

Religious Liberty



Theocracies

1. Liberty Before Sin
2. Liberty After Sin
3. The Principle of Liberty
4. Theocracies

We are to invite everyone—the high and the low, the rich and the poor, all sects and classes—to share the benefits of our medical institutions. We receive into our institutions people of all denominations. But as for ourselves we are strictly denominational; **we are sacredly denominated by God and are under His theocracy.** But we are not unwisely to press upon anyone the peculiar points of our faith. (*7T* 109.1; published **1902**)

THEOCRACY, *n.* Government of a state
by the immediate direction of God . . .
(1828 Webster)

In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that **the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance**—a custom which originated with Rome, and which she claims as the sign of her authority. It is the spirit of the papacy—the spirit of conformity to worldly customs, the veneration for human traditions above the commandments of God—that is permeating the Protestant churches and leading them on to do the same work of Sunday exaltation which the papacy has done before them. (*GC88* 573.1; *GC* 573.1)

Note 11. Page 573—These movements are apparent under diverse forms and in different ways, but the organization which embodies almost every form, and works in every way to gain its end, is the National Reform Association. It originated in a conference representing “eleven different denominations of Christians from seven of the states of the Union.” It now has the support of prominent men from “all branches of the church,” of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Prohibition Party.

It proposes to have our **national constitution amended**, “in order to constitute a Christian government,” “acknowledging almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the ruler among the nations, His revealed will as the supreme law of the land”; and so placing “all Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land.” (Appendix, *GC88* 688.2)

One of its propositions, announced by David Gregg, D. D., Pastor Park Street Church, Boston, is that **the state has “the right to command the consciences of men.”** Another, announced by the *Christian Statesman*, is that government must “enforce upon all that come among us the laws of Christian morality.” Another, announced by the Rev. E. B. Graham, is that “if the opponents of the Bible do not like our government and its Christian features, let them go to some wild, desolate land; and, in the name of the devil, and for the sake of the devil, subdue it, and set up a government of their own on infidel and atheistic ideas, and then, if they can stand it, stay there till they die.” Another, announced by Jonathan Edwards, D. D., is that Jews, and all Christians who keep the seventh day, are to be **classed as atheists**, and “must be treated, as for this [National Reform] question, one party” with atheists, who “cannot dwell together on the same continent” with the national reform Christianity. (Appendix, *GC88* 688.2)

Anybody can see at a glance that the establishment of the national reform theory of government would be but the **establishment of a theocracy**. And this is, in fact, what they propose to establish. They say that “a republic thus governed is of him, through the people, and is as really and truly a theocracy as the government of Israel.”

A monthly reading of the national W. C. T. U., written by Miss Willard, on God in government, says: “A **true theocracy** is yet to come, [and] the enthronement of Christ in law and law-makers, hence I pray devoutly, as a Christian patriot, for the ballot in the hands of women.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

And in her annual address to the national W. C. T. U. Convention, of 1887, Miss Willard said: “**The kingdom of Christ ‘must enter the realm of law through the gateway of politics....** There are enough temperance men in both [the Democratic and Republican parties] to take possession of the government and give us national prohibition in the party of the near future, which is to be the party of God.... We pray heaven to give them no rest ... until they shall ... swear an oath of allegiance to Christ in politics, and March in one great army ‘up to the polls to worship God.’ ... I firmly believe that the patient, steadfast work of Christian women will so react on politics within the next generation that **the party of God** will be at the front.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

Now a **man made theocracy** is only a scheme of government which puts man in the place of God. That is precisely the theory upon which the papacy was built, and that is just what the papacy is. The national reform theory is identical with that of the papacy; therefore the establishment of the national reform theory in this government will be but the setting up of a living image of the papacy. (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

Advocating, as these parties are, the papal theory, it is not to be wondered at that they are anxious to secure the co-operation of the papacy in carrying their scheme to success. *The Christian Statesman* is the official organ of the National Reform Association, and in an editorial, December 11, 1884, that paper said: “We cordially, gladly, recognize the fact that in the South American republics, and in France and other European countries, the Roman Catholics are the recognized advocates of **national Christianity**, and stand opposed to all the proposals of secularism.... whenever they are willing to co-operate in resisting the progress of political atheism, **we will gladly join hands with them**. In a World’s Conference for the Promotion of National Christianity—which ought to be held at no distant day—many countries could be represented only by Roman Catholics.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

