



faith on the line

A Journal for Those Who Dare

IV Quarter
Fall 2002
Volume 7 Issue 4

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*O taste and see that
the **Lord** is Good; happy are
those who take refuge in **Him**.*

Psalms 34:8



Creation to Restoration

Part 1

by Dr. Walter J. Veith

A Perfect World

It is written in the book of Genesis that God pronounced everything that He had created to be good, indeed very good:

And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, [it was] very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

There could have been no disharmonious note in this new creation, and according to the Scriptures, this creation was also not subject to death. Man was created in the image of God, and he was to be the ruler over everything that God had created.



And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His [own] image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Genesis 1:26-28

The creation of man was thus the crowning act of God's creation, and God endowed man with nobility and honor by granting him dominion of the newly created world. Of all the creatures God had created, man was different from all the other animals in that he was created in the image of God. To man was granted the gift of intellectual capacity, a creative spirit, and a sense of morality. He was also created a free agent in that he was endowed with a freedom of choice. The

creation of man was to bring glory to God throughout eternity.

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; [Even] every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Isaiah 43:6-7

These verses show that the children of men are called sons and daughters of God (heavenly princes), and that they were created for the glory of God. Man was to reflect the glory of God, ever increase in knowledge and wisdom, and to ever reflect the glory of God. In the book of Hebrews, Paul picks up the theme of the creation of man and sheds some interesting light on this subject.

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Hebrews 2:7

The Greek word *brachus* (for a little) literally means 'for a little while' or 'short time' and this implies that the full meaning of the text is actually 'for a little while lower than the angels'. Man was thus to grow in stature, and in the restored world it would not be the angels that would rule upon the earth restored, but restored man would be granted the privilege of sitting with Christ in His throne. This implies even greater glory, since Christ is the ruler of the universe.

For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. Hebrews 2:5

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. Revelation 3:21

Before being restored, there is, however, some overcoming to be done, for man has forfeited his great privilege through sin, and has lost that glory with which he was originally endowed.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

The Scriptures teach that the change of status and the suffering which this planet and mankind have had to endure since the fall of man would, however, be transformed back to the original through the purchase of the blood of Christ. Through Christ and in Him, man can overcome and be conquerors together with Him. What was lost in Eden can and will be restored through Christ through justification and sanctification to the glorification of those who accept the gift of His purchase, and then only will the full potential of man be realized.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Romans 9:23

The earth is also to be restored to its original status and sin will be eradicated from the universe.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Isaiah 65:17

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13

The Scriptures also teach that the whole creation is groaning whilst we wait for the restoration that has been promised. It is at this point that the sons of God will be revealed and that the bondage to corruption (death) will come to an end. Not only is man suffering from the consequences of sin, but the entire creation is also groaning under the burden of decay.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Romans 8:19-22

The Genesis account of the creation and the fall is the exact opposite of the naturalistic view of origins. Genesis portrays a decline from perfection to degeneration and decay, and the naturalistic approach propagates an advance from chaos to order and perfection. Genesis gives explicit details as to the consequences of sin and the fall, all of which are denied by the naturalistic approach, and these details are, in fact, reversed and used as the very means to create the advance from imperfection to perfection. Death is used to 'create' better-adapted forms, and the cycles of death which are enacted on the planet through prey and predator relationships are the nurturing ground for adaptive radiation. According to the Scriptures, however, this was not so from the beginning and prey-predator relationships originally never existed and will also not exist in the earth made new.



The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

The Scriptures also teach that the whole creation is groaning whilst we wait for the restoration that has been promised. ... Not only is man suffering from the consequences of sin, but the entire creation is also groaning under the burden of decay.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:6-9

These verses portray an order of things, which is totally different to what we currently experience on the planet. Firstly, there will be no carnivores and the current predators will thus revert to vegetarian diets, and secondly, all harmful creatures which sting or are venomous will revert to non harmful forms. Moreover, even a child will be able to lead the now dangerous predators, so all aggressiveness will be removed from the natures of these animals and man will once more have total control over the animal kingdom. This restoration is in line with what the book of Genesis portrays about the beginning as well as the original diet of all the creatures on the planet.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which [is] upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which [is] the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for meat: and it was so. Genesis 1:29-30

According to this verse, all creatures were thus vegetarian, and man's diet consisted of seeds and fruits and all animals ate the plants of the fields. There could have been no harmful bacteria, no parasites, in fact, no creatures with harmful effects at all. What happened then to mar this perfection? The Scriptures teach that sin entered in, and that as a consequence, the order of nature was radically changed. Without the sustaining power of God (for He 'upholds all things'), the second law of thermodynamics would henceforth ensure that only by the sweat of one's brow could order and harmony be obtained. Disorder, according to the Scriptures, is the work of the enemy. According to the parable of the sower, it was the enemy that sowed the bad seed among the good.

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An Imperfect Planet

After the fall, the order of nature was changed. According to Scripture, the serpent was cursed and lost some of its original abilities, even undergoing dramatic anatomical changes in that it would henceforth move on its belly. The statement that it would eat dust is a reference to death, since all creatures would return to the dust from whence they came. Also the fact that some snakes still have rudimentary legs could be an indication of a genetic change which deactivated the genes responsible for the development of the original locomotory structures.

The relationship between man and woman was also changed through the entrance of sin, and in order to deal with the changed circumstances there was a shift in role distribution which has become the object of much debate and, in some cases, much misery. The ground was cursed and would henceforth not yield its strength and it would take toil to glean its treasures. Adam would henceforth earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, which means that the provision of the necessities of life was to become his burden in the transformed world. Eve, on the other hand would find the raising of children with right characters a task that would require concerted effort, patience, and many tears. Eve did not receive the lesser role in this new situation, for the raising of descendants with right characters is the noblest of all tasks.

Not only did the role distribution change, but physical aspects of human and animal existence also changed. In a world that would not yield its strength, plants would produce thorns and thistles and the diet and lifestyles of all the created creatures would be affected. To the diet of man, the plants of the field were added in order to augment his diet, and the animals must have also undergone dramatic changes in diet, as their food supply must also have been affected. After Cain killed Abel, there was a further decline, which was to mar the once perfect planet. Cain was cursed, and the ground was to yield even less of its strength (*Genesis 4:12*). Both animals and man must have been affected by this change of circumstances, and wickedness in-

creased until God destroyed the world by bringing about the flood.

Prior to the flood, the animal world had already changed to such an extent that animals were already classified into clean and unclean categories, since Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals on board the ark. The flood brought about a further radical change, and the diets of man and beast must have been further affected, since God added flesh to the already changed human diet. After the flood, there was a rapid

decline in the life expectancy of man (and by implication in the animals as well). Life expectancy of man was approximately halved after the flood. After the time of Peleg (when the earth was divided), life expectancy was halved once more, and by the time of Moses the average life span was down to 120 years. By the time of David, it had declined to 80 years, and today it is still lower.

Scientific Evaluation

The existence of evil in a world created by the God of light and love is one of the principle reasons why many reject God. However, God has given all the reasons for the state of affairs and has also provided a solution in Christ to repurchase the lost possession. This same issue plagued Darwin, and he once wrote a letter to his friend Dr. Asa Gray regarding this matter:

I am bewildered. I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see so plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence for design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice.¹

He also wrote in 1844 in his initial draft of *The Origin of Species*:

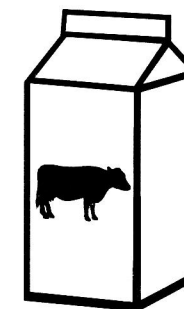
It is derogatory that the Creator of countless Universes should have made by individual acts of His will the myriads of creeping parasites and worms, which since the earliest dawn of life have swarmed over the land and in the depths of the ocean ... We cease to be astonished that a group of animals



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Calcium

By Christine Peck

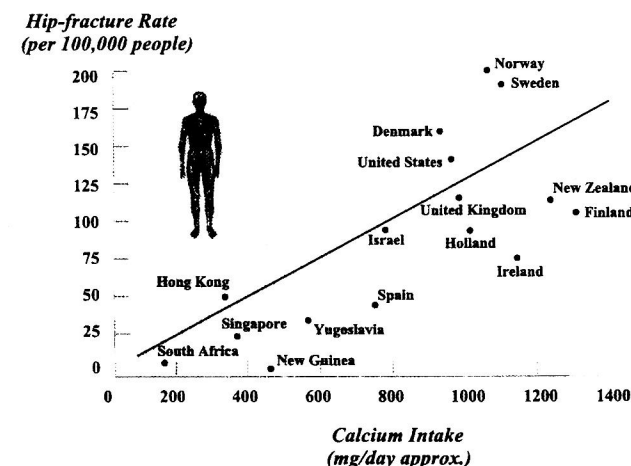


Calcium

Today there's a great emphasis on getting enough calcium. The Recommended Dietary Allowance for calcium in the U.S. is 1,200 mg per day. Americans also consume huge quantities of calcium compared with the populations of many "developing" nations. And yet the United States is among the nations having the highest occurrence of osteoporosis among its population (see Figure below). With such a high calcium consumption, why are we still losing calcium from our bones?

Animal Proteins are the Culprit

In countries where diets are predominantly plant-based and low in calcium and dairy consumption, osteoporosis levels are low.⁽¹⁾



Proof Positive, p. 153

Researchers have discovered that it isn't a lack of calcium in our foods that's causing the problem, but rather the high quantity of animal proteins we ingest. The process of digesting animal proteins produces sulfuric acid, which the body must buffer in order to remove it safely. Calcium is removed from the bones to do this job. This calcium is lost in the urine along with the acid.⁽²⁾ The best way to stop calcium loss is to reduce or eliminate the consumption of animal proteins, including those in the form of dairy products like milk, eggs and cheese, which are so popular in vegetarian diets. Only a "strict" or "total" vegetarian diet is free from animal proteins. The American Dairy Council would have us believe that we must get calcium from dairy products in order to maintain strong bones. Yet "in one study (sponsored by the Dairy Council) women consuming three 8-ounce glasses of cow's milk per day still lost calcium from their bodies, and remained in negative calcium balance, even after a year of consuming almost 1,500 mg of calcium daily."⁽³⁾

The good news is that osteoporosis can be prevented, and the effects can even be reversed, by adopting a diet low in animal proteins and obtaining calcium from plant sources that are easily absorbed. A 1981 study of calcium and protein levels in healthy men revealed that consuming 95 g of protein per day from animal sources and 1,400 mg of calcium supplements caused the loss of nearly 30 mg of calcium from their bones every day while a diet of 48 g of animal protein, together with 1,400 mg of calcium supplements, allowed them to gain 20 mg of calcium stores into their bones on a daily basis.⁽⁴⁾ "Interestingly, higher consumption of vegetable protein does not appear to be related to osteoporosis or bone fractures."⁽⁵⁾

The U.S. RDA for protein is 56 g, coupled with a 1,200 mg RDA for calcium, in recognition of the need for a higher calcium intake to compensate for calcium loss due to high animal protein intake. "The World Health Organization, with what many feel is a more appropriate view of human nutrition, recommends a more modest protein intake, 29 grams versus 56, and only 500 milligrams of calcium per day."⁽⁶⁾ The World Health Organization has observed that "calcium deficiency has never been documented anywhere in the world, even with calcium intakes of as little as 300 mg/day."⁽⁷⁾ So it isn't the lack of calcium in the diet that causes osteoporosis, but rather the consumption of a high protein diet.

