

*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!  
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt 25:6 RSV)



# A NATIONAL SUNDAY LAW

**PAST? PRESENT? FUTURE?**

(Part One)

In 1873, a Mr. McCoy moved from Louisville, Ky., to Arkansas. He served as constable for seven years, and two terms as Justice of the Peace in Hot Spring County. In 1884, he became a Seventh-day Adventist. At the August, 1885, term of the Circuit Court of that county, he was indicted for Sabbath breaking being charged with plowing his field on Sunday.

In 1884, Mr. J. L. Shockey, a Seventh-day Adventist, moved from Ohio and settled on a piece of railroad land six miles north of Malvern, the seat of Hot Spring County. On September 14, 1885, he was arrested for having been seen plowing his field on Sunday the previous Spring. He gave bond for his appearance before the February term of the Circuit Court in Malvern. (See The Two Republics, pp. 879-880)

This year, on March 9, now over 100 years later in an adjoining county - Garland - the citizens of Hot Springs, Arkansas in a public referendum by an almost 2 to 1 margin voted to legalize horse racing on Sunday with its pari-mutuel betting.

During the recent American national election in November of last year, both in Maryland and in Arkansas, municipalities overturned "blue laws." Mandatory Sunday closing statutes were repealed in Maryland, and in Arkansas, two communities approved Sunday alcohol sales. In Little Rock, the capitol and one of the communities to so decide, the vote was 65% for and 35% against. All of these expressions at the voting booth reflect the pluralistic and changing attitude of American society.

Not only here in America is this change visible, but the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops also noted this change in Canada. In a release, "The Meaning of Sunday in a Pluralistic Society" (September, 1986), the bishops cited a need to review the place of Sunday in a secular

society. While they noted that "most Christians" celebrate Sunday to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus, they observed, "however, that in our multicultural and pluralistic society there are others who do not share this belief. They honor a different day of worship or see no need at all for setting aside a day of praise and thanksgiving to God. Given the change in our society, it is no longer appropriate to protect Sunday closing laws on the basis that most Christians hold it to be the Day of the Lord."

This does not mean that the Bishops are planning to abandon Sunday legislation. Citing Pope John Paul's encyclical on human work, that all have a "right to rest," they declare that "this right includes at least one regular weekly day of rest." Their perceptions and solutions are interesting. They write:

In our pluralistic society, the choice of Sunday as the day of renewal for all is rooted more in tradition than religious conviction. Many groups, especially the labor movement, have emphasized repeatedly that Sundays are our traditional days of pause. In our society, the observance of Sunday as a holiday is more firmly entrenched in people's habits than any other day of the week. Sunday's off are a part of our culture, a culture that Christians have shaped in the past and in which they continue to take their rightful place in full and free cooperation with people of other religions and world views.

Maintaining Sunday as our common day of rest does not exclude special respect and consideration for people who wish to celebrate another day as their day of spiritual and physical renewal. We should be able to devise laws that will not penalize people with different beliefs as long as these laws protect the shared experience of leisure and rest for the majority. It should also be possible to devise shopping regulations that permit the purchase of basic necessities without destroying Sunday's emphasis on people and playfulness.

Finally, it is clear that there will always be some members of the workforce who will have to work on Sunday to provide essential services for the public. They deserve our understanding and appreciation for their contribution to the common good. However, even for these workers, employees or professionals, we should carefully protect and respect their right to enjoy the full benefits of Sundays, at least on an alternating basis.

These pastoral reflections of the Canadian bishops of the Roman Catholic Church should be noted carefully. The goal is to have a "protected Sunday" for the majority without a "penalty" on the minority. However, this

"protected Sunday" would fall short of forbidding all Sunday business and would not interfere with sports ("playfulness").

The impact of a pluralistic society seems to be recognized by all except some Seventh-day Adventists who wish to make capital of the Sunday Law issue for their own ends. There is no question but that the subject of Sunday laws catches Adventist attention. The experience of the past as noted above, not only that which occurred in Arkansas, but also in Tennessee, arouses deep emotions. Besides this, various quotations can be marshaled from the Writings to sustain the emphasis. But it is over the misapplication of the Ellen G. White Writings that has led to this blind spot in our evaluation of the present. This is compounded by the fact that we are not willing to apply the rules which Ellen White gave for the study of her Writings.

