

rules is to prevent us from harming ourselves and our neighbor with dangerous actions, or damaging consequences.

Thus, when the principle says, "Thou shall not commit adultery," and the norm (or life experience) defines the values to be safeguarded and priorities chosen ("don't do it, not even if you're forced into sin like Joseph"), then the rule will apply the principle and norm by saying what is actually forbidden: "If a man lies with . . . wife of his neighbor" . . . or with "his daughter in law" . . . they have committed an abomination (Lev 20:10-21). The rule will always seek to express the principle and honor the priorities in view of what is good and just for human life.

Christians are called to think, to pray, to sometimes agonize their decisions through, but not totally on their own. We are safe only if we base our decisions on principles found in Scripture, focusing them through norms or priorities exemplified in Scripture, and reaching our decisions through formulation of rules in harmony with those biblical principles and norms. It makes all the difference in the world if we accept Scripture as the Word of God. If we do not accept the Bible as His Word we will miss His creative Word which sustains us (Matt 4:3).

If we ignore the Bible as His Word, we will miss His statement about what is right and wrong, good and evil, given at Sinai.

If we disregard the Bible as His Word we will fail to hear His words on Calvary "It is finished," sin is defeated, you are up against a foe that has been conquered, and we may not enjoy the victorious life offered to us.

Finally, if we scorn the Bible as the Word of God we will most certainly not recognize the resurrection call as His Word, and then "we are of all man most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:19).

To be a human being means to be able to hear the Word of God. In hearing His Word and conforming our lives with the life stories of the Bible, and trusting in God who always knows best, we set our behavior on firm ground (Psalms 112).

Endnote

¹ Robert McAfee Brown, *The Spirit of Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 171-172.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ADVENTIST HERMENEUTICS

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When surveying the history of Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutics, it is helpful to distinguish the hermeneutics underlying essential characteristic doctrines from those nonessential secondary views. It is helpful also to distinguish early hermeneutics from later ones.

Protestant Heritage

In arriving at the doctrines that Seventh-day Adventists consider essential and characteristic of their theology, it can fairly be said that the precursors and pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism "followed basically the hermeneutical principles established during the Reformation that were also held by non-liberal Protestants of their time."¹ The essential characteristic doctrines include the imminence and literalness of the premillennial second coming, the holiness of the seventh-day as the Sabbath, the unconscious sleep of the dead, the presence of spiritual gifts in the end-time (specifically as seen in the ministry of Ellen G. White), and the datability of the pre-advent judgment to 1844.

Influence of William Miller. William Miller, of Low Hampton, New York, helped set the stage for later Adventists by carefully elaborating a list of 14 "Rules for Interpretation."²

Miller's first rule for interpreting the Bible was that "every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible." Miller was determined not to be satisfied with a superficial

reading of a passage or with casually guessing at its meaning. "Every word" was to be accorded "its proper bearing."

His fourth rule expanded his first one, taking in the whole Bible. "To understand doctrine, bring all the Scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence."

His fifth rule put the Bible above all human commentaries. "Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself." Here in essence is the great Protestant principle, "The Bible and the Bible only."

Miller's tenth rule recognized that God gives us common sense and expects us to use it even when studying the Bible. If a conclusion we come to is both out of harmony with the rest of the Bible *and silly*, then it is obviously wrong. "The right construction will harmonize with the Bible, *and* [my italics] make good sense; other constructions will not." We'll come back to this later.

His thirteenth rule shows how very cautiously Miller searched for the fulfillment of prophecy in history. It is a rule that should be honored by every student of prophecy today. When comparing a historical event with a Bible prophecy which you think was fulfilled in that historical event, "if you find every word of the prophecy. . . is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event; but if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development; for God takes care that history and prophecy shall agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed."

Miller's fourteenth and final rule was a spiritual one, involving willingness, by faith, to make any sacrifice Bible study might lead to. "The most important rule of all is, that you must have *faith*. It must be a faith that. . . if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires,—character [reputation], living [livelihood], occupation, friends, home, comforts and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain."

Miller's integrity and sincerity were revealed in his adherence to his own rules. He laid aside all commentaries, letting the Bible stand on its own. He used margin and concordance to let the entire Bible speak to each problem text. He used history books to help him

compare history with prophecy, and—after resisting God for thirteen years—he gave himself unstintingly, at great physical and monetary sacrifice, to the proclamation of the message his Bible study had led him to.