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⁽¹⁾ *Becoming Vegan*, by Brenda Davis, R.D. & Vesanto Melina, M.S., R.D., p. 35; and *Proof Positive*, by Neil Nedley, M.D., p. 153

⁽²⁾ *Proof Positive*, p. 152-156

⁽³⁾ *Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple*, by Michael Klaper, M.D., p. 28

⁽⁴⁾ *Proof Positive*, p. 152

⁽⁵⁾ *Proof Positive*, p. 154-5

⁽⁶⁾ *Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple*, p. 38

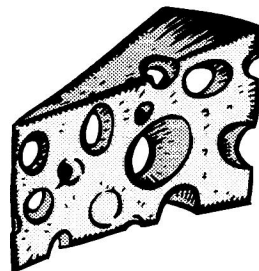
⁽⁷⁾ *Health Power, Health by Choice Not Chance*, by Aileen Ludington, M.D. and Hans Diehl, DrHSc, MPH, p. 57

Calcium

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Calcium Absorption

Even though milk has a high calcium content (1 cup contains 290 mg of calcium), 60-80% of it isn't absorbed through the human intestine. Humans in general absorb as much or more calcium from plant products than from milk.⁽⁸⁾ The exceptions are plants having high concentrations of compounds that block calcium absorption, like phytic acid in wheat bran cereal and oxalic acid in spinach.⁽⁹⁾



Phosphorus Affects Calcium Absorption

The best calcium sources are those that contain a high calcium content and a low phosphorus content. Dark green, leafy vegetables like kale, turnip greens, lambsquarters, collards and mustard greens are excellent calcium sources and have three to five times more calcium than phosphorus. Foods like beef, pork and fish have large amounts of phosphorus and hardly any calcium. "It's recommended that at least as much calcium as phosphorus is consumed in the diet if you want to optimize calcium absorption."⁽¹⁰⁾ Tofu and sesame seeds are examples of foods that have nearly equal amounts of calcium and phosphorus. Carbonated beverages have a poor P/C ratio. They have, typically, 41 mg of phosphorus and no calcium.⁽¹¹⁾ Pepsi has 53 mg of phosphorus in a 12 oz can.⁽¹²⁾ Such drinks are a poor choice of beverage if you want to gain the highest benefit from the calcium in your food.

Calcium Benefits High Blood Pressure

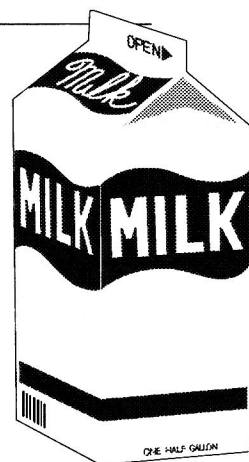
A study published in 1992 indicates that foods high in calcium content can significantly lower blood pressure. "The result [of the study] was that each gram of calcium consumed per day seems to lower the risk of high blood pressure by about 12 percent."⁽¹³⁾

Salt and Osteoporosis

Research has revealed that a low sodium diet also reduces the risk of osteoporosis.⁽¹⁴⁾ "When the kidneys excrete excess sodium, 23 to 26 mg of calcium is lost along with every gram of sodium excreted."⁽¹⁵⁾ One teaspoon of salt contains 2,325 mg of sodium. The maximum upper limit of sodium intake for a person with normal blood pressure is 2,400 mg per day.⁽¹⁶⁾ Many meat substitutes, snacks, bottled and canned foods are high in sodium. A 2-piece serving of FriChik contains 429 mg of sodium⁽¹⁷⁾, one tablespoon of Bragg Liquid Aminos holds 660 mg of sodium⁽¹⁸⁾ and one can of cream of mushroom soup carries 2,111 mg of sodium.⁽¹⁹⁾

Calcium Supplements

"If calcium supplements are used, be sure they are NOT made from bone meal or oyster shell. These substances are often contaminated with arsenic, lead, or mercury, that accumulates in the bones and shells of these animals."⁽²⁰⁾ Nutritionists recommend that calcium be obtained from whole plant sources rather than from supplements.⁽²¹⁾ Chemists have discovered how to chelate vitamin and mineral supplements to make them more absorbable. But why pay high prices for bioengineered vitamins and minerals when God has already provided them in wholesome forms in natural plants just waiting for you in the produce section of your grocery store, in the local farmer's market, and from the bounty of your own garden?

⁽⁸⁾ Proof Positive, p. 155⁽⁹⁾ Proof Positive, p. 155⁽¹⁰⁾ Proof Positive, p. 156⁽¹¹⁾ Proof Positive, p. 156; Becoming Vegan, p. 94⁽¹²⁾ Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, by Jean A. T. Pennington, p. 7⁽¹³⁾ Proof Positive, p. 142⁽¹⁴⁾ Proof Positive, p. 139⁽¹⁵⁾ Becoming Vegan, p. 94⁽¹⁶⁾ Proof Positive, p. 138⁽¹⁷⁾ Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, p. 195⁽¹⁸⁾ From the Nutrition Facts label on the bottle.⁽¹⁹⁾ Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, p. 255⁽²⁰⁾ Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple, p. 39⁽²¹⁾ Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple, p. 28

How to Get Enough Calcium

Here's a list of plant foods that can provide plenty of calcium. Remember, on a low-protein diet of 30g or less per day, especially protein from plant sources, daily calcium needs are only 500 mg.

Lambsquarters	1 cup	464
Collard greens	1 cup	35
Amaranth grain	1 cup	298
Figs, dried	10	269
Green soybeans	1 cup	261
Tofu, firm	1/2 cup	258
Turnip greens	1 cup	249
Kale	1 cup	179
Sesame seeds, dried	2 Tbsp	176
Blackstrap molasses	1 Tbsp	172
Okra, boiled	1 cup	154
Baked beans	1 cup	154
Mustard greens	1 cup	152
Dandelion greens	1 cup	146
Artichoke, boiled	1 medium	135
Quinoa grain	1 cup	102

Kelp and Blackstrap molasses are foods containing the highest amount of calcium. Carob powder is also high in calcium, as is/are parsley, almonds, watercress, brazil nuts, brewer's yeast, and broccoli. Sunflower seeds, dried apricots, buckwheat, walnuts and peanuts all contain low to medium amounts of calcium as well. With a varied diet, there is no reason why one could not obtain sufficient amounts of calcium per day without using dairy or fish.

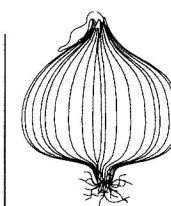
How to Avoid Osteoporosis

Here's a short list of lifestyle changes that can be adopted to lower your risk of getting osteoporosis and to combat it if you already suffer from its effects:⁽²²⁾

- 1) Adopt a healthful, low-protein diet.
- 2) Stop smoking, as well as the use of caffeine
- 3) Take a brisk 20-30 minute walk outside in the sunshine every day.

⁽²²⁾ Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple, p. 28-29

Nature's Healing Remedies



Onion has many qualities in common with garlic, but milder. Unlike many vegetables which lose some of their virtues in cooking, cooked onions are rich in vitamins. Add them to stews or bake them, but do not fry them.

Energy

Onions are an energy fuel. A boxer once used onions as "fuel", and a champion race runner ate raw onion at each stop for energy.

Skin

Onions are also excellent for the complexion. There is a great satisfaction in watching one's skin improve, eruptions disappear, and knowing that the intestinal lining is undergoing a similar process. In addition, onion destroys intestinal parasites and corrects various forms of constipation.

Diuretic

Onion is a good diuretic which acts against retention of fluids and cleanses the system of urea and sodium. Externally, onion promotes elimination. Rub the loins with half an onion to increase urination by 25%! Such onion massage is also helpful in cases of **sciatica**. Eating raw onion promotes transpiration and cleanses the pores as effectively as a good sauna bath. It is especially recommended for rheumatic patients.

Typhoid, Flu, High Fevers, Scarlet Fever

To treat these conditions, use a **Foot Poultice**: Spread several large onions, chopped fine, on a thin linen cloth and wrap around the feet of the patient. Keep it on overnight, or eight hours (be sure to protect the bed). This produces a good deal of moisture and is highly diuretic. Within three days, the illness should pass. (All treatments should be made under doctor's consultation)

Onion is an excellent antibiotic - anticoagulant and has antidiabetic properties, inasmuch as it lowers the sugar content in the blood.



Onions may be considered among the foremost of the health-giving vegetables. Nibble some parsley or mint to sweeten your breath afterward.

-Excerpted from *Healing Edibles & Other Home Remedies* by Joe & Elsa Willis of Maranatha Medical Ministries. Information given here is for consumer education only. It is not meant to replace the advice of a qualified health care professional.



The Danger of a Golden Rule Gospel

by Richard O'Ffill

This sermon is part of an audio series entitled *How Shall We Escape* available from American Cassette Ministries

On one occasion my wife and I were attending a Sabbath evening program. I am glad that there are still some churches that have meetings at the close of the Sabbath. I know that it may not seem worth it if not many people come. But then it reminds me of the story of the preacher out in the West who went to church one Sunday morning. There was no one there for Sunday school, but that wasn't unusual. After all, this was ranching country and the people had chores to do before they came to church. After a time, the clock on the wall of the country church read 11 o'clock and still no one had come. The minister was patient, but by 11:15 he had just about decided to leave when the door in the back opened and a rancher, cowboy boots and all, came in. He took his place toward the back of the room. The pastor acknowledged him with a smile. In a minute or two the pastor went back, and extending his hand said, "Well, brother, it looks like it is just you and me. What shall we do?" The cowboy replied, "Pastor, if I had a load of hay for the cattle and I took it to the field and only one cow came, I would feed her."

