued for nearly seventy years.

In 1731, this multiple establishment in support of the Christian [Protestant] religion progressed to the point of allowing the tax dollars of the people to go to the church of their own persuasion. Therefore, in a town where many churches were
We hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth 'that religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.'

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The last of these, in part, reads as follows: "That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." A. T. Jones, Ecclesiastical Empire, 812.

James Madison said, "Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth 'that religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.'" Absence of the First Amendment. Levy, The Establishment Clause, 65-66.

At the first session of the First Congress, Representative Madison on June 8, 1789, proposed for House approval a series of amendments to the Constitution. The House, which included Madison, was composed of one member from each state. The Senate began debate on the House amendments on September 3 and continued through September 9. The debate was conducted in secrecy, and no record exists except for the account of motions and votes in the Senate Journal. According to the record on September 3, three motions concerning the First Amendment were defeated. The first motion was: "Congress shall make no law establishing one religious sect or society in preference to others." It was defeated. The second motion was: "Congress shall not make any law infringing the rights of conscience, or establishing any religious sect or society." It was defeated. The third motion was: "Congress shall make no law establishing any particular denomination of religion in preference to another." It was defeated. The language was changed to read, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion." Ibid., 82.

Why were the first three motions defeated? Because they were grossly inadequate. The main issue was not the fear of a national religion, but whether Congress can pass laws that establish religious laws.
The purpose of the First Amendment, like the others, was to restrict the powers of Congress. The Bill of Rights limited and qualified the powers of government. Congress had no powers to legislate laws establishing religion, even in the absence of the First Amendment, because the Constitution never gave Congress any authority to do so. The Constitution does not even mention God. Therefore, it is unreasonable to conclude that the First Amendment, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” means that Congress can tax the people in the support of religion, and pass religious legislation.

However, on August 17, more than two weeks prior to these three defeated amendments, there was a proposal that passed by a vote of thirty-one to twenty. This proposal did not become the final wording of the First Amendment, but it does well represent the intent of the framers. The proposal was made by Samuel Livermore and it read at follows: “Congress shall make no laws touching religion, or infringing the rights of conscience.” Ibid., 78.

Congress was not to pass laws that touch religion. They were not to pass religious legislation that supports one religion or all religions impartially. This is in full harmony with the Constitution which does not give Congress any powers to pass religious legislation.

Three days later, on August 20, Fisher Ames proposed the following amendment: “Congress shall make no law establishing religion, or to prevent the free exercise thereof, or to infringe the rights of conscience.” Ibid., 81. This proposal passed as well. It is apparent that making “no law touching religion” and making “no law establishing religion” are in agreement. If Congress were able to pass laws touching religion then there would be the establishment of religion.

The founding fathers were not merely concerned about the “establishment of a religion,” they were concerned about any "establishment of religion." Consequently, Congress was not to pass laws that “touch” religion.

On September 15, the House changed the amendment to read: “Congress shall make no law establishing articles of faith or a mode of worship or prohibiting the free exercise of religion.” The framers’ intent was to keep Congress from passing laws "establishing articles of faith or a mode of worship." Congress was to pass no laws and conservative Catholics? Are they not a church body pushing for religious amendments to the Constitution? What would be the difference between establishing one particular denomination as the established church and having fifty different denominations united under one banner, doing in effect the same thing?

Let us take, as an example, the Christian Coalition’s push for a national Sunday law. Remember, the Christian Coalition says we must have religion in the government, but not a national church.

Now the Sabbath is in the fourth commandment of God, which I am not against, and believe most decidedly in keeping holy. How does the fourth commandment read in the Bible? "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11.

There are Jews, Seventh-day Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Apostolic churches, and many others who keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy. Those who generally make up the Christian Coalition keep the first day of the week, Sunday.

For Congress and the Supreme Court to uphold a national day of rest based on the Bible, they must, in all honesty, pass this law as it reads in the Scriptures. One of the rules that lawmakers must adhere to is that, “The words of a statute, if of common use, are to be taken in their natural, plain, obvious, and ordinary signification and import.” A.T. Jones, Views of National Reform, Series One. 18.

Where do we find the Sabbath commandment? We find it in the Ten Commandments. This is its natural setting. Is the command plain and obvious? Yes. It reads, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God.” Exodus 20:8-9.

God intended that man should keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath, while the Christian Coalition intends to have the first day [Sunday] established as the national day of rest. Herein is the difficulty. If the courts are to uphold the biblical Sabbath commandment as a national law, they are not allowed to reconstruct the plain words of the command-
Religion is always a matter between God and the individual. Therefore, no man or group of men can impose any religious test upon others without usurping the prerogative that belongs to God alone. Popes, priests, and pastors who assume this power are not to be trusted, for anyone who resorts to force shows that he does not trust God.

God created the mind of man to be free. God Himself does not force our conscience, but woos us with His loving care. Unfortunately, fallible and uninspired men have for generations assumed authority over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and dogmas as infallible. To compel a man to financially support opinions which he disbelieves, and to support a clergy that he would never make his pattern, is satanic. Even to force a man to support the church and minister of his own choosing, deprives him of the liberty of choice bestowed upon him by his Creator.

Religion is not to be a test for either citizenship or public office. To consider a candidate unworthy of public office unless he professes or renounces this or that religious opinion is contrary to the principles of pure religion. Public servants, whether they are religious or not, are elected to protect our civil and religious liberties, not to take them away. The greatest need is not so much born-again Christians in government, but born-again Christians in homes and churches. After all, what “go-along-get-along” politician would not compromise his religious convictions in order to get elected, or re-elected? Will we actually improve the morality of the nation through religious legislatie reform? Or will we be placing a premium on hypocrisy?

What many fail to understand, is that the problem with immorality in our nation is due to the human heart. The only thing that can change the human heart is the gospel.

The gospel commission will not be fulfilled by tinkering with the Constitution. We will not hasten the second coming of Christ by manipulating governments. Remembering that Jesus rejected the earthly crown for a crown of thorns, how is it that a church can play the part of a harlot by clasping hands with the state and passing religious legislation? When Jesus has given us a clear blueprint for fulfilling our commission, how can we abandon it for a party platform? When Jesus tells us that He is preparing a place for us in the new heaven and the new earth, how can we even consider being builders of an earthly New World Order of Church and State? For the clasping of hands with the state by Christian leaders in legislating religious laws is not only a lack of faith in God’s Word, but a cold indifference to the hastening of Christ’s second coming.

What many fail to understand, is that the problem with immorality in our nation is due to the human heart. The only thing that can change the human heart is the gospel.
How Did We Lose a Generation of Youth?

In the final moments of earth’s history, at a time when our church most needs its strength and energy, our youth are deserting our church in astonishing numbers. We are living in an age in which the youth are facing the ferocious final assault from Satan. “We are living in a time of special peril to the youth. Satan knows that the end of the world is soon to come, and he is determined to improve every opportunity for pressing young men and young women into his service. He will devise many specious deceptions to lead them astray.” Testimonies, vol. 8, 223. As we watch our youth, the future of our church, turning to the enchantments of the world and other religions, we are compelled to ask ourselves, What went wrong? How have we managed to fail our youth so miserably that seventy percent of them leave the church? The answers to these questions can be found in comparing our practices as parents and the practices of our church institutions with the counsel that God has given us.

First, we will examine the role of parents in raising youth. The most important step we can take to help our youth is to surrender ourselves wholly to Christ. Youth are quick to discern hypocrisy and are easily disillusioned with a religion which parents preach but fail to practice. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel that we can ever present to our children is the example of a holy, Christ-like life. The fruits of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23), as evidenced in our lives will be far more effective in winning our youth than mere words of admonition.

The Spirit of Prophecy exhorts us, “All sanitarium workers and parents and ministers should realize their responsibility to God to be themselves patterns of what they desire the youth to become. ‘For their sakes I sanctify myself,’ Christ declared, ‘that they also might be sanctified through the truth.’ John 17:19. So those to whom the youth should look for direction and a godly example should sanctify themselves. Paul directed Timothy, ‘Be thou an example of the believers.’ 1 Timothy 4:12. This is instruction to the workers in every institution. If they are learning of Christ daily, they will never forget how potent for good is the influence of a right example. But if they are

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seeking only to amuse and please themselves, they set for themselves and for those within their range a low standard. Such a course can only end eventually in the yielding up of their faith." The Australasian Union Conference Record, September 30, 1912.

Parents must exercise constant vigilance in what they allow their children to read, to listen to, and to watch on television. As Satan launches the final onslaught against humanity, every conceivable form of violence, perversion, and depravity is filling the television and radio airwaves. Hollywood glorifies violence in television and movies, and too often our youth are found partaking of this unholy fare. Mrs. White writes, "How many books are there concerning war and bloodshed, which mislead the youth! As they read, Satan stands at their side to inspire them with the spirit of the warrior of whom they read, and their blood becomes heated in their veins, and they are stirred up to do cruel actions. How numerous are immoral books, which lead to unholy desires, and fire the passions of the heart, and lead away from all that is pure and holy!" The Youth's Instructor, November 16, 1893.

Impure and immoral music, videos, TV shows, books, and magazines are bombarding our youth from every side. The servant of the Lord writes, "I have been instructed that the youth are exposed to the greatest peril from improper reading. Satan is constantly leading both the young and those of mature age to be charmed with worthless stories. Could a large share of the books published be consumed, a plague would be stayed that is doing a fearful work in weakening the mind and corrupting the heart. None are so confirmed in right principles as to be secure from temptation. All this trashy reading should be resolutely discarded." Ibid., April 12, 1904.

Parents have a difficult and solemn task in raising children amid a degenerate and perverse generation. One of the primary reasons the youth turn away from God is the lack of proper training in the home. Parents have suffered their children to form wrong habits, the marks of which may be seen all through life. Upon the parents lies this sin. These children may profess to be Christians, yet without a special work of grace upon the heart and a thorough reform in life their past habits will be seen in all their experience, and they will exhibit just the character which their parents allowed them to form." Testimonies, vol. 1, 403.