Men who followed Miller, and especially those who contributed conspicuously to essential characteristic Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, shared his ultimate confidence in the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God. They too required interpretations to be consistent not only with immediate context but with the entire Bible, and they rejected traditions that conflicted with the plain sense of the Bible. They also shared Miller's confidence in the historicist interpretation of prophecy, specifically perceiving the year-day principle as scriptural. Like Miller, they held that Spirit and faith are essential to discovery of Bible truth.

Apollos Hale, a leading Millerite editor, looking back early in 1845,³ felt able to say,

It was the Bible alone which produced the Advent movement. Those who embraced the Advent doctrine were distinguished, from the first, by their strict regard for the Bible. This was exclusively peculiar to them. Every question was decided by that. No fair argument has ever been brought from that [i.e., from the Bible] against their doctrine; and to this day the individual who is unfashionably familiar with his Bible, is sure to fall under the odium of their faith [i.e., be accused of being an Adventist]: . . .

Now whereas Miller felt that the Bible was clear enough for any honest student without recourse to Greek and Hebrew, O. R. L. Crosier found that reference to *ta hagia* (Greek, literally, "the holies") was essential to a correct understanding of Christ's current heavenly ministry, and later Seventh-day Adventist writers also appealed to the original languages.⁴

SDA Pioneer Writers. The basic duty of every interpreter was to learn honestly and as fully as possible what the Bible taught. Thus Uriah Smith in the *Review* in 1858, said⁵

The first question to be settled with such is the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves. But in all doctrinal questions which arise in the theological world, there must be some ground upon which we can anchor; there must be some standard by which to test and decide conflicting opinions. Such a standard is the word of God.

A maverick among early Seventh-day Adventist theological writers was G. I. Butler, General Conference President 1871-1874 and 1880-1888. Between January 8 and June 3, 1884, he had the *Review and Herald* publish a series of articles in which he meticulously argued that parts of the Bible were less fully inspired than other parts. Even though Butler himself did not abandon any essential characteristic doctrine, Ellen G. White in 1889⁶ vigorously opposed his proposal, and it does not appear to have been openly adopted by any contemporary Seventh-day Adventist writer.

In contrast to Butler and before Ellen G. White's objections were released, J. H. Waggoner supplied a list of hermeneutical principles that expressly encouraged faith in the uniform authority of all Scripture.⁷ His list included such things as

2. The Bible is absolute truth and anything that disagrees in the slightest particular must be false.
3. The Bible, though composed of many books with many authors, is really one book with one author, which is characterized by oneness of thought and perfect harmony in all its parts.
6. One part of the Bible cannot be fully understood if taken out of specific context or out of context of the Bible as a whole.
7. There is no book in the Bible upon which light is not thrown by every other book in the Bible.

Said Waggoner in another place:⁸

On every Bible doctrine Bible expressions may be found in plain, direct terms, that is, such as contain no symbols or figures, or only such figures and forms of speech as are of common use, and easily understood. These are decisive; and all our interpretations of prophecy must harmonize with them. This is 'true literalism,' and may not be dispensed with, for any consideration.

Different Conclusions from the Reformers

We have said that early Adventist writers were true to the hermeneutical principles of the Reformation; but if this is so, how did they come to some conclusions that differed markedly from those of the Reformers?

The answer is easy. Did not the Reformers come to different conclusions themselves? Uriah Smith thought he understood. He

believed that the literal interpretation of Scripture used by the Reformers was the very basis for theological advance. Said he in his famous commentary on Daniel and Revelation,

There are two general systems of interpretation adopted by different expositors. . . The first is the mystical or spiritualizing system invented by Origen, to the shame of sound criticism and the curse of Christendom; the second is the system of literal interpretation, used by such men as Tyndale, Luther, and all the Reformers, and *furnishing the basis for every advance step* [my italics] which has thus far been made in the reformation from error to truth as taught in the Scriptures.⁹

In addition to the built-in proclivity of Reformation hermeneutics to engender advancing light has been the Seventh-day Adventist usage of principles which were both compatible with the principles of the Reformers and also an extension from them.

Typology: More Extensive. For example, whereas the Reformers made enthusiastic use of the OT types of the cross, Adventist writers made richer use of biblical types and antitypes that were seen to anticipate last-day developments. Miller in 1843 observed, as others had before him, that just as Jesus fulfilled the spring types (Passover, Wave Sheaf, Pentecost) in the spring of the year designated by the 70-week prophecy, so He might be expected to fulfill the autumn types (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles) in the autumn of the year designated by the 2300-day prophecy.