I believe the rancher was right, don't you? We seem to be into thinking big these days. I don't believe that is necessarily bad. After all, the purpose of preaching the gospel is to get a large harvest; yet we must not gauge our success only on how many come to eat, but rather whether or not we are adequately feeding those who come. Sometimes friends ask me how many people come to the meetings that I conduct. I tell them I don't know. Someone else has to count. I find that if I am worried about how many or how few people are there, it can affect my preaching. We say that we believe Jesus would have died for just one. If that is true,

shouldn't we be willing to preach the gospel to just one? But then the point I was making at the beginning was that I like it when a church provides services at vesper time on Sabbath evening.

So there my wife and I were at the Sabbath evening meeting. In the introduction to the sermon, the young pastor asked a question. He asked how the congregation thought Jesus would treat Monica Lewinsky if she were to come into the service that evening. He then gave the opportunity for anyone to express their opinions. The question was, "What would Jesus do?"

Speaking of what Jesus would do, the other day I saw someone wearing a narrow cloth bracelet. On it were stitched the letters WWJD. The letters represent the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" This question is one that is brought out so vividly in a book written by Charles Sheldon who lived from 1857 to 1946. The book was entitled, *In His Steps*. Charles Sheldon was a Congregational minister who advocated what is called a "social gospel." Pastor Sheldon viewed Jesus as a religious reformer and a role model. In the

book he tells an imaginary story of how a street person stumbled into a church during services and died in full view of the congregation. The congregation was horrified to realize that this could happen in the community where the church was located, and so the pastor formed a small group whose watch word from that day forward was, "What Would Jesus Do?" This commitment led them to take dramatic steps to relieve suffering in the community and to improve the lives of the needy and those less fortunate in society within the outreach of the church. The book is moving, to say the least.

Let me state here that my heart is with the many organizations that relieve suffering humanity. I have spent the last twenty-six years of my ministry doing precisely this. I worked for twelve years in ADRA, and for fourteen years I have directed the work of community service in the Florida Conference. At the present time, we have what I believe is a wonderful work in Miami called Adventist Urban Ministries. Its purpose is to make the church "felt" in the community, and we ask ourselves the question, "If we were to move the church off of this block, would the neighbors care?" I mention this only so that you will understand I am not an adversary of ministry to our fellow man but rather have dedicated the largest part of my ministry to it. Yet in spite of my commitment, I have concerns. These concerns are what this sermon is all about. I have entitled it, "The Danger of a Golden Rule Gospel".

I am firmly convinced that we are in the last days. I don't know how many days the last days are, but I am aware, as you are, that something is going on around us that is radically affecting not only the way we act but verily the way we think. Of course I don't need to tell you that the thinking of those who are not followers of Christ has not changed, unless

it might be said their opposition to the truth has become more systematic. The systems that the Bible refers to as the heathen have now developed a philosophical counter attack against the gospel that may not have existed in the days of the apostle Paul for the simple reason that the early preaching of the gospel took the heathen world by surprise. What **has** changed in modern times, and is continuing to change, is the mind set of the so-called Christian world. There are ominous signs that we are being hurled back to a spiritual dark ages. The light of truth seems to be going out among those who are supposed to be the light of the world. But we should not be surprised, because Jesus said that all of this would happen just before He came back the second time. It was prophesied that darkness would cover the earth and gross darkness the people. It was prophesied that there would be many false prophets and false christs, that it would not be easy to know who was who, and if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.

Friends, we must understand that we are in a war, and the devil intends that you and I become casualties of this war. The war is first and foremost a war for the mind. When the first part of the war is over, those who resist error and take refuge in the truth will be targeted for a final solution that, if carried out, would make the holocaust and what happened in Cambodia, Rwanda, the slaughter by the Red Guards and the Russian Gulag look like kindergarten. The other day I was talking with a fellow pastor about some church plans and programs. I told him I believe that we must be intentional to put wording into the plans that we are putting together these days to make sure that the truth is not compromised or lost.

He said to me, "Oh, we don't need to do that, we are taking that for granted." I understood by this that he was saying truth is automatically built into all of the plans and strategies we make. I am afraid I am not as confident as he is that this is true.

Here at the end of the twentieth century, we must take nothing for granted. We have no idea of what is before us, and unless we are intentional about insuring that truth and our message is spelled out in our plans and programs, it is not impossible that our plans and programs could actually choke out the very truth they were meant to advance.

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These days, our churches and other institutions are into what is called visioning and the creation of mission statements. I believe this is good as long as we are careful to protect the truth and our message. We must take nothing for granted. The other day, someone sent me a statement of one Adventist church's vision and core values. I want to share them with you, if you don't mind:

"Our Vision

The vision of the (church's name) is to be a biblically functioning community where people are becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

Our Core Values

- Christ's followers should be authentic and yearn for continuous spiritual growth through prayer, devotion, and Bible study.
- A person's relationships directly impact Christian growth and the church's spiritual life.
- Personal growth is best nurtured by friendliness, love, openness, and tolerance.
- To be Christ's disciple is to be a servant.
- People are more effective and derive greater satisfaction from service when they use their spiritual gifts.
- An individual's spiritual growth and effectiveness in ministry are better served within a small support group.
- Understanding and experiencing God's grace is the only hope for lost people.
- Excellence in programming and facilities honors God and inspires people.
- We seek to share and enhance our understanding of the Bible, recognizing that we can learn from others."

I believe this vision and the core values expressed are noble. As I looked them over, I thought I recognized the concepts from somewhere else. I was curious and so went onto the Internet. There I found that the vision and the core values are essentially the same ones that are the vision and core values of one of mid-America's largest non-denominational, congregational churches.

You might ask, so what is wrong with that? Truth is truth. We should be glad that the large church in the Midwest expresses those truths. But think clearly. Don't take anything for granted. These values and the vision must not be coming from the perspective we are coming from, or else the megachurch in the Midwest would be an Adventist church instead of being non-denominational and congregational. The other possibility could be that the Adventist church is somehow being drawn toward a non-denominational, congregational point of view.

Notice, the last core value in the list from the Adventist church. It says, "...we seek to share and enhance

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our understanding of the Bible, recognizing that we can learn from others." I am not trying to quibble, but what is meant by "our understanding of the Bible"? What is going to happen when a majority of members of that particular church don't see things from an orthodox Adventist perspective anymore? "Our" understanding then could become everybody's understanding, and then everybody's understanding could become anybody's understanding.

I repeat, I believe we must take nothing for granted. It would have been much safer if the Adventist church had said, "We seek to share and enhance the understanding of the Bible as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church." But then someone may say again, "But we are taking that for granted."

Again, I must reply, No, not in the nineties. These days in the area of faith and morals, we must take nothing for granted. I have another question about this particular core value. What does it mean when it says that it recognizes we can learn from others? It seems to be saying we can learn from other denominations. But, you may be thinking, can't we? Let me ask you a question before I answer. Learn what? Are we speaking of doctrines and theology here?

I am convinced there is an intentional effort being made in some places both internally and externally to dumb down the doctrines that make us Seventh-day Adventists. If this is true, it would not be a new phenomenon. The devil has always found that the best way to fight the church is to join it. In many places these days he is already exercising voice and vote. We must be alert or we could greatly regret it someday.

By now you may be thinking, where are you going with all of this? I urge you to keep thinking and you will soon see. I repeat, Jesus has warned us that in the last days many would be deceived. For the deception to be effective, it would have to be well veiled and seemingly, on the face of it, true. Remember, the devil doesn't come to the door of our hearts and say that he has some lies he wants to sell us. Truly he comes to the door of our hearts with lies, but they will be wrapped in a skin of truth. For all practical appearances, the devil himself becomes converted. I repeat, we are in a battle for the mind. If we close our eyes,

The devil has always found that the best way to fight the church is to join it. In many places these days he is already exercising voice and vote.

even for a moment, we could be fatally surprised.

I would like to share with you an article I read not long ago. The article is entitled, "Gospel-Free Christianity." I will go over the highlights of it with you; and as I do, I think you will begin to understand better what I am trying to say. Remember, we began by talking about "What Would Jesus Do?" Then we talked about a generic church vision and values statement. Now we are going to add another piece of the puzzle.

The article states that one of the most striking features of post-modern America is the virtual disappearance of Christian conviction. The larger Christian culture is now a "theology-free zone" in which Christian conviction may be tolerated, as long as congregations resemble little more than special interest organizations with pretty buildings and religious entertainment.

Nancy T. Ammerman is a sociologist and researcher at Hartford Theological Seminary. She believes that we are seeing the rise of a new form of Christianity in America. She calls it, "Golden Rule Christianity." Studies show that there is a growing number of both liberals and conservatives who are what might be called Golden Rule Christians. These people do not see Christianity in terms of beliefs and doctrines but simply in terms of a basic moral outlook on life, such as is expressed in the Golden Rule. Golden Rule Christians define their faith in terms of practices, not doctrines. It has been found that this new faith-style may now be the dominant form of religiosity among middle-class suburban Americans. That means that the majority of people who go to church these days may be in this category.

Golden Rule Christians still want to keep some connection with classical Christianity. They want their faith to be grounded in the Bible, but they do not take the Bible literally. They see Scripture as not having so much to do with doctrine as with choices and practice. Golden Rule Christians believe that the Bible is useful as a tool for making one's own life and the life of the world better.

Golden Rule Christians are not interested in developing a system of doctrines. They are more concerned with the development of their personal lives and spirituality. They are concerned with helping others and in making the world a better place to live in. This is a kind of low-demand religion. For Golden Rule Christians, the Bible is a place to find interesting stories, but not special and revealed knowledge about the true and living God.

As you might imagine, the secular culture does not mind Golden Rule Christianity. It is not offensive because it doesn't make demands on its followers. The only general principle to be followed is that they should treat others as they would wish to be treated. Biblical doctrines such as sin and redemption are out. God is our fellow struggler. He is not seen as the Holy One of Israel, the Creator of the universe, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and merciful. Jesus Christ is

seen as the great religious teacher who preached and lived the Golden Rule. It is not necessary to believe that He is the pre-existent Son of God, the Messiah promised to Israel, our substitutionary Savior.

