

Old Paths

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

The secret of the LORD is with them that
fear him; and he will show them his
covenant. Psalm 25:14

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**Fall Creek Falls in Fall Creek Falls State Park in
Tennessee – site of the 1889 HSDA camp meeting**



Fundamental Pillars — Judgment in the Light of the Sanctuary

Why the Investigative Judgment Is Good News for God's People

By Allen Stump

“Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.” (Revelation 14:7)

Few experiences in life cause an immediate emotional response quite like seeing flashing blue lights in a rearview mirror.

Even if we have done nothing wrong, most of us instinctively ease our foot off the accelerator. The sight of a police officer often awakens thoughts of accountability, guilt, or punishment. In much the same way, the word *judgment* tends to produce feelings of uneasiness. We imagine a courtroom, a stern judge, and a verdict that will determine our future.

Unfortunately, many Christians carry that same anxiety into their understanding of God's judgment.

For some, the judgment is little more than a celestial audit of every mistake they have ever made. Others prefer not to think about it at all. Still others assume that the doctrine belongs exclusively to Seventh-day Adventist theology and has little relevance for the broader Christian experience.

Yet Scripture presents judgment in an entirely different light.

The Bible does not portray judgment as the enemy of the gospel. Rather, it presents judgment as the final and public demonstration of the gospel's success. Through the sanctuary service, God reveals not only that he judges, but how he judges and why his judgment is ultimately good news for every person who has placed his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have long understood that the sanctuary is the central pillar around which our prophetic and theological identity revolves. Ellen White wrote:

The scripture which above all others had been both the

foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409.1)

To understand the judgment, we must first understand the sanctuary.

God's desire to dwell with his people

The sanctuary story begins with one of the most beautiful invitations in Scripture:

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

God did not establish the sanctuary to separate himself from humanity. He established it to dwell among humanity.

This truth is easily overlooked. When many people think of the sanctuary, they think of barriers: curtains, veils, restricted access, and sacred spaces. Yet every feature of the sanctuary was designed to reveal God's desire to draw near to his people without consuming them in his holiness. Psalm 77:13 declares: “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.”

If we wish to understand God's ways, we must look where he has chosen to reveal them. The sanctuary reveals a God who continually moves toward sinners:

- The altar of sacrifice speaks of substitution.
- The laver speaks of cleansing.
- The candlestick speaks of illumination.
- The table of showbread speaks of divine provision.
- The altar of incense speaks of intercession.
- The ark of the covenant speaks of law upheld by mercy.
- Every article points to Christ.

Ellen White observed:

THE SANCTUARY AT A GLANCE

Location	Primary Symbol	Spiritual Meaning
Courtyard	Altar of Burnt Offering	Sacrifice and Justification
Courtyard	Laver	Cleansing
Holy Place	Candlestick	Divine Light/Christ's Truth
Holy Place	Table of Showbread	God's Provision/Bread of Life
Holy Place	Altar of Incense	Christ's Intercession
Most Holy Place	Ark of the Covenant	Law, Mercy, and Judgment

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain's refusing to accept God's plan in the school of obedience to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 233.2)

From Eden onward salvation has always centered in Jesus.

The mercy seat and the throne of God

At the center of the sanctuary stood the ark of the covenant.

Within it rested the Ten Commandments—the unchanging transcript of God's character. Above it sat the mercy seat, overshadowed by two cherubim fashioned from pure gold.

The symbolism is profound. God's law was not discarded in order to save sinners. Instead, mercy rests above the law, demonstrating that redemption satisfies the claims of justice without abolishing righteousness. David wrote:

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. (Psalm 89:14)

Again:

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Psalm 85:10)

Ellen White adds an inspired commentary:

In the sacrifice of Christ for fallen men, mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. When these attributes are separated from the most wonderful and apparently successful work, there is nothing to it. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 209.4)

At Calvary, heaven's apparent dilemma was resolved. Justice did not destroy mercy, nor did mercy nullify justice. Both found perfect expression in the person of Jesus Christ.

The judgment, therefore, is not simply God attempting to determine whether sinners are worthy of salvation. It is God

demonstrating before the entire universe that his dealings with sinners have always been just, merciful, and true.

Why 1844 matters

Few dates in Adventist history carry as much significance as October 22, 1844.

The Great Disappointment remains one of the defining moments in the Advent movement. Thousands of believers anticipated the visible return of Christ based upon their understanding of Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

When Christ did not appear, many abandoned their faith. Others returned to their former churches. A small group, however, returned to Scripture, determined to understand where they had gone wrong.

The issue, they discovered, was not the prophetic period, but the their understanding of the sanctuary.

The Millerites had assumed that the sanctuary referred to the earth. Through careful biblical study, Hiram Edson and others came to understand that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 was the heavenly sanctuary described in Hebrews.

Ellen White later wrote:

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. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.1)

Instead of descending to earth, Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin the final phase of his priestly ministry.

Far from disproving the Advent movement, 1844 revealed Christ's continuing work on behalf of humanity.

The investigative judgment: A biblical reality

The phrase *investigative judgment* does not appear in Scripture, but the concept unquestionably does.

Daniel saw the scene in vision: “The judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:10).

Notice several important details:

THE PROPHETIC TIMELINE

457 B.C. — Decree of Artaxerxes to restore Jerusalem

A.D. 27 — Baptism and anointing of Christ

A.D. 31 — Crucifixion

A.D. 34 — Gospel turns to the Gentiles

A.D. 1844 — Cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary begins

“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” — Daniel 8:14

1. A judgment takes place before Christ receives his kingdom.
2. Books are opened.
3. Heavenly beings observe the proceedings.
4. The judgment occurs prior to the second coming.

Likewise, Revelation declares: “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

If Christ brings rewards with him, then a judgment necessarily precedes his return.

Peter adds: “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17).

Many Christians recoil at the thought that heaven examines human lives. Yet Scripture repeatedly affirms that such a judgment exists.

The crucial question is this: Who stands beside us in that judgment?

Christ our advocate

The sanctuary message reaches its highest expression in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

¹ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: *We have* such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. (Hebrews 8:1–2)

Notice the present tense: *we have*. Christ is not merely a Savior of the past. He is a present High Priest. He intercedes continually for his people.

John provides one of the most comforting promises in all of Scripture:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (1 John 2:1)

Imagine entering a courtroom where your elder brother serves as your advocate while your heavenly father presides in perfect justice and love. This is not a courtroom designed to condemn God’s children. It is a courtroom designed to vindicate them in every way possible that is consistent with righteousness and love.

Ellen White explains:

Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 484.2)

What an astonishing picture! Christ does not deny our failures. He presents his merits in their place. This is why Paul can confidently declare:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

Judgment does not remove assurance. Properly understood, it establishes assurance.

Vindicating God’s character before the universe

One of the least appreciated aspects of the judgment is that it is not merely about humanity—it is also about God.

Throughout history, Satan has questioned God’s character:

- Is God truly just?
- Is he arbitrary?
- Can his law be kept?
- Does he treat his creatures fairly?

The judgment answers those questions forever.

Paul writes: “That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged” (Romans 3:4).

In a sense, the entire universe witnesses the proceedings. Why was one person saved while another was lost? Why did God permit suffering? Why has sin been allowed to continue for six thousand years? The judgment provides transparent answers. Ellen White wrote:

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 504.1)

God is not afraid of examination. His government welcomes it!

When the books are finally closed, every created being will confess: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

Living in the antitypical Day of Atonement

Adventists have long referred to our time as the antitypical Day of Atonement. This expression simply means that we are living during the heavenly fulfillment of the ancient Day of Atonement.

Ancient Israel was instructed to "afflict" their souls. It was a day of solemn reflection and repentance.

Likewise, ours is an age of heart searching. This does not mean living in fear. It means living intentionally. It means asking:

- Where are my affections?
- What occupies my thoughts?
- Have I fully surrendered my life to Christ?
- Am I allowing his righteousness to work in me?

The judgment is not a call to anxiety. It is a call to preparation. We have been warned:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425.1)

That statement has often produced fear. Yet it should also inspire confidence, for the same Christ who will one day conclude his intercession is presently preparing a people to stand. Let us not forget:

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333.1)

Christ never calls us to accomplish in our own strength what he has promised to accomplish through his grace.

The end of sin

The first angel's message proclaims:

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Revelation 14:6). Notice what this message ultimately promises. It promises that:

- Sin will end.
- Death will end.

- Suffering will end.
- Injustice will end.
- Separation from God will end.

The judgment is God's final answer to the problem of evil.