In 1844 S. S. Snow developed this concept to show that Jesus would fulfill the Day of Atonement type on the 10th day of the 7th month, October 22. Immediately after the great disappointment, Millerite editors Joseph Turner and Apollos Hale and Miller himself believed that Christ had in fact commenced the heavenly Day of Atonement on October 22. Hiram Edson, physician F. B. Hahn, and school-teacher O. R. L. Crosier¹⁰ further developed the Day of Atonement concept as they explored the heavenly aspects of the atonement. Crosier's presentation in the *Day-Star Extra* of February 7, 1846 still makes sense to most Seventh-day Adventists and for the most part remains the standard Seventh-day Adventist understanding.

Tradition: Rejection More Extensive. Although the Reformers

rejected some customs and traditions, Adventist writers manifested a sharper rejection of tradition. A statement by Crosier in the famous *Day-Star* Extra illustrates this sharpened rejection. Even on so central a matter as the location of the atonement, Crosier wrote:

But again, they say the atonement was made and finished on Calvary, when the Lamb of God expired. So men have taught us, and so the churches and world believe; but it is none the more true or sacred on that account, if unsupported by Divine authority.

Among traditions which Adventists have challenged more sharply than the Reformers have been the observation of Sunday and the assumed immortality of the soul.

Bible Authority: Complete Scripture. The Reformers insisted on the superlative authority of Scripture, yet Adventists have shown a keener appreciation for the authority of the entire Bible. Luther is well known for his tendency to reject James, make very little use of Hebrews, and set up a canon within the canon. Calvin virtually rejected the book of Revelation. The later Scottish-American reformers, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, contemporaries of the Adventist pioneers, rejected the entire OT.

But Adventists, and especially the Seventh-day Adventists, insisted on taking truth from the entire Bible. In doing this they were unconsciously in harmony with the Sabbatarian Anabaptists as viewed by Gerhard F. Hasel in an early issue of *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. Referring to Oswald Glait and Andreas Fischer, founders of Sabbatarian Anabaptism in the 1520s, Hasel said, "Both men regarded the Old and New Testaments as inseparable and indivisible. In this view they were far in advance of their time."¹¹

Fulfillment of Prophecy in Advent Movement as a Hermeneutical Tool. Luther and some other Reformers honored the historicist interpretation of prophecy, including the year-day principle; but Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, having arrived by the same route at the conviction that the second advent movement was a fulfillment of prophecy, used that fulfillment as a hermeneutical principle in the further development of their message. Once established as scriptural, the fulfillment of prophecy in the second advent movement became a hermeneutical tool for helping establish the Sab-

bath, sanctuary, spiritual gifts, true church, second advent doctrines, etc.

In a letter to Bro. and Sr. Hastings, October 2, 1848, James White announced the topics for a conference to be held in Topsham, Maine—one of the famous Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences of 1848. The topics were to be the Sabbath and the sanctuary. He commented, "In this we honor God's most holy institution [the Sabbath] and acknowledge the work of God in our second Advent experience [leading up to Christ's new work in the heavenly sanctuary]."¹²

In naming his first enduring periodical, "*The Second Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald*," James White summarized the concept that the time had arrived to herald the Sabbath because God had fulfilled prophecy in the second advent movement, which culminated in 1844. More precisely, the time had come to keep the commandments spoken of in the third angel's message because the Millerite second advent movement fulfilled the first and second angels' messages.

Said James White in one of the earliest issues of the *Review*:

THE 2300 DAYS.—This prophetic period has been, and still is, the main pillar of the Advent faith. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we have a correct view of the commencement and termination of this period, in order to understand our present position.¹³

Thus, once the 1844 events were seen to be a fulfillment of prophecy, they became a hermeneutical tool for evaluating other interpretations. The 1844 events served to add an eschatological dynamic to the Sabbath, second-coming, life-style, and missionary concepts of the burgeoning new movement.

Spiritual Gifts: The Ministry of Ellen G. White. The Reformers believed in *spiritual gifts*, but pioneer Seventh-day Adventists held end-time spiritual gifts in especially high regard, particularly as manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. For example, in his *A Seal of the Living God* (Jan. 1849), Bates said,

More than two years are now past since I proved them [the visions] true. Therefore I profess myself a firm believer in her visions so far as I have witnessed, and I have seen her have many. In every instance they have been in accordance with God's word: setting the promises of God, and the closing scenes around us in harmonious, scriptural

order, leaving the hearers the privilege of searching the scriptures for the proof, and also in rebuking sins of omission and commission, without partiality to friend or foe, always causing the hearts of the righteous to rejoice, and the wicked to tremble: exactly the reverse of what God taught Ezekiel was false visions.¹⁴

