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VISO VERUM



Pharisees & Sadducees

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Ellen G. White:

AA	The Acts of the Apostles	MH	Manuscript Releases, Vol. 1-21
BEcho	Bible Echo	MS	Manuscript
CE	Christian Education	PC	The Paulson Collection of E. G. White
COL	Christ's Object Lessons	PM	The Publishing Ministry
CT	CT = Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students	RH	The Review and Herald
CW	Counsels on Writers and Editors	SG	Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1-3
DA	The Desire of Ages	SM	Selected Messages, Vol. 1-3
EW	Early Writings	ST	The Signs of the Times
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GC88	The Great Controversy	YI	The Youth's Instructor
GCB	The General Conference Bulletin		

Other Authors:

MWM	Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller	KJV	The Authorized King James Bible
JoL, PREX2	Litch, Josiah, Prophetic Expositions		

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Pharisees and Sadducees

Introduction

Verse 9 “Whom¹ shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. **10** For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: **11** For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. **12** To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.” Isaiah 28:9-12

Verse 9 “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. **10** Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.” Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4

The “rest” and “refreshing” spoken of in the 28th chapter of Isaiah is the loud cry message of the third angel (Isaiah 28:9-12; *EW*, 277). And according to the same passage of scripture this message is intricately linked to the hermeneutic (or method of interpreting the Bible) through which it is understood and communicated. Inspiration identifies this hermeneutic as that used by William

¹ Editor’s note: From the Hebrew actually: “Trough whom”

Miller in the Millerite movement:

“Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel’s message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology*, Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:” *RH*, November 25, 1884.23

“1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible.”
RH, November 25, 1884.24

“The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth.” *RH*, November 25, 1884.25 ²

William Miller’s 14 rules, also referred to as the proof-text method of interpretation, are Heaven’s appointed method of interpreting the Bible. And these rules are but an elaboration of the hermeneutic given by the scriptures themselves. But the enemy of souls is a master of misinterpreting the Scriptures. And he has, in the course of perfecting his tactics of warring against Heaven, formulated methods of his own devising to lead the unwary into false paths.

2 For the full list of rules see *Memoirs of William Miller*, p. 70 (1853, SB, *MWM* 70.2)

“Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble.”
GC88, 530.1

The results of this can be seen in the errors, confusion and division in Adventism regarding the message the church is to proclaim and the manner in which it is to go about proclaiming it. And what peril to Adventism if things remain this way! But the God whose mercy endures forever has recorded the history of the Pharisees and Sadducees to warn of the far-reaching consequences of accepting any other hermeneutic than that given by inspiration. This history is important and must be understood as it is being repeated to the very letter in our day.

The Hermeneutic of the Sadducees – The Historical Critical Method

“The Sadducees rejected the traditions of the Pharisees. They professed to believe the greater portion of the Scriptures, and to regard them as the rule of action; but practically they were skeptics and materialists ...

“The Sadducees denied the existence of angels, the resurrection of the dead, and the doctrine of a future life, with its rewards and punishments.” *DA*, 603.1-2

“The Sadducees held that there would be no resurrection of the body;” *DA*, 209.3. ...

The Sadducees rejected the teaching of Jesus; He was animated by a spirit which they would not acknowledge as manifesting itself thus; and His teaching in regard to God and the future life contradicted “their theories. They believed in God as the only being superior to man; but they argued that an overruling providence and a divine foresight would deprive man of free moral agency,

and degrade him to the position of a slave. It was their belief, that, having created man, God had left him to himself, independent of a higher influence. They held that man was free to control his own life and to shape the events of the world; that his destiny was in his own hands. They denied that the Spirit of God works through human efforts or natural means. Yet they still held that, through the proper employment of his natural powers, man could become elevated and enlightened; that by rigorous and austere exactions his life could be purified.” *DA*, 604.2

The religion of the Sadducees was very startling indeed. They did not believe in the resurrection of the body or the judgment. Furthermore, the Sadducee believed that man’s destiny was in his own hands, his judgment was supreme and that he had the power within himself to become elevated and enlightened. These are the very sentiments that lie at the heart of Spiritualism.