Eventually, Revelation 22:11 will become reality:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (Revelation 22:11)

Human character will become fixed forever. For the re-deemed, this is not a terrifying prospect. It means they will never again struggle with temptation, grief, or failure! What a promise for the people of God.

Imagine a universe where no child suffers, no grave is dug, no tears are shed, and no sin ever rises again. That is where the judgment is leading.

Judgment is good news

For generations, Adventists have rightly proclaimed that we are living in the hour of God's judgment.

Sometimes we have proclaimed it with solemnity. Sometimes we have proclaimed it with urgency. Occasionally, we have proclaimed it with unnecessary fear.

But perhaps it is time to recover the truth that the sanctuary has been teaching all along: Judgment is good news.

- It is good news because Jesus is our High Priest.
- It is good news because mercy still pleads.
- It is good news because the books of heaven testify to God's justice.
- It is good news because evil will not endure forever.
- And it is good news because every person whose life is hidden with Christ can stand before the universe clothed in his righteousness.

Paul's words remain the final answer to every fear concerning judgment: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

If our lives are hidden in Christ, then judgment is not the end of the gospel.

It is the public declaration that the gospel has accomplished its work.

And when the final verdict is rendered, all heaven will rejoice that mercy and truth have indeed met together, and that righteousness and peace have kissed each other.



Youth's Corner—Mountain Hollow Memories

Of Geese and Goslings

By Grace Cox

Sister Grace Cox grew up in what is now called Smyrna Valley and is writing letters to my granddaughter, Gillian, telling her about her growing up while weaving spiritual lessons into them. This is the third of a series of letters we know will bless you. Pastor Allen Stump)

Dear Gillian,

Let me tell you about the geese and goslings we had when I was the little Girl of the Hollow. I seem to remember that all of our mama geese were gray with white chests and underbellies, and the papa geese, the ganders, were always white. I suppose they were those colors due to their particular breed.

My papa built nests out of brush for the mama geese to hatch their eggs, over on the hill on the other side of the lane, across the creek. It was fun to watch the ganders when the eggs hatched and the fuzzy yellow goslings followed Mama Goose off the nest. The papa ganders would dance and carry on, as if they were very proud of their newly hatched babies, as if they had done the hatching all by themselves!

As a three or four year old little girl, I loved to follow Mama Goose and her oh-so-cute babies around. But it made mama goose nervous. One day, I guess she had had enough of it, and when I got a bit too close for her comfort, she turned and attacked me, flapping her wings and flogging my legs with them and pinching my arms with her big yellow bill. I screamed bloody murder!! My father wasn't far away, and he came running and got the goose off me. I probably learned my lesson that day—to give mama goose and her babies their proper respect by loving them from a safe distance.

Remembering that experience reminds me of our heavenly father: Even mothers that wear feathers or those that wear fur all love their babies and will protect them from harm, even at the risk of their own lives. God risked all when He sent Jesus to rescue us from the evil one, and my father, out of love for his little girl, risked getting flogged himself when he rushed to my rescue. Love, whether the human or critter kind, is from God, for "God is love" (1 John 4:8b).

About once a year, my mother would pluck the goose down from their tummies and chest areas, and she used the down to stuff pillow ticks and mattresses. If you've never slept on a featherbed mattress, you've missed quite an experience. It is sooooo soft, you sink right into it. Makes a cozy bed for winter, but they can be rather stifling during hot summer nights. To make up the bed, you learned to fluff the

mattress and smooth it out on top so it looked neat. But then you could not sit on the bed to put on your shoes as that would ruin the looks of it, and you'd have to start over, fluffing it and smoothing it out. I wouldn't want a down-filled mattress now.

When plucking the geese, Mama always sat in a chair over under the shade of our log barn roof. They didn't like to be plucked. She had to hold them firmly on her lap, and it had to be a calm day, because the down could easily blow away on the breeze. I don't think it was painful to them at all to be plucked; they needed that overgrowth of downy feathers to be plucked away for the summer. But it sure hurt their feelings! They acted ashamed of their nakedness at first, but soon new down grew, and they got over it.

Once, for some reason that I cannot remember, my mom wrapped a certain goose egg in a towel and laid it on the floor behind our wood-burning cook stove in the kitchen where the temperature must have been just right for hatching it. And after a few weeks, sure enough, a baby gosling pecked its way out of the shell, and there it was—my own pet gosling!

I must have imprinted on its mind as its mother as it then followed me around everywhere. I could pick it up and hold it and how I loved that little thing! But it wasn't exactly healthy. Something was wrong in its balance and nervous system. As it followed me, it would waddle along, as goslings do, for several steps, then it would tumble forward as if doing a somersault. Then it would jump up and waddle, then somersault again, over and over. After a while, maybe a week or two, it tumbled over one day and didn't get up. My sweet pet gosling died. I grieved, so sad for my loss. But it gave me a memory I've treasured.

I learned at a young age that nothing lives forever in this world. But it won't be that way when God remakes this earth for eternity! All will be perfect then. Nothing will ever get sick or die. Don't you look forward to that time? I certainly do. We feel sad now and often cry over many things. But then, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ... (Revelation 21:4).

With love in Jesus,

Miss Grace
who was once The Girl of the Hollow



Health Matters

By Sheri Stump

Health for the time of trouble

A dear Christian lady recently asked me what she was to do when the time of tribulation came and we are instructed to flee. She is not healthy, She cannot walk fast, let alone run!

This is a great question. I will share what I answered her at the end of this article. For now let us consider health in these times.

We surely are living in the last days of this earth's history, and our health is vitally important.

The Bible says:

Beloved I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospers. (3 John 2)

What does it mean to prosper and be in health?

Health covers a broad range, including the body, soul, and spirit of the person.

Physical health, mental and emotional health, financial health and spiritual health are all very important. Each aspect of health is vital to our survival on this earth and our fitness for heaven.

Ellen White states it like this in her book *Counsels for the Church*:

... More than forty years ago [in 1863] the Lord gave us special light on health reform, but how are we walking in that light? How many have refused to live in harmony with the counsels of God! As a people, we should make advancement proportionate to the light received. It is our duty to understand and respect the principles of health reform. On the subject of temperance we should be in advance of all other people; and yet there are among us well-instructed members of the church, and even ministers of the gospel, who have little respect for the light that God has given upon this subject. They eat as they please and work as they please. (Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, p. 235.1)

We are instructed in the Bible to be good soldiers of the Lord. We need health to be good soldiers. We need health to be able to do the work God has for us to do.

We read:

³ Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

What does it mean to 'endure hardship'?

How can we endure hardness as a good soldier, if we are weak and sick?

Jesus told us:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Jesus said in this world we shall have tribulation. How shall we endure tribulation, if we are weak and sick? We read in Philippians about suffering for Christ's sake:

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; (Philippians 1:29)

And in Second Timothy, we find:

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

When we suffer persecution for Christ, we have the assurance that God is with us. He will strengthen us and guide us through the persecution, but our physical health and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is foundational to our success here. We need to hear his voice, and we must be able to distinguish the voice of God from the voice of the enemy of souls.

What we read in the book of Romans gives us encouragement:

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)

In Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10-20, we read about the spiritual armour God instructs us to wear.

We are to put on this spiritual armour so that we will be able to stand strong for the Lord. We find in these verses that our battle is not with flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

So, our spiritual armour includes our loins girt about with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We must have the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

With the armour of the Lord in place, we are ready to stand for the truth but we must also have health to stand. It takes energy to be a good soldier.

Health is a synergistic package.

When we are failing in one area of health, all areas of health are effected. If just one aspect of health is out of balance all the other aspects of health will be challenged.

Depression can cripple the Lord's work.

Poor physical health damages spiritual growth and clarity of thought.

Mental anxiety and stress can cloud reason.

Spiritual anemia leads to spiritual blindness. Doctrinal error may result and place us at high risk of missing out on eternity in heaven with our Savior.

Health reform includes physical, mental/emotional, financial, and spiritual health.

True health is defined not just by the absence of disease, but by how well your physical, mental, emotional, financial, spiritual and even social systems function together.

Ellen White said in the following quote;

Again and again God has declared that obedience to His commandments will bring eternal life. He charged the children of Israel to hearken diligently to His law. And we, too, are bidden to obey this law. On obedience to it depend our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. In obedience there is life and health, peace and assurance. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, Ms 18, 1905, par. 30)

Health is an ongoing lifestyle practice rather than a quick fix.

Our health is influenced everyday by the multiple choices that we make.