In a world which is fast approaching the moral condition of Sodom, one sin which parents must especially guard against is the sin of secret vice. The glamorization of this sin has become popular in the media, with much attention being given to it in movies, television shows, music videos, and magazines whose consumers are mostly young people. Mrs. White admonishes us, "Satan is controlling the minds of the young, and we must work resolutely and faithfully to save them. Very young children practice this vice, and it grows upon them and strengthens with their years, until every noble faculty of body and mind is debased. Many might have been saved if they had been carefully instructed in regard to the influence of this practice upon their health. They were ignorant of the fact that they were bringing much suffering upon themselves. Children who are experienced in this vice, seem to be bewitched by the devil until they can impart their vile knowledge to others, even teaching very young children this practice. Mothers, you cannot be too careful in preventing your children from learning low habits. It is easier to guard them from evil, than for them to eradicate it after it is learned." A Solemn Appeal, 55-56.

"I am filled with pain and anguish as I see parents conforming to the world and allowing their children to meet the worldly standard at such a time as this. I am filled with horror as the condition of families professing present truth is opened before me. The profligacy of youth and even children is almost incredible. Parents do not know that secret vice is destroying and defacing the image of God in their children. The sins which characterized the Sodomites exist among them. The parents are responsible; for they have not educated their children to love and obey God. They have not restrained them nor diligently taught them the way of the Lord. They have allowed them to go out and to come in when they chose, and to associate with worldlings." Testimonies, vol. 5, 78.

Another evil which parents must guard their youth against is idleness. In the Spirit of Prophecy we read, "Men and women who have been blessed with an abundance of money, with houses and with lands, generally train their children to a life of idleness and selfish indulgence. Thus they are made useless for this life, and unfit for the future, immortal life. Christ in His life gave men an altogether different example. In His youth He worked with His father at the carpenter's trade; but the youth of today are educated to believe that it is the money that makes the man. The sure result of such education is seen in the pride, the vanity, the love of pleasure, the sinful practices, that are so prevalent in this degenerate age. Where there is an abundance of idleness, Satan works with his temptations to spoil life and character. If youth are not trained to useful labor, whether they be rich or poor, they are in peril; for Satan will find them employment after his own order. The youth who are not barricaded with principle, do
not regard time as a precious treasure, a trust from God for which every human being must give an account.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, October 18, 1894.

Now let us examine the role of our educational and church institutions in raising youth. It seems as if the boundary between wholesome social activities and worldly entertainment has been blurred. Entertainment is sometimes used as an enticement to attract youth to our religious meetings. One camp meeting I attended advertised numerous entertaining activities, including a couple trips to a water park named “Wet and Wild.” A recent brochure I received for a church youth conference advertised a Saturday evening “party” at a theme park owned and operated by a beer company. Schools have also resorted to bringing in entertainers and performers to amuse our students. How far have we deviated from God’s plan? Read the following testimonies and ask yourself if they apply to us today: “The object of God in bringing the college into existence has been lost sight of. Ministers of the gospel have so far shown their want of wisdom from above as to unite a worldly element with the college; they have joined with the enemies of God and the truth in providing entertainments for the students. In thus misleading the youth they have done a work for Satan. That work, with all its results, they must meet again at the bar of God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 33.

“Some will urge that if religious teaching is to be made prominent our schools will become unpopular; that those who are not of our faith will not patronize them. Very well; then let them go to other schools, where they will find a system of education that suits their taste. It is Satan’s purpose by these considerations to prevent the attainment of the object for which our schools were established. Hindered by his devices, the managers reason after the manner of the world and copy its plans and imitate its customs. Many have so far shown their lack of wisdom from above as of competitive sports against other non-Adventist schools. What was God’s prophet’s counsel regarding this practice? “Satan is delighted when he sees human beings using their physical and mental powers in that which does not educate, which is not useful, which does not help them to be a blessing to those who need their help. While the youth are becoming expert in games that are of no real value to themselves or to others, Satan is playing the game of life for their souls, taking from them the talents that God has given them, and placing in their stead his own evil attributes. It is his effort to lead men to ignore God. He seeks to engross and absorb the mind so completely that God will find no place in the thoughts. He does not wish people to have a knowledge of their Maker, and he is well pleased if he can set in operation games and theatrical performances that will so confuse the senses of the youth that God and heaven will be forgotten.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 274-275.

One area in which we have strayed far from the Master’s plan is in the area of dating and courting. Our colleges provide many opportunities for dating, which include such events as excursions to local amusement parks, school sporting events, and “pool parties.” It may surprise you to learn that courting was not even allowed at Battle Creek in its early days. The following testimony from 1882 reveals the high standard that was once held regarding courting at our schools: “Your expressed determination to have a lady’s company wherever you should go shows me that you are far from being in a position to be benefited by going to Battle Creek. The infatuation which is upon you is more satanic than divine. I do not wish you to be disappointed in regard to Battle Creek. The rules are strict there. No courting is allowed. The school would be worth nothing to students were they to become entangled in love affairs as you have been. Our college would soon be demoralized. Parents do not send their children to our college or to our offices to commence a lovesick, sentimental life, but to be educated in the sciences or to learn the printer’s trade. Were the rules so lax that the youth were allowed to become bewildered and infatuated with the society of the opposite sex as you have been for some months past, the object of their going to Battle Creek would be lost.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 109.

Here we stand on the brink of eternity with unwarmed souls all around us, and what are we doing? With so much at stake you would expect to find people earnestly praying and working for the salvation of others while there is yet time. But instead, we find so-called “Christian comedians” making appearances at our youth meetings. What would Peter and Paul say if they were raised and saw the grand truths of the gospel they once preached now being trivialized and cheapened into a comedy routine? God’s servant writes to the youth, “When you associate together, you may be a help and a blessing to one another if you surround yourselves with an influence that is divine; but there are those who have grave defects which are gaining a deeper hold upon them, and which, if not overcome, will drive the Spirit of God out of the heart. There is among you too much love of jesting and joking, which is not convenient, and which in no way strengthens the soul or the intellect. Jesting and joking may please a class of cheap minds, but the influence of this kind of conduct is destructive to spirituality.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, May 30, 1895.

Satan is building up an army of youth that he will use to accomplish his plans during the final conflict; “Satan is making earnest, persevering efforts to corrupt the mind and debase the character of every youth; and shall we who have more experience stand as mere spectators, and see him accomplish his purpose without hindrance? Let us stand at our post as men, to work for these youth, and through the help of God to hold them back from the pit of destruction. In the parable, while men slept the enemy sowed tares; and
while you, my brethren and sisters, are unconscious of his work, Satan is gathering an army of youth under his banner; and he exults, for through them he carries on his warfare against God.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 47.

As parents and church members we have a solemn obligation to fight for the souls of our youth. It is a humiliation and an embarrassment to admit that nearly three out of every four young people leave our church. The time has come for us as parents to stop indulging our children, and to restrict as far as possible their access to corrupting videos, TV shows, music, and books. This may mean some difficult choices are going to have to be made. For some families it may mean throwing out the TV or VCR. Others may need to dispose of CDs, tapes, and videos. Parents need to make an earnest effort to instill principles of purity and morality into their children while they are still young. Parents should be constantly holding up their and youth in prayer. Make morning and evening family worship a top priority in your home. Probably the most important thing that we can do to lead our youth to Christ is to reveal Him in our own life and character. Remember—youth will be far more impressed by who you are than by what you say.

The time has also come for us to seriously examine what our churches and schools are doing for our youth in light of God’s inspired counsel. Maybe it is time for us to admit that amusements, entertainment, sports, and comedians are not the answer to keeping our youth interested in the church. Rather than conforming to the world, what the youth really need is a return to primitive godliness and a separation from the practices of the world. Rather than providing youth entertainment, our churches and schools need to provide youth with opportunities for unselfish service to others. Instead of having “pool parties,” let us have prayer meetings. Instead of students learning how to win basketball games, the youth need to be instructed in the art of winning souls. Rather than planning amusements for the youth, leaders in our churches and schools should instruct our youth on how to surrender their lives to Jesus, how to live a life of self-denial and obedience through His indwelling Spirit. If we heed God’s counsel—first, in our personal lives, then, in our homes, schools, and churches—our youth will be a mighty force in proclaiming God’s final message of warning to this world. □

I wish I could give a lot more, but being on a fixed income, this is the best I can do. I know you are doing a great work, in soul saving. My prayers are with all of you.

CL, Ohio

Please pray for us in the local churches who try to uphold historic Adventism. It is not easy; our people are so asleep, and they do not want to be awakened!

We have a new pastor who believes in the Spirit of Prophecy wholeheartedly and believes in historic Adventism. He reads Our Firm Foundation and enjoys it. He and I have a very good working relationship. We meet with a few other faithful members and have special prayer in the church on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, for revival and reformation among our people. Then we visit in the homes, trying to point our dear people to Jesus and wake them up, but it is not easy! Please pray for us here.

EV, Texas

May God be with each one this new year of 1996. It seems so very sure we will see many things come about. Sad and joyful thought—we are closer to our dear Saviour’s return. We have so very much to thank our wonderful Heavenly Father for! Praise Him!

I wish to thank you for the November issue of Our Firm Foundation. It is amazing to experience trials, and in the long run we can see it is for our Christian growth.

“To Stand Alone” is a part of Jesus’ lesson to us. He had to stand alone. We can take courage by accepting His life—as a big help to do likewise. Until another time, let us meet at Jesus’ coming.

RC, Oregon

Here is a check for your ministry. Please use as you see fit to advance the cause of God. I pray that 1996 will be a great year for your ministry. I know that problems abound, but God will overturn to finish His work. Keep up the good work, and keep the faith.

