

Chap. 55 - Lessons From Meeting the Sunday Law Crisis of the Late 1880's and Early 1890's

INTRODUCTION

-

WITH THE FOCUS OF ADVENTISM ON THE RETURN OF CHRIST, THE CLIMACTIC LAST-DAY EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH HIS SECOND COMING HAVE EVER BEEN A THEME OF MAJOR INTEREST TO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS. IT COULD NOT BE OTHERWISE, FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM SPRANG FROM A RELIGIOUS MILIEU, THE MILLERITE MOVEMENT, WHICH STRESSED ESCHATOLOGICAL EVENTS--THE RESURRECTION, THE LAST JUDGMENT, THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN AND SINNERS.

THE VISIONS GIVEN TO ELLEN WHITE AT THE OUTSET OF HER MISSION BROUGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH PROMINENTLY INTO VIEW AS THE TESTING TRUTH, WHICH IN THE LAST DAYS WOULD DIVIDE THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH INTO TWO CLASSES--THOSE WHO OBEY GOD AND WILL BE ETERNALLY SAVED AND THOSE WHO REJECT HIS LAW AND WILL BE ETERNALLY LOST. THE ATTITUDE OF THE INDIVIDUAL TOWARD THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH WOULD BE THE DETERMINING FACTOR.

THE CLOSING EVENTS OF THIS EARTH'S HISTORY HIGHLIGHTED THE LITTLE 219-PAGE *GREAT CONTROVERSY* PUBLISHED IN 1858, AND WERE THE CRUCIAL, CLIMATIC ISSUE OF THE GREAT CONTROVERSY DEPICTIONS IN THE BOOKS BEARING THAT TITLE ISSUED IN 1884, 1888, AND 1911.

HOW CAREFULLY ADVENTISTS HAVE STUDIED THE CLOSING CHAPTERS OF THIS BOOK, AND HAVE THRILLED AT THE INSPIRED PICTURE OF WHAT IS BEFORE THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD! WITH NO ABATING OF INTEREST THEY HAVE SCRUTINIZED ALL THE PUBLISHED ELLEN G. WHITE WRITINGS FOR KINDRED STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT THROW SOME ADDED LIGHT ON COMING EVENTS. IN THIS SECTION WE PRESENT FOR THE FIRST TIME A NUMBER OF HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED ESCHATOLOGICAL STATEMENTS, WHICH HELP TO ROUND OUT THE PICTURE OF THE FINAL EVENTS OF EARTH'S HISTORY.

381

AS SUNDAY LAW ISSUES INTENSIFIED IN THE LATE 1800'S AND AGITATION FOR A NATIONAL SUNDAY LAW IN THE UNITED STATES INCREASED, ELLEN WHITE WROTE PERCEPTIVELY OF "THE IMPENDING CONFLICT" IN *TESTIMONIES*, VOLUME 5, PAGES 711-718, DISCUSSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF

THE ISSUES THEN FACING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, DECLARING THAT THE CHURCH WAS NOT READY FOR THE ISSUE, AND CONJECTURING THAT GOD MIGHT YET, "IN ANSWER TO THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE, HOLD IN CHECK THE WORKINGS OF THOSE WHO ARE MAKING VOID HIS LAW" (P. 714).

AS THE LAWS CALLING FOR SUNDAY OBSERVANCE IN CERTAIN OF THE SOUTHERN STATES WERE ENFORCED AND ADVENTISTS WERE ARRESTED, IMPRISONED, AND FORCED TO LABOR IN CHAIN GANGS FOR NOT OBSERVING THESE LAWS, THE SABBATH-SUNDAY ISSUE TOOK ON GREATER SIGNIFICANCE AND CAME IN FOR EARNEST STUDY AT THE 1889 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION. CAREFULLY REVIEWING THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED, ELLEN WHITE COUNSELED CAUTION IN ANY ACTION THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN BY THE DELEGATES.