And in that same paper, August 31, 1881, Rev. Sylvester Scovel said: “This common interest [“of all religious people in the Sabbath”—Sunday] ought both to strengthen our determination to work, and our **readiness to co-operate in every way with our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens.** We may be subjected to some rebuffs in our first proffers, and the time is not yet come when the Roman church will consent to strike hands with other churches—as such; but the time has come to make repeated advances, and gladly to accept co-operation in any form in which they may be willing to exhibit it. It is one of the *necessities* of the situation. The *nexus* between the two great divisions of Christianity on questions of moral legislation is a thing worthy the consideration of our best minds and our men of largest experience in such affairs.” (Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

In perfect accord with this is the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII., 1885, which directs that “all Catholics should **do all in their power** to cause the constitutions of states, and legislation, to be modeled on the principles of the true church, and all Catholic writers and journalists should never lose sight, for an instant, from the view of the above prescriptions.” Therefore as the purpose of the national reform association is identical with that of rome, it is only to be expected that they should show a readiness to “gladly join hands.”

And whenever Protestantism gains control of the civil power, whether with or without the aid of Rome, that will be but to erect an image of the papacy.

(Appendix, *GC88* 689.1)

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Pilate then took his place on the judgment seat, and again presented Jesus to the people, saying, “Behold your King!” Again the mad cry was heard, “Away with Him, crucify Him.” In a voice that was heard far and near, Pilate asked, “Shall I crucify your King?” But from profane, blasphemous lips went forth the words, “We have no king but Caesar.” (*DA 737.5*)

Thus by choosing a heathen ruler, the Jewish nation had withdrawn from the theocracy. They had rejected God as their king. Henceforth they had no deliverer. They had no king but Caesar. To this the priests and teachers had led the people. For this, with the fearful results that followed, they were responsible. A nation’s sin and a nation’s ruin were due to the religious leaders. (*DA 737.6*)

- ❖ In the days of the theocracy, when Moses . . . (*AA* 92.2)
- ❖ The people of Israel, in their gratitude at deliverance from the Midianites, proposed to Gideon that he should become their king, and that the throne should be confirmed to his descendants. This proposition was in **direct violation of the principles of the theocracy**. God was the king of Israel, and for them to place a man upon the throne would be a rejection of their Divine Sovereign. (*PP* 555.4)

❖ When the Israelites first settled in Canaan they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the rule of Joshua. . . . As they departed from obedience to God's law, they desired to be freed from the rule of their divine Sovereign; and thus the **demand for a monarchy** became widespread throughout Israel. (*PP* 603.3)

❖ And the Lord said unto Samuel: “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but **they have rejected Me**, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.” The prophet was reprov'd for grieving at the conduct of the people toward himself as an individual. They had not manifested disrespect for him, but for the authority of God, who had appointed the rulers of His people. Those who despise and reject the faithful servant of God show contempt, not merely for the man, but for the Master who sent him. It is God's words, His reproofs and counsel, that are set at nought; it is His authority that is rejected. (*PP* 605.1)

❖ Though the people of Israel were proud of their national greatness, they did not look with favor upon David's plan for so greatly extending the military service. The proposed enrollment caused much dissatisfaction; consequently it was thought necessary to employ the **military officers in place of the priests and magistrates**, who had formerly taken the census. The object of the undertaking was directly **contrary to the principles of a theocracy**. (*PP 747.1*)

❖ Note 8. Page 603. The question has been raised, and is now much agitated, if a theocracy was good in the time of Israel, why would not a theocratical form of government be equally good for this time? The answer is easy: (*PP* 761.6)

❖ A theocracy is a government which derives its power immediately from God. The government of Israel was a true theocracy. That was really a government of God. At the burning bush, God commissioned Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. By signs and wonders and mighty miracles multiplied, God delivered Israel from Egypt and led them through the wilderness and finally into the Promised Land. There He ruled them by judges “until Samuel the prophet,” to whom, when he was a child, God spoke, and by whom He made known His will. In the days of Samuel the people asked that they might have a king. (*PP* 761.7)

❖ This was allowed, and God chose Saul, and Samuel anointed him king of Israel. Saul failed to do the will of God; and as he rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord rejected him from being king and sent Samuel to anoint David king of Israel; and David's throne God established forevermore. (*PP* 761.7)

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1913 Yearbook— “1. That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

2. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things, and by whom they do consist . . .”