RP, Kentucky

Please do not stop sending me the issues of Our Firm Foundation. They are a part of my life, and I so look forward to receiving them. God bless you at Firm Foundation. You are a God-send.

VC, Florida

God bless you in these last days. Keep up the good work. Your beacon of light is shining throughout the world. Thank you for all that you have done for me.

BB, California

I earnestly thank the Lord for your faithfulness and courage. Keep on sharing the gospel in the light and power you have received it. I look forward to receiving the magazine and the audio tapes in the coming year.

AM, California

May we all stay so close to Him that He will be able to bless us.

MK, California

Enclosed find a check to be used in your literature, here and overseas. We just love your paper, Our Firm Foundation. Keep it coming! May the Lord bless you and your work.

HS, Wisconsin

Religious history of the 16th century has long fascinated me. I found the article by Colin Standish on “The Council of Trent” to be very balanced, enlightening, and edifying. I also found the article on women’s ordination refreshing after the constant barrage of alternative views seen in the majority of official SDA publications.

EK, Ohio

I have been having fairly good success with my book [The Lord’s Day and a National Sunday Law]. One woman was concerned about the number 666 in the Bible, so she prayed one night that God would reveal to her what it meant, or that God would send someone to explain it to her. The very next day I was distributing my book door to door in her town. She was in front of her house, so I handed her this book. She noted the large 666 and told me that they had been talking about that. I have our church’s name and phone number stamped on the last page. She got in touch with our church, and now both she and her husband are preparing for baptism.

My son spent two weeks in Russia and the Ukraine giving health talks. He had good translators, and he had with him a number of my books on the Sabbath. Now they are going to translate my book into Russian and Ukrainian and print them locally.

Jacob Teske, California
Reflections Upon a General Conference President

Robert H. Pierson

PLEASE, Elder Pierson, tell us another African story.” It was November, 1988. I had no idea that this would be the last time that I would see Elder Pierson before his death in January 1989. As he had done on occasions before, he had invited me to spend a day with him at the home of Dr. Charles, an Indian surgeon who had often hosted Elder Pierson when he came to the Washington area.

My son Nigel, then six years of age, loved the African stories that Elder Pierson told him from time to time. On this occasion, however, after telling my children a story as we drove Elder Pierson from Dr. Charles’ home to another home of Indian believers where he was to have supper that night, Elder Pierson told him, “Well, Nigel, I have told you one story, you will have to wait for another story at another time.” That story was never told.

It was my privilege to get to know Elder Pierson relatively well, especially during his retirement years. On the number of occasions that I was down in the Fletcher and Hendersonville area of North Carolina, he either invited me home for lunch, or he invited me to eat out with him. When Hartland Institute held meetings in the area he always attended at least some of the meetings.

It was in early 1966 that I first heard the name of Elder Pierson. He was then president of the Trans-African (now East-African) Division. Prior to that he had been president of the Southern Asian Division. He had also held responsibilities such as president of the West Indies Union Mission (new conference) and the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.

The then academic dean of Avondale College, Dr. Ivan Higgins, had said that he was certain that Elder Pierson would become the new General Conference president to replace Elder R. R. Figuhr, who had held that position for twelve years. I had never heard Elder Pierson’s name until then, but Dr. Higgins had worked in India during the years of Elder Pierson’s presidency there, and knew him well. His prediction was fulfilled when at the 1966 General Conference session, held in Detroit, Michigan, Elder Pierson was elected to the solemn responsibility of the leadership of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It was not until 1974, when I became president of Columbia Union College, that I began to get to know Elder Pierson personally. A number of times I was in his office discussing various issues, including the theological situation in Australia, the state of our colleges in the United States, and the leadership of the West Indies Union. I found him to be a most gracious man, with an earnest desire for hastening the return of Jesus Christ. I also found him to be a man of prayer. His earnest prayers at the end of each session I spent with him in his office will not be forgotten.

Elder Pierson passed away seven years ago, but the vision that he had has not been lost on many of us. I want to look at some of the positive characteristics of Elder Pierson, as I perceive them, as an example to each reader of Our Firm Foundation magazine.

1) Elder Pierson had a great love for the Seventh-day Adventist truth.

Many will remember his book, We Still Believe, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975. This book was not written in a vacuum, but rather it was written with a keen awareness of troubling challenges to the gospel message. Satan was, in a most dramatic way, insinuating doctrinal deviations into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Elder Pierson was greatly burdened. It was the General Conference president’s desire to stabilize our people in their understanding of the three angels’ messages that motivated the writing of that book.

We cannot forget some of the other statements he made, especially those connected with his retirement as General Conference president:

“Already, brethren and sisters, there are subtle forces that are beginning to stir. Re-
gtrettably, there are those in the church who belittle the inspiration of the total Bible; who scorn the first eleven chapters of Genesis; who question the Spirit of Prophecy’s short chronology of the age of the earth; and who subtly, and not so subtly, attack the Spirit of Prophecy. There are some who point to the Reformers and contemporary theologians as a source and the norm for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. There are those who are allegedly tired of the hackneyed phrases of Adventism. There are those who wish to forget the standards of the church we love. There are those who covet and would court the favor of the Evangelicals; who would throw off the mantle of a peculiar people; and those who would go the way of the secular, materialistic world.” Adventist Review, Oct. 26, 1978.

“Fellow leaders, beloved brethren and sisters, don’t let it happen! I appeal to you as earnestly as I know how this morning. Don’t let it happen! I appeal to Andrews University, to the seminary, to Loma Linda University. Don’t let it happen! We are not Seventh-day Anglicans, not Seventh-day Lutherans. We are Seventh-day Adventists! This is God’s last church with God’s last message!” Ibid.

“In the fourth generation, there is much machinery. The number of administrators increases, while the number of workers at the grassroots level becomes proportionately less. Great church councils are held to define doctrine. More schools, universities, and seminars are established. These go to the world for accreditation and tend to become secularized. There’s a reexamination of positions and modernizing of methods. Attention is given to contemporary culture, with an interest in the arts, music, architecture, and literature. The movement seeks to become relevant to contemporary society by becoming involved in popular causes. Services become formal. The groups enjoy complete acceptance by the world. The sect has become a church!” Ibid.

There is no question in my mind but that he saw a tremendous falling away within our ranks, though he was careful in the way he expressed himself. Ever aware that anything he said as General Conference president, or indeed as the former General Conference president, might be repeated or misused in a way that he would not have desired, he measured every word, and every statement in that light.

During the years of my presidency at Columbia Union College, I cannot recall once meeting him without having him ask me how things were moving in Australia. I would have to explain the continued and deepening apostasy that was taking place in my homeland. Inevitably he would respond by referring to a General Conference leader who had gone down to Australia and had come back with the word that things were turning around, or even getting better.

I recall the last such interchange not long before I accepted a call to Weimar Institute in California. He named a very highly respected vice-president of the General Conference, reporting to me that this vice-president had returned to the

I decided that I would never speak on justification without bringing in sanctification, and I would not speak on sanctification without bringing in justification.

States with the assurance, “Things are now settling down in Australia, and the agitation is almost gone.” I had to respond to Elder Pierson, “If that is true, then Australia is in a worse position than even I believed it to be, for it would mean that the apostasy had totally won the day.”

I remember that on another occasion he had asked me if I knew the then editor of the Australasian (now South Pacific) Record. I told him that I had met him, but did not know him well. Then he asked a question that it took me some time to fathom, “Is anything wrong?” I learned that Elder Pierson asked questions very carefully, and it took a little while to understand what really was the basis of his question. But I recognized that as he had read the Australasian Record, he noticed a sharp change in the editor’s editorials. When the editor had first assumed the editorship he had presented many strong editorials in which he upheld truth and righteousness. But some time later the editor became eclectic, lacking the pointedness of his earlier editorials. When I understood the nature of his question, I had to explain to him that the leaders in the South Pacific Division had asked him to tone down his editorials. This had been confirmed to me by the associate editor for the Australasian Record of that time. In typical fashion Elder Pierson simply responded, “I was just wondering.”

He believed in the power of Christ to bring victory to the life and often preached on this topic.

I remember listening to a sermon he preached in 1978 in the First Church, Washington, D.C., in which he taught justification and sanctification. It was the gospel in its richness! At the fellowship dinner that followed I thanked him for the sermon, especially for the fact that he had established a gospel predicated upon both justification and sanctification.

“Well Colin,” he responded, “years ago I decided that I would never speak on justification without bringing in sanctification, and I would not speak on sanctific-

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whether it was his earnest effort to put the best construction on things that were happening in the church, expressing his real hope that the brethren would stand loyally for truth and righteousness and make every effort to lead the church into the kingdom of heaven.

3) Elder Pierson had great compassion, even for those who disagreed with him.

I vividly recall the one time that Elder Pierson spoke for a prayer meeting at Hartland. During the course of a powerful message in which he was encouraging the students and staff to not only stand true to the pillars of our faith, but to live the truth that they knew, he said, “I now want to quote from the Review of June 4.” He quoted a statement that thoroughly arrested my attention. It was a mighty call for reformation, including dress reform, health reform, and recreation reform. I was taken aback, for I had not noticed such powerful editorials in many years. On completing the statement he said, “Oh, by the way, I failed to tell you that that was the Review of June 4, 1935.” That editorial had been penned by Elder F. M. Wilcox, the then editor. Elder Pierson was determined to make a point without in any way openly reflecting his innermost concerns with anyone in present responsibilities.

After the prayer meeting I was dialoguing with him in my office. I said, “Elder, you certainly took me in with your reference to the Review article.” He said nothing, but just laughed. His point had been well made without name calling.