AGITATION FOR SUNDAY LEGISLATION GRADUALLY WANED, BUT IN SUCCEEDING YEARS ELLEN WHITE KEPT THE ISSUES OF THE FINAL CONFLICT BEFORE CHURCH LEADERS. TIMES MIGHT HAVE CHANGED, SO FAR AS ACTUAL PERSECUTION FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE WAS CONCERNED, BUT THE ISSUES AND THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED REMAINED THE SAME. SINCE ELLEN WHITE'S DEATH FURTHER CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE SAME PRINCIPLES AND THE SAME ISSUES WILL BE REVIVED IN THE COMING CONFLICT, PRESENT APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING.

THE MAJOR PORTION OF THIS SECTION INCLUDES ESCHATOLOGICAL STATEMENTS WHICH FREQUENTLY PARALLEL THE PRESENTATION GIVEN IN *THE GREAT CONTROVERSY*, BUT WHICH JUST AS OFTEN PROVIDE NEW DETAILS AND NEW INSIGHTS. THESE MATERIALS HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO THREE MAIN AREAS, NAMELY:

1. LESSONS FROM MEETING THE SUNDAY LAW CRISIS OF THE LATE 1880S AND EARLY 1890S.

2. GENERAL COUNSELS APPROPRIATE FOR A PEOPLE APPROACHING THE END.

382

3. INVOLVEMENTS OF "THE LAST GREAT STRUGGLE," WITH THE SABBATH-SUNDAY ISSUE AS THE CRUCIAL FACTOR.

THE READER WILL NOTE THAT, WHILE ELLEN WHITE CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO TRYING EXPERIENCES AHEAD, WHICH WILL DOUBTLESS INCLUDE MARTYRDOMS, AND PREDICTS APOSTASIES IN OUR RANKS, SHE ALSO FORECASTS LARGE ACCESSIONS TO THE CHURCH AND GIVES ENCOURAGING ASSURANCE OF HEAVEN'S SUSTAINING GRACE TO GOD'S LOYAL PEOPLE.--WHITE TRUSTEES.

Assurance as the Clouds Darken in 1884

Great things are before us, and we want to call the people from their indifference to get ready. . . . We are not now to cast away our confidence, but to have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and He will help us to the end. We will look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord hath done for us, to comfort and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. . . .

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. Then, let us take up our work just where we find it, without one word of repining, imagining nothing can come, but that strength will come proportionate to the trials. . . .

Our present peace must not be disturbed by anticipated trials, for God will never leave nor forsake one soul who trusts in Him. God is better unto us than our fears. . . .

Don't Borrow Trouble for a Future Crisis.-- Many will look away from present duties, present comfort

384

and blessings, and be borrowing trouble in regard to the future crisis. This will be making a time of trouble beforehand, and we will receive no grace for any such anticipated troubles. . . . When the scene of sore conflict comes, we have learned the lesson of holy confidence, of blessed trust, and we place our hands in the hands of Christ, our feet on the Rock of Ages, and we are secure from storm, from tempest. We are to wait on our Lord. Jesus will be an ever-present help in every time of need.--Letter 11a, 1884.

You inquire in regard to the course which should be pursued to secure the rights of our people to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. This has been a burden on my soul for some time, whether it would be a denial of our faith, and an evidence that our trust was not fully in God. But I call to mind many things God has shown me in the past in regard to things of a similar character, as the draft [during the American Civil War] and other things. I can speak in the fear of God, it is right we should use every power we can to avert pressure that is being brought to bear upon our people. . . .

[We are] not to provoke those who have accepted the spurious sabbath, an institution of the Papacy, in the place of God's holy Sabbath. Their not having the Bible arguments in their favor makes them all the more angry and determined to supply the place of arguments that are wanting in the Word of God by the power of their might. The force of persecution follows the steps of the dragon. Therefore great care should be exercised to give no provocation. And again, let us as a people, as far as possible, cleanse the camp of moral defilement and aggravating sins. . . .

All the policy in the world cannot save us from a terrible sifting, and all the efforts made with high authorities will not lift from us the scourging of God, just because sin is cherished. If as a people we do not keep ourselves in the faith and not only advocate with pen and voice the commandments of God, but keep

385

them every one, not violating a single precept knowingly, then weakness and ruin will

come upon us. . . .