#### The Rules

Ellen G. White wrote that "the testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture." (SM, bk i, p. 42) A second rule states - "Regarding the testimonies; nothing is cast aside; but time and place **must** be considered." (Ibid., p. 57; emphasis supplied.)

A failure to follow these simple rules has led to a jangling jungle of voices on the periphery of the Adventist Community. Each voice claims to have discovered some new way to attain perfection by human endeavor. These siren calls come from persons with varied backgrounds of experience, some from the drug culture, and some with no other objective than personal gain. Each call regardless of motive takes some statement or statements from the testimonies, related or unrelated, and builds upon this a theory of salvation through human works. These verily make of non-effect the Writings.

Interestingly, Ellen G. White in setting forth the rules noted above, warned that there would be those "who would search for new and strange doctrines, for something odd and sensational to present to the people. They will bring in all conceivable fallacies, and will present them as coming from Mrs. White, that they may beguile souls." These "will misinterpret the messages that God has given, in accordance with their personal blindness." (Ibid., p. 41)

# AMAZING FACTS!

On my recent trip through the Northwest, I was confronted by facts so amazing that I am sure that Elder Joe Crews would wish not to know so as to avoid their implication. At one contact a couple gave me a current issue of a widely circulated paper on the periphery of Adventism. The article which caused their concern contained the amazing fact that the ashes of the Altar in the court of the earthly sanctuary "represented the confessed sins of the righteous." (p. 27)

I was sure that one amazing fact called for another in this same journal. So I looked through the other articles. On another page I found an interesting title - "The New Theology and the Spirit of Prophecy" written by the Standish brothers. I couldn't believe what I was reading. There in a bold block was the final conclusion. It read:

The acceptance of the prophetic gift in the ministry of Sister White is essential not only for the preparation of God's people for the eternal kingdom, but also to the acceptance of the Scriptures as inspired." (p. 15)

Here is a contradiction of what the Writings teach plus a plain unabridged Roman Catholic teaching. An amazing fact indeed! Let us note first what Ellen G. White taught about the preparation of God's people for the eternal kingdom. She wrote:

In the Word of God is contained everything essential to the perfecting of the man of God. (ST, Jan. 30, 1893; Art. - "Benefits of Bible Study" [Emphasis supplied])

As to the necessity of the Writings to know that the Bible is an inspired book, evidently I did not learn of Biblical inspiration until I became a Seventh-day Adventist. This was a new amazing fact to me, because my mother before we became Adventists taught me to reverence the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

In the book, The Faith of Millions, Dr. John A. O'Brien of Notre Dame University wrote referring to the Roman Catholic Church - "If she had not declared the books composing the New Testament to be the inspired word of God, we would not know it. (p. 145, emphasis his)

All the Standish brothers have done is to interpret that "she" as Ellen G. White and thus have transmitted the adulterated teaching of Rome into Our Firm Foundation! (April, 1989) As I drove along the highway contemplating the

impact of these amazing facts on concerned Seventh-day Adventists, I wondered what it will take to awaken them to the deceptions which Ron Spear and his cohorts are perpetrating on God's professed people.

The first Sabbath out, April 22, I visited the New Hope Church, an Evangelical facility which the Milwaukie, Oregon, Seventh-day Adventists are using for their services. I sat in one of the "Adult Study Options" for Sabbath School. The teacher who by his remarks I perceived to be a minister told the class that he believed all King James Versions of the Bible should be burned. (An Amazing Fact!) He recommended the NIV, but was teaching from the Living Bible which he admitted was merely a paraphrasing. He assured the class, however, that he could check it by the NIV as to correctness. He was a graduate of Union College, the same as I, and I knew that he had to take NT Greek as a part of the ministerial course. I then wondered what had happened to his study habits during the years since.

Now I am aware of the inadequacies of the KJV and some of its faulty translations. I know also that the KJV teaches that the atonement was completed on the Cross. I still use it; I will continue to do so; but if certain texts have to be checked, as some do, then I will use the Greek text with all the linguistic tools available to me. Sincere laity who want to check things for themselves need to become familiar with an interlinear Bible. A layperson can become a well-informed student of the Word.