Back in 1980 when he conducted the Week of Prayer at Weimar while I was dean of that college, I told him my concern of what I felt had been a failure on the part of General Conference President Daniels to fully stand up for the Spirit of Prophecy when speaking at the 1919 Bible Teachers’ Convention. He strongly supported Elder Daniels by saying, “I cannot imagine that Elder Daniels was not wholly supportive of the Spirit of Prophecy.” I told him I would give him the transcript of the conference so he could evaluate it for himself. A couple of days later he returned the transcript to me with the simple words, “There were a number of things that Elder Daniels said that I wished he had not said.” There was no deep hostility, just a simple and humble statement.

4) Elder Pierson had a great desire to see repentance, revival, and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I had first come to serve at Columbia Union College on September 3, 1973. The very next month was the epoch setting 1973 Annual Council held in the Takoma Park Church. Elder Pierson, supported by other leaders, launched a mighty effort to bring repentance, revival, and reformation to this church.

The meetings included these words, “We believe that the return of Jesus has been long delayed, that the reasons for the delay are not wrapped in mysteries, and that the primary consideration before the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to reorder its priorities individually and corporately, so that our Lord’s return may be hastened.” “What has happened to the message and experience that, by 1892, had brought the beginning of the earth’s final message of warning and appeal?” “As a body, the church still is in the Laodicean condition, as set forth by the True Witness in Revelation 3:14-19.”

I was thrilled as I heard that message presented, and I wondered if the beginning of the latter rain was about to fall.

I was a delegate to the 1974 Annual Council held at the Loma Linda University Church. There, in spite of opposition, Elder Pierson brought in Elder William Frazee to lead the early morning worship, along with other strong speakers on revival and reformation.

Not all appreciated this. As one Union president exclaimed to me, “What does Elder Pierson think he is doing bringing that rebel in to talk to us?” I had to strongly disagree with this Union president.

I cannot forget the beautiful communion service that Elder Pierson conducted at the conclusion of the 1974 Annual Council in which the vice-presidents served as elders. The service certainly brought great conviction to my heart and led me to make reconciliation with a leader from whom I had been estranged for a couple of years.

I so strongly looked forward to the 1975 General Conference session in Vienna, Austria, to which I was a delegate. I sincerely believed that this message of repentance, revival, and reformation would be taken worldwide—but that did not happen. My own theory is that there was such controversy, led by the European delegates against what they saw as the Americanizing of the church in Europe, that the Holy Spirit could not work.

On one occasion, after telling him of my disappointment, I asked Elder Pierson, “What really went wrong in 1975?” His answer was typical, “Well, Colin, I will have to talk to you about that sometime.” But he never did. And, at least as far as I am concerned, he took his thoughts on the detailing of his passionate goal for revival and reformation to the grave.

5) Elder Pierson was a great supporter of self-supporting work.

I know few leaders who understood the correct role between self-supporting and denominational work as Elder Pierson did. He realized that not all leaders shared his enthusiasm for the work of self-supporting workers.

It was Elder Pierson who had restored to Elder Frazee his ministerial credentials after they had been taken from him when he stepped into self-supporting work at the commencement of Wildwood. He became a close friend of Wildwood and spent considerable time there, as he did at many other self-supporting institutions.

He wrote a book called Miracles Happen Every Day, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1983, to try to help others understand the importance of self-supporting work. He also wrote articles that clearly supported the self-supporting ministries.

I know I found him to be a dear friend and counselor, especially when the issues became more controverted. It was Elder Pierson’s efforts to a great extent that led to the calling of the January 27, 1988, meeting between eight self-supporting leaders and twenty-three General Conference leaders. Some progress was made that day. It was Elder Pierson’s hope that future, day-long dialogues would take

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H e was absolutely convinced that this was God’s remnant church, that its destiny would be completed, and that the church would go through, shaken, sifted, and purified to the kingdom of heaven.
He wrote a book called *Miracles Happen Every Day...* to try to help others understand the importance of self-supporting work. He also wrote articles that clearly supported the self-supporting ministries.

7) Elder Pierson was a humble and compassionate man.

Perhaps Elder Pierson’s humility can best be understood in a statement that he used at the Palmadale meetings in California in 1976. At these meetings were leaders of the South Pacific Division, together with General Conference leaders. The dialogue centered around the theological teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford, who was present. During the course of dialogue, Elder Pierson said that his knowledge of Scripture was that of a Sabbath School teacher. Unfortunately, Dr. Ford was quick to jump on this statement, inferring that Elder Pierson was not credible in matters of theological determination. Yet, Elder Pierson was, in truth, a deep student of the Word. He understood this message far better than most. As a true Bible student he knew, “Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Isaiah 35:8. He knew that Sister White had said that faithful laymen, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would not be led from God’s truth if they earnestly studied God’s Word.

“The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for our salvation are made as clear as noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God.” *Signs of the Times*, June 25, 1902.

8) Elder Pierson was a man who gave his whole life to the ministry.

After his retirement because of ill health in 1978, he could have easily justified a life of relaxation and ease. But Elder Pierson had a passion for finishing the work of God and continued to play his role. He took a number of assignments, including going to the remote Cayman Islands, to act in a pastoral role. Indeed, it was while acting in such a role in Hawaii that he had his fatal heart attack.

I know that he supported the work of Hartland, and the books that Russell and I
“Miracles” Masquerading as Science

There are a number of health care methodologies that have been practiced for quite some time that have, at least in part, not been shown to be based upon, nor to work in harmony with, natural law. Although they are frequently presented in a scientific-like setting, and those utilizing them give scientific-sounding explanations for how the remedies work, still a number of these methodologies have not been shown to be explainable by the basic sciences of anatomy, physiology, physics, chemistry, biochemistry, pathology, and so forth. Thus, these remedies are very possibly operating on the basis of mind-cure (“innate” powers of the mind), which is a form of self-hypnosis, or they operate on the basis of regular hypnosis and/or the electric currents of Satan. Apparently not operating on the basis of natural laws, the results of these and other similar methodologies qualify as “miracles”—the working of supernatural powers.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy began in the 1800s and is based on the concept that disease should be treated with medications, herbal or otherwise, that echo or increase the symptoms of the disease, but that are given in such dilute preparations that some doses cannot possibly have even one molecule of the active ingredient. The extreme dilution of the medication undoubtedly explains why the homeopathic medicines do not make the symptoms of the disease being treated more severe. It also largely explains why there are few unfavorable, chemical side effects from their medications. It is proposed that “like heals like.” It is believed that the potency of the preparation is increased in a mystical way by the “succession” or dilution process. “The power of a substance is not in the material but in its pattern. The further removed the material becomes, the greater the power of the pattern.” A Visual Encyclopedia of Unconventional Medicine, Ann Hill, 23. As quoted in Mystical Medicine, Warren Peters, MD, 62. “Natrum Muriaticum,” or common table salt, is prescribed at times by homeopaths according to their succession method. But every person knows that the more dilute the salt is in the food, the less salty it is, and thus less effective, rather than more effective. These concepts are contrary to commonly experienced principles of chemistry and physics. If this aspect of homeopathy does not work because of obedience to natural law, then it may possibly have its effectiveness from the working of supernatural powers.

Reflexology

Reflexology believes that all of the body organs are represented at specific points on the soles of the feet. Palpation and massage of these specific areas can lead to a proper diagnosis, and, by purportedly balancing the energy forces, they can cure anything from constipation to a sore throat. There are other similar systems of health care. One proposes that each organ is represented by specific points on the palms, and another that the organs are represented by specific points on the external ear. A fourth system, iridology, proposes that specific areas of the eyes’ iris reflects the health status of the many body organs. It is true that all parts of the body are interconnected by the nervous system, but anatomy and physiology have been unable to show that any point of the soles, palms, ears, or irises is any more connected or related to any one organ than it is to all other organs and tissues of the whole body. These methods...
claim to work through the electrical currents of the body, but they are seemingly not in harmony with the anatomy of the body’s electrical system.

**Kinesiology**

Kinesiology teaches that certain muscles are related in a special way to specific internal organs. It is believed that the evaluation of the strength or weakness of a given muscle tells the health status of its associated organ. Again, there has been no discovery of any special anatomic or physiologic connection between any muscles and their purported corresponding internal organs. One practitioner of this method learned that it was his own mental state that determined the results of his patient’s muscle testing, rather than the health condition of the patient. See Warren Peters, op. cit., 48.

**Acupuncture**

Acupuncture also misrepresents the anatomy and physiology of the body’s nervous system by stating that there are twelve to twenty-four vertical lines or meridians spaced around the human body. Hundreds of specific points along these meridians are believed to be connected in a special way to specific internal organs. Inserting needles in these special points can produce “analgesia” which allows for the performance of major surgery. It is also claimed that needling, massaging, or applying pressure to specific sites can treat and cure disease of the various internal organs as well as of the musculo-skeletal system.

Acupuncturists say that health is simply a matter of tweaking into balance a mysterious life force called qi (pronounced chee), which is said to move through invisible meridians in the body. See “Medicine’s Latest Miracle,” Hippocrates, January 1995, 53–63. Acupuncture is considered by some to be the most effective way of treating drug addictions—from smoking to alcoholism to heroin use. The needles used in acupuncture are hair-thin and are inserted up to one-fourth inch. Some treatments require much deeper insertion. The needles are twirled at times to “increase” the effect. The sensation is described as “no pain” to “less than a pin-prick,” yet it is postulated that this nearly painless procedure applied to distant areas of the body works by stimulating the brain to release endorphins—naturally produced pain-killing chemicals. Tests of the procedure give conflicting reports as to whether acupuncture actually stimulates the release of endorphins. Even if acupuncture does release some endorphins it is very difficult to explain how the endorphins released into the general bloodstream can produce anesthesia limited to the chest for lung surgery, and in another patient the head area for brain surgery, and all of the time the patient is awake and able to drink and talk with the surgeons. The experience of science with chemicals circulating in the bloodstream to cause analgesia is that the state of the patients is nearly unexplainable.