James White has been celebrated in certain quarters in recent years for a strong editorial of his published in the October 16, 1855 *Review*, in which, among other things, he asked,

What has the REVIEW to do with Mrs. W.'s views [i.e., visions¹⁵]? The sentiments published in its columns are all drawn from the Holy Scriptures. No writer of the REVIEW has ever referred to them [the visions] as authority on any point. The REVIEW for five years [its entire existence thus far] has not published one of them. Its motto has been, "The Bible, and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty." Then why should these men [some of the movement's critics] charge the REVIEW with being a supporter of Mrs. W.'s views?¹⁶

For balance, such a statement should be read in conjunction with a repudiation of creeds found in James White's report on the "Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, October 5 & 6, 1861."¹⁷ White's point is that if we should get up a definitive statement about what we are to believe, God might confound us by directing us through the gift of prophecy to still other biblical truths.

I take the ground that creeds stand in direct opposition to the gifts [referring primarily to Mrs. White's gift of inspiration]. . . . Suppose the Lord, through the gifts, should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed; then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks our creed all over at once.¹⁸

Making a creed [White went on to explain] is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement. God put the gifts into the church for a good and great object; but men who have got up their churches, have shut up the way or have marked out a course for the Almighty. They say virtually that the Lord must not do anything further than what has been marked out in the creed. A creed and the gifts thus stand in direct opposition to each other. Now what is our position as a people? The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time

to time. And in this we take a position against the formation of a creed.¹⁹

Hermeneutics Underlying Nonessential Views

So far we have been considering the hermeneutics underlying essential, characteristic Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. When we turn to secondary views, we can find most of the same hermeneutical principles at work but not always so purely or consistently.

Prophetic Speculations. How are we to explain Uriah Smith's innovation around 1870 that Turkey was the king of the north and Armageddon a local military engagement? Note that Smith was every bit a historicist. Note also that "Turkey" signified vastly more in his day than in ours. Smith wasn't dumb. But was he, perhaps, following headlines too closely?

Following headlines has assumed at times considerable influence as a hermeneutical principle in Christian circles within and without Seventh-day Adventism. When in 1918 newspapers in Europe and America daily reported the seemingly inexorable progress of General Allenby northward to a rendezvous with the Turks at Megiddo;²⁰ and when in 1938 the British general Sir Ian Hamilton said, "I have looked carefully at the map, and the best spot for Europe to meet and throw back Asia is called Megiddo, or, on some maps, Armageddon,"²¹ it was indeed a cautious Adventist evangelist who could resist the impulses of his calling.

But those who resisted were glad. And James White, who did not share Uriah Smith's enthusiasm for Turkey but who refrained from differing with him publicly for the sake of unity on essentials, warned in the *Review* of Nov. 29, 1877, while Turkey was even then engaged in warfare with a European nation,

In exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where the history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness, lest he find himself straying in the field of fancy. . . . What will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question.

It was a caution that seems to have perennial usefulness.

Evangelistic Misapprehensions. In the famous 1888 controversy, both sides understood themselves as historicists and both sides

held a high view of inspiration. But for the moment, an overriding hermeneutical principle of the leading brethren who opposed the new ideas seems to have been evangelism. To change their interpretation of the tenth horn from the Huns to the Alemanns, as fiery young Jones demanded, risked rousing public doubts about the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the eleventh horn (the "little horn," which is the same as the beast that shares the "mark of the beast"), potentially impeding evangelism. And substituting the moral law for the ceremonial law in Galatians 3, as the provokingly amiable young Waggoner urged, would greatly complicate debates with non-Adventist preachers.

Sister White said that in their exclusiveness, both sides were wrong; the schoolmaster in Galatians was both laws and the difference between the two sides was only a mote. She was right! The moral law leads us to Christ by showing us our sins, and the ceremonial law leads us to Christ by showing us that we need a sacrifice for our sins.²² The difference between the two sides was infinitesimal, for they both believed the ceremonial law was done away, that the Sabbath of the moral law is still binding, and that we cannot be saved apart from the cross. But their zeal for evangelism provided a strange hermeneutic keeping them apart and obscuring Scripture.

144,000 and Similar Speculations. If concern for soul-winning operated as a false hermeneutic in 1888, desire for Jesus to come soon in fulfillment of prophecy became an incentive for certain views leading to a burst of speculation concerning the 144,000 around the turn of the century, when Seventh-day Adventist membership was 75,000 and growing fast. For instance, S. N. Haskell and his wife Hetty, on their return from Australia, reported back to Sister White that as they toured the American camp meetings they repeatedly heard that Sabbath keepers should be adopting and giving birth to as many children as possible (the "baby craze"). Sometimes the clamor was accompanied by the argument that in bearing and adopting children, Seventh-day Adventists could the quicker complete the 144,000 and hasten the second coming. The Haskells begged the people to emphasize the three angels' messages instead.²³ Longing for the second coming has provided certain views for interpreting not only the 144,000 but also of the "genera-

tion" that shall not pass in Matthew 24:34²⁴ and the healing of the deadly wound in Revelation 13.