“Satan beguiles men now as he beguiled Eve in Eden, by flattery, by kindling a desire to obtain forbidden knowledge, by exciting ambition for self-exaltation. It was cherishing these evils that caused his fall, and through them he aims to compass the ruin of men. ‘Ye shall be as gods’, he declares, ‘knowing good and evil’ (Genesis 3:5). Spiritualism teaches ‘that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead,’ And again: ‘Each mind will judge itself and not another.’ ‘The judgment will be right, because it is the judgment of self. ... The throne is within you.’ Said a Spiritualistic teacher, as the ‘spiritual consciousness’ awoke within him, ‘My fellow-men, all were unfallen demigods.’ And another declares, ‘Any just and perfect being is Christ.’” *GC88*, 554.1

The Sadducees were in essence spiritualists. But in order for them to reach this point they used a method of interpreting the Bible that revolved around skepticism and criticism of its parts. The modern manifestation of the Sadducees’ method of interpreting

scripture is the historical-critical method.³ This hermeneutic treats the Bible as any other uninspired book or historic work and places the reader as a critic above the Word to question, dissect and challenge its precepts and teachings. The historical-critical method is the hermeneutic used by most “liberal” Adventists. And the fruits of its skepticism, rejection of scripture and elevation of human reasoning can be seen in ideas that have become synonymous with liberal Adventism. Examples include the rejection of the Biblical account of creation for Darwin’s theory of evolution, the rejection of scriptural teaching on gender roles in favour of women’s

3 “The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God’s word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives. By spiritualism, multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.” AA, 474.1

“When Christ sent forth the disciples with the gospel message, faith in God and His word had well-nigh departed from the world. Among the Jewish people, who professed to have a knowledge of Jehovah, His word had been set aside for tradition and human speculation. Selfish ambition, love of ostentation, greed of gain, absorbed men’s thoughts. As reverence for God departed, so also departed compassion toward men. Selfishness was the ruling principle, and Satan worked his will in the misery and degradation of mankind.” MH, 142.1

“Satanic agencies took possession of men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, became the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the organs of men were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which men were possessed.” MH, 142.2

“What is the condition in the world today? Is not faith in the Bible as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation of today as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ? Have not greed and ambition and love of pleasure as strong a hold on men’s hearts now as they had then? In the professedly Christian world, even in the professed churches of Christ, how few are governed by Christian principles. In business, social, domestic, even religious circles, how few make the teachings of Christ the rule of daily living. Is it not true that „justice standeth afar off: ... equity cannot enter. ... And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey?” (Isaiah 59:14-15).” MH, 142.3

“We are living in the midst of an „epidemic of crime,” at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body?” MH, 142.4

“Historical criticism, also known as the historical-critical method or higher criticism, is a branch of literary criticism that investigates the origins of ancient text in order to understand ‘the world behind the text’.” *Wikipedia*

ordination and concepts of equality drawn from feminist theory, the promotion of homosexuality in the church, and the rejection of Biblical standards in diet, dress, entertainment etc. The Spirit of prophecy clearly condemns this method of interpretation and points to Lucifer, the first critic that ever existed, as its originator.⁴

It is interesting to note that most of the priests were Sadducees:

“In numbers the Sadducees fell far below their opponents, and they had not so strong a hold upon the common people; but many of them were wealthy, and they had the influence which wealth imparts. In their ranks were included most of the priests, and from among them the high priest was usually chosen. This was, however, with the express stipulation that their skeptical opinions should not be made prominent. On account of the numbers and popularity of the Pharisees, it was necessary for the Sadducees to concede outwardly to their doctrines when holding any priestly office; but the very fact that they were eligible to such office gave influence to their errors.” DA, 604.1

Such is the case in Adventism today where most of the scholars within our denomination have been educated in the historical-critical method.⁵ The result of the application of this hermeneutic is that many of our scholars, educators and leading brethren do not believe foundational Adventist truths such as the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgement. These truths, which lie at the very center of the Adventist system of beliefs, cannot be upheld by a methodology which has no basis in the Bible. But these divergent opinions are not “made prominent” in order to avoid coming into conflict with the majority of lay believers who hold

4 “When men talk of higher criticism; when they pass their judgment upon the word of God, call their attention to the fact that they have forgotten who was the first and wisest critic. He has had thousands of years of practical experience. He it is who teaches the so-called higher critics of the world today. God will punish all those who, as higher critics, exalt themselves, and criticize God’s Holy word.” *BEcho*, Feb 1, 1897.9

5 “Prior to about 1935 Adventist expositors of the Bible were at least generally following the proof-text method of Bible study. Two seemingly unrelated events of that decade led to a gradual transition to the historical method over the next twenty-five years, with the result that by the 1960’s most of the Bible scholars of the church had adopted that method...” – R F Cottrell, *The Role of Biblical Hermeneutics in Preserving Unity in the Church*, p. 6, 1996; R F Cottrell, *The Role of Biblical Hermeneutics in Preserving Unity in the Church*, p. 17, 1996

these doctrines to be true. But by virtue of their high office as leading educators and ministers, their false doctrines are exerting their influence on the minds of many of God's people.