We have been taught that our bodies function at their best when we are breathing deeply of fresh, pure air; when we have periods of sunshine each day and when we abstain from harmful substances, such as drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, environmental pollutants, and chemicals additives. We know that we need proper nutrition, adequate sleep, hydration, and cleanliness from drinking water and bathing regularly. We also know that we need consistent movement to aid in blood circulation and to strengthen our muscles. A vitally important aspect of health is trusting in God which brings peace of mind.

The Bible speaks of physical health in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 and says that our bodies belong to God.

¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)

Can you grasp the fact that our body is a place where God desires to dwell?

Ellen White speaks of the importance of health in her book *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*:

In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary,—temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking. Our heavenly Father sent the light of health reform to guard against the evils resulting from a debased appetite, that those who love purity and holiness may

On the subject of temperance we should be in advance of all other people; and yet there are among us well-instructed members of the church, and even ministers of the gospel, who have little respect for the light that God has given upon this subject. They eat as they please and work as they please.

(Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, p. 235.1)

know how to use with discretion the good things he has provided for them, and that by exercising temperance in daily life, they may be sanctified through the truth. (Ellen White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 52.1)

Our physical health is vital to the success of our work as God's ambassadors here on this earth.

So, what did I say to the lady who asked what she can do in the time of tribulation since her health is challenged and she cannot flee to the mountains? I encouraged her to continue to do all she can do to be a healthy soldier in God's Army on this earth, but after having done all she can to regain her health, she must take a stand for truth, no matter what. I referred her to Psalm 91. She can claim the promises found there. That dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty is possible. I presented to her that when we abide in the "secret place of the Most High" we can say "God is our refuge and fortress". In the secret place of the Most High we are covered with his feathers and are safely tucked under his wings of protection. I also encouraged her to stay in the word of God, memorize it, and meditate on the word day and night. I encouraged her that as she communes with God through his word and in prayer, she will be safe under his wings, even if she is sitting on her couch in her living room when all others have fled. Her eternal destiny is safe with God. I also reminded her that death in this life is not a fearful thing, nor is physical death the end for the believer.

What good news it is when we remember that God knows exactly where we are, and, whether we are healthy or ill, God is with us and has made provision for each believer.



1889 HSDA Camp Meeting: Last Call!

By Allen Stump

This is the last call for our annual camp meeting. This year's dates are July 28–August 2. It will be held again at the Piney Creek Campground of Fall Creek Falls State Park near Spencer, Tennessee. We hope all will come and join us in fellowship and in the study of God's word.

The theme of the camp meeting is "For Such a Time as This." Our featured evening speaker will be Jean-Christophe Bolotte from France who will also conduct two breakout sessions on the subject, "Why Organization?" Other speakers and times are on page 14.



Pastor Jean-Christophe Bolotte

During the breakout sessions, Sister Sheri Stump will lead out in health expos. There will also be sessions on the truth about God by Daniel Mesa, marriage and family life by Todd and Rhonda Brown (who also have a special time for the youth earlier in the day), country living by Corey McCain, and the Laodicean church by Allen Stump.

Free healthy vegan meals will be served each day. There are several cabins in the camp, and if you do not mind possibly sharing a cabin, there should be room for all. There is no cost to campers for using a cabin. They will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Those attending full-time will be given preference over those who may only wish to come for part of the camp.

The weather is usually hot, and thunder showers are always a possibility this time of the year, so bring an umbrella and fan if you wish.

Above all, bring your spiritual sword and a good attitude that is seeking to know God better. You will not be disappointed. Please plan now to attend.

For those who cannot attend we encourage you to listen via the livestream that is being provided. We have enclosed a special livestream version of the camp program for you so you can know when the meetings are happening and can join.

Parenting God's Way

The neglect of home religion, the neglect to train your children, is most displeasing to God. If one of your children were in the river, battling with the waves and in imminent danger of drowning, what a stir there would be! What efforts would be made, what prayers offered, what enthusiasm manifested, to save the human life! But here are your children out of Christ, their souls unsaved. Perhaps they are even rude and uncourteous, a reproach to the Adventist name. They are perishing without hope and without God in the world, and you are careless and unconcerned. . . .

Fathers and mothers, each morning and evening gather your children around you, and in humble supplication lift the heart to God for help. Your dear ones are exposed to temptation. Daily annoyances beset the path of young and old. Those who would live patient, loving, cheerful lives must pray. Only by receiving constant help from God can we gain the victory over self. . . .

By sincere, earnest prayer parents should make a hedge about their children. They should pray with full faith that God will abide with them and that holy angels will guard them and their children from Satan's cruel power.

In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and to ask Him for His help and guidance and watch-care during the day! How fitting, also, when evening comes, for parents and children to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day that is past!

Each morning consecrate yourselves and your children to God for that day. Make no calculation for months or years; these are not yours. One brief day is given you. As if it were your last on earth, work during its hours for the Master. Lay all your plans before God, to be carried out or given up, as His providence shall indicate. Accept His plans instead of your own, even though their acceptance requires the abandonment of cherished projects. Thus the life will be molded more and more after the divine example; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:7.(Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, pp. 151.3, 6–152.6)



Forsaking Not the Assembling: Why Christian Fellowship Matters More as the End Draws Near

By Allen Stump

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24–25)

We live in an age of unprecedented convenience.

With a smartphone, tablet, or computer, Christians can now listen to sermons from virtually anywhere in the world. Livestream worship services have become commonplace. Entire church services can be viewed from the comfort of one's living room. For those hindered by sickness, age, imprisonment, or great distance, these technologies have proven to be an immense blessing.

Yet, while technology has provided opportunities previous generations never imagined, it has also introduced a subtle danger. Many sincere believers have begun to ask, "Do I really need to gather with other Christians? Can't I worship God just as well at home?"

The question deserves an honest answer.

The Scriptures reveal that while there are circumstances in which believers cannot physically gather, God's normal plan for his people has always been fellowship, worship, and service together. In fact, the Bible teaches that as we approach the end of time, assembling with God's people becomes increasingly important.

The apostle Paul expressed it this way:

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24–25)

Notice that Paul does not merely say, "Attend church."

Instead, he gives us a divine purpose for assembling. Christians are to encourage one another, stimulate and strengthen one another to acts of love and service, and prepare one another for the day that is rapidly approaching.

God's people have always gathered together.

God has never intended Christians to live in isolation. From the earliest pages of Scripture, God has called his people into community.

Consider the Sabbath command as it is expanded in Leviticus:

Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work

therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:3)

The phrase *holy convocation* literally means a sacred assembly.

While Christians rightly emphasize the Sabbath as a day of rest and communion with God, Scripture also presents it as a day for gathering with God's people. The Sabbath was never intended to be merely a private experience. It was designed to unite believers in worship and fellowship.

Even Jesus recognized the importance of assembling with others.

Luke records:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. (Luke 4:16)

The expression "as his custom was" is significant. Jesus regularly attended public worship.

Think of it. No one ever enjoyed closer communion with the Father than Jesus Christ. No one prayed more fervently or possessed greater spiritual understanding; yet, the Son of God considered it important to gather with others in worship.

Furthermore, Jesus did not merely attend—he participated. He read the Scriptures, taught the people, and ministered to those around him.

If Christ found value in public worship, how can we, his followers, conclude we have no need of it?

The example of the early church

The New Testament church continued the pattern established by Christ.

Immediately after Pentecost, Luke records:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42)

Notice the two great pillars of Christian experience found in this verse:

☞ Doctrine

☞ Fellowship

Christianity has always involved both.

A person may possess doctrinal knowledge, yet still suffer spiritual weakness if separated from other believers. God never intended Christianity to be lived in isolation.

Just a few verses later, Luke writes:

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. (Acts 2:46)

The early church gathered in homes, in the temple courts, and wherever believers could assemble. Their faith was strengthened through shared worship, prayer, and service.

Christianity (a plural idea) has always been a shared experience.

The campfire lesson

Consider a simple illustration. Imagine several logs burning together in a campfire. The flames burn brightly, producing warmth and light for all around. Now remove one log and place it a few feet away. What happens? Gradually, the isolated log loses its warmth. The flames diminish until eventually it becomes cold and lifeless. The Christian life often works in much the same way.



Even mature believers can slowly lose spiritual warmth when isolated from fellowship. This is one reason Ellen White wrote:

Never entertain the thought that you can be Christians and yet withdraw within yourselves. Each one is a part of the great web of humanity, and the nature and quality of your experience will be largely determined by the experiences of those with whom you associate. Jesus says: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." Matthew 18:20. Then let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhort one another; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching. (Ellen White,

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 190.3)

Notice she assumes believers are gathering together.