So far we have observed that essential, characteristic Seventh-day Adventist doctrines have been developed through the use of hermeneutics similar to and in certain ways improvements of the great principles of Reformation hermeneutics. We have also seen that some secondary, nonessential views, though basically built on (advanced) Reformation principles, have not been so purely based on such principles. We now need to look at a few criticisms raised from time to time against the major Seventh-day Adventist doctrines.

Scottish Common Sense Realism?

A criticism occasionally raised against William Miller is that he was influenced by Scottish Common Sense Realism. The accusation seems sinister in that the words used are so harmless. If something called "Scottish Common Sense Realism" is bad, it must be very bad.

A moment's reflection will show that the accusation is irrelevant.

Miller's principal contributions to Adventism were his premillennialism and his use of the year-day principle to locate the close of the 2300 days in 1843 (corrected by others to 1844), thereby dating the final judgment and triggering the first angel's message. (The concept of a *pre-advent* judgment was first published by Josiah Litch²⁵ in 1841, independently of Miller.)

To evaluate the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism on Miller, and hence on Seventh-day Adventism, all we need do is ask whether Scottish Common Sense Realism was essential to premillennialism and to the choice of 1843/44 for the close of the 2300 days. The answer in each case is obviously No. Premillennialism was the eschatology of choice during the first three Christian centuries, long before the rise of Scottish Common Sense Realism!

As for 1843/44, LeRoy Edwin Froom has shown that Johannes Petri²⁶ came to essentially Miller's conclusion in Germany before Miller was born. Froom has further shown that the 2300 evening-morning of Daniel 8:14 was first seen to be 2300 years stretching

from Bible times to the Messiah's coming by Nahawendi,²⁷ a Jewish Rabbi living in Mesopotamia in the ninth century, a thousand years before Miller.

Scottish Common Sense Realism was invented by Thomas Reid around 1768. Are we to say that it influenced Nahawendi in the ninth century and the Christians of the first three centuries?

Miller did say, as we saw above, that an interpretation should make sense. Luther wisely did the same in 1521 at Worms, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason. . . ."²⁸

But Miller began his Bible study when he had had enough of *mere* common sense. He had been an active, debating, widely read deist, one who rejected his mother's and uncle's and grandfather's appeals to accept a miracle-working Jesus as Saviour and who fully believed that the Bible was full of inexplicable inconsistencies.

He began his initial Bible study when he suddenly saw himself a sinner in need of a Saviour. When his deist friends reminded him of the Bible's inconsistencies, Miller decided to let the Bible speak for itself, convinced that if it was indeed a revelation from God, it would be an understandable revelation. It was now that he began his famous systematic study, beginning at Genesis 1:1 and proceeding no faster than the Bible, with the help of margin and concordance, could explain itself. In this arduous process, he says, "The Scriptures became my delight, and in Jesus I found a friend."

Seventh-day Adventists do not now, nor have we ever, accepted *all* of Miller's teachings. This observation is important. Indeed, the freedom with which post-disappointment Adventists, including the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, pointed out Miller's errors seems energetic to the point of being disrespectful, until we remember how deeply committed they were to being biblically right.

Most certainly the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers disagreed with Miller on the day to observe the Sabbath, on the immortality of the soul, and on the location of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14. They also disagreed quickly with his cherished interpretation of the "seven times" of Lev 26:18, 21, 24, 28 and on the location of the saints during the millennium. (Miller interpreted the "seven times" as $7 \times 360 = 2520$ years from the first deportation to Babylon which he placed in 677 B.C. to 1843; with virtually all other Christians, he placed the saints on earth during the millennium.)

Superb Bible student that he was, Miller made mistakes, some of them being mistakes that only a superb Bible student would have been in a position to make. His mistakes were corrected by his followers from the Bible, some being modified and others rejected outright. No Seventh-day Adventist fundamental belief is based uncritically on what Miller taught. Only those aspects of Millerism survived that stood the rigid test of sound hermeneutics based on the belief that the whole Bible is the Word of God.