SIXTY—SIXTH MEETING

GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

December 2, 1930

P R E S E N T:

M Wilcox, M E Kern, Claude Conard, H H Cobban, E R Palmer, Mrs Plummer, J A Stevens, E Hackman, A Spalding, M C Taft, H H Votaw, C S Longacre, S A Wellman, H E Rogers, L E Froom, J A P Green, J J Strahle (of Northern Europe), C E Weaks.

F. M. Wilcox was asked to act as chairman.

STATEMENT OF OUR FAITH FOR YEAR BOOK:

A request was presented from the African Division that a statement of what Seventh-day Adventists believe should be printed in the Year Book, since they feel that such a statement would help government officials and others to a better understanding of our work.

VOTED, That the chair appoint a committee of which he shall be a member, to prepare such a statement for publication in the Year Book.

Named: H.E.Kern, F.M.Wilcox, E.R.Palmer,

C.H.Watson.

1931 Yearbook— “2. That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.”

They will accept that which pleases their ideas and will begin to manufacture another foundation than that which is laid. They will flatter their own vanity and esteem, thinking that they are capable of removing the pillars of our faith <and replacing them with pillars they have devised.> *6LtMs*, Ms 28, 1890, par. 7

This will continue to be as long as time shall last. . . . (Ibid., par. 8)

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will **undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith** that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. (Manuscript 31, **1896**)

We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the last fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to tear down the foundation principles of our faith. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists to take the place of the truth which point by point has been testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. From the great system of truth as it has been presented by God's messengers, **not a pin is to be removed.**

(18LtMs, Lt 232, 1903, par. 42) (To Dr. Kellogg)