Now turning to the Pharisee.

The Pharisees - The Historical-Grammatical Method

The Pharisees held to an orthodoxy which, on the surface, was not as marked a departure from Bible religion as was that of the Sadducees.

“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.” Acts 23:8

“But their religion consisted of tradition, ceremonies and the injunctions of men which the Lord had not called His people to perform.” AA, 15.1

“...The minds of the disciples were to a great degree influenced by the traditions and maxims of the Pharisees, who placed the commandments of God on a level with their own inventions and doctrines. The scribes and Pharisees did not receive or teach the Scriptures in their original purity, but interpreted the language of the Bible in such a way as to make it express sentiments and injunctions that God had never given. They put a mystical construction upon the writing of the Old Testament, and made indistinct that which the infinite God had made clear and plain. These learned men placed before the people their own ideas, and made patriarchs and prophets responsible for things they never uttered. These false teachers buried up the precious jewels of truth beneath the rubbish of their own interpretations and maxims, and covered up the plainest specifications of prophecy regarding Christ. They made the keeping of the commandments of God appear to be a rigorous round of ceremonies, so needless and foolish

that the force of God's law was destroyed. They heaped exactions upon the commands of God that could never be met, and thereby lessened respect for God." *ST*, 11. September 1893.7

The Pharisees replaced God's standard with their own, and thus instituted a false system of worship in place of the true. And under their false system, those who upheld the truth as Christ did were accused of being apostates and breakers of God's law.

"He [Christ] was loyal to God's commandments, setting aside the human traditions and requirements which had been exalted in their place. Because of this He was hated and persecuted. This history is repeated. The laws and traditions of men are exalted above the law of God, and those who are true to God's commandments suffer reproach and persecution. Christ, because of His faithfulness to God, was accused as a Sabbathbreaker and blasphemer." *COL*, 170.3

The pen of inspiration tells us that the work accomplished by the religion of the Pharisee will be repeated. The "traditions, maxims and sayings of men" which stood at the center of the Pharisees system of false worship parallel's the historical-grammatical method today. The historical grammatical method is the hermeneutic employed by the majority of "conservative" Adventists. This hermeneutic claims to uphold a number of scriptural presuppositions (such as the Bible being the word of God and the only source of doctrine) while making use of historical-critical procedures in interpreting scripture.⁶ An example of this is the primacy given to the original languages which necessitates a dependence upon "experts" in these languages if one is not such an expert themselves. This has encouraged the tendency to depend upon men which is cited as a terrible curse amongst God's people at the end of the world (Jeremiah. 17:5, Isaiah. 31:1-3, 29:11). While the original languages can be useful, giving them the preeminent role in determining the meaning of scripture is contrary to the hermeneutic used by Wil-

6 R F Cottrell, *The Role of Biblical Hermeneutics in Preserving Unity in the Church*, S.17, 1996

liam Miller. Miller arrived at the foundational truths of Adventism by simple proof-texting without recourse to the Greek and Hebrew.⁷ This is also contrary to the scriptures which give the principal qualification for understanding the Word as the condition of one's heart and not scholastic training in ancient languages (John 7:17, John 8:42-47).

Another error of the historical-grammatical method is the reading of the Bible from the perspective of the original writer's culture, society and perspective of life in order to arrive at its meaning for us today. It is important to note that this is the opposite perspective from how the Bible itself instructs us to approach it. Scripture teaches that the Christian is to read it with the understanding that it is talking more about the end of the world than about the times in which it was written (1 Corinthians. 10:11, Romans. 15:4). In order to interpret scripture from the perspective of the original writer's culture and society, recourse to experts in ancient cultures and societies is necessitated. And thus souls are led away from the Word itself to the sayings and deductions of uninspired men.