We are happy to remind ourselves that Dr. William Shea has presented to the Daniel and Revelation committee a collection of over 20 evidences within the Bible supportive of the year-day principle.²⁹

The chief thing, then, that Seventh-day Adventists got from Miller, the interpretation of Daniel 8:14 that terminates the 2300 days in the fall of 1844, can be substantiated from Scripture without reference to Miller. It was substantiated from the Bible before Miller was born and has been done so again and again since his death. The interpretation does not depend on Scottish Common Sense Realism.

"Patchword Theology"?

Several years ago I read an article³⁰ which, in calling for Seventh-day Adventists to produce a systematic theology, complained that the bundle of doctrines we had assembled so far was a mere "patchwork theology," not bad for "fundamentalists" but "inappropriate" for the Seventh-day Adventist church of today.

The article made me wonder why, if our message is so disjointed, some of us, given an interested non-Adventist ear, tend to cover all our doctrines in a single long evening. Each doctrine seems to dovetail seamlessly into every other. Interpretation of Daniel 2 leads to the second coming, then to Daniel 7 and the 1260 days and the mark of the beast and coming Sunday laws, to the change of the Sabbath and true Sabbath keeping, then to Daniel 8 with 1844 and the cleansing of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment and the sleep of the dead as they await the judgment and the first angel's message that announces the judgment and the second angel with the fall of Babylon and Revelation 18:1-4 with the call to come out of Babylon and back to Revelation 12:17 for the remnant church to

join when you come out of Babylon and on to the Spirit of Prophecy and then to health reform and dress and entertainment standards and *Steps to Christ* with its righteousness by faith, and *The Desire of Ages* with its focus on Christ, and *The Great Controversy*, which brings us back to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

"Patchwork theology?" The writer of *The Great Controversy* spoke of a "system" existing in her day, a century ago. "The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a *complete system of truth, connected and harmonious*, showing that God's hand had directed the great Advent Movement, and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people."³¹

"*Proof Texting*." We have looked at two criticisms, one involving Scottish Common Sense Realism and the other invoking "patchwork theology." A third criticism is that the pioneers and their followers based their characteristic interpretations on simplistic "proof texting."

Pejoratively, "proof texting" means basing a doctrine on a Bible verse or Bible verses in reckless disregard of context. But if by the term we mean going through the Bible and sensitively and wisely collecting together all of its statements on a particular theme, and if when we get through we have an accumulation of texts that justifiably prove a particular Bible truth, we have done nothing wrong. We have in fact helped clarify the Bible and render its message persuasive.

If we ask students to memorize key passages that justifiably help to prove a Bible doctrine, we have not only not done wrong, we have done right. There is every justification for asking people to memorize the fourth commandment as proof that the Sabbath is to be kept, and Revelation 1:7 as proof that Jesus will not come secretly but visibly, for "every eye shall see Him," and so on. As far back as the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great acknowledged that when he preached, the people asked him to provide proof texts to support his message.³² Much of the complaining I have heard against proof texts since around 1960 has come from people who have seemed unwilling to memorize God's holy Word.

Personally, I choose not to be intimidated out of the appropriate use of proof texts. At the same time, we recognize that

there is an illegitimate, out-of-context use of so-called proof texts. Even Millerite preachers saw steam trains in the flaming chariots of Nahum 2. And genuine out-of-context proof texting appears even today as an unconscious hermeneutical principle in some controversial teachings. We cite two examples.

John's statement in Revelation 21:22 that he saw no temple in New Jerusalem as it descended to earth after the millennium has been used in recent decades to prove that there is no literal temple anywhere in heaven at the present time, in spite of numerous references to it in other parts of Revelation and elsewhere.

Another passage that has undergone out-of-context proof texting is Galatians 3:28 as employed in the crusade for women's ordination at the expense of its immediate context about salvation and in spite of its larger context in Paul's writings as a whole. Thus, a century after Seventh-day Adventists argued about Galatians 3:24 they now argue about 3:28, only four verses removed!

Ellen G. White herself was no promoter of out-of-context proof texting. She complained vigorously that

In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret them to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible.³³

Sanctuary Doctrine Based on Entire Bible

In closing this article, we remind ourselves that the "sanctuary doctrine," the most distinctive of all Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, is based on the entire Bible, with careful attention paid to context at every point.