Of course, in this narrow context there is no need for the Atonement. The main thing is that we should go along and get along and help a few fellow strugglers along the way. When you ask a Golden Rule Christian about their concept of God, they will usually tell you about the God of their own experience, not the God revealed in the Bible. You will often hear them say, my God is this way, or I think that my God wants me to be that way. Their religion is a lived religion. What used to be a part of the Christian life has become the whole. They are not willing to know and serve the supreme God who is revealed in the Bible.

Golden Rule Christianity is simply undeveloped Christianity. It is what is left after you remove the gospel. Golden Rule Christianity is popular precisely because it makes few demands and makes few distinctions. On the other hand, authentic Christianity is high-demand and is based upon important distinctions. These days, more and more churches are willing to offer themselves as safe meeting grounds for Golden Rule Christians, maybe even the Adventist church whose vision and core values I read to you.

You may be thinking, but what does the Golden Rule Christian have to do with a person who is wearing a wrist band that has WWJD stitched into it? WWJD is possibly just another form of Golden Rule Christianity. It could be simply a code of conduct that uses Jesus as a role model. There is nothing wrong with using Jesus as a model, except there have been any number of wonderful people down through the ages who we might use as role models for our lives. A person could even have Jesus for a role model and yet reject Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. To that person Jesus may just be a good person to pattern your life after, like Buddha or Gandhi.

If we are going to talk about what Jesus would do, then let us remember that Jesus preached and served. He

had a message and He had a ministry. But we must never forget that His message was God focused. His ministry was people focused. For many years, some have joked that we were so heavenly minded, we were no earthly good. These days we may have gone to the other extreme. It might be said today that we have become so earthly minded that heaven and the God of heaven are now a concept that has little relevance to our day-to-day lives.

I am more and more convinced that God is playing less and less a role in our church life. We, us, ours, and mine are now to a great extent the center of our focus. We are turning the purpose of our creation on its head. We must never forget that God was not created to serve us, but it is just the other way around—we were created for His glory and to serve Him.

I was sitting in a committee meeting the other day. The purpose of this meeting was to study how to establish more churches in a particular region. While listening to the discussion, I began to have some of the thoughts I am sharing with you now. I wrote myself a note in which I asked myself the question, "Is it possible to have a ministry without a message?" I answered myself, "No, it is not possible." But then I wrote (and I will quote from my note), "The problem is, will the message be man centered or God centered? What we call a social gospel is a simply a message that has people as its center."

Jesus had both a message and a ministry. His message was God centered and His ministry was people centered. This is the way it must be, because, after all, the purpose of the gospel is not to bring God down to the people but to bring the people back up to where God meant them to be when He created them in the beginning in His likeness and in His image.

These days we are using the word ministry for just about everything. I guess that is OK, but we must be careful or we may discover that an exaggerated emphasis on ministry could make theology and doctrines disappear. This is what I meant when I began by referring to the WWJD fad. There is surely nothing wrong with using Jesus as our model, as long as we have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior first. There is nothing wrong with trying to pattern our lives after His, as long as we realize that without being born again and being forgiven of our sins we will not be able to see the kingdom of heaven, no matter how nice we treat other people.

The mind-set of the nineties is not about repentance and cleansing. It is about support groups and seminars. It is about "tell me how to do it and I will put it into practice the

The mind-set of the nineties seems to have forgotten that the first and great commandment is that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind. It seems to have forgotten that unless we have done that, the Golden Rule doesn't mean very much, or if it does, it has just become a motto, like that of another lodge or a club or one to wear as a bracelet with WWJD stitched on it.

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best way that I know how. If I fail, then no matter. After all, Jesus understands".

The mind-set of the nineties seems to have forgotten that the first and great commandment is that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind. It seems to have forgotten that unless we have done that, the Golden Rule doesn't mean very much, or if it does, it has just become a motto, like that of another lodge or a club or one to wear as a bracelet with WWJD stitched on it.

We must not forget that our love for each other must **follow** and be the **result** of a supreme commitment to God. Jesus said that to love those who love you is not so special, because even the bad guys do that.

I would be very happy if the trend toward ministry and love and service for each other were an outflowing of a renewed interest in theology and doctrine; but unfortunately it seems more and more that ministry and love are being emphasized in place of theology and doctrine.

I would be very happy if the trend toward ministry and love and service for each other were an outflowing of a renewed interest in the Word of God and a commitment to follows its commands for our lives; but it seems that while love is being promoted, faithfulness and obedience to the Scripture is being downplayed in many places.

We have clown ministries, puppet ministries, and music ministries. We have ministries for this and ministries for that. But we must not forget that some of the greatest oppressors of all time began as what we would term in modern language, "outreach ministries." By that I mean they began by emphasizing caring and helping some oppressed class of society.

Unless we make God our message, making man our ministry will only be a passing fad and in the end may result in the oppression by the majority of those who disagree and the strong over the weak; and instead of a church where we come to worship Jesus as Lord, it may well become a place where selfishness actually become institutionalized in the name of ministry.

When Jesus becomes just our role model and the Golden Rule our law of life, what may appear to be the ideal may indeed end up being just the opposite. I am convinced there is an

intentional strategy to play down the preaching of absolute truth, the teaching of absolute moral values of behavior, and the teaching of anything that would sound to be definitive from the Word of God.

As I read in the vision and the core values of the Adventist church that I mentioned, references to the specific mission and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been replaced with a vision and core values that are generic and which, to a large extent fit the mind set of Jesus as model and the Golden Rule as law, instead of Jesus as Lord and Savior and the Ten Commandments as the standard of righteousness. There is no mention of a commitment to preach the unique message that God has given to this church in this generation, which is meant to prepare a living generation to meet a Holy God.

I am not a person who is satisfied with the way things have been. I do not believe that we should not change. On the contrary, I believe that the gospel is about change, and that being ready for the coming of Jesus is the most wonderful change that will have ever been effected in the lives of human beings.

However, I greatly suspect that we are much too narrow and shallow in our thinking. We know that we have to change. We crave change, and yet when the moment comes, when we see the opportunity to change, we feel that we must give up some truth to make room for the new truth. I will admit that when truth comes we must be willing to give up error. Yet what I see happening in more and more places is that we seem to throw out truth to make room for new truth. If we continue to do this, the Holy Spirit will never be able to lead us as He has promised into all truth.

You know the old saying that we ought to "practice what we preach." There is no doubt about that. But beware.

To practice what we preach does not mean that we should stop preaching and start only practicing. This is the theme and focus of this sermon. We are now into ministry, but ministry will lead us down a dead-end street unless it is firmly rooted in true doctrine and in the true gospel. A ministry that doesn't begin with a God focus is doomed to lead us astray.

Can you see what has happened? Human nature being what it is, we prefer to do anything and everything as long as it doesn't require a commitment to Jesus as our Savior and as the Lord of our life. We prefer anything and everything as long as it doesn't mean that we have to let the Word of God tell us how to live. This is why we are more comfortable with Jesus as our role model and the

Unless we make God our message, making man our ministry will only be a passing fad and in the end may result in the oppression by the majority of those who disagree - and the strong over the weak; and instead of a church where we come to worship Jesus as Lord, it may well become a place where selfishness actually become institutionalized in the name of ministry.

golden rule as our guideline than we are with confessing our sins and making the Ten Commandments the rule for our lives.

Perhaps it is the old righteousness by works thing wrapped in a banner that has the name of Jesus all over it. We must understand that though Jesus may be a role model for our lives, there is nothing within us that can bring us anywhere near the model unless we have been born of water and of the Holy Spirit. We must understand that, although the Golden Rule is a wonderful

principle, the natural selfish human heart can only be selfish. A selfish person can only help others for selfish reasons. The Golden Rule for a person who has not been born again will sooner or later boil down to the fact that the one who has the gold rules. This is why, my friend, David said, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." This is why Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." The Golden Rule is not a stand-alone principle. It must be supported and sustained by an ongoing commitment to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The WWJD fad must be no substitute for sound doctrine. The God of the Golden Rule Christian tends to be the God of their own point of view unless they have found the true God which is revealed only in Scripture.

A vision and core values that are so generic that they could be adopted by any denomination or every denomination are not the vision and values that God is calling upon those who will be alive to meet Him when He comes.

What would Jesus do? That depends on who your Jesus is. Is He the Jesus of the Mormons, who they say was once just like you? The Bible warns that in the last days there is not one christ, there are many. It is simply not safe to ask, "What would Jesus do?" unless you are sure that you are talking about the true Jesus; and the only way you can be sure you are talking about the true Jesus is to go to the Word. That is why whenever He was confronted with a situation that meant a serious decision, Jesus—the true Jesus—would say, "It is written." The sacred Scriptures were His safety, and they are ours too.

As to the question the young minister asked at the

Sabbath afternoon meeting, "If Monica Lewinsky came into church, what would Jesus do?" After the service I approached the young pastor and suggested that what Jesus would do if Monica Lewinsky came into the church would depend on her own attitude.

The Word of God is about how God relates to sin. It says that He hates sin all the time. How then does God feel about sinners, including Monica Lewinsky? That depends on them. He is calling all sinners to repent. He has done that from the moment He walked in the Garden of Eden and called to "Adam, Adam where are you?" He has put into the heart of every sinner something that calls them to repent. But He has also given to every person a will, and what the person does with the call will depend on what they choose to do. That means, in the final analysis, that although we are all sinners, as sinners we fall into two classes. One class is those who have chosen to repent, and the other class is those who like

themselves the way they are.