Traditions of the Fathers and the SDA Church Manual:

The Pharisees had policies which in their implementation made God's word of no effect. Consider the following:

Verse 9 "And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. **10** For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: **11** But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. **12** And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; **13** Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." Mark 7:9-13

⁷ Le Roy Froom, *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* Vol. 4 p. 462

Today the SDA church manual, an uninspired policy document, performs a similar work as the traditions and policies of the Pharisees. The introduction of the church manual was vehemently opposed by some of the Adventist pioneers who lived through the Millerite movement. They opposed it on the grounds that its introduction would lead to spiritual weakness as brethren and ministers would come to lean on it for direction in addressing church challenges as opposed to seeking recourse to God's word and the Holy Spirit through prayer.⁸ This has certainly been the case in recent times where some who, unable to disprove contentious points of present truth such as Daniel 11:40-45 and Radical Islam as the Third Woe, have used the church manual to furnish grounds to dis-fellowship those standing in defence of Bible truth.

This manual makes of no effect God's counsel regarding the Biblical or apostolic model for local church organization by replacing it with the "settled minister" model used by apostate Protestantism.⁹ The apostolic model endorsed by inspiration designated the oversight of local churches to elders who functioned as pastors of these churches.¹⁰ Ministers served as evangelists – raising up churches in different areas and only bestowing as much labour upon them as was needed to enable them to become self-reliant. Following this they would enter new areas to raise up more churches - only visiting established churches to support the local elders. However after the death of Ellen White the settled minister as we know it today took the local church leadership function of the elder and the elder became the minister's assistant.¹¹ This course has yielded within Adventism the same harvest of problems that it has

8 General Conference Proceedings, *RH*, November 20, 1883

9 *Has the Church left the Biblical Model for Local Church Organization?* By G.P Damsteegt in *Here We Stand* by S Koranteng-Pipim

10 "The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel." *AA*, 91.1

11 Damsteegt p. 685

in the fallen protestant churches – most prominently, the spiritual atrophy that has been brought on by an over reliance on settled ministers. This has in turn contributed to the unwillingness on the part of lay members to personally and candidly investigate the truthfulness of controversial subjects for themselves. They must wait for their Pastor to tell them what to believe and what is right and wrong. And when these Ministers are themselves walking in false paths the souls that depend on them follow on blindly over the precipice to perdition.

The Attack on Christ - A Type of the Attack on Miller's Rules

The proof-text hermeneutic elaborated by William Miller is the method of interpretation given by the scriptures themselves (Isaiah. 28:9-12). It is the method used by the inspired authors of the New Testament when interpreting the Old Testament.¹² An example is Paul's use of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:16-17. Paul takes this passage out of its immediate historic context - which was in reference to salvation from the armies of Babylon over 600 years earlier - and uses it as a proof text to establish the "present" truth of salvation in Jesus Christ. The same can be said about Christ's use of Isaiah 6:9-10 in Matthew 13:14-15. Christ uses this passage which, taken in its original context, referred to the Jewish nation during the reign of Jotham hundreds of years earlier, and He speaks of it as having a direct application to the Pharisees in His day.¹³ Christ read this passage as referring more to His day than to the people to whom it was originally written. And the same principle holds true when reading the entire canon of scripture today.

¹² See also Matthew 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7:14

¹³ For more examples of Christ using the proof-text method with passages from the Old Testament - see Matthew 4:4 and Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:7 and Deuteronomy 6:16.

The foundations of Adventism as given on the 1843 and 1850 charts typify Christ.¹⁴ And the rejection of Christ's teaching by the Pharisees and Sadducees typifies how the modern Pharisees and Sadducees will treat those who hold to these foundations and the proof-text hermeneutic upon which they are established. Just as the Pharisees and Sadducees opposed each other but were united in their hatred of Christ, so the proponents of the historical-grammatical and historical-critical methods hate one another but are united in their opposition to the proof-text method. While himself opposed to the proof-text method, the modern SDA theologian quoted below recognizes this scenario:

“The crisis facing contemporary Adventism is not necessarily due to a clash of two cultures – ‘the church of the west’ and ‘the rest of the church.’ Rather it is a crisis over biblical hermeneutics, the appropriate principles for interpreting the Bible. Recently this crisis has spawned much new hermeneutical terminology in our church: casebook vs. cookbook, principles vs. liberal approach. Contextual vs. key text approach, dynamic vs. rigid approach, principle/spirit vs. literal/letter, historical-critical method vs. historical-grammatical method, perhaps other terms as well. ‘In addressing the issue of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics), Seventh-day Adventists are faced with only two options: (1) the historic Adventist approach in Scripture, which recognizes the Bible is fully inspired, trustworthy, and authoritative, and (2) the contemporary liberal approaches to the Bible, which deny full inspiration, reliability ‘Although these two principles are miles apart, they are both agreed in their rejec-

14 „Die Warnung wurde ausgesprochen: Nichts darf hereingelassen werden, was das Fundament des Glaubens zerstören würde, auf dem wir die ganze Zeit gebaut haben seit die Botschaft in den Jahren 1842, 1843 und 1844 verkündigt wurde. Seit dieser Zeit vertritt diese Botschaft vor der Welt, getreu dem Licht, das der Herr uns gegeben hatte. Wir haben nicht die Absicht, unsere Füße von der Plattform wegzubewegen, auf die sie gestellt wurden, als wir Tag um Tag mit ernstem Gebet den Herrn darum baten, uns Licht zu schenken. Meinst du etwa, ich könnte das Licht aufgeben, das Gott mir gegeben hat? Wie der Fels der Zeitalter muss es bestehen bleiben. Es hat mich geleitet, seit es geschenkt wurde. Brüder und Schwestern: Gott lebt, regiert und arbeitet auch heute. Seine Hand ist am Steuer und in Seiner Voraussicht lenkt Er das Steuer gemäß Seines eigenen Willens. Niemand möge sich an Schriftstücke klammern und dann sagen, was diese tun können oder auch nicht. Sie mögen sich selbst an den Gott des Himmels klammern. Dann wird des Himmels Licht in den Seelentempel scheinen, und wir werden die Erlösung Gottes sehen.” RH, 14. April 1903.35;

See article entitled the *Foundations of Seventh-day Adventism*, < <http://www.futurenews.ca/the-foundations-of-adventism/>>

tion of a third approach – namely, the ‘prooftext’ method of interpretation.” Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 27-28

The passage above simply affirms the fact that the liberal/conservative divide and the rejection of the messages that constitute present truth have opposing hermeneutics at their center. And the rejection of present truth (and the hermeneutic through which it is established) by both these camps is but a repetition of the history of Christ’s conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees. What must not be lost sight of is the outcome of this conflict. In Christ’s fate – His betrayal, torture and crucifixion can be seen the path that will be trod by all who will be loyal to truth as it is in Jesus (2 Timothy 3:12, Luke 23:31). But as Christ gained the victory over death and the grave, so shall those who stand true to Him share in His victory and receive eternal life at His coming. But in the final fate of the Pharisees and Sadducees – their perishing at Rome’s hand in the destruction of Jerusalem – can be seen the final fate of those in Adventism who are now warring against present truth. Their rejection of the foundations of Adventism will leave them unable to defend our historic Adventist teachings, unprepared to receive the latter rain and as final recipients of the Mark of the Beast at the Sunday Law.

With Stammering Lips and another Tongue:

The Pharisees and Sadducees rejected Christ because he was not a scholar after their mould.

“...The Pharisees scoffed at Christ; they criticized the simplicity of his language, which was so plain that the child, the aged, the common people heard him gladly, and were charmed by his words. The Sadducees also derided him because his discourses were so unlike anything delivered by their rulers and scribes. Those Jewish teachers spoke in monotonous tones, and the plainest and most precious scriptures were made uninteresting and unintelligible, buried under such a mass of tradition and learned lore that after

the Rabbis had spoken, the people knew less of the meaning of the Scriptures than before they listened. There were many souls starving for the Bread of Life, and Jesus fed them with pure, simple truth. In his teaching he drew illustrations from the things of nature and the common transactions of life, with which they were familiar. Thus the truth became to them a living reality; the scenes of nature and the affairs of daily life were ever repeating to them the Saviour's precious teachings. Christ's manner of teaching was just what he desires his servants to follow." *CE*, 142.3

He was not educated in their schools, He did not interpret the scriptures as they did and he was not actuated by their Spirit. As with John the Baptist, attending the theological seminaries of His day would have unfitted Him for His life mission; and so He never sought that form of education (*DA*, 101; *CT*, 206).