Appeals of No Avail Without Working of the Holy Spirit.--All the struggles to carry our appeals to the highest authorities in our land, however earnest and strong and eloquent may be the pleas in our favor, will not bring about that which we desire, unless the Lord works by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who claim to believe the truth. We may struggle as a mighty man in swimming against the current of Niagara, but we shall fail unless the Lord pleads in our behalf. God will be honored among His people. They must be pure, they must be divested of self, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. . . .

Laws to Exalt the False Sabbath.--We are to be ready and waiting for the orders of God. Nations will be stirred to their very center. Support will be withdrawn from those who proclaim God's only standard of righteousness, the only sure test of character. And all who will not bow to the decree of the national councils, and obey the national laws to exalt the sabbath instituted by the man of sin to the disregard of God's holy day, will feel, not the oppressive power of popery alone, but of the Protestant world, the image of the beast. . . .

The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed and He will have a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain. . . .

A new life is proceeding from satanic agencies to work with a power we have not hitherto realized. And shall not a new power from above take possession of God's people?--Letter 55, 1886.

We must soon wrestle with the powers of the land, and we have every reason to fear that falsehood will gain the mastery. We shall call upon our churches in the name of the Lord to view this struggle in its true light. [SEE *TESTIMONIES*, VOL. 5, PP. 711-718, "THE IMPENDING CONFLICT" (1889).--COMPILERS.] It is a contest between the Christianity of the Old and

386

New Testaments, and the Christianity of human tradition and corrupt fables.

This contest is to decide whether the pure gospel shall have the field in our nation, or whether the popery of past ages shall receive the right hand of fellowship from Protestantism, and this power prevail to restrict religious liberty. . . . The message must go broadcast, that those who have been imperceptibly tampering with popery, not knowing what they were doing, may hear. They are fraternizing with popery by compromises and by concessions which surprise the adherents of the papacy. . . .

God's Children in Other Churches.--God has children, many of them, in the Protestant churches, and a large number in the Catholic churches, who are more true to obey the light and to do [to] the very best of their knowledge than a large number among Sabbathkeeping Adventists who do not walk in the light. The Lord will have the message of truth proclaimed, that Protestants may be warned and awakened to the true state of things, and consider the worth of the privilege of religious freedom which they have long enjoyed.

Sunday Amendment in the United States.--This land has been the home of the oppressed, the witness for liberty of conscience, and the great center of scriptural light.

God has sent messengers [A. T. JONES AND OTHERS.] who have studied their Bibles to find what is truth, and studied the movements of those who are acting their part in the fulfilling prophecy in bringing about the religious amendment which is making void the law of God and thus giving ascendancy to the man of sin. And shall no voice be raised of direct warning to arouse the churches to their danger? Shall we let things drift, and let Satan have the victory without a protest? God forbid. . . .

Many Not in Our Ranks to Come to the Front.--There are many souls to come out of the ranks of the world, out of the churches--even the Catholic

387

Church--whose zeal will far exceed that of those who have stood in rank and file to proclaim the truth heretofore. For this reason the eleventh hour laborers will receive their penny. These will see the battle coming and will give the trumpet a certain sound. When the crisis is upon us, when the season of calamity shall come, they will come to the front, gird themselves with the whole armor of God, and exalt His law, adhere to the faith of Jesus, and maintain the cause of religious liberty which reformers defended with toil and for which they sacrificed their lives. . . .

A Spurious Sabbath the Issue.--A spurious sabbath is presented to be legislated into power, compelling the observance of a sabbath which God has not enjoined upon man. The persecutions of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated, will be more than rivaled, when Protestantism and popery are combined. . . .

Our own land is to become a battlefield on which is to be carried on the struggle for religious liberty--to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Then can we not discern the work of the enemy in keeping men asleep who ought to be awake, whose influence shall not be neutral, but wholly and entirely on the Lord's side? Shall men cry, Peace and safety, now, when sudden destruction is coming upon the world, when God's wrath shall be poured out?--Manuscript 30, 1889.