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TRANSFORMING PRAYER

By Richard O'Ffill

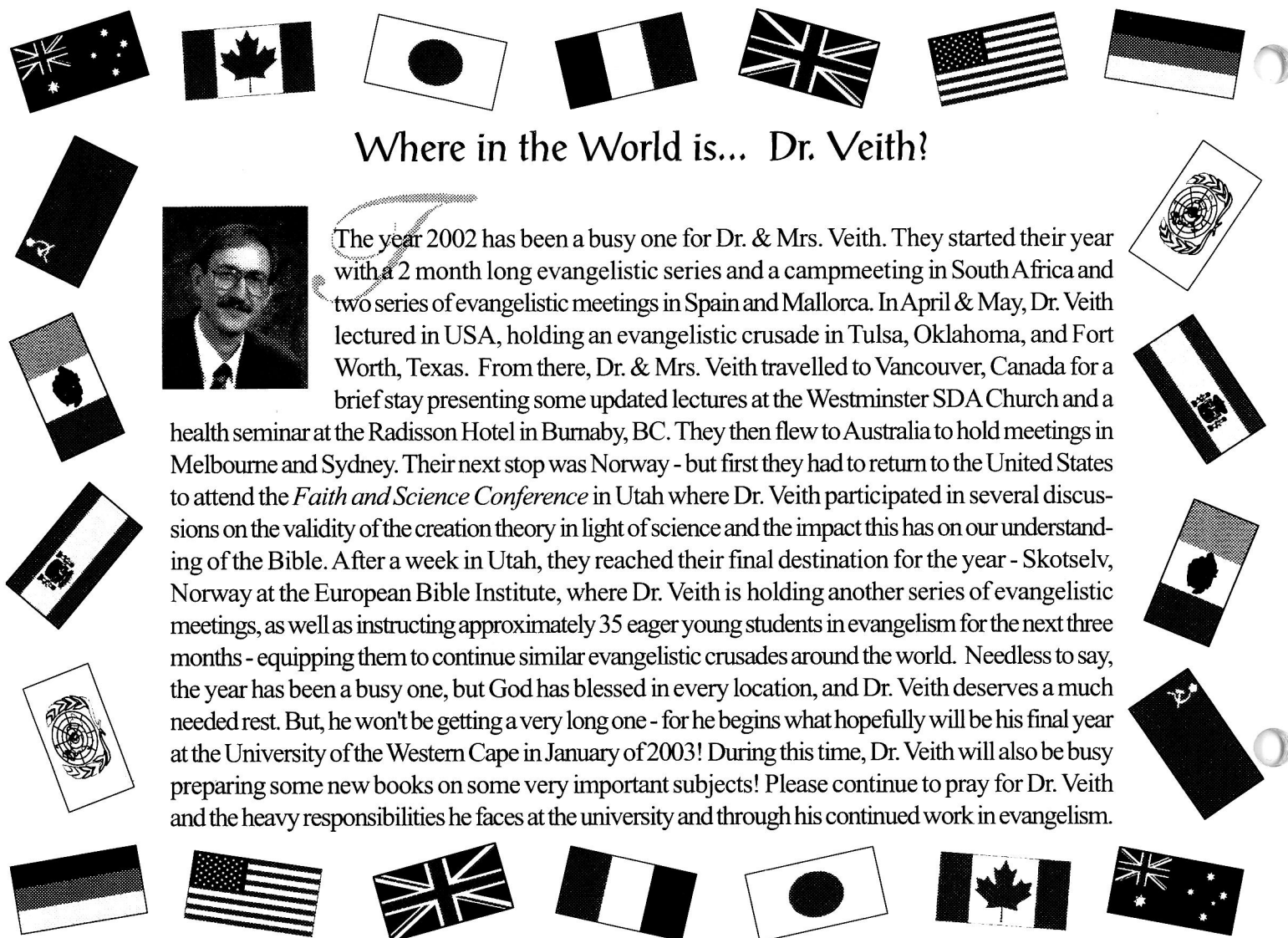
The theme and the underlying premise on which this book is based is that the first purpose of prayer is not to *get* but rather to *be*. You will see the importance of putting first things first in your prayers and of seeking

first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness. "But what about my physical and material needs?" Don't worry; our Lord has promised that if we will be more concerned about being than about getting, all the other things we have tended to worry about for so long will be added unto us! 134 pp

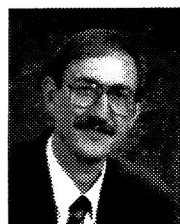
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Where in the World is... Dr. Veith?



The year 2002 has been a busy one for Dr. & Mrs. Veith. They started their year with a 2 month long evangelistic series and a campmeeting in South Africa and two series of evangelistic meetings in Spain and Mallorca. In April & May, Dr. Veith lectured in USA, holding an evangelistic crusade in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Fort Worth, Texas. From there, Dr. & Mrs. Veith travelled to Vancouver, Canada for a brief stay presenting some updated lectures at the Westminster SDA Church and a

health seminar at the Radisson Hotel in Burnaby, BC. They then flew to Australia to hold meetings in Melbourne and Sydney. Their next stop was Norway - but first they had to return to the United States to attend the *Faith and Science Conference* in Utah where Dr. Veith participated in several discussions on the validity of the creation theory in light of science and the impact this has on our understanding of the Bible. After a week in Utah, they reached their final destination for the year - Skotselv, Norway at the European Bible Institute, where Dr. Veith is holding another series of evangelistic meetings, as well as instructing approximately 35 eager young students in evangelism for the next three months - equipping them to continue similar evangelistic crusades around the world. Needless to say, the year has been a busy one, but God has blessed in every location, and Dr. Veith deserves a much needed rest. But, he won't be getting a very long one - for he begins what hopefully will be his final year at the University of the Western Cape in January of 2003! During this time, Dr. Veith will also be busy preparing some new books on some very important subjects! Please continue to pray for Dr. Veith and the heavy responsibilities he faces at the university and through his continued work in evangelism.

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News Report Faith and Science Conference Report

From August 23-29, 2002, a selection of 84 Seventh-day Adventist theologians, scientists, and church leaders met together in Ogden, Utah for the first ever *Faith and Science Conversation*. The Conference was the first in a series to be held between 2002 and 2004 concluding in a second international conference in 2004. Regional meetings will continue between now and the concluding session to facilitate "dialogue on questions of science and theology that impact Adventist understanding of the Biblical account of the origin of earth and life. ... The initial proposal stated that the Church's understanding of origins affects and informs other dimensions of its life. Therefore there is wisdom and value in the Church exploring the theological and scientific implications of various views of Genesis 1-11" (*Adventist Review Oct 2002*)

It seems that "the rapid advances in scientific knowledge that are generally framed within certain assumptions about origins" need to be reconciled with the "fundamental belief in regard to creation".

Several scholarly establishments in the church were represented, including the Geoscience Research Institute, the Biblical Research Institute, as well as Loma Linda University, LaSierra University, and Andrews University. Among the group were also church leaders, theologians, and researchers.

"According to printed material from the conference, the Adventist view of life and our world is in direct tension with the modern science worldview that explains existence on the basis of wholly natural and random events over long ages." (*Ibid*) This Adventist view [or perhaps it should be better called the Biblical view] can pose a problem to scientists and researchers even in Adventist circles and, as Jan Paulsen said, "these issues are there in the church". "The seriousness and breadth of differences concerning questions of origin that are present in the Seventh-day Adventist community" was recognized at the Conference, and "several key issues of faith-science interface that either affirm or challenge the Seventh-day Adventist [Biblical] understanding of origins" were identified. These various views and positions were explored "with respect to integrating the information of science with Scripture." (*Ibid*)

In 2004, another international conference will meet and prepare a report summarizing the next three years' conversations to be submitted to the administration of the world church. The outcome should be interesting.



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To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord

when champions are few - this will be our test. At this time, we must

AMAZING DISCOVERIES UPDATE



On August 23 & 24, 2002, Amazing Discoveries held a weekend revival series at the Westminster SDA Church with Pastor Richard O'Ffill. The weekend consisted of sermons on several thought-provoking subjects. Pastor Richard O'Ffill is the Revivalist for the Florida Conference in Orlando, Florida. During his more than 39 years of ministry, he has served in Southern Asia, and Latin America, as well as North America. Pastor O'Ffill believes that a Holy God, through the Holy Spirit, is developing a holy people for the soon return of Jesus Christ and his provocative sermons were a great blessing to those who attended. His talks included some thoughts on the twentieth century home, *Are Adventists the Only Real Christians?*, the secret of answered prayer, and much more. The audio tapes of the series, as well as his book *Transforming Prayer*, are available through Amazing Discoveries. Pastor O'Ffill's personal website - www.revivalsermons.org - includes a large number of excellent sermons and audio clips covering a wide variety of topics including contemporary Christian worship, family life, and our personal relationship with Jesus. It is an uplifting place to visit!

We, at Amazing Discoveries, praise God that He is in control of the work of spreading the gospel through the three angel's messages as presented in Dr. Veith's seminars. Over the last several months, Dr. Veith's book *Truth Matters* has been published in the German language, and his book *The Genesis Conflict* has been published in Spanish! In addition, Dr. Veith's second edition of *The Genesis Conflict* is, as we speak, off the press and will be available shortly in English. Translators are already hard at work to translate the 2nd edition of *Truth Matters* and this new edition of *The Genesis Conflict* in Spanish and German, and the website and books are also being translated into French! We praise God

for the opening of doors to make this possible - that as many people may have access to the final message of the three angel's even in their native languages. We have also been made aware that Dr. Veith's video series is being translated into Russian, Norwegian, and other languages, in addition to the already available German and Afrikaans. It can only be God's hand that has caused the message to become so widespread, and we thank Him for His leading. We thank you for your continued prayers and generous donations! Below are some comments received via our updated website which now contains a message board, a guest book, several audio clips, new articles, updated navigation, and a continuous on-line evangelistic series. Please visit us often at: www.amazingdiscoveries.org.

Dr. Veith, I just want to thank you for providing refreshing and stimulating resources for Christians. I was introduced to your videos years ago in Vancouver, and have found your products to be insightful and without a doubt, the best things I've read since E.G. White's books. Thank you for showing people our worship can be intelligent, and not just purely an emotional exercise. These videos are exactly what I and my family need to stay focused. A sincere thank you, and may God continue to use you and bless you. I look forward to one day meeting you - perhaps in heaven! - SW

I simply love the ABC videos I bought from you. They make me think and really grow spiritually.... JG

Tremendous message! So well documented and put together! I have ordered the series of 7 videos, printed out your reports on the various topics, and am planning on seeing about hosting you in our church or in nearby venue soon! Thanks for your commitment and powerful testimony and message! CK

I am researching health articles for an upcoming seminar at my church, and was led by the Holy Spirit to your website. Thank you for such excellent articles, I now feel more confident in presenting the material I have been preparing. God bless your ministry. MM

gathered warmly from the colleges of others, courage from their convictions, & boldly from their treasure." 57 150





THE NEW YEAR

by Ellen G. White

*This article is taken from the
Review & Herald,
December 16, 1884*

Another year has almost passed into eternity; [2002] is almost dead; [2003] will soon be here. Let us review the record of the year that so soon will be past. What advancement have we made in Christian experience? Our work--have we so done it that it will bear the inspection of the Master, who has given to every man work according to his several ability? Will it be consumed as hay, wood, and stubble, unworthy of preservation? or will it stand the trial by fire?