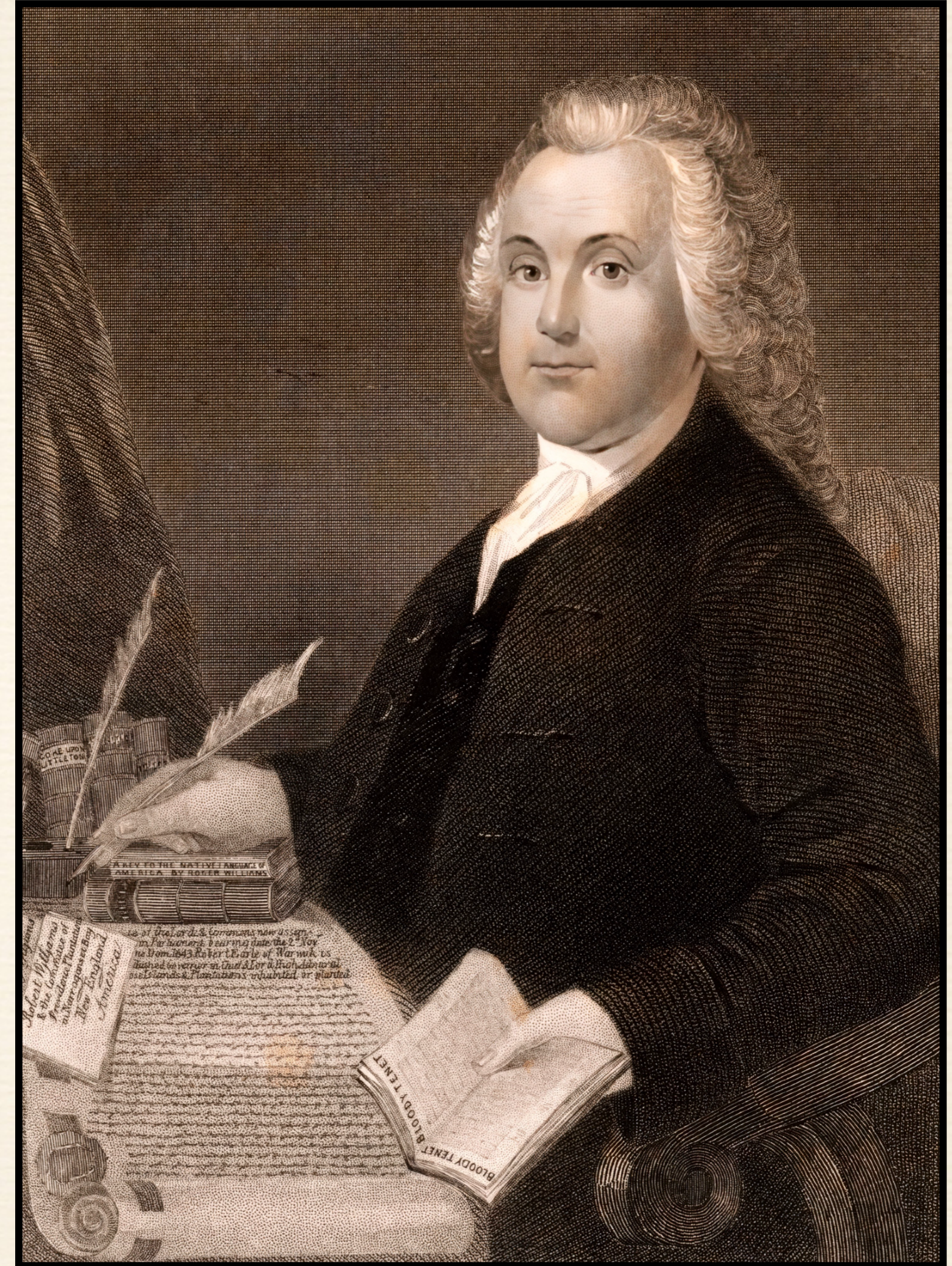
We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the Word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the message of heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But **the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved**, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimonies of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon **unquestionable authority**.—(Letter 95, March 14, **1905**, to the Kresses)

In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. **Not one pin is to be removed from that which *the Lord has established*.** The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?—*The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905.