America Can Become the Place of Greatest Peril

America, . . . where the greatest light from heaven has been shining upon the people, can become the place of greatest peril and darkness because the people do not continue to practice the truth and walk in the light. . . .

The more nearly we approach the closing scenes of this earth's history, the more pronounced will be the work of Satan. Every species of deception will take the lead to divert the mind from God through Satan's devices.--Letter 23c, 1894.

388

An Early View of Sabbath Importance [SEE
ALSO EARLY WRITINGS, PP. 32-34, FOR THE
VISION IN 1847 ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH.]

I saw that we sensed and realized but little of the importance of the Sabbath, to what we yet should realize and know of its importance and glory. I saw we knew not what it was yet to ride upon the high places of the earth and to be fed with the heritage of Jacob. But when the refreshing and latter rain shall come from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power, we shall know what it is to be fed with the heritage of Jacob and ride upon the high places of the earth. Then shall we see the Sabbath more in its importance and glory.

But we shall not see it in all its glory and importance until the covenant of peace is made with us at the voice of God, and the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem are thrown open and swing back on their glittering hinges, and the glad and joyful voice of the lovely Jesus is heard richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear bidding us enter.--Letter 3, 1851.

We must take a firm stand that we will not reverence the first day of the week as the Sabbath, for it is not the day that was blessed and sanctified by Jehovah, and in reverencing Sunday we should place ourselves on the side of the great deceiver. The controversy of the Sabbath will open the subject to the people, and an opportunity will be given that the claims of the genuine Sabbath may be presented. . . .

The God-fearing, commandment-keeping people should be diligent, not only in prayer, but in action, and this will bring the truth before those who have never heard it. .

When the law of God has been made void, and apostasy becomes a national sin, the Lord will work in behalf of His people. Their extremity will be His opportunity. He will manifest His power in behalf of His church. . . .

A Time to Witness.--The Lord has enlightened us

389

in regard to what is coming upon the earth that we may enlighten others, and we shall not be held guiltless if we are content to sit at ease, with folded hands, and quibble over matters of minor importance. . . .

The people must not be left to stumble their way along in darkness, not knowing what is before them, and unprepared for the great issues that are coming. There is a work to be done for this time in fitting a people to stand in the day of trouble, and all must act their part in this work. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and be so fortified by the truth that the delusions of Satan shall not be accepted by them as genuine manifestations of the power of God. . . .

It is a solemn time for God's people, but if they stand close by the bleeding side of Jesus, He will be their defense. He will open ways that the message of light may come to the great men, to authors and lawmakers. They will have opportunities of which you do not now dream, and some of them will boldly advocate the claims of God's downtrodden law. . . .

Satan's Strategy in the Final Conflict.--There is now need of earnest working men and women who will seek for the salvation of souls, for Satan as a powerful general has taken the field, and in this last remnant of time he is working through all conceivable methods to close the door against light that God would have come to His people. He is

sweeping the whole world into his ranks, and the few who are faithful to God's requirements are the only ones who can ever withstand him, and even these he is trying to overcome. . . .

Go to God for yourselves; pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work or the powers of darkness. . . .

A world is to be warned, and when the third angel's message goes forth with a loud cry, minds will be fully

390

prepared to make decisions for or against the truth. The great change is to be made by Satan and his evil angels, united with evil men who will fix their destiny by making void the law of God in the face of convincing evidence from His Word that it is unchangeable and eternal.

Loud Cry of Third Angel's Message.--The very time of which the prophet has written will come, and the mighty cry of the third angel will be heard in the earth, his glory will lighten the world, and the message will triumph, but those who do not walk in its light will not triumph with it. . . .

The solemn time has come when ministers should be weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach" (Joel 2:17). It is a day when, instead of lifting up their souls in self-sufficiency, ministers and people should be confessing their sins before God and one another.