The anesthesia associated with acupuncture goes contrary to the general understanding of anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. The anesthesia of hypnosis is also unexplainable. Until science can truly show the rational basis of the anesthesia of acupuncture we have to believe that it may very well be the result of hypnosis. Any method of health care that has been associated with paganism for several thousand years, and explains itself as balancing or releasing the energy forces of the body, should be kept at arms length until it is clearly shown to obey natural law.

Any method of health care that has been associated with paganism for several thousand years, and explains itself as balancing or releasing the energy forces of the body, should be kept at arms length until it is clearly shown to obey natural law.

**Spine Manipulation for Organ Disease**

Chiropractic claims that disease of the internal organs is caused by interference with the flow of energy to them from the nervous system. This “blockage of energy flow” is said to be caused primarily by vertebrae of the spine being “out of place,” thus putting pressure on the nerves. Manipulation of the spine is purported to relieve the interference with energy flow, thus treating the diseased internal organs.

Science has discovered that each cell in the human body produces its own energy. The electrical stimuli from the nervous system merely helps tell the cells and organs when and how hard to work—that is, the stimuli help to coordinate the activities of the cells and organs. When the internal organs are completely separated from the brain by the severing of the spinal cord, their muscle tissues and cells continue to function in essentially normal ways, thus disproving the above chiropractic concepts. The primary problems after severing the spinal cord are control of bladder and bowel evacuation which is dependent upon the skeletal or external muscles which do not function at all until told to by an outside, electrical stimulus. The brain utilizes its nervous energy in helping to direct and coordinate the other organs in their activities, but it does not provide any energy for them to do those activities. These topics will be discussed further in our next article.

Science has shown that chiropractic manipulation relieves skeletal-muscle spasms, improves local musculo-skeletal blood circulation, and increases joint motion. Thus, when used to treat musculo-skeletal problems, chiropractic care has been shown to work in harmony with natural law and is quite effective in many types of these problems.
Manipulation of the spine, though, is not without risk. There have been published instances of permanent injury to the spinal cord related to this type of treatment, and thus, it is not always innocuous. See “Complications of Chiropractic Treatment for Back Pain,” Postgraduate Medicine, May 15, 1988. As with any serious treatment it should be entered into only after study has shown it is indicated and that the probability of benefit clearly outweighs the risk of harm.

Soon after the turn of the century, a Seventh-day Adventist therapist wrote in a booklet called “The Searchlight” regarding a method of treatment that related disease “to pressure and alignment problems of the spine.” He apparently quoted from Ellen White’s writings in a way to make it appear that Christ’s methods of healing were in harmony with his. In 1911, Ellen White responded with the following words:

“Some days ago I read the booklet called ‘The Searchlight.’ Last night I was instructed to say to the brother who has used my name and my writings so freely in that document, that he has no right to interpret my writings as he has done, and that it is wrong to place me and my teachings before the public in the light that his booklet represents them. I forbid the use of my writings in any such way.

“Furthermore, I protest against the teachings of the ‘Searchlight’ as to the mony with the “magnetic healing” concepts of chiropractic’s founder, D. D. Palmer. See Mystical Medicine, 64.

Energy Force Healing

There are a number of healing methods that attribute their success to the evaluation, manipulation, or balancing of real or purported electrical or magnetic energies. At least one system of health care seeks to maintain or restore health by balancing the good (positive) and the bad (negative) energy forces within the body referred to as the “Yin” and the “Yang.”

Another system states that there is an electromagnetic energy in all living tissues radiating out from the tissues. This radiation of energy is referred to as the “aura.” Certain “skilled” individuals purportedly are able to detect this aura with their hands and can thus evaluate the health status of the tissue, be it plant or animal. “Manipulation” of the energy field is also believed to be able to treat diseased organs.

This concept of the aura also gives rise to the use of a “pendulum” to diagnose the health status of plant or animal. A suspended object on a string held over the human body is said to rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise depending on the condition of the aura. This is said to enable the “skilled” practitioner to diagnose and know how to treat the disease.

Man is unable to detect the weak magnetic field of the earth with his bare hands yet these methods of health care claim to barehandedly evaluate and manipulate the body’s magnetic fields which are at least one million times weaker!

The concept of the aura is also used to explain how a sample of blood, urine, hair, or body secretion can be measured in one of several types of scientific-appearing machines or in a special box referred to as ”Abram’s box.” It is claimed that the presence or absence of certain diseases can be determined by measuring the aura of the specimen.

Some health care providers believe that the touch of their hands actually provides healing power, and they relate remarkable results from this method. Other health care providers are claiming that they can evaluate conditions of health and treat disease by evaluation and manipulation of the purported aura previously described. This method is referred to as “therapeutic touch,” or TT, but the hands of the health care provider do not actually touch the patient. The hands are kept a few inches from the patient as purported evaluation and manipulation of the “energy field” takes place. This technique seems to be sweeping through hospitals and nursing schools. Some 45,000 health professionals in the United States are reported to be trained in this technique, and federal research grants are being provided to study this form of treatment. See “A No Touch Therapy,” Time, November 21, 1994.

Science has shown that the electrical currents of the body do generate weak magnetic fields that extend outside of the body. The magnetic fields of the neurons of the brain are at least 1 million times weaker than the magnetic field of the earth, and require extremely sensitive equipment to detect and record. See J. Vieth, “Magnetoecephalography, a New Function Diagnostic Method,” Elektroencephalograph Verwande Geb, 1984, June 15, 111-118. Even though the earth is large, its magnetic field is weak, not even being able to attract or to create any pattern with plain metal filings. Man is unable to detect the weak magnetic field of the earth with his bare hands yet these methods of health care claim to barehandedly evaluate and manipulate the body’s magnetic fields which are at least one million times weaker! Only supernatural intervention can make such health care feasible.

Conflicting with Natural Law

There are many other methods of health care, in addition to these that we have briefly described, which fall into the same category. They claim to tap into the latent powers of the mind, or of the universe, or they purport to balance or work with the electrical energies of the body. Many times their proponents profess that the methods used are based upon natural law, but evaluation does not yet support their claims. We need to avoid all such types of remedies.

We are told that “Everything that conflicts with natural law creates a diseased condition of the soul.” Counsels on Health, 68. This is one of the reasons why God has allowed modern man to discover His laws in our bodies. He has provided us with a knowledge of anatomy, physiol-
ology, biochemistry, and so on, as tools not only to help us know how to remove disobedience to His natural laws from our lives, but also to help expose the false health care methods of Satan.

We need not get caught up with every method of health care, regardless of how glowing are the reports regarding it. Scientists are presently confused by the rapid influx of health care remedies, many of which have their roots in the mystical, spirit-worshiping religions of the East. A number of these remedies, such as therapeutic touch, transcendental meditation, and acupuncture, are reported to be associated with some degree of physiological change. Supporters use these changes to increase the acceptance of these modalities in scientific circles, but none of these findings have been demonstrated to be consistently or clearly in harmony with the laws of the Creator.

A few years ago, another "several thousands of years old" health care system was introduced to Western science. It is called Qi Gong (pronounced chee kong), which means "manipulation of vital energy." It is explained that the Qi (chee) life force must be kept at a certain level and in balance to keep sickness away. This can be accomplished by personal exercises, or it can be done for you by a Qi Gong master who performs the exercises around you without touching you. In its introduction to Western news media, Qi Gong was demonstrated upon a Western scientist (who had been practicing self-hypnosis for a number of years and had had Qi Gong practiced upon him once before) who described the effect upon him as an "electromagnet power inside my body." At one point, he requested the Qi Gong therapist to decrease the energy level because "I felt ready to fly."

In 1992, scientists in Japan reported the measurement and recording of strong magnetic field energy from the hands of three individuals. The report shows tracings recording the frequency and strength of the magnetic energy force that these individuals could turn on and off at will. The recorded energy was "at least 1,000 times stronger" than the magnetic field created by the body's normal electrical currents. The reporting scientists acknowledge that they could not detect strong enough electrical currents in the bodies of the three magnetic energy emitters to produce such strong magnetic energy fields. They concluded that the source of the unusually strong magnetic fields must be "Qi"—the "deep force" behind our ob-

What if life should be prolonged? What if temporal gain should be secured? Will it pay in the end to disregard the will of God? All such apparent gain will prove at last an irrecoverable loss.

Unser Festes Fundament

German is the language of the newest edition of Our Firm Foundation. This youngest member of the family is translated, copy-edited, and formatted in Germany. It arrives here in Eatonville, Washington, by computer disc. We add the art work and image it to film. We then print, bind, and ship the finished magazines worldwide. We expect this newest edition to be well received. We want to encourage everyone to send us names and addresses of German-speaking Adventists both here and abroad. It will start out as a quarterly magazine. Each subscription will cost US $8.00 for four issues delivered to addresses in the United States and its protectorates. US $11.50 will send four numbers by first-class mail to Canada or Mexico. Airmail delivery to the rest of the world costs US $16.00 for four issues or US $12.00 by surface mail. Those who have addresses in Europe and desire a more economical, though later delivered subscription, may correspond with Gerhard Bodem, 07631 - 16050, Deutschland, In den Weiher 24, 79379 Mühlheim - Baden.

We trust that some will donate extra funds to enable us to send this important language edition to all available German-speaking Adventists regardless of their personal ability to pay.
Nothing New Under the Sun

In last month's presentation we identified two themes which run through Daniel and Revelation. In the book of Daniel these themes are associated with the rivers Ulai and Hiddekel. One identifies the message of the everlasting gospel in connection with the work of Christ in the Most Holy Place, while the second identifies the enemy who opposes this work at the end of time. These two themes are also located within the three angels' messages of Revelation 14.