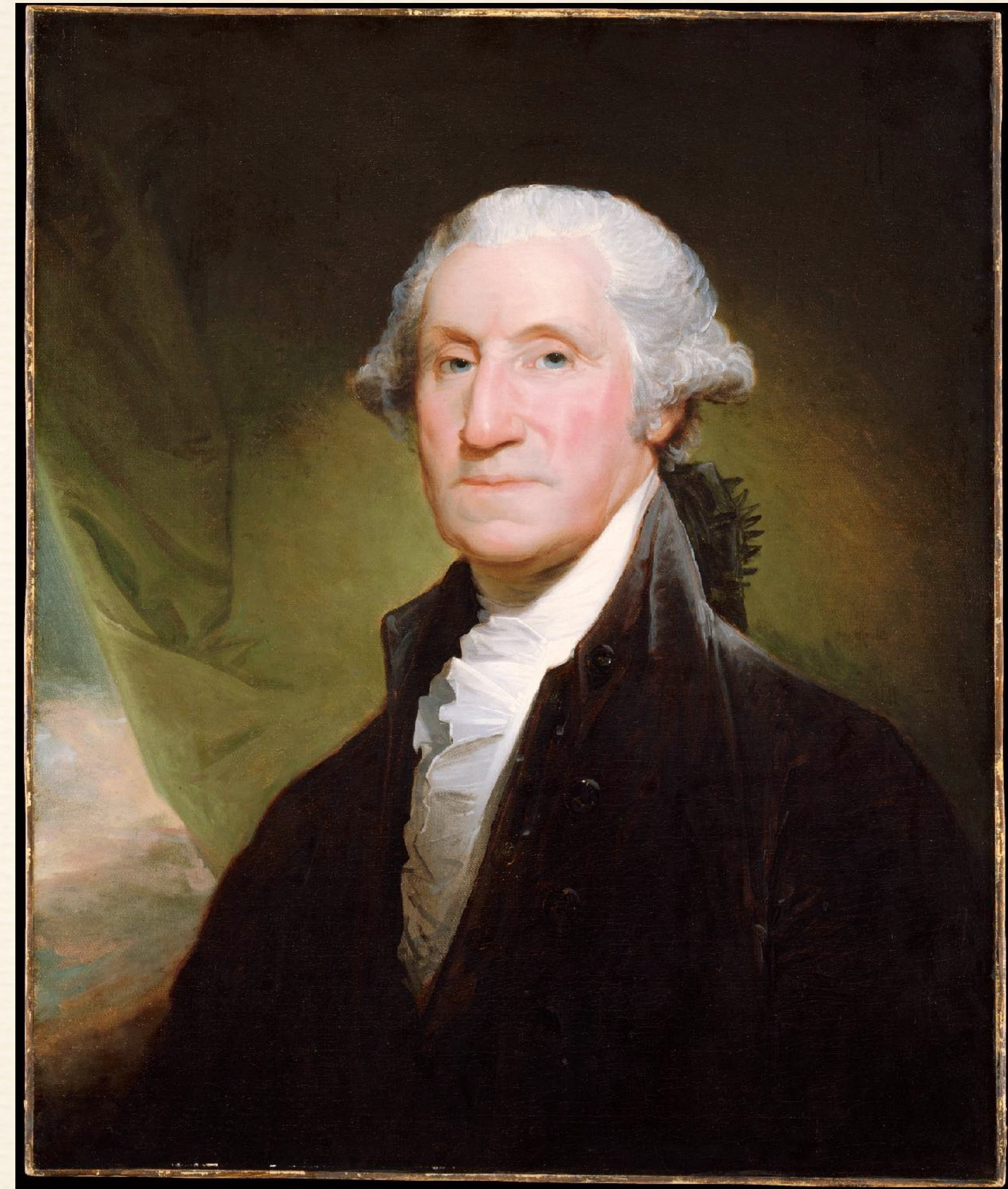
It was the desire for liberty of conscience that inspired the Pilgrims to brave the perils of the long journey across the sea, to endure the hardships and dangers of the wilderness, and with God's blessing to lay, on the shores of America, the foundation of a mighty nation. Yet honest and God-fearing as they were, the Pilgrims did not yet comprehend the great principle of religious toleration. The freedom which they sacrificed so much to secure for themselves, they were not equally ready to grant to others. (*GC88 292.2*)