An Army of Believers Who Stand the Last Test.--The law of God is made void, and even among those who advocate its binding claims are some who break its sacred precepts. The Bible will be opened from house to house, and men and women will find access to these homes, and minds will be opened to receive the Word of God; and, when the crisis comes, many will be prepared to make right decisions, even in the face of the formidable difficulties that will be brought about through the deceptive miracles of Satan. Although these will confess the truth and become workers with Christ at the eleventh hour, they will receive equal wages with those who have wrought through the whole day. There will be an army of steadfast believers who will stand as firm as a rock through the last test. . . .

Increased light will shine upon all the grand truths of prophecy, and they will be seen in freshness and brilliancy, because the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will illuminate the whole. . . .

When the angel was about to unfold to Daniel the

391

intensely interesting prophecies to be recorded for us who are to witness their fulfillment, the angel said, "Be strong, yea, be strong" (Daniel 10:19). We are to receive the very same glory that was revealed to Daniel, because it is for God's people in these last days, that they may give the trumpet a certain sound.--Manuscript 18, 1888.

When Christ shall come the second time, the whole world will be represented by two classes, the just and the unjust, the righteous and the unrighteous. Preceding the great sign of the coming of the Son of man, there will be signs and wonders in the heavens. .

.. Already sprinklings from the vials of God's wrath have been let fall upon land and sea, affecting the elements of the air. The causes of these unusual conditions are being searched for, but in vain.

God has not restrained the powers of darkness from carrying forward their deadly work of vitiating the air, one of the sources of life and nutrition, with a deadly miasma. Not only is vegetable life affected, but man suffers from pestilence. . . .

Physical and Religious World to Be Shaken.-- These things are the result of drops from the vials of God's wrath being sprinkled on the earth, and are but faint representations of what will be in the near future.

Earthquakes in various places have been felt, but these disturbances have been very limited. . . . Terrible shocks will come upon the earth, and the lordly palaces erected at great expense will certainly become heaps of ruins.

The earth's crust will be rent by the outbursts of the elements concealed in the bowels of the earth. These elements, once broken loose, will sweep away the treasures of those who for years have been adding to their wealth by securing large possessions at starvation prices from those in their employ.

And the religious world too, is to be terribly shaken, for the end of all things is at hand. . . . All society is

392

ranging into two great classes, the obedient and the disobedient. . . .

There Will Be Laws Controlling Conscience.-- The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved. Of this time John the Revelator declares:

"The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Revelation 18:3-7).

One Universal Confederacy.--"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:13, 14).

"These have one mind." There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. "And shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to

conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanists.

In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt

393

powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue, for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies Himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. . . .

In Revelation we read concerning Satan: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:13-17). . . .

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (chap. 16:13-15). . . .

Satan Will Appear to Succeed.--All things in nature and in the world at large are charged with intense earnestness. Satan, in cooperation with his angels and with evil men, will put forth every effort to gain the victory, and will appear to succeed. But from this conflict, truth and righteousness will come forth triumphant in victory. Those who have believed a lie will be defeated, for the days of apostasy will be ended.--
Manuscript 24, 1891.

394

Counsel Relating to Sunday Law Issues

There have arisen in our conference questions that need to have careful attention, whether the Sabbathkeepers in the Southern States, where they are liable to feel the oppressive power of their State laws if they labor on Sunday, shall rest on Sunday to avoid the persecution which must come if they do any labor. [THE 1889 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION WAS HELD IN BATTLE CREEK, OCTOBER 18 TO NOVEMBER 5. ON SABBATH, NOVEMBER 2, ELLEN WHITE SPOKE IN THE MORNING ON REVELATION 13, "LAYING OUT IN CLEAR LINES THE POSITION OF

THE PEOPLE OF GOD FOR THIS TIME IN REGARD TO SUNDAY LAWS." SABBATH AFTERNOON SHE READ FROM THE *TESTIMONIES* AND AN 1883 GENERAL CONFERENCE SERMON RELATING TO THE SAME SUBJECT. NEITHER PRESENTATION WAS REPORTED.--COMPILERS.] Some of our brethren seem anxious that a resolution shall be passed by the General Conference advising our Sabbathkeeping brethren liable to imprisonment and fines, to refrain from labor on that day. Such resolutions should not be placed before this conference, requiring their action.