This Adventist Church in the Portland area was planning to launch a "Revelation Celebration" in Clackamas, Oregon, starting the following Monday evening. What was new to me was that the church was using two different types of invitation circulars. This interested me as we had not used this type of approach in our evangelistic work. However, it was in noting this that I obtained another amazing fact which Joe Crews will not admit, although he knows it is true.

One multicolored folder was for the non-Adventist. The second, less colorful, was for the ex-Adventist being used in an attempt to reach the backsliders. This one read - (front cover with proper picture) - "It may be true that 'This is Not Your Father's Oldsmobile,' BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT -- [and you turn the page] this is not your father's church - It has changed!"

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If we would compare testimony with testimony as we do (or should do) the Scriptures, taking time to note in regard to these testimonies "time and place," we would have a clear line of truth which would be in harmony with Bible truth arrived at in the same way. For example, if in our studying from the Bible the basic doctrine of the state of man after death and eternal rewards, we accepted as literal the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and set forth as cardinal teaching the conclusions to be thus drawn, what would we believe? This same approach is being made in the study of the Writings with only those segments of the Writings being compiled which support some preconceived theory to appeal to the human desire for something sensational or something which will sustain their ego.

#### Application

When we apply the two simple rules to the question of a "National Sunday Law" and start comparing testimony with testimony, the first thing we discover is that this phrase is not found in the Writings. The application of "time and place" to that which has been written in regard to a Sunday Law could be divided into pre and post 1900.

At the very time - 1885 - the incidents which we cited on page 1 were taking place in Arkansas, Ellen G. White was emphasizing two things. Starting in 1878 and continuing through 1886 she wrote:

We are now upon the very borders of the eternal world. (4T:306)

The end of all things is at hand. (5T:16)

Brethren, I have been shown that we are standing upon the threshold of the eternal world. (5T:18)

We are standing, as it were, upon the borders of the eternal world. (5T:382)

We are standing upon the very verge of the eternal world. (5T:460)

Eternity stretches before us. The curtain is about to be lifted. (5T:464)

In connection with this emphasis on the nearness of the end, she wrote also about a Sunday Law and its significance. Her words are:

By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness." (5T:451)

This "decree enforcing" the papal Sabbath is

noted as a "warning" signal "to leave the larger cities" with the ultimate objective of "retired homes in secluded places among the mountains." (5T:464-465)

In 1889, Ellen White would write:

Events which for more than forty years we have, upon the authority of the prophetic word, declared to be impending, are now taking place before our eyes. Already the question of an amendment to the Constitution restricting liberty of conscience, has been urged upon the legislators of the nation. The question of enforcing Sunday observance has become one of national interest and importance. (5T:711; emphasis mine)

This was a true evaluation of what was then taking place. On May 21, 1888, Senator H. W. Blair introduced a National Sunday-Rest Bill into Congress. It was opposition to this and subsequent religious legislation which catapulted A. T. Jones to the forefront of Adventism. However, out of this agitation for Sunday legislation, Congress finally voted into an appropriations bill for the Columbian Exposition of 1892, a Sunday closing amendment which was signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison on August 5, 1892.

Rightly or wrongly, A. T. Jones perceived this law as giving life to the image of the beast of Revelation 13, and that the mark of the beast had been established. Coupling this Congressional action with the Message of 1888, Ellen G. White could write - "The time of test is just before us" indicating that God's people had reached the time for the fulfillment of Revelation 18; and "the loud cry of the third angel had already begun." (R&H, Nov. 22, 1892)

During this final decade of the 19th Century, there was constant agitation over the Sunday question which presented an unparalleled opportunity for the Adventist to witness to the Sabbath truth. Major statements concerning Sunday, its origin as a day of worship, were made which were used and have been used by Adventist evangelists in the decades since then. (See pp. 5-6)

#### Since 1900

Counsel to get out of the cities continued to come from the pen of Ellen G. White. In 1906, she wrote - "'Out of the cities; out of the cities!' - this is the message the Lord has been giving me." (Life Sketches, p.