We reviewed some of the counsel which identifies the books of Daniel and Revelation as an important part of the catalyst for the final revival which will come to God's people at the end of time. We also noted that it was through an increase of knowledge that a people are to be prepared to stand in the latter days. We defined this knowledge as an understanding of the Papacy, its mark of authority, and its Sabbath implications. As we continue this study of Daniel 11:40-45, we will now look at another factor which identifies Daniel and Revelation as the books designed to bring about the revival of God's people:

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that a special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. 'The wise shall understand' (Daniel 12:10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God's people all through the centuries, the promise is, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.' Revelation 1:3." Prophets and Kings, 547-548.

Here both Daniel and Revelation are identified as containing messages which the wise will understand. Perhaps the most important aspect for us to recognize, as we attempt to understand these prophecies, is the counsel given to us to understand sacred history.

Great and Solemn Events

"All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come in its order will be. Daniel, God's prophet, stands in his place. John stands in his place. In the Revelation the Lion of the tribe of Judah has opened to the students of prophecy the book of Daniel, and thus is Daniel standing in his place. He bears his testimony, that which the Lord revealed to him in vision of the great and solemn events which we must know as we stand on the very threshold of their fulfillment." Selected Messages, book 2, 109. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. . . .

"Study Revelation in connection with Daniel, for history will be repeated. . . .

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures

Jeff Pippenger
is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study.” Testimonies to Ministers, 116-117.

To stand on “the threshold” of great and solemn events means that they are still in front of us. We have been commanded to know these events. In order to recognize them, we are directed to the history of God’s people as a point of reference:

“The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days... There the whole accumulated truths are presented in force to us that we may profit by their teachings.” Selected Messages, book 3, 339.

It is through studying the history of the church that the Holy Spirit supplies the knowledge and discernment necessary to recognize the solemn events which are ahead of us. It is in knowing the history of the relationship of God with His people that we find our assurance:

“In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us.” Testimonies to Ministers, 31.

A Revival of the Past

Recognizing that our greatest need is for a revival, and that a revival will come in connection with an understanding of the books of Daniel and Revelation, it is not hard to look back into the history of our church and discover a time when an understanding of these books brought about a revival. This very scenario was evidenced at the beginning of the Millerite movement.

This movement began with an increased understanding of the book of Daniel, particularly concerning the vision by the banks of the Ulai, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel. Though the Millerite movement was based upon an understanding of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, it was not until well into the movement that, as a result of an “increase of knowledge” upon that very subject of the 2300 days, a powerful revival took place.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.’ Matthew 25:5-7. In the summer of 1844, midway between the time when it had been first thought that the 2300 days would end, and the autumn of the same year, to which it was afterward found that they extended, the message was proclaimed in the very words of Scripture: ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh!”

I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time.

That which led to this movement was the discovery that the decree of Artaxerxes for the restoration of Jerusalem, which formed the starting point for the period of the 2300 days, went into effect in the autumn of the year 457 B.C., and not at the beginning of the year, as had been formerly believed. Reckoning from the autumn of 457, the 2300 years terminate in the autumn of 1844.” The Great Controversy, 398-390.

Could this experience of increased light be the history which will be repeated at the end of time? Is there additional light to be revealed concerning these very prophecies which we have proclaimed were unsealed in 1844? Something of this sort might be expected, for, as we mentioned in the first article, it will be through an increase of knowledge from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that a people will be prepared to stand:

“The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days...”

“In the first angel’s message men are called upon to worship God, our Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein. They have paid homage to an institution of the Papacy, making of no effect the Law of Jehovah, but there is to be an increase of knowledge on this subject.” Selected Messages, book 2, 105-106.

The First Ten Virgins

When new light came identifying the correct starting point for the 2300 days, the people began to proclaim the message, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!” This was the beginning of the great revival of their day, and was the fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins. It added momentum to the second message, calling people out of Babylon.

In the Eastern culture the bridegroom comes at both the beginning and at the end of the marriage procession. First, he comes to the bride’s home, then he comes back to his own home. The bridegroom comes twice. Could this be part of the parable, part of the history which is to be repeated?

Pioneer Experience Repeated

“I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time, and, like the third angel’s message, has been fulfilled and will continue to be present truth till the close of time.” Review and Herald, August 19, 1890.

Sister White clearly states that there will be a repetition of the parable of the ten virgins, which, when first fulfilled in the summer of 1844, was the catalyst of the early rain experience during the pioneer movement.

She also addresses the parallel between the second and fourth angels’ messages:

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven, preparing for the fulfillment of some important event. Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended,
the earth was lightened with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' Revelation 18:2. The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it Swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel's message.

'Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.' Verses 4-5. This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the Midnight Cry joined the second angel's message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God's people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.' Early Writings, 277-278.

As the pioneers presented fulfilled prophecy, they pointed to the historical events which demonstrated the fulfillment of the prophecy as "waymarks," and which described the steady tread of events which lead down to the end of the world.

The counsel for us to prepare for the future through an understanding of the history of the past in connection with the "parable of the ten virgins," and the repeated "call out of Babylon," emphasizes that the revival which our church awaits will parallel the experience of the pioneer movement. When we recognize these facts, the significance of Daniel 11:40-45 is greatly increased, for it is in this vision that the Papacy, as symbolized by the king of the north, brings the whole world under the dominion of Rome—for the final time. Sister White tells us our greatest, most urgent need is for a revival.

The new information on the starting point for the 2300 days added momentum to the pioneer movement, but also an advanced understanding of historical events powered the movement.

"Historical events, showing the direct fulfillment of prophecy, were set before the people, and the prophecy was seen to be a figurative delineation of events leading down to the close of this earth's history. The scenes connected with the working of the man of sin are the last features plainly revealed in this earth's history." Selected Messages, book 2, 102.

As the pioneers presented fulfilled prophecy, they pointed to the historical events which demonstrated the fulfillment of the prophecy as "waymarks," and which described the steady tread of events which lead down to the end of the world. They also recognized that these waymarks carried figurative information beyond their simple placement in history. By recognizing events in history as fullfillments of prophecy they developed faith in the Word of God which prepared them to stand during the tests and disappointments which would later confront them.

The Catalyst of Prophecy

This recognition of fulfilled prophecy also brought increased zeal in their proclamation of the prophecies to those around him. Perhaps the clearest example of the power associated with the fulfillment of prophecy by a current event is the story of Josiah Litch:

"In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the Second Advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown 'in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;' and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: 'Allowing the first period, 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Daecozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days, commenced at the close of the first period, it will end on the 11th of August, 1840, when the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken. And this, I believe, will be found to be the case.'

"At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the Advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and in publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended." The Great Controversy, 334-335.

Two items are identified with the fulfillment of Litch's prediction. Not only was a wonderful impetus given to the movement, but also the prophetic rules of interpretation used by William Miller were verified as the correct rules of study.

When we, like the pioneers, follow prophetic interpretations which agree with the rules used by Miller and his associates, we will then have reliable tools by which to understand prophecy. If Adventism today would strictly adhere to these rules, and none other, possibly half of the heresies confronting our church today would disappear like morning fog on a summer day.

But more solemn is the age old question—What if? What if we had recognized and proclaimed—prior to 1889—that there would be a secret alliance formed between the Vatican and the United States which would bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union? Would we have scoffed at, as were those who proclaimed Litch's prediction? What would have happened when it finally came to pass? Litch's prediction of the fall of the Ottoman Empire brought a great power into the early Advent movement. God designed into the prophecy of Daniel 11:40 the same potential for a "wonderful impetus" as was brought by Litch's pre-
diction, God would have had His people recognize and proclaim this truth in advance of it becoming past history.

"Those who place themselves under God's control, to be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events ordained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotency, pointing to what they cannot do. Putting on the armor of heaven, they will go forth to the warfare, willing to do and dare for God, knowing that His omnipotence will supply their need." Testimonies, vol. 7, 14.

The final movements are now under way. Yet, unlike the impetus provided to the message by Litch's prediction in advance of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the fall of the Soviet Union in our day created little more than a sigh from God's people.

The experience of the pioneer movement was designed to be repeated in our day, but we in Laodicea have slept on. Certainly it is high time for us to awaken!

"The days in which we live are eventful and full of peril. The signs of the coming end are thickening around us, and events are to come to pass that will be of a more terrible character than any the world has yet witnessed. 'For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.' But to those who have the light of truth, it has been written, 'Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.' 1 Thessalonians 5:3-6. 'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' Romans 13:11-12. 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.' Mark 13:35-36." Review and Herald, November 22, 1892.

We must have a knowledge of the great and solemn events which are on the very threshold of fulfillment. We will be able to recognize these events by understanding the history of the past, which the future events will parallel. We have identified an important experience in the beginning of this movement which will be repeated as it completes its work for the Master.

In the next article we will study a history which has been identified by the Spirit of Prophecy as one which will be repeated as Daniel 11 comes to its close. This past history and the future repetition of this history reveals not the experience of God's people, but the steps which the enemy of God's people takes as his deadly wound is healed. It would be well for the reader to consider the following quotation before studying next month's article.

The experience of the pioneer movement was designed to be repeated in our day, but we in Laodicea have slept on. Certainly it is high time for us to awaken!

"We have no time to lose. Trouблous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.' Daniel 11:30-36.

"Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place. We see evidence that Satan is fast obtaining the control of human minds who have not the fear of God before them. Let all read and understand the prophecies of this book, for we are now entering upon the time of trouble spoken of: 'And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which

Conditions

"Every one should seek to understand the great truths of the plan of salvation, that he may be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks the reason of his hope. . . . We should contemplate the infinite sacrifice of Calvary, and behold the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the righteousness of the Law. . . . You can then testify to men of . . . the righteousness of God in justifying the believer in Jesus, on condition of his future obedience to the statutes of God's government in heaven and earth." Review and Herald, April 24, 1888.
"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom..."

"Neither let the mighty man glory in his might..."

"Let not the rich man glory in his riches..."

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me."

Jeremiah 9:23,24

In What Shall We Glory?

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24.