There are questions about which it is far better to have as little notoriety given as possible, in either case--for or against. . . .

God Will Give Light and Knowledge When Needed.--When the Sunday question is legislated to become a law, there will not be so great a danger of taking steps that are not of a character to receive the sanction of Heaven . . . for the reason that the Lord gives light and knowledge just when it is most needed. . . .

While all Sabbathkeepers are anxious and troubled, seeking to penetrate the mysteries of the future, and to learn all they can in regard to the correct position they shall take, be careful that they are advised correctly in regard to Sunday observance. . . . There will ever be danger of going to extremes. . . .

If the decision is made that our people shall not labor on Sunday and that our brethren in the Southern States [AT THE TIME THIS MANUSCRIPT WAS WRITTEN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN SOME OF THE SOUTHERN STATES WERE BEING PERSECUTED BECAUSE OF VIOLATION OF STATE SUNDAY LAWS. SOME OF THESE ADVENTISTS REFUSING TO PAY FINES IMPOSED WERE PUT IN CHAIN GANGS.] shall appear to harmonize with the Sunday law, because

395

of oppression, how long before all over the world [our people] shall be in like circumstances as they are in the South. The decision is to be a universal one. If it comes to the light of day as it will in degrees and there will be concessions and servile bowing to an idol god by those who claim to be Sabbathkeepers, there will be a yielding of principles until all is lost to them.

If we counsel them not to respect the idol sabbath exalted to take the place of the Sabbath of the Lord our God, then instruct them in this matter in a quiet way and encourage no defying of the law powers in words or actions unless called to do this for the honor of God to vindicate His downtrodden law. Let there be no unnecessary act of arousing the combative spirit or passions of opponents. . . .

There should be no just occasion to our enemies to charge us with being lawless and defying the laws through any imprudence of our own. [SEE *TESTIMONIES*, VOL. 9, PP. 232-238, "SUNDAY LABOR."] We should not feel it enjoined upon us to irritate our neighbors who idolize Sunday by making determined efforts to bring labor on that day before them purposely to exhibit an independence. . . .

There should be no noisy demonstration. Let us consider how fearful and terribly sad is the delusion that has taken the world captive and by every means in our power seek to enlighten those who are our bitterest enemies. If there is the acceptance of the

principles of the inworking of the Holy Ghost which he [the Christian] must have to fit him for heaven, he will do nothing rashly or presumptuously to create wrath and blasphemy against God. . . .

How You Treat the Sabbath Question Is Decisive.-- There are some trying testimonies to be manfully borne by Sabbathkeepers and some bitter persecution finally endured. . . . Let no resolutions be passed here which will encourage half-hearted service or cowardly hiding our light under a bushel or under a bed, for we

396

will certainly be tried and tested. . . . Be sure the Sabbath is a test question, and how you treat this question places you either on God's side or Satan's side. The mark of the beast is to be presented in some shape to every institution and every individual. . . .

Every move from the first made by Satan was the beginning of his work to continue to the end to exalt the false, to take the place of the genuine Sabbath of Jehovah. He is just as intent now and more determined to do this than ever before. He has come down with great power to deceive them who dwell on the earth with his satanic delusions. . . .

As we meet the emergency, the law of God becomes more precious, more sacred, and as it is more manifestly made void and set aside, in proportion should arise our respect and reverence for the law. . . .

In the exercise of the longsuffering of God, He gives to nations a certain period of probation, but there is a point which, if they pass, there will be the visitation of God in His indignation. He will punish. The world has been advancing from one degree of contempt for God's law to another, and the prayer may be appropriate at this time, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126). . . .

Individuals to Take Responsibility.--Let not anyone make any proud boast, either by precept or example, to show that he is defying the laws of the land. Make no resolutions as to what persons in different states may do, or may not do. Let nothing be done to lessen individual responsibility. To their God they must stand or fall. Let none feel it is his duty to make speeches in the presence of our own people, or of our enemies, that will arouse their combativeness, and they take your words and construe them in such a way that you are charged with being rebellious to the government, for this will close the door of access to the people. . . .