In another important statement, Ellen White notes:

Make the social meetings of the church as interesting as possible. Let everyone present feel that he has a duty to perform in the meeting. Co-operate with the heavenly angels, who are trying to make a right impression on every worker. (Ibid., p. 190.4)

"Social meeting," or planned sharing time, were periods that might occur in connection with Sabbath School, following the morning sermon, or in an afternoon meeting. There was a culture of speaking in church with sincere testimonies of encouragement, experience, providence, answered prayer, and praise, as well as confession and even exhortation. God never designed solitary Christianity.

Every Christian needs an Aaron and Hur

One of the most beautiful illustrations of Christian support appears in Exodus 17.

Israel had entered into battle against Amalek. Moses ascended a hill overlooking the conflict with the rod of God in his hand.

Scripture says:

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. (Exodus 17:11)

Eventually, Moses became exhausted.

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. (Exodus 17:12)

What a lesson for the church today! Every believer, even strong ones, will eventually grow weary. Every Christian experiences seasons of discouragement, temptation, grief, or spiritual struggle. We all need an Aaron and Hur.

Paul expressed this principle, when he wrote:

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

How can we bear one another's burdens if we never know what those burdens are? How can we bear burdens when we are isolated from others? How can we encourage one another if we are never together?

God's plan has always involved believers helping believers.

One smile...

One prayer...

One handshake...

One conversation...
may keep someone from giving up.

Many declare that it is certainly no harm to go to a concert and neglect the prayer meeting or absent yourself from meetings where God's servants are to declare to you a message from heaven. It is safe for you to be just where Christ has said he would be. Those who appreciate the words of Christ will not turn aside from the prayer meeting, or from the meeting where the Lord's messenger has been sent to tell you concerning things of eternal interest. Jesus has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Can you afford to choose your pleasure and miss the blessing? (Ellen White, *The Youth's Instructor*, March 30, 1893, par. 7)

Satan's strategy: Isolation

Peter gives a sobering warning:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1 Peter 5:8)

Observe how lions hunt in the wild. They seldom attack the center of the herd. Instead, they isolate the weak, the injured, or the straggling animal. Satan employs the same strategy.

The devil delights in separating Christians from fellowship. He knows that isolated believers are often discouraged believers. Prayer becomes irregular. Bible study diminishes. Temptations become more difficult to resist.

God calls us together because he understands our need for one another.

Lessons from God's creation

Nature itself testifies to the value of fellowship.

Canadian geese fly in a V-formation, each bird helping create lift for the one behind it. Researchers estimate they can travel dramatically farther together than alone. When

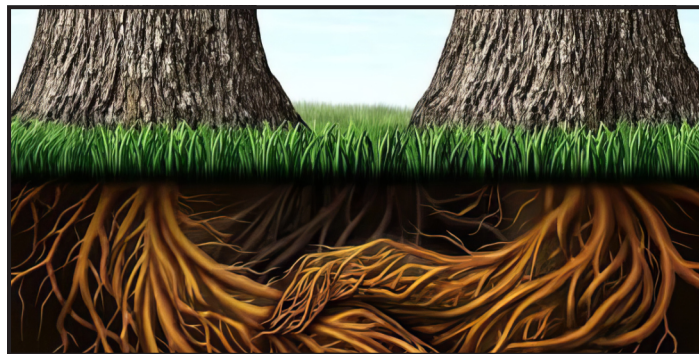


Canadian geese flying in a V-formation

one goose becomes injured, others often remain behind until it recovers.

Redwood trees provide another remarkable illustration.

Though some exceed 300 feet in height, their roots extend only a short distance into the earth. Their strength comes from intertwining their roots with neighboring trees. Together, they withstand storms that would topple them individually.



Roots from redwood trees interlock to make strong foundations for the world's tallest trees.

Ecclesiastes captures this principle beautifully:

⁹ Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰ For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? ¹² And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12)

God created us for fellowship.

The church is God's appointed agency.

Many, today, speak highly of individual spirituality while expressing little appreciation for the church.

Yet Ellen White plainly wrote:

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. . . . (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.1)

Notice that statement carefully.

God's *appointed agency* is not isolated individuals. It is not independent ministries. It is his church—believers united in mission and purpose.

This does not diminish personal responsibility, but it does remind us that Christianity is larger than ourselves.

As you see the day approaching

Perhaps the most striking part of Hebrews 10:25 is Paul's statement:

"...and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

What is "the day"?

At a minimum, it points to the return of Jesus Christ. It also carries overtones of the Day of the Lord, the judgment, and the closing scenes of earth's history. Also in the Hebrew economy the phrase "the day" by itself, referred to the Day of Atonement which is a day of judgment. We are certainly living there now. If this phrase in Hebrews means the coming of Jesus, the counsel is still the same.

Whatever interpretation one adopts, one thing is clear: we are living closer to that day than any generation before us.

Jesus warned of deception, persecution, and spiritual decline in the last days.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (Matthew 24:12)

In response, God does not tell his people to gather less. He tells them to gather more.

The final generation of believers will need one another as never before.

The blessings after the benediction

Many of life's greatest blessings occur after the final prayer has been offered.

- ☞ A handshake
- ☞ A testimony
- ☞ A word of encouragement
- ☞ A prayer shared quietly in the foyer
- ☞ A visitor welcomed for the first time

There are weary believers sitting in church pews every Sabbath carrying burdens no one else sees. Some struggle with grief. Others face financial uncertainty. Still others battle discouragement or private temptations.

Sometimes a single conversation can become the means by which God preserves a soul.

As Ellen White observed:

If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and of the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another. . . . (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 101.3)

The one who refreshes others is often refreshed the most.

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. (Proverbs 11:25)

Looking toward the final assembly

One day, these earthly assemblies will end.

The final Sabbath before Christ's return will come and go. The last sermon will be preached. The final benediction will be spoken.

Then God's people will gather for a different assembly.

John saw it in vision—a multitude which no man could number standing before the throne of God.

Until that day arrives, heaven's counsel remains unchanged:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

May our churches become places where weary saints find strength, where lonely souls discover fellowship, where seekers encounter truth, and where every believer is encouraged to prepare for the soon coming of Jesus Christ.

And may each of us ask, every Sabbath:

- ☞ How can I glorify God today?
- ☞ Whom can I encourage today?
- ☞ Whose burden can I help carry today?
- ☞ How can I help prepare someone else for eternity?

For as the day approaches, we need one another more than ever.



Holy Convocations in the Last Days

The Importance of Our Camp Meetings

The importance of Christian fellowship extends beyond the weekly Sabbath service. Throughout biblical history, God repeatedly called his people to gather in larger assemblies for worship, instruction, and spiritual renewal.

Ancient Israel assembled at the annual feasts appointed by God. These convocations were not merely ceremonial gatherings; they were designed to preserve God's people from worldliness and strengthen the bonds that united them to both God and one another.

Ellen White wrote:

Anciently the Lord instructed His people to assemble three times a year for His worship. To these holy convocations the children of Israel came, bringing to the house of God their tithes, their sin offerings, and

their offerings of gratitude. They met to recount God's mercies, to make known His wonderful works, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to His name. And they were to unite in the sacrificial service which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus they were to be preserved from the corrupting power of worldliness and idolatry. Faith and love and gratitude were to be kept alive in their hearts, and through their association together in this sacred service they were to be bound closer to God and to one another. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 39.3)

The principle has not changed.

In the Seventh-day Adventist movement, camp meetings have long occupied a special place in the life of the church. They provide opportunities for believers to step away from the demands of everyday life and devote concentrated time to prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and mission.

Ellen White's counsel regarding these gatherings is strikingly relevant today:

"It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp meetings. The enemies of truth are many; and because our numbers are few, we should present as strong a front as possible. Individually, you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth." (Ibid., p. 38.3)

Many reasons are often given for staying away from spiritual gatherings—distance, inconvenience, expense, work obligations, or the simple comforts of home. Yet Ellen White challenges believers to consider whether these reasons truly outweigh the spiritual blessings God intends to bestow.

She continues:

Some will say: "It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for us to save the money and give it for the advancement of the work where it is so much needed." Do not reason in this way; God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of His people. Strengthen the meeting all you possibly can by being present with your families. Put forth extra exertion to attend the gathering of God's people. (Ibid., p. 39.1)

These are strong words, particularly in an age when convenience frequently governs our decisions. Perhaps the most challenging statement is this:

Brethren and sisters, it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you. Make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. You need every ray of light. You need to become qualified to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. You cannot

afford to lose one such privilege. (Ibid., p. 39.2)

The issue, then, is not merely attendance. It is preparation.