Men are not to rejoice in their wisdom, their strength, or their riches, but in the fact that they have a knowledge of Christ. This knowledge is the most excellent, the most precious, that we can possess. It is the pledge of everlasting life. For “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot grasp it, power cannot command it; but to all who will accept it, God’s glorious grace is freely given. But men may feel their need, and, renouncing all self-dependence, accept salvation as a gift. Those who enter heaven will not scale its walls by their own righteousness, nor will its gates be opened to them for costly offerings of gold or silver; but they will gain an entrance to the many mansions of the Father’s house through the merits of the cross of Christ.

It is only when the sinner feels the need of a Saviour, that his heart goes after the One who can help him. When Jesus walked among men, it was the sick that wanted a physician. The poor, the afflicted and distressed, followed after Him, to receive the help and comfort which they could not find elsewhere. Blind Bartimeus is waiting by the wayside; he has waited long to meet Christ. Throng of people who possess their sight are passing to and fro, but they have no desire to see Jesus. One look of faith would touch His heart of love, and bring them the blessings of His grace; but they know not the sickness and poverty of their souls, and they feel no need of Christ. Not so with the poor blind man. His only hope is in Jesus. As he waits and watches, he hears the tread of many feet, and he eagerly inquires, What means this noise of travel? The bystanders answer that “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” With the eagerness of intense desire, he cries, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” They try to silence him, but he cries the more vehemently, “Thou son of David, have mercy on me.” Luke 18:37-39. This appeal is heard. His persevering faith is rewarded. Not only is physical sight restored, but the eyes of his understanding are opened. In Christ he sees his Redeemer, and the Sun of righteousness shines into his soul. All who feel their need of Christ as did blind Bartimeus, and who will be as earnest and determined as he was, will, like him, receive the blessing which they crave.

The afflicted, suffering ones who sought Christ as their helper, were charmed with the divine perfection, the beauty of holiness, that shone forth in His character. But the Pharisees could see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. His simple attire, and humble life, devoid of outward show, rendered Him to them as a root out of dry ground.

The self-righteous feel no need of Christ. And when those profess His name extol their own wisdom and goodness, they give evidence that they are not acquainted with Him. As soon as Christ is revealed to the soul, the sinner feels that his only hope is in the Lamb of God as the propitiation for sin. As Christ begins to open His love before him, watch the effect, and see what it is. Many claim this experience who are strangers to the love of Christ. But if it leads one to look with humility upon himself, to place the honor of Christ above his own, if he gives evidence that the heavenly reward is of more value to him than his worldly possessions, we may know that beams of light from Christ are shining upon his soul.

The Scriptures speak of some who thought they possessed love for Christ, when the test showed that self was uppermost in their affections. Simon the Pharisee was one of these. He professed to be a disciple of Jesus; and wishing to show his Master special honor, he made a supper, and invited Christ and his friends as guests. But Jesus shocked his narrow prejudice by showing that Heaven esteemed a penitent sinner above a Pharisee. The woman who had been a sinner, longed for purity of heart. She had seen the works of Jesus, and she greatly desired to become like Him in character. The words of Christ had kindled the hope of a better life, and her deep love and gratitude prompted the offering of the precious ointment. The Pharisee was offended that Jesus should permit a sinner to approach Him. Unbelief filled his heart, and doubts arose as to Christ’s divine mission. The Saviour, reading his unspoken thoughts, reproved him by a parable:

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto

Ellen G. White
him, Thou hast rightly judged.” Luke 7:41–43. Jesus takes Simon on his own ground, as feeling himself more righteous than the woman. Then he proceeds to draw the contrast between the love and devotion of the poor penitent, and the unbelief and cold neglect of the self-righteous Jew.

“Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Verses 44–47.

Simon had been a great sinner, and also a loathsome leper. Christ had pardoned his sins, and cleansed him from the terrible disease that was upon him. He had as much cause as the woman he despised, for humility and gratitude to Jesus. But he esteemed himself so highly, he was so intent upon maintaining his own honor and standing, that he was blind to the great debt of gratitude he owed. He had withheld from his Saviour even the acts of courtesy due to a common guest. He did not look upon himself as so great a sinner as he really was. Self-love opened the door to pride, unbelief, and ingratitude. So long as he cherished self-righteousness, he could not place a right estimate upon Christ.

The command is not, Let him that glorieth glory in himself, but in God. For sinful men, the highest consolation, the greatest cause of rejoicing, is that Heaven has given Jesus to be the sinner’s Saviour.

As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects; his likeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master. By beholding, by “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), he becomes changed into the same image. It is not by looking away from Him that we imitate the life of Jesus, but by talking of Him, by dwelling upon His perfections, by seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character, by trying, through faith and love, and by earnest, persevering effort, to approach the perfect Pattern. By having a knowledge of Christ—His words, His habits, and His lessons of instruction—we borrow the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, and become imbued with the spirit we have so much admired. Jesus becomes to us “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely,” Song of Solomon 5:10, 16.

In all His dealings with His ancient people, the Lord sought to impress them with the idea that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but in the God of their salvation. As Joshua, the leader of the children of Israel, went out alone before the taking of Jericho, to pray for God’s special presence, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the form of a mighty warrior, and to Joshua’s challenge he replied, “As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. . .Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” Joshua 5:14–15. The Lord marshaled His armies about the doomed city; no human hand was raised against it; the hosts of heaven overthrew its walls, that God’s name alone might have the glory. It was that proud city whose mighty bulwarks had struck terror to the unbelieving spies. Now in the capture of Jericho, God declared to the Hebrews that their fathers
might have possessed the city forty years before, had they but trusted in Him.

These things were written for our benefit. As a people, we lack faith. God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have so little strength, is that they trust so much in their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if the Saviour calls for our possessions and our service, there are many who see they cannot obey God and carry their earthly treasures with them, and they decide to stay by their treasures. Jesus left all His glory, and became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. But how few of His professed followers appreciate His great sacrifice! How few are willing to follow His example! How can those who expect to stand around Christ’s throne, and

Those who study to see how near they can live to the world and yet gain heaven, will come just near enough to be shut out from heaven. We must accept the suffering part of religion if we would sit down with the Suffering One upon His throne.

they will place their entire confidence in Him, and implicitly obey Him.

There are troublous times before us; the judgments of God are coming upon our world. The nations of the earth are to tremble. There will be trials and perplexities on every hand; men’s hearts will fail them for fear. And what shall we do in that day? Though the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage, if we have made God our trust, He will deliver us. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee. . . . For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91:1, 9-11.

The rich man is not to glory in his riches. If we fix our affections on worldly things, we fail to exalt Christ. Satan would keep our minds absorbed with the things of this life, that we may lose sight of the higher life; but we cannot afford to yield to his devices. Christ is the Source of all temporal, as well as all spiritual blessings. If He has given us riches, it is not that we may claim them as our own. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matthew 6:19-20. Paul counted all things but loss that he might win Christ. But when

Those who study to see how near they can live to the world and yet gain heaven, will come just near enough to be shut out from heaven. We must accept the suffering part of religion if we would sit down with the Suffering One upon His throne.

...
Correction
by Colin Standish

In the October issue of Our Firm Foundation magazine I contributed the first of a two-part series entitled “Reflections Upon the 56th General Conference Session.” In the article was the following paragraph:

“While not having the space to go through all of these changes, I want to concentrate on one—that policy change that allows a hierarchical organization to reach over the next organization in order to disband a conference. Let me explain. If, in the unusual event that a conference were to be considered to be in apostasy or in rebellion, and the union constituency decided not to disband that conference, the General Conference Committee could vote to reach over the union conference and disband it. Likewise, if a church were evaluated to be in apostasy or rebellion, and the local conference decided against disbanding the church at a properly convened constituency meeting, in which all the churches in the conference were represented by their chosen delegates, then the union conference could reach over and disband that church.”

Elder Athal Tolhurst, undersecretary of the General Conference, has communicated with us indicating that this did not accurately reflect the intent of the action taken at the Spring Council 1995. He stated:

“It needs to be pointed out, not only to you but to the readers of your magazine, that Dr. Standish’s report in this respect is entirely wrong. No action has ever been voted by the General Conference Committee that allows a higher organization to reach over the next organization in order to disband either a local church, a conference, or a union. In the first place, the policies that were voted by the General Conference Committee do not address the disbanding of a local church, except that the provision is there, should it become necessary after the conference or mission has been expelled from the sisterhood of conferences or missions by the constituency of the union. In other words, once there is no conference or mission, because the constituency has voted to expel, the policy allows the union the authority over the local churches in the area so affected. There is not a single reference in the policies to the disbanding of a local church over the heads of an existing conference or mission.”

The following is the relevant action voted at the 1995 Spring Council:

**B 09 Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Unions, and Churches by Dissolution and/or Expansion**

**B 09 05 Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Unions, and Churches by Dissolution and/or Expansion**—If a situation arises where it is determined by the higher organization that the majority of members of a conference, a mission, a union, or a union of churches are in apostasy, or that the organization refuses to operate in harmony with denominational policies and constitutional requirements, and is in rebellion, the higher organization has a responsibility to act for the protection of its loyal members, and the good name of the Church. Every effort should be made to avert the need for dissolution by counselling with the leadership and members, seeking to bring healing and reconciliation, and to preserve the organization as a witness for God and His saving truth. If conciliatory efforts fail and discontinuation appears to be the only solution, the higher organization shall have authority to act as set out under B 09 10, B 09 15, and B 09 20.

**B 09 10 Dissolution and/or Expulsion of Local Conference/Missions**—If a local conference/mission appears to be in apostasy or rebellion, as demonstrated by a constituency meeting action, and the procedures outlined under B 09 05 have been followed, but have proved unsuccessful, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The matter shall be considered by the union executive committee at a duly called meeting of committee members, at which time all relevant data shall be shared, and the union executive committee shall determine whether or not the conference/mission is in apostasy or rebellion.