While we cannot bow to an arbitrary power to lift up the Sunday by bowing to it, while we will not violate the Sabbath, which a despotic power will seek to compel us

397

to do, we will be wise in Christ. . . . We must say no words, that will do ourselves harm, for this would be bad enough, but when you speak words, and when you do presumptuous things that imperil the cause of God, you are doing a cruel work, for you give Satan advantage. We are not to be rash and impetuous, but always learning of Jesus, how to act in His spirit, presenting the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .

Danger of Hasty, Ill-advised Moves.--One indiscreet, high-tempered, stubborn-willed man will, in the great question introduced before us, do much harm. Yes, he will leave such an impression that all the force of Seventh-day Adventists could not counteract his acts of presumption because Satan, the arch deceiver, the great rebel, is deluding minds to the true issue of the great question, and its eternal bearing. .

.. There are those who will, through hasty, ill-advised moves, betray the cause of God into the enemy's power. There will be men who will seek to be revenged, who will become apostates and betray Christ in the person of His saints. All need to learn discretion; then there is danger on the other hand of being conservative, of giving away to the enemy in concessions. . . .

Anything we may do that lifts up the spurious to take the place of the true and genuine Sabbath, is disloyal to God, and we must move very carefully, lest we exalt the decisions of the man of sin. We are not to be found in a neutral position on this matter of so great consequence. . . .

Persecution in the Battle Before the Last Closing Conflict.--The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth. . . . You will not be tempted above what you are

398

able to bear. Jesus bore all this and far more. . . .

Work of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing.--There will be, even among us, hirelings and wolves in sheep's clothing who will persuade [some of] the flock of God to sacrifice unto other gods before the Lord. . . . Youth who are not established, rooted and grounded in the truth, will be corrupted and drawn away by the blind leaders of the blind; and the ungodly, the despisers that wonder and perish, who despise the sovereignty of the Ancient of Days, and place on the throne a false god, a being of their own defining, a being altogether such an one as themselves--these agents will be in Satan's hands to corrupt the faith of the unwary.

Self-indulgent Will Scorn Faithful Ones

Those who have been self-indulgent and ready to yield to pride and fashion and display, will sneer at the conscientious, truth-loving, God-fearing people, and will in this work sneer at the God of heaven Himself. . . .

In the name of the Lord I advise all His people to have trust in God and not begin now to prepare to find an easy position for any emergency in the future, but to let God prepare for the emergency. . . .

As Our Day Will Be Our Strength.--When the Christian is looking forward to duties and severe trials that he anticipates are to be brought upon him, because of his Christian profession of faith, it is human nature to contemplate the consequences, and shrink from the prospects, and this will be decidedly so as we near the close of this earth's history. We may be encouraged by the truthfulness of God's word, that Christ never failed His children as their safe Leader in the hour of their trial; for we have the

truthful record of those who have been under the oppressive powers of Satan, that His grace is according to their day. God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. . . .

There may be large mountains of difficulties in regard to how to meet the claims of God and not stand in

399

defiance of the laws of the land. He [the believer] must not be making ample provisions for himself to shield himself from trial, for he is only God's instrument and he is to go forward in singleness of purpose with his mind and soul garrisoned day by day, that he will not sacrifice one principle of his integrity, but he will make no boasts, issue no threats, or tell what he will or will not do. For he does not know what he will do until tested. . . .

We Are Not to Irritate Sundaykeeping Neighbors.-- There should be a constant walking in all humility. There should be no just occasion for our enemies to charge us with being lawless and defying the laws through any imprudence of our own. We should not feel it enjoined upon us to irritate our neighbors who idolize Sunday by making determined efforts to bring labor on that day before them purposely to exhibit an independence. Our sisters need not select Sunday as the day to exhibit their washing. There should be no noisy demonstration. Let us consider how fearful and terribly sad is the delusion that has taken the world captive and by every means in our power seek to enlighten those who are our bitterest enemies. If there is the acceptance of the principles of the inworking of the Holy Ghost which he [the Christian] must have to fit him for heaven, he will do nothing rashly or presumptuously to create wrath and blasphemy against God. . . .