As the world moves toward its final crisis, God's people need every spiritual advantage available. Camp meetings, church gatherings, prayer meetings, and times of fellowship are among heaven's appointed means of strengthening faith.

Ellen White emphasized that this need is even greater in the closing scenes of earth's history:

The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. They needed to turn away from their worldly cares, to commune with God, and to contemplate unseen realities.

If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict! And if the people of the world then needed the light which God had committed to His church, how much more do they need it now! (Ibid., p. 40.1–.2)

The answer is obvious: we need them more than ever.

In an increasingly fragmented world, these gatherings remind believers that they are part of something larger than themselves. They strengthen relationships, renew spiritual vision, and unite hearts in a common mission.

One of Ellen White's most stirring appeals concludes with these words:

Go to the camp meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so. Go with a will to work. And make every effort to induce your friends to go, not in your place, but to go with you, to stand on the Lord's side and obey His commandments. Help those who are interested to attend, if necessary providing them with food and lodging. Angels who are commissioned to minister to those who are heirs of salvation will accompany you. God will do great things for His people. He will bless every effort to honor His cause and advance His work. (Ibid., p. 40.3)

These assemblies are not merely opportunities to receive a blessing—they are opportunities to become a blessing.

When believers gather in the spirit of Christ, encouraging one another, bearing one another's burdens, and laboring together for souls, they fulfill the very purpose described in Hebrews 10:24–25.

Indeed, as the day approaches, perhaps there has never been a time when God's people needed one another more.



Separation of Church and State

By Onycha Holt

On February 29, 1892, Justice David J. Brewer delivered the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States* by stating that the church did not violate the Alien Contract Labor Law. Seven years earlier, in 1885, Congress had passed the Alien Contract Labor Act, which stated:

. . . it shall be unlawful for any person, company, partnership, or corporation, in any manner whatsoever, to prepay the transportation, or in any way assist or encourage the importation or migration of any alien or aliens, any foreigner or foreigners, into the United States, its Territories, or the District of Columbia, under contract or agreement, parol or special, express or implied . . . to perform labor or service of any kind in the United States, its Territories, or the District of Columbia.¹

In other words, in 1885 it was illegal for anyone to bring into the United States, its territories, or the District of Columbia any alien or foreigner to perform labor or service of “any kind.” The act is very specific and was the result of cheap labor being brought in to circumvent hiring people already living in these areas. But in the case of the Church of the Holy Trinity, a person in England was contracted with and transportation costs were paid for his travel to the United States so that he could serve as the rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity. It was claimed by the United States that the contract made by this church was forbidden by the Alien Contract Labor Act, and the United States was seeking to obtain the \$1,000 penalty afforded in such cases.

The court system of New York agreed with the United States, but the Holy Trinity Church appealed to the Supreme Court and therein lies the significance for us today because, in the unanimous decision, Justice Brewer declared the United States of America to be a Christian nation, which is important because it was a new announcement. The Supreme Court had not declared this before and more importantly, Brewer also declared: “But, beyond all these matters, no purpose of action against religion *can be imputed to any legislation*, state or national, *because this is a religious people*.”² In other words, **no** legislation can be claimed as being “against religion” because the people of the United States are a “religious people.” This may be important when we oppose the passage of a Sunday law. Also impor-

tant were some of the proofs Brewer used to declare the United States a Christian nation. One was “the laws [Sunday blue laws] respecting the observance of the Sabbath [Sunday], with the general cessation of all secular business,” and another was “the closing of courts, legislatures, and other similar public assemblies on that day. Then he stated:

These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances *that this is a Christian nation*. (Ibid.; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

What are the “many other matters”? Justice Brewer presented *judicial* decisions made by many states, including Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware, and then he added evidences from *American life*:

If we pass beyond these matters to a view of American life, as expressed by its laws, its business, its customs, and its society, we find every where a clear recognition of the same truth. Among other matters, note the following: the form of oath universally prevailing, concluding with an appeal to the Almighty; the custom of opening sessions of all deliberative bodies and most conventions with prayer; the prefatory words of all wills, “In the name of God, amen;” the laws respecting the observance of the Sabbath, with the general cessation of all secular business, and the closing of courts, legislatures, and other similar public assemblies on that day; the churches and church organizations which abound in every city, town, and hamlet; the multitude of charitable organizations existing every where under Christian auspices; the gigantic missionary associations, with general support, and aiming to establish Christian missions in every quarter of the globe. These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances *that this is a Christian nation*. In the face of all these, shall it be believed that a Congress of the United States intended to make it a misdemeanor for a church of this country to contract for the services of a Christian minister residing in another nation? (Ibid.)

The Supreme Court of the United States made their ruling based on the **intent** of the Alien Contract Labor Act, but using intent had been done before, so it was not a new argument, but their intent was based on another belief—the belief that the United States is a Christian nation, and this was a new argument. What the Supreme Court concluded, then, was that the United States Congress did not *intend* for the hiring of Christian clergy to be an illegal act under the Alien Contract Labor Act *because* the United States was a Christian nation.

The Blair Sunday-Rest Bill

Another legislative event to consider is the Blair Bill, introduced in Congress a few years earlier, which brought

1. <https://www.historians.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Foran-Act.pdf>

2. <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/143/457/>; emphasis supplied)

the issue of separation of church and state to the forefront in American minds. A multitude of debates followed, and millions of people signed petitions for or against the bill. As a result, the Supreme Court stayed acutely aware of the issue of the constitutionality of laws favoring religion.

On May 21, 1888, Republican Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire introduced in the Senate a bill mandating every Sunday as a day of rest nationwide. Alonzo T. Jones, a representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, testified on December 13, 1888, in a hearing the Senate Committee on Education and Labor was holding on the bill, as did eighteen other people representing different entities.

Jones introduced himself to the committee by saying:

Mr. Chairman, I represent the people known as Seventh-day Adventists. It is true, we have been entirely ignored by the other side. The very small "sect," as they stated it, of Seventh-day Baptists has been recognized, but we are more than three times their number, and many times their power in the real force of our work. We have organizations in every State and Territory in the Union. We have the largest printing-house in Michigan; the largest printing-house on the Pacific Coast; the largest Sanitarium in the world; a college in California and one in Michigan; an academy in Massachusetts; a printing establishment in Basel, Switzerland; one in Christiana, Norway; and one in Melbourne, Australia. Our mission work has enlarged until, besides embracing the greater part of Europe, it has also extended nearly around the world; and we desire a hearing, with the consent of the Committee. (A. T. Jones, *The National Sunday Law*, p. 9, para. 2)

The chairman of the committee, Senator Blair himself, gave Jones an hour to present his views against the bill. If you read *The National Sunday Law* by Jones, you will understand better his quick mind, for he answered Chairman Blair's objections without hesitation. We will consider the points Jones raised soon, but first, let us notice that it has been 138 years since the Blair hearing, 134 years since Justice Brewer wrote the Supreme Court decision, and 133 years since Ellen White wrote the following, connecting the uniting of church and state with the making void of the law of God:

When the Christian world shall make void the law of God **when church and state are united**, when Protestantism shall reach its hands across the gulf to unite with Romanism, allegiance to the law of God will be fully thrown off and the decree will go forth against the people of God. But when men trample on the plainest requirements of God's word, the prayer will go up to heaven, "It is time for thee, Lord to work; for they have made void thy law." [Psalm 119:126.] And God will work. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 8, Ms 104,

1893, par. 15)

Interestingly, the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy* was published in May 1888, the same month and year the Blair Bill was introduced in Congress. In this edition, she made the following statements:

Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation. While they are bent upon the accomplishment of their purpose, Rome is aiming to re-establish her power, to recover her lost supremacy. Let history testify of her artful and persistent efforts to insinuate herself into the affairs of nations; and having gained a foothold, to further her own aims, even at the ruin of princes and people. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (1888 ed.), p. 580.2)

Were Protestants accepting the aid of Rome in seeking passage of the Blair Bill? Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, wrote a letter to Rev. W. F. Crafts, one of the major Protestant promoters of Sunday legislation, stating:

I am most happy to add my name to those of the millions of others who are laudably contending against the violation of the Christian Sabbath by unnecessary labor, and who are endeavoring to promote its decent and proper observance by legitimate legislation. As the late Plenary Council of Baltimore has declared, the due observance of the Lord's day contributes immeasurably to the restriction of vice and immorality, and to the promotion of peace, religion, and social order, and cannot fail to draw upon the nation the blessing and protection of an overruling Providence. If benevolence to the beasts of burden directed one day's rest in every week under the old law, surely humanity to man ought to dictate the same measure of rest under the new law.