The need of fidelity is overlooked by many. There is a great deal to be done in this world--not in our way, but in God's way--for the benefit of those for whom Christ has died; but if this is done negligently or imperfectly, "Wanting" will be written against our names in the book of heavenly records. God is not pleased with any work unless it is done in the very best way possible. Every provision has been made that we may attain a height of stature in Christ Jesus that will meet the divine standard. **God is not pleased with his representatives if they are content to be dwarfs when they might grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ. He wants you to have height and breadth in Christian experience. He wants you to have great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, and lofty purposes of action.** Every passing year should increase the soul's yearning for purity and perfection of Christian character. And if this knowledge increases day by day, month by month, year by year, it will not be work consumed as hay, wood, and stubble; but it will be laying on the foundation-stone, gold, silver, and precious stones,--works that are not perishable, but which will stand the fires of the last day. Is our earthly, temporal work done with a thoroughness, a fidelity, that will bear scrutiny? Are there those whom we have wronged who will testify against us in the day of God? If so, the record has passed up to heaven, and we shall meet it again. **We are to work for the great Taskmasters eye, whether our painstaking efforts are seen and appreciated by men or not. No man, woman, nor child can acceptably serve God with neglectful, haphazard, sham work, whether it be secular or religious service.** The true Christian will have an eye single to the glory of God in all things, encouraging His purposes and strengthening His principles with this thought, "I do this for Christ."

..... The customs and maxims of the world are not to be our criterion, unless by the word of God we can prove them to be right. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." It

is not the greatness or insignificance of an action that makes it honest or dishonest. God requires that in all our transactions we pursue the straight line of duty.

If we have but little time, let us improve that little earnestly. The Bible assures us that we are in the great day of atonement. The typical day of atonement was a day when all Israel afflicted their souls before God, confessed their sins, and came before the Lord with contrition of soul, remorse for their sins, genuine repentance, and living faith in the atoning sacrifice....

Settling Debt

If all who profess to be servants of Christ are faithful in that which is least, they will be faithful in much. If there are debts yet unpaid, make special efforts to pay them. If you have run up accounts at the provision store or with the dry goods merchant, settle them if you possibly can. If you cannot, go to those to whom you are indebted, and frankly tell them the impossibility of meeting these demands; renew your note, and assure them you will cancel the debt as soon as you can. Then deny yourselves of everything you can do without, and be very economical in your expenditures, until your promises are fulfilled. Do not indulge yourselves in the use of other men's money for the sake of gratifying appetite or a love of display. You may thus remove a stumbling-block whereby many were hindered from believing the truth; and your good will not be evil spoken of. Will not our brethren make diligent efforts to correct this slack, haphazard way of doing business? The old year is fast passing; it is nearly gone. Make the most of the few days remaining. ...

Settling Old Quarrels

The Chinese New Year commences in February, and lasts one week. They have a custom of settling all quarrels between themselves and all outstanding debts; and if there are any who are unable to pay their debts, they are forgiven them. Thus the new year is commenced with all difficulties and accounts settled. This is a heathen custom that the Christian world would do well to imitate. God's law requires all this of us, and more,--we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is, we are to deal with our neighbors in everything just as we would wish them to deal with us. If we wish them to act fairly and justly toward us, then we should act fairly and justly toward them. We are simply to do as we would be done by.

If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters,--if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, con-

fess these sins, not in a general way, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender. Take them by the hand, let your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, "Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record." Who, think you, would withstand such a movement as this? There is too much coldness and indifference--too much of the "I don't care" spirit--exercised among the professed followers of Christ. All should feel a care for one another, jealously guarding each other's interests. "Love one another." Then we should stand a strong wall against Satan's devices. Amid opposition and persecution we would not join the vindictive ones, not unite with

the followers of the great rebel, whose special work is to accuse the brethren, to defame and cast stain upon their characters.

Let the remnant of this year be improved in destroying every fiber of the root of bitterness, burying them in the grave with the old year. Begin the new year with more tender regard, with deeper love, for every member of the Lord's family. Press together. "United, we stand; divided, we fall." Take a higher, nobler stand than you ever have before.

Many appear to be steadfast in the truth, firm, decided on every point of our faith; yet there is a great lack in them,--the tenderness and love which marked the character of the great Pattern. If a brother errs from the truth, if he falls into temptation, they make no effort to restore him in meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. They seem to regard it as their special work to climb upon the judgment seat and condemn and disfellowship. They do not obey God's word, which says, "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." The spirit of this passage is altogether too rare in our churches. It is the lack of it that shuts out the Spirit of God from the heart, from the home, from the church. Shall we not henceforth practice the Bible plan of restoring erring ones in the spirit of meekness? Shall we not have the spirit of Jesus, and work as He worked?

Keep back that disposition to crowd out a brother, even if you think him unworthy, even if he has hindered your work by manifesting a spirit of independence and willfulness. Remember that he is God's property. Err always on the side of mercy and tenderness. Treat with respect and deference even your most bitter enemies, who would injure you if they could. Let not a word escape your lips that would give them opportunity to justify their course in the least degree. Give no occasion to

any man to blaspheme the name of God or speak disrespectfully of our faith for anything you have done. We need to be wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove.

The old year is in its death struggle; let all wrath, malice, and bitterness die with it. Through hearty confession, let your sins go beforehand to judgment. Devote the remaining moments of the swift passing year to humiliation of self rather than trying to humiliate your brethren. With the new year, commence the work of lifting them up,--commence it even in the waning moments of the old year. Go to work anew, brethren and sisters,--go to work earnestly, unselfishly, lovingly, striving to lift up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, remove the heavy burdens from every soul.

Let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. Bring to your homes the poor that are cast out. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and the Lord shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Isaiah 58:6-11

Let the remnant of this year be improved in destroying every fiber of the root of bitterness, burying them in the grave with the old year. Begin the new year with more tender regard, with deeper love, for every member of the Lord's family.

A Work of Confession

Brethren in every church, will you follow the conditions God has specified, and prove the Lord, and see if He will fulfill His promises? *I believe He will. I have not the shadow of a doubt of it.* He will do just as He has said He would, and the exceedingly broad promises of rich blessings will be realized if we but comply with the conditions. Your heads may be hard and sound, but let not this hardness steal into your hearts. If you will fall on the Rock and be broken, then your self-righteousness will no longer exist. There will be instead soft, impressible hearts, kind, tender, true hearts, like that of Jesus, who was ever touched with human woe. You will weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Try it, brethren; God's way is always best. You have tried your own

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*should have been transformed to lay their eggs in the bowels and flesh of other sensitive beings; that some animals should live by and delight in cruelty; that animals should be led away by false instincts; that annually there should be an incalculable waste of the pollen, eggs and immature beings...*²

Charles Darwin was thus swayed to reject the hand of God in nature and to accept the naturalistic approach, but his conjectures and conclusions were based on the assumption that the present biological interactions apparent in nature, must have existed since the inception of life. This is not necessarily true, and we could ask the question: Does the evidence point to decay with elements of perfection and design serving as reminders of a once perfect situation, or does the evidence point to past imperfection and progress toward greater and greater perfection? The fossil record already reveals greater diversity in the past than in the present, and life also exploded on the scene in what has been termed the Cambrian explosion. These two factors alone point in the exact opposite direction to what naturalistic evolution would propose and they are consistent with the creation account. In coming issues, let us examine some of the issues involved.



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OUR CHURCH STANDARDS

Shall We Abandon or Enforce Them?

by Carlyle B. Haynes

[Editor's Note: This article appearing in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 26, 1934, was a sermon preached at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on March 31, 1934. As you read it, you will be surprised at how current it sounds. Despite its age, it merits careful consideration.]

A few weeks ago, out of a distressed and burdened heart, I spoke to you from this pulpit on the subject of church standards, and raised the question as to whether the time had come for this denomination to alter its platform and abandon its standards. At that time I took occasion to point out that the rising tide of worldliness observable among us called for a serious decision upon the part of the church leaders, either to maintain and enforce the old, established standards of the faith, or to cast them aside altogether. And I proposed a set of resolutions dealing with the particular evil of church pageants, shows, and acted representations—resolutions which the Tabernacle executive board later adopted with unanimity, and which, therefore, embody the accepted policy of this church today.

It is a source of peculiar gratification to me to observe how wholeheartedly the various activities of the Tabernacle church have endeavored to follow the counsel contained in this policy. From Battle Creek Academy, including both teachers and students, earnest inquiry has been made as to how to bring all activities into compliance with this policy. From the various activities of the Tabernacle, Missionary Volunteer, Senior and Junior, the Sabbath school, the musical organizations, and the women's organizations, the same inquiries have been made and the same purpose has been made evident. This is indeed heartening.

On the publication of the sermon preached here, in the columns of our widely circulated church paper, the REVIEW AND HERALD, a most astonishing response has come, that has nearly overwhelmed me. From north and south and east and west in North America and from many foreign fields, letters have come to me which disclose a widespread, and by me unsuspected, but nevertheless most positive and pronounced, conviction on the part of the writers that the time has fully come for a restatement and a new pledge of loyalty to the old-time ideals, standards, and teaching of this closing message of the gospel. This, too, is wonderfully heartening. Many of these correspondents pointed out that while they

deplored these tendencies toward worldly practices which they observed coming in among us, they nevertheless felt a sense of helplessness and timidity in opposing them, fearing they would be counted "old fogies," and that they would be hopelessly outnumbered and their protest ignored.

The impression seems to prevail with some devoted souls that the tendency has gone too far to be checked, that the dikes have given way, and there is no use now to resist. It is this particular phase of the matter to which I address myself today. I do not believe this position is warranted. I am no pessimist regarding this message and movement God has given us. The old standards are not lost. **The church of Christ is not apostate. The threefold message has not become Babylon. The world is not in the church to such an extent that the future is hopeless. There is a glorious triumph just before us. This is not time for despair. Rather, this is a time when God's loyal, faithful people, who recognize and accept the essential, basic teachings and standards of this message, should speak forth vigorously their convictions, and support every effort in the right direction.** There is no people on earth so responsive to right and spiritual leadership, so ready to follow right principles, as this people. They are going through to the kingdom.