No Deaths Among God's People After Probation Closes.--After Jesus rises up from the mediatorial throne, every case will be decided, and oppression and death coming to God's people will not then be a testimony in favor of the truth. . . .

We urge you to consider this danger: That which we have most to fear is nominal Christianity. We have many who profess the truth who will be overcome because they are not acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot distinguish His voice from that of a stranger. There is to be no dread of anyone being borne down even in a widespread apostasy, who has a living experience in

400

the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If Jesus be formed within, the hope of glory, the illiterate as well as the educated can bear the testimony of our faith, saying, "I know in whom I have believed." Some will not, in argument, be able to show wherein their adversary is wrong, having never had any advantages that others have had, yet these are not overcome by the apostasy, because they have the evidence in their own heart that they have the truth, and the most subtle reasoning and assaults of Satan cannot move them from their knowledge of the truth, and they have not a doubt or fear that they are themselves in error. . . .

When profligacy and heresy and infidelity fill the land, there will be many humble homes where prayer, sincere and contrite prayer, will be offered from those who have never heard the truth, and there will be many hearts that will carry a weight of

oppression for the dishonor done to God. We are too narrow in our ideas, we are poor judges, for many of these will be accepted of God because they cherish every ray of light that shone upon them.--Manuscript 6, 1889.

Pay Fine if It Will Deliver From the Oppressor

Men are inspired by Satan to execute his purposes against God. The Lord has said, "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations" (Exodus 31:13). None should disobey this command in order to escape persecution. But let all consider the words of Christ, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (Matthew 10:23). If it can be avoided, do not put yourselves into the power of men who are worked by the spirit of Antichrist. If the payment of a fine will deliver our brethren from the hands of these oppressors, let it be paid, rather than to be pressed and made to work on the Sabbath. Everything that we can do should be done that those who are willing to suffer for the truth's sake may be saved from oppression and cruelty. . . .

When men under conviction resist light, follow

401

their own inclinations, and regard the favor of men above the favor of God, they do as did many in Christ's day. . . .

Commandments Not to Be Ignored in Order to Have an Easy Time.--Christ is our example. The determination of Antichrist to carry out the rebellion he began in heaven will continue to work on the children of disobedience. Their envy and hatred against those who obey the fourth commandment will wax more and more bitter. But the people of God are not to hide their banner. They are not to ignore the commandments of God, and in order to have an easy time go with the multitude to do evil. They should be careful not to condemn their brethren in the faith who are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. . . .

Those who forsake God in order to save their lives will be forsaken by Him. In seeking to save their lives by yielding the truth, they will lose eternal life.

Natural affection for relatives and friends should not lead any soul who sees the light to reject the light, to dishonor God the Father and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Every possible excuse for disobedience will be framed by men who choose, as many did in Christ's day, the favor of men rather than the favor of God. If one chooses wife or children, father or mother, before Christ, that choice will stand through eternal ages, with all its weight of responsibility. . . .

The soul that has had light in regard to the Lord's Sabbath, His memorial of creation, and to save himself from inconvenience and reproach has chosen to remain disloyal, has sold his Lord. He has dishonored the name of Christ, He has taken his stand with the armies of Antichrist; with them at the last great day, he will be found outside the city of God, not with the loyal, the true and righteous, in the heavenly kingdom.

All who have genuine faith will be tested and tried. They may have to forsake houses and lands, and even their own relatives, because of bitter opposition. "But

402

when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," Christ said. "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matthew 10:23).

Antichrist--Those Who Exalt Themselves Against God-- Will feel His Wrath.--The greater man's influence for good, under the control of the Spirit of God, the more determined will be the enemy to indulge his envy and jealousy toward him by religious persecution. But all heaven is on the side of Christ, not of Antichrist. Those who love God and are willing to be partakers with Christ in His sufferings, God will honor. Antichrist, meaning all who exalt themselves against the will and work of God, will at the appointed time feel the wrath of Him who gave Himself that they might not perish but have eternal life. All who persevere in obedience, all who will not sell their souls for money or for the favor of men, God will register in the book of life.--
Manuscript 9, 1900.