Your obedient servant in Christ,

JAMES CARDINAL GIBBONS,

Archbishop of Baltimore. (Quoted by E. J. Waggoner, *The Blair Sunday-Rest Bill*, pp. 45, 46)

Only *his* name was being added to the list. Gibbons did not represent any other Catholic support for the bill, but his name carried weight. The letter was published in the Catholic publication, *Our Day*, in the January 1889 issue, and we do not know how many people it may have influenced to support the bill, but, overall, Catholic support was tenuous at best, for Senator Blair had introduced in an earlier session of Congress another bill entitled Blair Education Bill. This bill sought to give federal funding to public schools but excluded funding to parochial schools. Catholics were strongly opposed to the bill, as they were building many schools, and their opposition may have carried over to Blair's Sunday Rest Bill, for Protestants comprised the vast majority of its supporters.

Many years have passed since those events, and the length of time may have dampened Adventists' care and concern for the importance of separation of church and state, but the issue is again in the forefront of politics. Hopefully our awareness of the importance of separation of church and state will be rekindled. For example, in May 2025 President Trump created by executive order the Religious Liberty Commission.

Religious Liberty Commission

Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick was appointed chairman of the commission and Dr. Benjamin Carson vice chairman. The commission's final report was presented to President Trump in the Oval Office on June 26, 2026, at which time Chairman Patrick explained the purpose for the creation of the commission. President Trump, he said, "established this commission so that we would assure Americans the religious liberty, this great inheritance from our founding fathers, would continue for another 250 years" (Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, transcript minute 4:35; www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sn3oYUIMboo).

About ten weeks earlier, on April 13, 2026, in the seventh and final hearing of the commission, Chairman Patrick also stated:

It is time to set the record straight: there is no such thing as "separation of church and state" in the Constitution. For too long, the anti-God left has used this phrase to suppress people of religion in our country. During all 7 Commission hearings, witness after witness testified that the so-called "separation of church and state" was used to take their God-given religious liberty rights away. (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/religious-liberty-commission-holds-final-hearing-past-present-and-future-religious-liberty>)

And what are those "religious liberty rights?" Patrick described them during his final report on June 26, 2026:

The question is, what is religious liberty? *It is our conscience.* It's that little voice inside of us that tells us right from wrong. It's that voice that, when we're in trouble, we can talk to in our quiet moments. It's that voice when we feel unloved and alone that can comfort us through a higher power. When governments can take away your religious liberty, they're putting their hand in your heart and taking everything you believe in. And if governments can do that, then they become God. (Ibid., Patrick, transcript, min. 4:51)

According to Patrick, religious liberty is in our minds. "It is our conscience," he said, "It's that little voice inside of us." He did not say religious liberty involves the **exercise** of freedom of religion in how and when you worship, for example, but it is what "you believe in" (Ibid.).

At the end of his presentation, Chairman Patrick spoke on the topic again:

On the issue of church and state, that was used as a hammer against almost all of our witnesses. One of the important recommendations that we made, if that happens in the future, if any superior person in the military, a superintendent of the school district, someone in the health care system, whoever uses that against someone who is simply standing up for their religious liberty, or simply praying in public, that within a short amount of time, if they allege separation of church and state, that public official must, in writing, explain how that person has violated the Constitution. Because, again, the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. And from this day forward, if anyone says that to you and they're in public office or serve in any agency, in any official capacity, they have to point out exactly where you have violated the Constitution, because you have not. And from this day forward, that phrase should have no power over people of all faiths ever again in America. (Ibid., min. 17:52)

The first recommendation made by the Commission was:

So, Mr. President, recommendation number one, instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state. (Ibid., min. 4:51)

And the questions we now face are: Over the last several decades, have we forgotten the principles involved in the separation of church and state? Are we becoming more complacent in our stand for the separation of church and state? Is the current generation of Adventists ready to compromise on this issue? I think, for example, of the current website for the Adventist *Liberty* Magazine which declares that "religious liberty is **best** exercised when church and state are separate,"³ which implies that religious liberty can also be exercised when church and state are united, which is contrary to the concept of liberty the Adventist Church has always taught.

A. T. Jones

Let us now return to Alonzo T. Jones. In 1888, he and E. J. Waggoner were editors of *The American Sentinel*, a religious liberty monthly publication published by Pacific Press Publishing House. The two were also editors of *The Signs of the Times*. A. T. Jones clearly stated the biblical principles involved in the separation of church and state at the Senate hearing. To begin, he stated:

The principle upon which we stand is that civil government is civil, and has nothing to do in the matter

3. Declaration of Principles, *Liberty*, <https://www.libertymagazine.org/about>; emphasis supplied

of legislation, with religious observances in any way. The basis of this is found in the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:21. When the Pharisees asked whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cesar or not, he replied: "Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (A. T. Jones, *National Sunday Law*, p. 11.1)

... as the Saviour has made this distinction between that which pertains to Cesar and that which is God's, when Cesar exacts of men that which pertains to God, then Cesar is out of his place, and in so far as Cesar is obeyed there, God is denied. (Ibid., p. 16.4)

Another point he made was:

In the Saviour's command to render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, there is plainly a recognition of the rightfulness of civil government, and that civil government has claims upon us which we are in duty bound to recognize, and that there are things which duty requires us to render to the civil government. (Ibid., p. 17.1)

We read about this in Romans 13:1-9:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Ibid., p. 16.6)

It is easy to see that this scripture is but an exposition of Christ's words, "Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's." (Ibid., p. 17.1)

So, the biblical bases he uses for the separation of church and state are Matthew 22:21 and Romans 13:1-9. Jones continued:

Our duties under civil government pertain solely to the government and to our fellowmen, because the powers of civil government pertain solely to men in their relations one to another, and to the government. But the Saviour's words in the same connection entirely separated that which pertains to God from that which pertains to civil government. The things which pertain to God are not to be rendered to civil government—to the powers that be; therefore Paul, although knowing full well that there were other commandments, said, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" that is, if there be any other commandment which comes into the relation between man and civil government, it is comprehended in this saying, that he shall love his neighbor as himself; thus showing conclusively that the powers that be, though ordained of God, are so ordained simply in things pertaining to the relation of man with his fellow-men, and in those things alone. (Ibid., p. 19.1)

To repeat, the basis of Jones' arguments was the Bible, which is good, but Senator Blair asked about the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court against the Mormon Church, which wanted to practice polygamy because it was their religious belief but was against civil law. Wouldn't Jones' issue against civilly mandated Sunday worship fall in the same category, as it also would be a religious belief not be allowed by civil law. Jones' answer is of value to us, for we may be brought before courts because of our refusal to worship God on Sunday and will worship, instead, on the seventh-day Sabbath. Jones answered:

George Washington, I believe, is yet held in some respectful consideration—he is by the Seventh-day Adventists at least—and he said, "Every man who conducts himself as a good citizen is accountable alone to God for his religious faith, and is to be protected in worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience." And so should we be protected, so long as we are law-abiding citizens. There are no saloon keepers among us. We are as a body for prohibition; and as for the principles of Christian temperance, we conscientiously practice them. In short, you will find no people in this country or in the world, more peaceable and law-abiding than we endeavor to be. We teach the people according to the Scripture, to be subject to the powers that be; we teach them that the highest duty of the Christian citizen is strictly to obey the law,—to obey it not from fear of punishment, but out of respect for governmental authority, and out of respect for God, and conscience towards him. (Ibid., p. 23.7)

Senator Blair.—That is the common Mormon argument. The Mormons say their institution is a matter of religious belief. Everybody concedes their right to believe in Mormonism, but when they come to the point of practicing it, will it not be to the disturbance of others?