The basic teaching of the existence of a heavenly sanctuary and its need for purification are seen in Hebrews 8 and 9. The coming of Father and Son to a new location within the heavenly

sanctuary at judgment hour is seen in Daniel 7:9-14, 22, a passage directly parallel to the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14. The date 1844 for the judgment is based on Daniel 8:14 (which is in direct parallel with the judgment scene in Daniel 7); but even if the 2300-day prophecy were somehow proved misleading, the 1260-days, which also locate the judgment subsequent to 1798 (see Daniel 7:25, 26; 12:7) occur twice in Daniel and no fewer than five times in Revelation. Daniel 12:1-2 and Revelation 20:6 confirm that judgment must precede resurrection and thus must begin prior to the second coming (hence the term "pre-advent judgment").

Daniel 8:14, with its reference to the cleansing of the sanctuary (in parallel with the judgment scene in Dan 7) links the judgment with the Day of Atonement (which was a day of both cleansing and judgment) in Leviticus 16 and 23, chapters that emphasize the spiritual self-examination essential to the personal cleansing which is to accompany the cleansing of the sanctuary. In the end time this cleansing results in the Christ-centered, faith-filled commandment keeping of Revelation 14:12.

Responsible comparison of the spring types (Passover, Wave Sheaf, Pentecost) with the autumn types (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles) points to October 22, 1844 for the commencement of the heavenly judgment. It also confirms the concept of 1844 as inaugurating the antitypical Day of Atonement.

Malachi 3:1-6 points to a cleansing of the temple and of the "sons of Levi" at some point other than Christ's first coming (which coming resulted in the abandonment rather than cleansing of the Jerusalem temple). Acts 3:19, 20 promises a blotting out of repented-for sins near the second coming, thus confirming the Day of Atonement concept of sin removal. In the wedding parables of Matt 25:1-13; 22:1-14; and Luke 12:35-40 (cf. Luke 19:11, 12) the Bridegroom comes to earth after a heavenly wedding that includes judgment. Additional wedding imagery in Ephesians 5:21-33, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7-8, etc., round out the picture of Christ's purification of His corporate bride.

The three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 announce the arrival of God's judgment hour while the gospel is still available (confirming the concept of a pre-advent judgment), describe Christ-centered commandment keeping, and call for separation from fallen chur-

ches. 1 Peter 4:17 establishes the principle that judgment begins with God's people (cf. Ezek 9:6); and Matthew 7:21 and 24:13, and many other passages teach the doctrine of perseverance on which the whole concept of judgment is firmly founded.

The Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the "sanctuary" is not based on an isolated proof text but was developed from a large body of inter-related data located in both Old and New Testaments. And if this most distinctive Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is soundly biblical, we can reaffirm categorically that the other essential characteristic doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist message are also fully rooted in sound hermeneutical principles.

Endnotes

1 So R. Dean Davis, "Hermeneutical Principles of Early Adventist Interpreters" (Research paper, Andrews University, 1976), in his conclusions after looking for hermeneutical principles in Adventist writers from Miller through Uriah Smith.

2 Davis, "Hermeneutical Principles," pp. 1-6, analyzes and reorganizes Miller's 14 rules, getting 22 rules, and when analyzing Miller's writings, discovers 7 more, making in effect 29 rules.

3 Apollon Hale, "Has the Bridegroom Come?" *Advent Herald*, February 26 and March 5, 1845, reprinted as "Brother Hale's Article," *Review and Herald*, September 16 and October 7, 1851, with a warm recommendation by editor James White.

4 O. R. L. Crosier in "The Law of Moses," *The Day-Star*, Extra, Feb. 7, 1846, showed that "the most holy place" is not an essential translation of *ta hagia* in Hebrews. He was arguing that Hebrews does not teach an entry of Christ into the most holy place at His ascension, leaving room for His entry there in 1844.

5 Uriah Smith, "Miscellaneous Observations," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 11, 1858, p. 196, in Davis, "Hermeneutical Principles," p. 90.

6 See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:23.

7 See J. H. Waggoner, "A Few Principles of Interpretation," *The Signs of the Times*, Jan. 6, 1887, p. 8, in Davis, "Hermeneutical Principles," pp. 26-29.

8 J. H. Waggoner, "The Kingdom of God," p. 5, in Davis, "Hermeneutical Principles," p. 87.

9 Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1897, 1907), p. 4.

10 I recently had the helpful pleasure of working with Martin Hanna in a small doctoral seminar as he explored and analyzed Crosier's hermeneutical principles.

11 Gerhard F. Hasel, "Sabbatarian Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century: Part II," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 6 (1968): 28.