2. a. In the case of a local mission: If the union executive committee determines that a local mission is in apostasy or rebellion, and should be dissolved, it shall take an action to dissolve the local mission, and shall recommend to the next union session, or to a specially called session, the expulsion of the local mission from the sisterhood of missions.

b. In the case of a local conference: If the union executive committee determines that a local conference is in apostasy or rebellion, and should be expelled from the sisterhood of conferences, the union shall seek counsel from the division.

1) The union, in consultation with the division, shall use its discretion to decide whether another local conference constituency meeting should be called, and if so, at what point in the procedure.

2) The union shall submit a recommendation for expulsion of the local conference from the sisterhood of conferences to the next union session, or to a specially called session if there is no evidence of conciliation on the part of the conference.

3. If the union constituency votes to expel the conference/mission from the sisterhood of conferences/missions, it shall, as a companion action, vote to take into the care of the union all the churches of the conference/mission until reorganization, or some other provision can be arranged.

4. The union executive committee, functioning in place of the conference/mission constituency, shall proceed to disband any local churches which prove to be disloyal, and to redistribute remaining churches by territorial adjustment and/or reorganization.

5. The union executive committee shall make provision for the preservation of the membership of any such churches by holding records of their membership at the union until appropriate arrangements can be made.

6. In the event of the dissolution of a local mission and/or the expulsion of a local conference/local mission from the sisterhood of conferences/missions, audits of the financial and membership records of the conference/mission shall be conducted. All assets remaining after all claims have been satisfied shall be dealt with as specified in the conference constitution and bylaw/mission operating policy/articles of incorporation of the organization. Assets not so covered shall be transferred to a legal entity authorized by the division.

7. If with the passage of time and efforts toward healing and restoration, it seems desirable for the nurture of the members and for the mission of the church to reorganize the conference/mission, the process set out under B 06 10 shall be followed.

I accept Elder Tolhurst’s clarification that the higher organization has direct authority over the local church only after it has deemed it necessary to first dissolve the intervening organization.
Reverence is the test of a genuine Christian experience.

“We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening of the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Hebrews 12:9-11.

The only children who respect and reverence their parents are those who, like Jesus, “learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” The parents who wisely enforce obedience on their children will receive loving and voluntary reverence in return. In the end we always respect those who have the highest standards and live up to them. The breakdown of discipline in the home has caused a corresponding breakdown of discipline in the church. For this reason the modern generation has but little respect for their parents, and reverence for God and holy things have almost disappeared from the earth. The irreverent attitude of even professing Christians is appalling. They seem to think that God has changed and is less strict and particular than He used to be; therefore they presume on His mercy.

Exodus Movement

During the bondage in Egypt the children of Israel almost entirely lost their knowledge of God, and therefore, their reverence for Him. Through precepts and judgments the Lord taught them reverence and godly fear. It was a hard lesson to learn to approach God and all the sacred things connected with His service in a spirit of holy awe and reverential fear. The first lesson had to be learned by Moses, the leader of the Exodus movement, for his example would indicate the measure of reverence expected of the people. Moses got a new vision of God and the reverence with which He should be approached and worshiped in the experience of the burning bush at Mount Horeb.

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of
the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” Exodus 3:1-6.

What suddenly made that ground holy? It had been trampled underfoot for generations by irreverent and godless heathen tribesmen. The presence of God makes any person or any thing holy. There is no other source of holiness. The Lord said to Israel: “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” Leviticus 19:2. See also Psalm 89:6-7.

The Lord was very strict in His requirements for the leaders of the Exodus movement respecting reverence, and very severe in dealing with their exhibitions of irreverence. “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. And Moses called Michael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is placed in the sides of the ark to carry it by, and then only by holy men. As clear as this instruction was, it had to be enforced by two terrible judgments:

“And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God. . . . And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.” “And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.” 2 Samuel 6:2, 6-7; 1 Samuel 6:19-20. 50,070 were slain for looking in the ark.

All Israel!

The greatest lesson on reverence for all Israel was given at Mount Sinai in connection with the giving of the Law: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he

What suddenly made that ground holy? It had been trampled underfoot for generations by irreverent and godless heathen tribesmen. The presence of God makes any person or any thing holy. There is no other source of holiness.

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godly fear" because "our God is a consuming fire." This statement has direct reference to the giving of the Law which was the greatest of all exhibitions of God's majesty and glory. True reverence leads us to approach God with clean bodies, clean clothes, and clean characters. Just as people who are unholy in character and filthy in their habits feel unclean in the presence of saints, so all physical, mental and moral uncleanness should make us feel uncomfortable when we come into the presence of God. Rever-
To enforce this lesson the Lord visited terrible judgments upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their followers. See Numbers 16.

Advent Movement
"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written

inguish between the holy and the secular, the sacred and the common. They seem to have lost their spirituality to such an extent that they have lost all sense of reverence for holy things. Their sense of right and wrong seems to be so blunted and their vision so dimmed that they treat the holy and secular with almost no clear line of demarcation between them. Their great need is a spiritual revival and a genuine conversion, for only deeply spiritual people can be truly reverential, and they only can distinguish between the holy and the profane.

Sacred Things
God's name is holy and should be spoken with the utmost respect and reverence. "Holy and reverend is his name." Psalm 111:9.
God's Sabbath is holy and therefore should be treated differently than the common, secular days of the week. "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Exodus 31:14.
The penalty for profaning the Sabbath is still death. Reverence for the Sabbath demands that it be used for a different purpose than ordinary days. A part of true Sabbath keeping is to meet with God's people in "holy convocation." Leviticus 23:3. Those who do not attend divine worship on the Sabbath when it is possible to do so are showing disrespect for God and irreverence for His Sabbaths. Some of the things that profane the Sabbath are enumerated in Isaiah 58:14:
Thou shalt delight thyself in the L ORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the L ORD hath spoken it.
The title also is holy. It is God's money and not our own and is declared to be "holy unto the L ORD." "And all the title of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the L ORD'S: it is holy unto the L ORD. And if a man will at all redeem aught of his titles, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the title of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the L ORD." Leviticus 27:30-32. It should never be put to a secular, common use.

In His dealings with ancient Israel the Lord demonstrated what His attitude is toward every sin in every age, because His standards never change.

ence demands cleanliness, both physical and spiritual.

The Sanctuary and Godly Leadership
"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the L ORD." Leviticus 19:30. This command is repeated for emphasis in Leviticus 26:2: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the L ORD." Every part of the sanctuary was holy, even the court, the only part the congregation could enter. Only holy priests could enter the holy place but not until a special atonement was made for their sins and they were clothed in garments that were spotlessly clean. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and then only once a year after very careful preparation. His body and clothes must be scrupulously clean and his soul free from every stain of sin. The holiness of the place increases as we approach the presence of God. The temple of Solomon, which was built under divine direction, had many chambers of various degrees of holiness. One apartment was the Most Holy Place because it represented the immediate presence of God.

Through precepts and judgments the Lord also taught ancient Israel to respect and reverence the holy men who served in holy office, whether in the sanctuary or in positions of leadership in the movement. "Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor

for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11. Many have become bold in irreverence, because the Lord does not immediately execute His sentences against transgressors. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11.

In His dealings with ancient Israel the Lord demonstrated what His attitude is toward every sin in every age, because His standards never change. The Lord and everything connected with His worship are just as holy and should be treated with as much reverence as in days of old. The passing millenniums have made no difference in the attitude of the angels as they enter into the presence of the Creator. They still tread softly and bow their knees and veil their faces as they enter His courts, crying "Holy, holy, holy."

"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." Ezekiel 22:26. "Making no difference between the sacred and the secular." Moffatt. "They do not distinguish between the consecrated and the common." Fenton.

Many, even in the Advent movement, seem to find it impossible to dis-
Religious services are called “holy convocations” because they are gatherings of “holy people” who meet in a holy house to worship a holy God who is present by His Holy Spirit and holy angels. We come together to study God’s Holy Word from His Holy Book. Therefore divine services are different from all other gatherings and the distinction should be clearly recognized and defined. They should be attended with feelings of reverence and godly fear. When we enter the house of God to listen to His Holy Word we should give careful heed to the instruction in Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

God’s house should be treated in a different manner than we treat an ordinary house, and His Book should never be handled as an ordinary, secular book. Even the song books containing the hymns used for praise and worship are sacred. Most of the songs are based on scriptural statements and were written by men and women more or less divinely inspired.

Spirit of Prophecy

“To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven.

“From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred, things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts, and are being brought down to the level of common things.

“When the worshippers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats... Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshippers.

“If the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord, and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place, should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped....

“All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.

“When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most. Sometimes a little child may so attract the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground, and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them, and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves....

God’s house should be treated in a different manner than we treat an ordinary house, and His Book should never be handled as an ordinary, secular book. Even the song books containing the hymns used for praise and worship are sacred.

“When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence. It should not be made a place to meet old friends, and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions... God and angels have been dishonored by the careless, noisy laughing and shuffling of feet heard in some places...

“No wonder our churches are feeble and do not have that deep, earnest piety in their borders that they should have. Our present habits and customs, which dishonor God, and bring the sacred and heavenly down to the level of the common, are against us. We have a sacred, testing, sanctifying truth; and if our habits and practices are not in accordance with the truth, we are sinners against great light, and are proportionately guilty. It will be far more tolerable for the heathen in the day of God’s retributive justice than for us....

“It is too true that reverence for the house of God has become almost extinct. Sacred things and places are not discerned; the holy and exalted are not appreciated... We have reason even to be more thoughtful and reverential in our worship than had the Jews. But an enemy has been at work to destroy our faith in the sacredness of Christian worship....

“Nearly all need to be taught how to conduct themselves in the house of God. Parents should not only teach, but command, their children to enter the sanctuary with sobriety and reverence....

“This matter has been sadly neglected. Its importance has been overlooked, and...
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