(Ibid., p. 24.1)

Mr. Jones.—. . . My argument throughout is that the civil government can never have anything to do with men's duties under the first four of the ten commandments; and this is the argument embodied in Washington's words. These duties pertain solely to God. Now polygamy is adultery. But adultery is not a duty that men owe to God, in any way, much less does it come under any of the first four commandments. This comes within the inhibitions of the second table of the law of God—the commandments embracing duty to our neighbor. How men should conduct themselves toward their fellow-men, civil government must decide; that is the very purpose of its existence. Consequently, the practice of polygamy lying wholly within this realm, is properly subject to the jurisdiction of civil government. My argument does not in the least degree countenance the principles of Mormonism, nor can it fairly be made to do so. I know that it is offered as a very ready objection; but those who offer it as an objection and as an argument against the principles upon which we stand, thereby make adultery a religious practice. But against all such objection and argument, I maintain that adultery is not in any sense a religious practice. It is not only highly irreligious, but it is essentially uncivil; and because it is uncivil, the civil power has as much right to blot it out as it has to punish murder, or thieving, or perjury, or any other uncivil thing. Moreover, we deny that honest occupations on any day of the week, or at any time whatever, can ever properly be classed with adultery. (Ibid., p. 24.2)

So brothers and sisters, when we consider our obedience to state and national laws versus our obedience to God, the Ten Commandments show us how to respond—the first four of which reveal our duty to God alone and the last six our duty to man. We are not to kill our fellow man, to lie to him, or to commit adultery with him, for example, and civil governments can rightly regulate our relationships to one another on such issues, but our relationship to God is something only God can mandate.

The Blair Bill did not pass. A similar bill was introduced in the next session of Congress and also did not pass. An attempt to amend the Constitution of the United States to favor Christianity also did not pass, but we are faced today with renewed efforts to revive these lost causes.

The Liberty Medal

Every year the National Constitution Center near Independence Hall awards the Liberty Medal to someone “of courage and conviction” who has striven “to secure the blessings of liberty for people around the globe.”⁴ In the past it has been bestowed upon people such as President

Zelenskyy, Justice Ginsburg, Justice Kennedy, Senator John McCain, and the Dalai Lama, as well as many others, and on July 3, 2026, the 38th annual Liberty Medal ceremony took place. The recipient of the medal? Pope Leo XIV. He was awarded the medal in recognition of “his lifelong work promoting religious liberty and freedom of conscience and expression around the world.”⁵

“Coming events cast their shadows before,”⁶ and this is part of the shadow and part of the deception. Promoting religious liberty? We know the Papacy never changes: “Rome never changes. Her principles have not altered in the least.”⁷ She works in stealth and waits patiently for an opportunity to regain the control she once had over peoples and nations, and in 1832, about sixty-two years before Ellen White's quotation earlier about “church and state are united,” Pope Gregory XVI brazenly wrote:

This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that *liberty of conscience must be maintained for everyone*. It spreads ruin in sacred and civil affairs, though some repeat over and over again with the greatest impudence that some advantage accrues to religion from it. (Pope Gregory XVI, encyclical letter August 15, 1832, as printed in Claudia Carlen, IHM, *The Papal Encyclicals, 1740–1878*)

Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII

That was 1832 and Gregory XVI was pope, but in 1077 Gregory VII was pope, and the Holy Roman Empire was ruled by Henry IV. His empire covered Germany, Burgundy, Italy, and Bohemia. The papal states at the time were but a tiny portion of land surrounded by the Holy Roman Empire; yet, a major conflict occurred between Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII.

Before Henry IV was emperor, he was king of some of the individual nations of the Holy Roman Empire. As any ruler of the time, he maintained his position with the support of the princes in his realm, though wars and revolts could, and did, occur, but more importantly, while he ruled over the nations and then over the empire, he appointed the archbishops, bishops, and abbots, which was an affront to the pope, who believed himself superior to the king and the rightful person to do so. He offered to negotiate with Henry, but he refused and, instead, deposed the pope and persuaded his bishops to refuse obedience to the pope. It became a full-fledged church-state issue. Who was to rule over the church? Who was to appoint its officers and leaders? The emperor or the pope? We sometimes think of the church-state issue as the church seeking to rule the state, but

5. Ibid.

6. Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 636.1

7. Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894, par. 4

4. <https://constitutioncenter.org/about/liberty-medal>

in this case the issue was about the state trying to rule the church. We note this to illustrate how the Papacy wants it both ways—it does not tolerate the state ruling over it, **and** it will not stop until it controls and rules the state **and** until it also controls and rules individuals. As we read earlier in the quotation from Pope Gregory XVI, it is an “absurd and erroneous proposition . . . that liberty of conscience must be maintained for everyone.”

In response to Henry’s actions against Gregory, Gregory excommunicated Henry, which gave Henry’s nobles the right to refuse support and obedience to Henry. Now Henry’s position and territory were in jeopardy, so he appealed to the pope to lift the excommunication.

Terrified by the desertion and threats of his own princes, who were encouraged in rebellion against him by the papal mandate, Henry felt the necessity of making his peace with Rome. In company with his wife and a faithful servant he crossed the Alps in midwinter, that he might humble himself before the pope. Upon reaching the castle whither Gregory had withdrawn, he was conducted, without his guards, into an outer court, and there, in the severe cold of winter, with uncovered head and naked feet, and in a miserable dress, he awaited the pope’s permission to come into his presence. Not until he had continued three days fasting and making confession, did the pontiff condescend to grant him pardon. Even then it was only upon condition that the emperor should await the sanction of the pope before resuming the insignia or exercising the power of royalty. And Gregory, elated with his triumph, boasted that it was his duty to pull down the pride of kings. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 57.3)

Pope Gregory removed the excommunication order. Henry IV agreed to the conditions. The papacy won.

Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. She can read what is to be. She bides her time, seeing that the Protestant churches are paying her homage in their acceptance of the false sabbath and that they **are preparing to enforce it** by the very means which she herself employed in bygone days. (Ibid., p. 580.1)

It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy. (White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894, par. 4)

And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. **The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church.** And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries....

. . . She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the

churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 581.1, 581.2)

Have we, as a church, forgotten who the man of sin is? Although the term is sometimes applied to the pope in Adventism, it is more frequently applied to the papacy. It is clearly so stated in Principle XIII in the fundamental principles of 1872 and of 1889, which reads, in part: “the man of sin, **the papacy**, has thought to change times and laws.”⁸ Today, however, no mention of the man of sin is made in the church’s fundamental beliefs, nor has it been mentioned for decades, but in 1894 we were told this:

Through the Papacy, the Roman power, the man of sin, the purpose of Satan is carried out among men; the law and the time of God are set aside. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894, par. 2)

And Ellen White states that the man of sin is a front for the actions and purposes of Satan:

When Satan could not induce all the angels to revolt against the law of God, he made the earth the scene of his rebellion, and **through the man of sin seeks to carry out his diabolical purpose.** (Ibid.)

And his diabolical purposes are to secure legislation enforcing Sunday observance and to bring about the loss of liberty of conscience:

The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. . . . and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for **a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience**, which has cost so great a sacrifice, **will no longer be respected.** (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 592.3)

Satan’s masterpiece of deception is popery; and while it has been demonstrated that a day of great intellectual darkness was favorable to Romanism, it will also be demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is also favorable to its power; for the minds of men are concentrated on their own superiority, and do not like to retain God in their knowledge. (White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894, par. 8)

And a few paragraphs later Ellen White asked the question, will commandment-keeping people lose their respect for the law of Jehovah?

8. https://7thdayhomechurch.org/Resources/1889-Revised_Statements_of_Belief.pdf

We are coming to a time when almost universal scorn will be heaped upon the law of God, and God's commandment-keeping people will be severely tried; but **will they lose their respect for the law of Jehovah** because others do not see and realize its binding claims? Let God's commandment-keeping people, like David, reverence God's law in proportion as men cast it aside and heap upon it disrespect and contempt. (Ibid., par. 10)

She doesn't answer the question, but she has warned us about a great reformation Satan is seeking to accomplish **in doctrine**, in which the pillars of our faith would be given up, the principles of truth discarded, and our religion changed. This warning was not a warning against a reformation in how we work together, which can always be improved, but a warning against counting as error our fundamental principles:

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the **pillars of our faith** and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The **principles of truth** that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our **religion** would be changed. The **fundamental principles** that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The **Sabbath**, of course, **would be lightly regarded**, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice; but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 18, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13)

Those who receive not the love of the truth, will unite with Satan and with antichrist through whom Satan has worked to make void the law of God to give to the world a **spurious Sabbath**, the child of the **papacy** that it might be worshipped as an idol. Of this power Paul writes, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there be a falling away first, and that **man of sin** be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." [2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.] **This is antichrist** to whom the dragon shall give his power, his seat and great authority, and this power

will be energized by the devil, and will have combined him human and superhuman power. The children of God will be endowed with power from on high and will be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 8, Ms 104, 1893, par. 15)

Now the important part—church and state uniting:

Satan has carried his first great work of deception down through all the ages, and will until the close of time. In antichrist, he has a living agent. When the Christian world shall make void the law of God **when church and state are united**, when Protestantism shall reach its hands across the gulf to unite with Romanism, allegiance to the law of God will be fully thrown off and the decree will go forth against the people of God. But when men trample on the plainest requirements of God's word, the prayer will go up to heaven, "It is time for thee, Lord to work; for they have made void thy law." [Psalm 119:126.] And God will work. (Ibid., par. 16)

Satan will then inspire men, and even professedly Christian men who refused to receive the love of the truth, to accuse and slander those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. He will lead those who appear to be good men to accuse the servants of God who refuse to bow down to the image of Baal in observing the spurious Sabbath and will cause men to cast contempt upon the Sabbath which the Lord sanctified and blessed. Persecution has already begun upon some of those who are loyal and true to the commandments of God, who observe the Sabbath as a sign between them and their God. The Lord has a people who will be as true as steel to principle. (Ibid., par. 17)

And then an amazing statement—God is giving Satan his last chance to develop his principles to the worlds God has made! How fair God is.