A LESSON FROM THE PAST

There has come to me, as I have further considered the whole situation, a desire to analyze and understand it more clearly. So I have turned to the word of God, and endeavored to bring the light of former experience to bear upon our present condition. And out of this study I bring to you the text of this morning's sermon, Ezekiel 9:3-6:

The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be in the midst thereof. And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark: and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

The circumstances which form the setting for this passage are these: Ezekiel was among the captives in Babylon. As he was sitting in his house, with the elders of Judah about

him, the hand of the Lord fell upon him. Out of an appearance of fire, a hand was stretched forth. It took the prophet by a lock of his head, and the Spirit lifted him up between earth and heaven, and brought him in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the inner door of the temple. There God displayed to him in successive scenes the iniquity of His people, their departure from right and holy practices, their abandonment of the religion of God. Ezekiel was carried forward through the different parts of the temple and of the city to witness the increasing abominations committed by various classes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The whole city was filled with iniquity. It had not stopped in the city. It was engulfing even the sanctuary of God. This holy place was desecrated by the polluting devices of wicked men. Seventy of the ancients of the house of Israel, each swinging a censer, offered a thick cloud of incense to every form of creeping things, abominable beasts, and idols, which were portrayed upon the wall, while they said, "The Lord seeth us not; and the Lord hath forsaken the earth." Women were engaged in all the superstitions of their false worship. Even between the porch and the altar of the temple, men stood with their backs to the temple, and worshipped the sun toward the east.

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF SIN

Looking upon these varied scenes of guilt, Ezekiel heard the voice of the Lord saying:

Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger: and lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. Ezekiel 8:17,18

At once the fulfillment of this solemn denunciation was shown the prophet. The heavenly beings in charge of the city closed in, each with his destroying weapon in his hand. Six others came from the way of the higher gate, toward the north, and these, too, each had a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. These went in and stood by the brazen altar.

The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from cherubim to the threshold of the house. The Lord forsook a sanctuary which had been so polluted by man's transgression, and stood at the door of the temple, to direct the work of separation and punishment among the people, which it was now determined to accomplish. His wrath was about to be

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visited upon them. He was about to take vengeance for the iniquities of men, to deal with them in His fury, for all the abominations they had committed, as well as for the hardness and impenitence of their hearts.

There remained some among God's people, however, who had not forsaken or provoked Him. As in the time of Elijah, so there was a remnant who had not been influenced by the apostasy from God. They had retained their loyalty to Him. They had not engaged in these abominations. These must be preserved from the destruction which was coming; they must not go down in the general ruin. They had displayed their zeal for God's honor, and He would now display His power for their safety.

THE MARK OF LOYALTY

And so to the man clothed in linen, with the writer's inkhorn, the Lord said: *"Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the forehead of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."*

So were the servants of God distinguished. They had done all they could to maintain God's authority, to teach God's way, to uphold God's standards; and when all they could do was not sufficient to stem the tide of apostasy, still they sighed and cried over the abominations which they could not prevent. They did not go with the crowds. They did not compromise. Tears of sorrow filled their eyes because men kept not the divine law. These souls wept in secret places when men would not hear. And God hearkened and heard. Their witnessing was not in vain. A book of remembrance was kept for those who feared the Lord, those who thought upon His name. (*Mal 3:16*) Now that sudden destruction was decreed upon the faithless apostates, these faithful servants of God were to be preserved. As in Egypt the Israelites were distinguished by the blood on the doorposts, and thus escaped the destroying angel, so these were now marked by divine appointment, that they might escape the evil to come.

The destruction then began at the sanctuary of God, with the ancient men who had engaged in these abominations. The destroying angels went through the city, searching out all who had acted on the conviction that *"the Lord seeth us not; the Lord has forsaken the earth,"* and had fallen away into corrupt practices. None were spared. No pity was shown. Old and young, maids and little children, and women were smitten. No place, no circumstances, were a protection for impenitent guilt. Only those upon whom was God's mark were delivered.

THIS MOVEMENT OF GOD

These things, "written aforetime," were written for our admonition. They have lessons of guidance, of courage, of comfort, for us. May the Lord, the Spirit, make us wise in their consideration, and faithful in their improvement for ourselves. God has given this people their teachings. He has given them their standards. He had placed before them their objectives. He has assigned them their work. He has given them His Spirit for the finishing of their task. And He has given them special equipment in the varied gifts of His Spirit for the carrying forward of His message.

This movement is God's movement. This denominational organization belongs to Him. He brought it into existence. He commissioned it. It has a divine call. It is doing a divine work. It has not apostatized. It is going through to the kingdom. Men who lead it may and do make mistakes. But God is its real Leader. The head of this movement is God Himself. After years of service in this work both at home and abroad and in various capacities, during which I have seen the weaknesses and sins of men as they have affected the work of God, and seen these men either corrected or set aside, a profound conviction has been created in my soul, which is constantly deepening, namely, that the God of heaven, the Creator of the universe, the Upholder of all things, is in charge of the work of this message, and is carrying it onward to certain victory. Stay by the truth, dear friends. A glorious triumph is just ahead.

This conviction, however, does not blind me to the very obvious fact that practices which formerly were forbidden have made their appearance among our churches. Influences which corrupt and destroy make themselves felt among us. Tendencies which are altogether worldly are becoming too pronounced. Standards are being lowered. Attitudes and relationships are being changed. Some of our people are inclined to look at things with different eyes than they did a quarter of a century ago. A tide of worldliness is threatening the church. Some are fearful it will overwhelm us, that it has already gone so far that it is useless to resist it. They are wrong. We recognize the evil, we deplore the drift, we acknowledge the danger, we sigh and cry for the abominations. But I assure you they will not sweep it away. God is still in charge of affairs. He has not been set aside, nor has He relinquished His control. He and His truth will yet triumph.

The time has come, however, fully come, for every devoted, faithful, single-hearted follower of God, and especially those who recognize and properly estimate the dangers of the present hour and the evils of lowered standards, to take a positive stand in opposition, to any further lowering of our standards, and a positive determination to lift them back where they ought to be where God would have them.

A comprehensive survey of this tide of worldliness against which we must set our faces is not possible within the limits of this sermon. It is possible, however, to point out some tendencies and influences, and direct attention to the principles which they undermine.

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

This message of truth from God is sent into the world because it contains, and is designed to give, a proclamation of the nearness of the coming of our Lord, and to prepare a people to meet Him in peace and safety. To do this it makes a separation between this people and the world. This message teaches simplicity, plainness, meekness, humility in life, in character, in conduct, in habits, in dress, in eating, in drinking, in recreation, in everything pertaining to life and godliness. The people who give this message to the world are a plain, simple people, in correspondence with the message they give. All their practices, all their proceedings, are, of course, to be simple and plain. **All going after the world, all following of the fashions of the world, whether in dress, in food, in amusement, in church procedure, in music, in education, in medical practice, in reading, or in any other direction, is offering strange fire to God.** God has His own methods for carrying forward His work. We do not need to adopt human methods. He has His own standards for His people. To adopt worldly standards is to turn our back upon Him.

It is inevitable that there should be a struggle between divine and human methods, between divine and human standards, in carrying forward the work. It has always been so. **The devil is not dead, and he is more active now than ever. He does not propose to have God's work triumph without a supreme challenge and conflict. But it will triumph, nevertheless. Do not ever lose your faith in that.**

The drift worldward is almost imperceptible while in progress. But comparing its effects over a period of years brings out the difference it makes. So as we compare church standards now with those of a former generation, we are enabled to discern how far the drift has carried us. Borderlines between the world and us seem to be rapidly disappearing. They will disappear altogether unless we plainly mark them again.

Some of our people have become careless about Sabbath observance. Perhaps some are uninstructed. I cannot fail to observe that in some homes the radio [and TV?] is on during Sabbath hours, secular papers are read, business is talked if it is not transacted, pleasure rides are taken, social engagements are arranged for and sometimes consummated, many

entirely unnecessary household duties are performed, and altogether there is a sad departure from the earlier faithfulness and devotion and loyalty to God's holy command. These things should be changed. The Sabbath is God's day. All the hours belong to Him. He has prescribed how they are to be used.

There is a wonderful renewal of strength and building up of spiritual experience in using them as He has appointed.

The time has come, however, fully come, for every devoted, faithful, single-hearted follower of God, and especially those who recognize and properly estimate the dangers of the present hour and the evils of lowered standards, to take a positive stand in opposition, to any further lowering of our standards, and a positive determination to lift them back where they ought to be where God would have them.

In our home, our minds are fixed that the day shall be God's. We will not read secular papers, no matter how important and world shattering the news may be. The radio [and TV] is quiet during all its sacred hours. No entrance is left here for Satan to take our minds from God and heavenly matters. But it is God's day, and He shall have it. The artistry and fascination and enjoyment of the world's greatest musicians must not encroach on this holy time. No announcement, not message, no entertainment, no news the world has to give, is important enough to be

allowed to interfere with, or interrupt, or affect, or cancel the weekly appointment the God of heaven has with His waiting and struggling people on earth.

Turn off your radios [and TVs], dear friends, on God's holy day. Keep them off during the sacred hours. Put away your secular papers. Let this day be wholly God's. Prepare for the Sabbath on the day before. Guard your lips from speaking your own words. Guard your feet from going your own ways. Guard your mind from finding its own pleasure. Guard your heart from departure from God. Make His day "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable," and you will find it a wonderful builder of strength, a restorer of spiritual life, a renewed vigor and faith. It was intended to do far more for us than we are permitting it to do. We are losing much by our carelessness.

PLAINNESS AND SIMPLICITY IN DRESS

Simplicity and plainness in dress are not so noticeable among us today as they were years ago. I am putting it mildly, as you all know. As I look over the twelve hundred people who are here today,—well, to discern the differences between this and any other congregation requires a close and prolonged search. We have become careless regarding our standards of dress. Personal adornment is quite conspicu-

ous. Necklaces are in evidence. Rings are quite plentiful; chains and bracelets are not unknown. All of this is a lowering of standards. We profess to be a people who follow the instruction of the Bible, and refrain from the wearing of gold and jewels for display. I plead with you to heed God's command, "Put off thy ornaments from thee." Ex. 33:5

This matter of dress, however, affects far more than ornamentation. A marked characteristic of this time is immodest exposure of the person, a display of physical charms, an accentuation of every bodily part which is calculated to create—what shall I say? Admiration?—On the part of the beholder. O dear friends, if the desire to create admiration in this matter stopped with admiration, it would be going too far. But it is more than that. I do not need to tell you. Your flesh is as my flesh. The impulses and cravings inherent in fallen human nature are not unknown to you. No one can dress in such a way as to call attention to and accentuate the sensual, the fleshly, the physical, and then look with apparent innocence into my eyes and tell me he does not know what he is doing. No one is as dumb as that. He is cultivating and encouraged and ministering to the earthly, the passionate, the sensual, the lower nature. And the masculinity of the pronoun I use need not be considered as limiting my application to one sex.