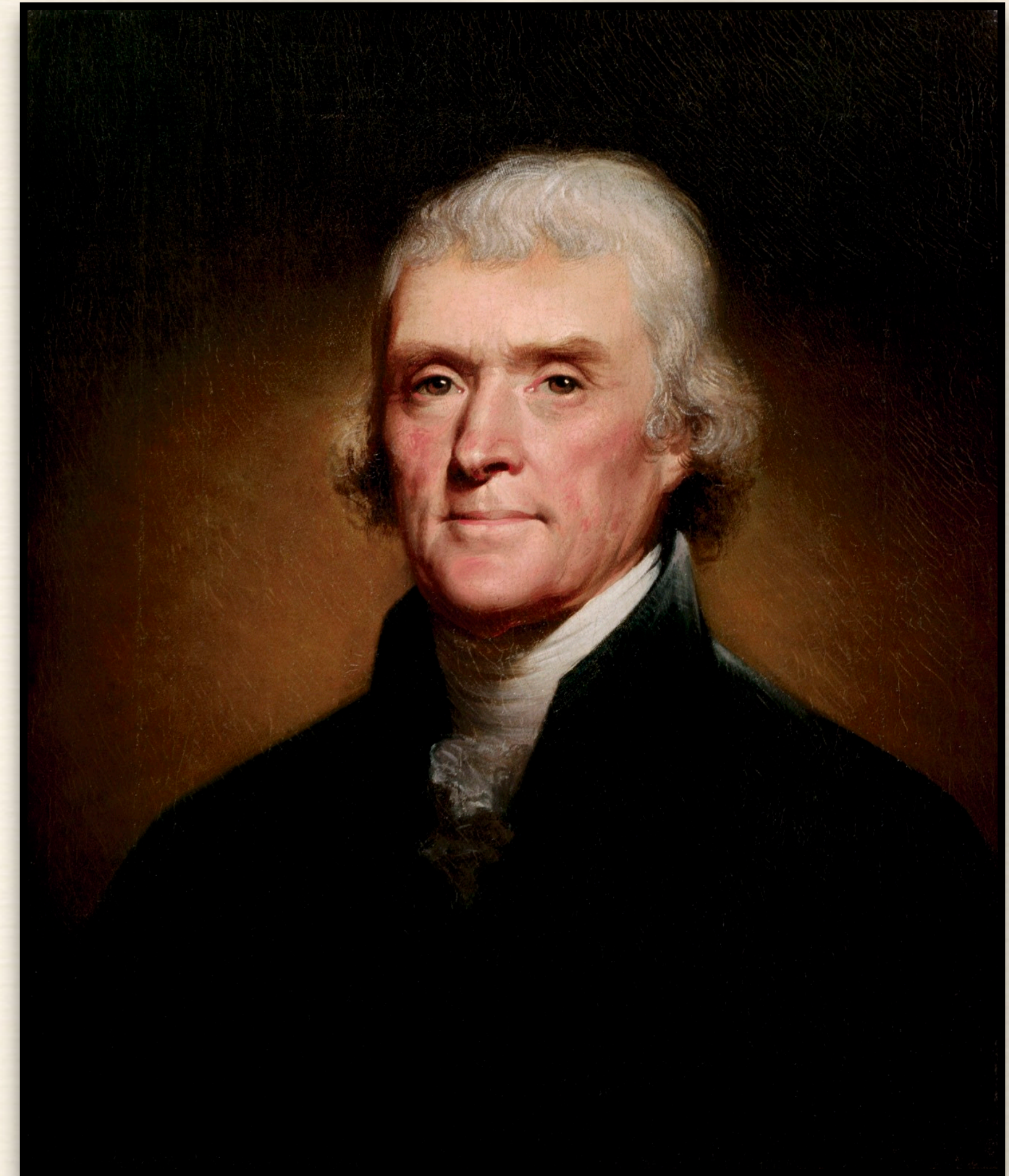
Roger Williams, pioneer of religious liberty, arrived in Boston **1631** and was banned from Massachusetts in **1635**.



❖ George Washington—“Every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience.” (Letter to the United Baptist Churches in Virginia, May 1789)



❖ Thomas Jefferson—“Almighty God hath created the mind free. All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens...are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion...No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion.” (Northeast Wall Jefferson Memorial)





By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, **our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution** as a Protestant and republican government, **and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions**, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near. (*5T* 451.1)

As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, **so may this apostasy be a sign** to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (*5T* 451.2)

God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, **that His people may be prepared** to stand against the tempest of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord will shelter His faithful ones in the day of trouble. We are to be as men waiting for their Lord, not in idle expectancy, but in earnest work, with unwavering faith. It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance. While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord's people may not have mercy or justice. **The Sunday movement** is now making its way in darkness. (*5T* 452.1)

The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending. Its professions are mild and apparently Christian, but when it shall speak it will reveal the spirit of the dragon. It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavor to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience. We should search the Scriptures and be able to give the reason for our faith. Says the prophet: "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (5T 452.1)

Those who have access to God through Christ have important work before them. Now is the time to lay hold of the arm of our strength. The prayer of David should be the prayer of pastors and laymen: “It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law.” Let the servants of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, crying: “Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach.” God has always wrought for His people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and overruling providence. (*5T* 452.2)

He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and disaffected, the haters of God, His truth, and His people can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if He orders it thus. **Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence.** He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict. (*5T* 452.2)

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 done in the midst thereof. (Ezekiel 9:4)

The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. (*5T* 454.1)

While they are consecrating themselves to God, a convincing power will attend their efforts to present the truth to others, and its light will find access to many hearts. We must sleep no longer on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources and avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" and the promise is given, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (5T 454.1)