The Lord is giving Satan his last chance to develop his satanic principles before the heavenly principalities and powers, before the worlds in which God has made. But his power is soon to be taken away. The Lord permits persecutions to arise in order to purge all dross away from his people, but to those who persecute his children, he will render double for their cruelty and violence. (Ibid., par. 18)

The world and the church are married. The ruling powers of earth have taken it upon themselves to compel the conscience of God's people who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. **They will seek by force to make them yield obedience to and worship the image of the beast, in keeping the spurious Sabbath, the child of papacy.** (Ibid., par. 19)

With what pride Satan looks upon the world whom we numbers as his subjects. With the **union of church and state**, he is ruler as far as it is possible for him to be in the world. (Ibid., par. 20)

We are told the union of church and state will bring in national apostasy and national ruin.⁹

The leaders of church and state will bring in a union of church and state, but they did this during Luther's day because to do otherwise would undermine the authority of Rome, would stop thousands of streams from flowing into her treasury, would overthrow (think of it!) the pontiff's throne, and would also destroy their own authority:

Many dignitaries, both of Church and State, were convicted of the truthfulness of his [Luther's] theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to **undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury**, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would **overthrow the pontiff's throne**, and eventually **destroy their own authority**. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God, and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom he had sent to enlighten them. (White, *The Great Controversy* (1888 ed.), p. 131.2)

But with the people of God, it will not be so:

Although **church and State will unite** their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive "the mark of the beast," [Revelation 13:16.] yet the people of God will not receive it. (Ibid., p. 450.1)

Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation. While they are bent upon the accomplishment of their purpose, Rome is aiming to re-establish her power, to recover her lost supremacy. . . . and having gained a foothold, to further her own aims, even at the ruin of princes and people. Romanism openly puts forth the claim that the pope "can pronounce sentences and judgments in contradiction to the right of nations, to the law of God and man." [The "Decretalia."] (Ibid., p. 580.2)

We are not sure which Decretal this last quote is from, for there are thousands of Decretals written by the popes, but we know the concept is true. Rome has pronounced sentence against nations, the law of God, and man! Think of

Huss and Jerome, Henry IV, and the spurious Sabbath. It is all true, and she never changes:

And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. are still the principles of the Romish Church. . . . Let the principle once be established in the United States, that the church may **employ or control** the power of the State; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that **the authority of church and State** is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured. (Ibid., p. 580.3)

She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures, **in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated.** Stealthily and unsuspectingly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. (Ibid., p. 581.1)

Today we see the Protestant world again stirring over issues of religious liberty, this time in a manner seemingly contrary to 1888. In 1888 the push was for a law compelling Sunday observance, and A. T. Jones testified against it, using biblical principles of separation of church and state, but today some of those urging separation of church and state are being denounced as taking away religious liberty, as we heard from Chairman Patrick of the Religious Liberty Commission:

For too long, the anti-God left has used this phrase [separation of church and state] to suppress people of religion in our country. During all 7 Commission hearings, witness after witness testified that the so-called **"separation of church and state" was used to take their God-given religious liberty rights away.** (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/religious-liberty-commission-holds-final-hearing-past-present-and-future-religious-liberty>)

Brothers and sisters, the biblical model of separation of church and state never takes away religious liberty. Protestantism and the state are blind to understanding this, but Satan, the pope, and the Papacy are not. Combined they have a long, long history of compelling individuals, kings, legislatures, governments, and even angels to bend to their wishes, and all of their experience is laser focused on you and me to force us to turn from our allegiance to the God of the universe, from the love with which he fills it, and from what he leaves behind when he passes by, as when he passed by Moses—mercy, grace, longsuffering, goodness, and truth (Exodus 34:6). The choice for us shouldn't be hard.

9. Ellen White, *Evangelism*, page 235.1



Hid in My Heart

By Sheri Stump

The purpose of the Hid-in-My-Heart series is to meditate on and memorize scriptures that define the fundamentals of our faith so that we will be ready to give an answer for the faith that is in us. These biblical teachings are taken from the 1889 Fundamental Principles.

So far, we have memorized or at least familiarized ourselves with Scriptures that support the Father, the Son, the Holy Scripture, baptism, the new birth, prophecy, the fulfillment of prophecy, a temporal millennium, the prophetic correction of 1844, the prophetic ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the immutable Law of God, the Sabbath, the change of the Law of God, Christ's peculiar people, how God would have his people dress, giving to God, the nature of man, man's dependance on God, gifts of the Spirit, the three angels' messages, the investigative judgment, and the grave. This article features Fundamental Principle XXIII, the state of the dead.

1889 Fundamental Principle XXIII:

XXIII – That the state to which we are reduced by death is one of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness. Ps. 146:4; Dan. 12:2.

If you would like a complete biblical explanation on this Fundamental Principle, here is the link of a sermon Pastor Allen Stump gave on Fundamental Principle XXIII, the state of the dead. The link and a QR code are below for that message.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XR0myTvxxzq0&list=PLsE-5c918fZE d G x P n -qrO6mmkyPe708owA&index=24>



The following are some verses for you to memorize/meditate upon.

I have included the first letter of each word following each verse. Memorizing the verse with this help will assure that you do not miss a word while reciting it and since each letter represents one word it will be a help to prompt you on what the next word in the verse is.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)

NutKe, i, i, towG, bhagfeae. A. 1 T. 1:17

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; In

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)

Ftlkttsd: btdkna, nhtamar, fmotif. Atl, ath, ate, inp; nhtamapfeiatiduts. E 9:5-6

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

Amottsitdotesa, stel, astsaec. D 12:2

We have been told:

The servants of Christ were to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial. Their preparation was to be made day by day in treasuring up the precious truths of God's word, and through prayer strengthening their faith. When they were brought into trial, the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the very truths that would be needed. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 355.1)

Truths not studied or hid in our hearts before cannot be brought to our remembrance at a later time if they have not been studied and memorized prior to the need.

May God bless you as you meditate on these verses is my prayer for each of you!

Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the scriptures to memory, and then throw them right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, 'it is written.' This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them. (Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888, par. 9)



Marriage Morsel

By Ellen White

It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. (Genesis 2:18)

After the creation of Adam every living creature was brought before him to receive its name; he saw that to each had been given a companion, but among them “there was not found an help meet for him.” Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved.



“Marriage is honourable,” God being the first officiant.

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (Ephesians 5:29). “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one” (Genesis 2:24).

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. “Marriage is honorable” (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Par-

adise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature. (Ellen White, *Courage and Conflict*, p. 14.1–4) 卐

The life which Christ lived was untainted by sin. Satan exerted all his powerful arts, yet he could not affect that spotless life. Its light always shone with unwavering brilliancy. Because Satan could not produce the least shadow of sin in the life, he could not bring it within his power, that of the grave. No one could take Christ’s life from Him; He voluntarily laid it down. And for the same reason, when He had laid it down, Satan could not prevent Him from taking it up again. Said He, “I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” John 10:17, 18. To the same intent are the words of the apostle Peter concerning CHRIST: “Whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.” Acts 2:24. Thus was demonstrated the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to be made a high priest “after the power of an endless life.” Heb. 7:16. (E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, United Kingdom edition, August 25, 1892, page 264.5) 卐

Online Virtual Service Schedule

We provide on-site and virtual services. All times are EST or EDT, depending on the time of the year.

Sabbath: Sabbath School—9:10 a.m. Worship Service—11:00 a.m.

Monday: Story Hour—7:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Prayer Meeting—7:00 p.m.

Thursday: History/Theology Study—7:00 p.m.

Zoom Room Information: ID—613 212 7443. Passcode—916919. Phone—1-646-931-3860, enter conference ID 613 212 7443, followed by the # symbol when prompted, and press the # symbol again. 卐

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