O people of the church of God, let us return in practice to the time when modesty and chastity and sweet simplicity were more than words, and carry out in our lives what the principles of the gospel demand—separation from the world and its fashions, abandonment of its evil practices, an entire following of our Lord in all matters pertaining to life and godliness and our walk as Christians among men.

THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

Time was when we looked with uneasiness upon a divorced person. That has changed. Divorce has become common. It is all about us. Indeed, it is decidedly among us. And we display our newly acquired breadth of mind and modernity by smiling indulgently about it. And we indifferently put divorced persons into places of prominence and influence in church work thus endorsing them as models for our members, especially our youth. I do not mean to imply that a divorced person is thereby disqualified for church work. That is not true. That would be an injustice to an innocent party.

God forgives, of course. He receives to Himself those who have failed and gone astray. There is no question here regarding God's acceptance of a divorced person into fellowship with Himself, whether that person be the sinner or the sinned against. But the participant in a divorce should realize

that any prominence given him by the church is bound to make him a target for criticism. And the church itself suffers in reputation and standing as well as himself.

VAINGLORIOUS DISPLAY

Let me return to the principle of simplicity and plainness, and apply it now to our proceedings as well as to our dress and conduct. I notice that when we have social gatherings, dinners, banquets, entertainments, celebrations the tendency is to be very elaborate and extravagant. Simple pleasures, modest expenditure, reasonable entertainment, normal recreation, these belong to a former time. They no longer are sufficient. Everything must be done to excess. It must surpass everything of the kind attempted before. Simplicity and plainness are too tame. There is no thrill in them. The unusual, the exciting, the daring, the risky, the untried, the very limit—these are what we must have today in the practice of some.

We see this in many things connected with the church. It flowers into its most extravagant fruitage and positive silliness in weddings and graduation exercises. But it touches everything else - musical programs, thirteenth Sabbath exercises, holiday gatherings, and every social event. I have seen people work themselves to the point of complete exhaustion, financially as well as nervously, to put on a bigger, better, and more elaborate wedding than anything known before, until it ceased to be a sacred, solemn, divine ordinance, and became only a gaudy, cheap tinsel show. And it does not stop even at funerals. I have seen people strive to make a funeral service into a great display, until it ceased to be a simple, dignified tribute of honor and respect to the dead and the exaltation of the word of God and became only a means to attract attention to the living.

OUR SCHOOLS

The thing affects our schools as well. I groan within me every time graduation time comes, when I am compelled to witness the display, the extravagance, the pageantry, the pomposity connected with these exercises. My groaning struggles with mirth as I watch the class striving to master the intricacies of the ridiculous "goose step" which has become as much a part of these affairs as the granting of diplomas. It settles into genuine groaning again as I realize how much heartache, jealousy, envy, hard feelings, anxiety, and perplexity have been experienced by parents in order to make possible this show, with its special dresses, and suits, and flowers, and gifts, and class pins, and photographs, and class "Annual," and social gatherings. And my groaning is altogether unalloyed when I consider how wide a departure all this is from what this denomination and message stand for. We

teach our children that this message is essentially one of simplicity and plainness and meekness and humility, and then we permit them to go contrary to all the message stands for, by allowing these elaborate affairs in our churches and schools.

I appeal to you, dear friends, let us get back to our original standards, and set our faces against their violation. When we plan for weddings, let us make them simple, dignified, godly, impressive ordinances of God, leaving off all man-made embellishments. When we plan for funerals, let them be occasions when the word of God can impress its eternal truths upon awed and susceptible hearts. When we plan for graduating exercises, let them be for the glorification of the divine, not the human. And in all our social activities, I appeal for arrangements and proceedings which will build us up as men and women of God.

WORLDLY PLEASURES

I must direct attention to one more thing. Carelessness has come in among us with reference to card playing, theatergoing [movies], and dancing. I do not mean, of course, that any considerable number of our members are engaging in these questionable and forbidden things. There are those, however, who are. "Bridge" and other card games, but especially "bridge," are by some looked upon as the only possible method by which they can spend an evening socially with friends. As Adventists, they do not play in their own homes; but when they mingle among non-Adventists, they play. And they argue that they do this to retain their influence with their friends. I raise the question, Influence—in what direction?

It seems to be a rather common idea among Christians who mingle socially with those outside the church fold, that they gain added influence over their unbelieving friends by conforming to worldly customs. They claim they do it to impress their friends that religion need not be "bigoted," "narrow," "strait-laced."

THE WORLD'S ESTIMATE OF WHAT A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE

No greater mistake can be made. Anyone who has had any experience knows that the world's standards for a Christian are usually higher than a Christian's standards for himself. Men outside the church shape their judgment of a believer with reference to the highest standards, those which he thinks the believer professes. The judgment of the man of the world upon a Christian who indulges in card playing, theatergoing, or dancing, is a severe one. He has a higher respect for a Christian who refrains from them than for one who indulges in them.

Then there are those who attend shows [and movies]. They think this should make no difference with their church standing. Once in a while I learn of a Sabbath school teacher or church officer who has gone to a show or at-

tended or participated in a dance. And when these persons are questioned about these things, and the suggestion is made that it might be advisable for them to discontinue either their unhallowed course or their church activities and membership, they are hurt and their friends are hurt. I ask, why? Do they think that a church adopts standards as a joke? They know what the standards are when they join. When they know themselves to be violating these standards, and know they intend to continue to violate them, they should be honorable enough to withdraw from the church, and not bring reproach upon it. For every church member who is deliberately going contrary to his church profession is a reproach and a liability to the church of Christ.

After my former sermon on church standards, I received a letter from a member, saying he was not living up to these standards, and expected to continue to violate them, and asked that his name be dropped. I respect such a man. I do not respect hypocrites.

GOD HAS A LOYAL PEOPLE

While there are those in the church who go after the world in these things and violate the standards of the church, it is gratifying to recognize that there are more who honor God, respect His authority, and are loyal to church standards. God has His true servants. They tremble at His word. They are the salt of the earth, the preservation of men. They have been set apart by the Lord for Himself. They have been made, by the Holy Spirit, new creatures in Christ Jesus. They stand in His robe of righteousness, complete in Him. They are instant in prayer, fruitful in holiness, prefer the reproach of Christ to the treasures of the world, and are the ornament and strength of the church. It is these who are described in our text. They sigh and cry, not alone for the abominations of the world, but for the departures and apostasies and unfaithfulness in the church. In the secrecy of the closet, in the prayer meeting, unknown and unnoticed by the world, they cry to God to save His people. And the Lord, as if turning away His attention from apparently greater objects to mark them more intently, says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Isa. 66:2

And these faithful souls have not sighed in listless idleness or wept tears of fearful indolence without doing anything to stop the progress of evil. They have first stood staunchly against these things coming in. Not being able to hold them back, they have not participated in them. They continue to bear their testimony against them. They are not partakers of other men's sins. They do not join them in tearing down the standards. They stand out openly for God, for His truth, for

Our Church Standards*...Continued From Page 27*

His way, for His church. And when they can do nothing more by active effort, they still mourn over evils they cannot cure.

They neither feel nor profess indifference to the conduct and condition of their brethren. Being jealous for the honor of God, happy in the acceptance of a Savior, knowing the comforts of the Holy Spirit, believing in the triumph of the message and the doom of the sinner, they long to the end of life for the salvation of the erring, and they sigh and cry to God while they live above a condition in which they have no participation.

Such people God marks as His own. He takes particular care that they shall be saved from the coming destruction. And when the slaughter weapons begin their dread work, these are saved. "Go through and smite," rings the command, "but come not near any man upon whom is the mark."

THE RAPIDLY APPROACHING END

Dear friends, it will not be very long before the destroying angels are ordered to do their terrible work. There are daily developments all about us which make it absolutely certain that we are rapidly nearing that dread day when the image of the beast, having received life, will speak, and issue its orders for branding with the mark of the beast and for death to those who refuse. Blind indeed must be the eyes of the Bible student who cannot discern in the present economic confusion and the wild experimentation which is made to reduce it to order, all the elements of fulfillment of the apocalyptic prophecy. **Practically every product of union labor now has its mark upon it. Boots and shoes, clothing, newspapers, even bread, are all labeled. Every secret society has its mark, password, grip, and badge. The whole tendency of our time is combination. It is demanded by religion, by politics, by capital, by labor, by government.** Everything is working together to put the world under the domination of the beast and his image, and to mold things for the last great battle God and Satan.

RETURN TO THE FIRST LOVE

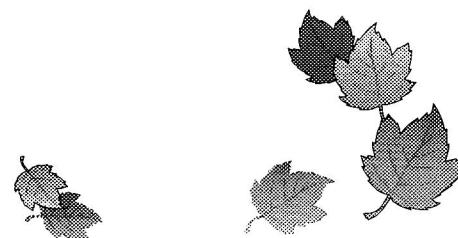
This is no time, dear brethren, to drift away from God, to depart from the faith, to waver in our loyalty. Eternal issues are about to be settled. The end of all things is right upon us. All we have been hoping for is about to be realized. The kingdom of God is at hand. In view of these solemn times, I call for a return to our first love, our first ardor, our first devotion. Let us walk as men who know their Lord. Let us not waver in our allegiance. **Let us be what we profess to be.** Let us faithfully uphold every standard, every truth of this blessed message which God has so graciously given us. Let us hear and heed the call so familiar to us:

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

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may

be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil.1:9-11.

May God give us this experience.



Faith On the Line is the official quarterly publication of Amazing Discoveries Charitable Foundation, a Seventh-day Adventist based non-profit organization, addressing theological, political, economic, and scientific issues from a Biblical perspective. Copies are sent to all who request them. Requests should be sent to the address below. A suggested minimum donation of \$17 CDN / \$11 US for 4 issues (1yr) or \$5 CDN / \$3.75 US per single copy would be appreciated.

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