12 Cf. also Joseph Bates, *Seventh Day Sabbath*, 1st ed. (New Bedford, 1846), p. 24, "In the xiv ch. Rev. 6-11, he saw three angels following each other in succession: the first one preaching the everlasting gospel (*second advent doctrine*) [my italics]; 2d, announcing the fall of Babylon; 3d, calling God's people out of her by showing the awful destruction that awaited all such as did not obey. He sees the separation and cries out, 'Here is the patients (*sic*) of the Saints, here are they that keep the *commandments* of God and the faith of Jesus.'" Cf. also Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, 1849), pp. 34-35, "I say therefore, unless it can be clearly proved that the five messengers in vii:1,2, are angelic beings, then I have here the right exposition. If all other difficulties which I have mentioned could be removed, and that would be exceedingly difficult, yet cannot this, *unless we yield our history*, [my italics] and if we do that we shall fail to find where the sealing messengers

come from." Bates, *A Seal*, p. 17, interprets the first angel of Rev. 14:7 as fulfilled by the "Advent people" preaching in unison from the same chronological charts, in 1842 and 1844.

13 James White, "Our Present Position," *Review and Herald*, Dec., 1850.

14 Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, 1849), p. 31.

15 Cf. the title of her earliest booklet, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, long available as the first part of *Early Writings*. Cf. also Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 32, "The Lord gave me the following view in 1847, while the brethren were assembled on the Sabbath, . . ." and *ibid.*, p. 48, "The Lord gave me a view, January 26, 1850, which I will relate."

16 Facsimile available in *Witness of the Pioneers* (Washington: The Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1961), p. 9.

17 See *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1861.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

19 *Idem.*

20 The anticipated rendezvous at Megiddo never took place.

21 Quoted in a Voice of Prophecy lesson series, No. 7.

22 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:233-235.

23 Hetty Haskell to Ellen G. White, February 27 and July? (*sic*), 1900, in Laurel Ann Nelson Damsteegt, "Humble Giants: A Study of Stephen and Hetty Haskell," (Term paper, Andrews University, 1977), pp. 24-29.

24 The Greek word translated "generation" in Matt 24:34 is translated "brood (of vipers)" in Matt 23:33.

25 Josiah Litch, *An Address to the Public, and Especially to the Clergy* (Boston, 1841), p. 37, states clearly that "the Scriptures place the judgment" prior to the "resurrection." A year later Litch's *Prophetic Expositions* (2 vols., Boston, 1842), 1:50-54, insisted that "the trial must precede the execution," a proposition "so clear . . . that it is sufficient to state it." Litch cited John 5 and Rev 20, which show that some people will be resurrected "to life" at the second coming, and others will be resurrected "to death" at a later time, indicating that the judgment—which decides who is to be resurrected when—comes before resurrection.

26 LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1946-1954), 2:713-719.

27 *Ibid.*, 2:196, 240.

28 Cf. also John Wesley to "an old friend," November 27, 1750, in Richard P. Heitzenrater and Frank Baker, gen. eds, *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*, 20:371, "I am for both [faith and reason]: for faith to perfect my reason, that, by the Spirit of God not putting out the eyes of my understanding but enlightening them more and more, I may 'be ready to give a clear', scriptural 'answer to every man that asketh me a reason of the hope that is in me'."

29 William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 1 (Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1982).

30 James Londis, "Can We Trust the Church's Theologians?" *Sligoscope*, April, 1981: "Right now we have a patchwork theology that is inappropriate for the main work of the church." Londis's appeal in this pastoral letter is for a theology that can answer the theological questions of non-Adventist theologians and the practical questions of ordinary people today. There is reason to believe he might now write the article differently.

31 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

32 Gregory the Great, *Commentary on Job*, Dedicatory Letter, in LCC 9:185.

33 Ellen G. White, *Maranatha*, p. 132.

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DIVINE LOVE, THE DELAY OF THE ADVENT AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

By Mark A. Finley

Speaker, It Is Written Telecast

Introduction

One hot summer day a thirteen year old boy sat on a wooden barrel in the cool recesses of an old Vermont general store idly whittling on a sprig from a maple tree. At two o'clock the wind-up grandfather clock on the wall began to chime. But the mechanism jammed and the clock continued to strike. On its nineteenth stroke the dreaming lad suddenly aroused and dashing into the street began yelling out, "It's never been this late before!" It's never been this late either for students of Bible prophecy!

In his second epistle, the apostle Peter appeals for a deep heart preparation for the coming of Christ (2 Pet 3:1-13). The apostle makes three significant points: (1) How you live affects what you believe, and what you believe affects how you live; (2) The delay of the Advent has not occurred because of any failure on God's part. (3) It's possible to hasten the Advent.

Lifestyle Determines Theology

Peter makes his first significant point in vs. 3-4, "Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" In effect, they are saying, "He is not coming." That's revealed in the last part of their query: "For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."