These circumstances are being repeated now at the end of the world. The denominational schools and seminaries have turned from true education and are educating after the manner of the world and the fallen churches.¹⁵ God is now raising up instrumentalities to finish His work and, as in times past, these instrumentalities are not the "learned" men. They are not the degreed Theologians that are held in such high regard within Adventism today. On the contrary, they are the humble men of the earth. They come from the common walks of life and possess few external qualifications. What they do have are teachable spirits and hearts willing to follow the path demarcated by the Word of God. They are described in prophecy as the "stammering lips and another tongue" with which God is now speaking to His people. And they are set forth in the very passage in Isaiah that delineates the proof-text hermeneutic.

Verse 9 "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. **10** For precept must be upon precept, pre-

¹⁵ For more on this history read the book *Broken Blueprint* by Vance Ferrell

cept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: **11** For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. **11** To whom he said, This is the rest where-with ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. **13** But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” Isaiah 28:9-13

Why does God have to turn to such a class of people? The answer to this question is found in Isaiah 29:

Verse 9 “Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. **10** For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. **11** And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: **12** And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. **13** Wherefore the Lord said, For as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:” Isaiah 29:9-13

The learned men – the Pharisees and Sadducees – cannot understand God’s word because of their false hermeneutics and false education. God’s word, particularly Daniel and the Revelation which are open to the understanding of the wise at the end of the world are to them as sealed books. But the “unlearned” or lay people in the church cannot understand God’s word either because they depend on the learned men to teach them. They respond “I cannot [understand it]; for I am not learned”. And Christ proclaims against both these classes the same fearful denunciation He proclaimed against the Pharisees:

Verse 6 “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Mark 7:6-7

This state of affairs is just how Satan would have it; and it is further elaborated in the following passage from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will”. GC88, 595.2

When Christ came to speak the words of life, the common people heard Him gladly; and many, even of the priests and rulers, believed on Him. But the chief of the priesthood and the leading men of the nation were determined to condemn and repudiate His teachings. Though they were baffled in all their efforts to find accusations against Him, though they could not but feel the influence of the divine power and wisdom attending His words, yet they incased themselves in prejudice; they rejected the clearest evidence of His Messiahship, lest they should be forced to become His disciples.

“These opponents of Jesus were men whom the people had been taught from infancy to reverence, to whose authority they had been accustomed implicitly to bow. ‘How is it,’ they asked, ‘that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these pious men receive Him if He were the Christ?’ It was the influence of such teachers that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.” GC88, 595.3

“The spirit which actuated those priests and rulers is still manifested by many who make a high profession of piety. They refuse to examine the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the special truths for this time. They point to their own numbers, wealth, and

popularity, and look with contempt upon the advocates of truth as few, poor, and unpopular, having a faith that separates them from the world. GC88, 596.1

“Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would not cease with the dispersion of the Jews. He had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse to the church in all ages. And His fearful denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, and His warnings to the people not to follow these blind leaders, were placed on record as an admonition to future generations.” GC88, 596.2

In Closing:

The bible has foretold the circumstances in which we find ourselves today. The history of the Pharisees and the Sadducees has been given that we may take heed and avoid the mistakes that cost the Jewish nation so dearly in the past. This history communicates that the current controversies within Adventism are but symptoms of deeper, more fundamental errors regarding how God’s word is interpreted. And in this as in all other situations, God has not left us without counsel regarding the way He would have us go. Consider the following:

“In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown ‘n A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;’ and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: ‘Allowing the first period, 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Dea-cozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days, commenced at the close of the first period,

it will end on the 11th of August, 1840, when the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken. And this, I believe, will be found to be the case.' JoL, *PREX2*, Aug. 1, 1840; *GC1911*, 334.4

At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. (See Appendix.) When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and in publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended." *GC1911*, 335.1

In the early years of the Advent movement the principles of prophetic interpretation used by Miller were confirmed. This period witnessed a wonderful manifestation of the power of God. This demonstration led to the formation of God's denominated church - Seventh-day Adventism. And if we are to be participants in the much more extensive movements under the outpouring of the latter rain, we are to apply the same principles in our studies and teaching of the Word, else we fail of receiving the promised blessing and become as withered plants ready to be burned in the fires of the last day.

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