## SABBATH QUESTION AGITATION - 1889-1905

1889

T. Enright of the Redemptorist Fathers - Industrial American, Harlan, Iowa:

The Bible says: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," but the Catholic Church says: "No, keep the first day of the week," and all the world bows in obedience." (January 19, 1889)

1893

The Christian Sabbath, (2nd Ed.; Baltimore: The Catholic Mirror [Official Organ of Cardinal Gibbons])\*

The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. (p. 29)

Dr. E. T. Hiscox, Baptist Clergyman and Author of the Baptist Manual in a paper read August 20, 1893 at Saratoga, NY, at a Baptist Ministers' Meeting.

Of course I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of Paganism, and Christened with the name of the Sun-god. Then adopted and sanctified by the Papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism, and the Christian world...

1894

The Catholic World, a magazine of General Literature and Science, March, 1894.

The church took the pagan philosophy and made it the buckler of faith against the heathen. She took the Roman Pantheon, temple of all the gods, and made it sacred to all the martyrs; so it stands to this day. She took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday...

The sun was the foremost god with heathendom... Hence the church in these countries would seem to have said, "Keep that old, pagan name. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified." And thus the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder [White God of the Scandinavians], became the Christian Sunday sacred to Jesus. (p.809)

1895

A Letter from the Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons to J. F. Snyder of Bloomington, Illinois, Nov. 11, 1895.

Of course the Catholic Church claims the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical without her. And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.

1897

John Milner, a Roman Catholic Divine, to James Brown, a member of a Protestant Religious Society, Letter #11 in The End of Religious Controversy (New York: P. J. Kenedy) [After reviewing the history of the Sabbath from Creation through the life of Christ, Milner drew the following conclusion in his letter]

Yet with all of this weight of Scripture authority for keeping the Sabbath or seventh day holy, Protestants, of all denominations, make this a profane day and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week, or the Sunday. Now what authority have they for doing this? None at all, but the unwritten Word, or tradition of the Catholic church,... (p. 89, Emphasis his)

## Sunday Question Agitation (continued)

1899

T Enright CmsR, Kansas City, MO, June 16, 1899

I hereby offer \$1000, to anyone who can prove to me, from the Bible alone, that I am bound, under pain of grievous sin, to keep Sunday holy.

1902

Letter from T. Enright, dated April 26, 1902 from Detroit, MI.

I still offer \$1000 to any one who can prove to me, from the Bible alone, that I am bound under pain of grievous sin, to keep Sunday holy. We keep Sunday in obedience to the law of the Catholic Church. The church made this law long after the Bible was written; hence the law is not in the Bible. The Catholic church abolished not only the Sabbath, but all the other Jewish Festivals.

1905

Letter from T. Enright, dated June, 1905 from St Louis, MO.

I have offered and still offer \$1000 to any one who can prove to me from the Bible alone, that I am bound, under grievous sin, to keep Sunday holy. It was the Catholic Church which made the law obliging us to keep Sunday holy. The church made this law long after the Bible was written. Hence said law is not in the Bible. Christ, our Lord empowered his church to make laws binding in conscience.

\* The four articles in The Catholic Mirror demonstrated from the Bible that Adventists were the only consistent Protestants since the Bible provided no justification for Sunday observance. These articles challenged Protestants either to admit their debt to the Roman Catholic Church or to keep the Bible Sabbath. The Adventists had these articles published in a booklet - Rome's Challenge to Protestants. It was given wide circulation and used effectively by their evangelists.

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From page 4, col. 2 - "A National Sunday Law"

p. 409. But the "message" was not connected with the Sunday Law as a sign to leave the cities. Instead, she declared - "On these cities, God's judgments will fall." (Letter 158, 1902) In 1905, she indicated the global extent of the message to get out of the cities, by writing - "The world over, cities are becoming hot beds of vice." (Ministry of Healing, p. 363) Then in 1907, the warning came - "Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it becoming more and more evident that those who remain in them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their soul's salvation." (Ms. 115, 1907)

By comparing testimony with testimony, there is revealed a broadening of the issues which will bring about the same ends had the objectives of the Sunday Law issue of the final decade of the 19th Century been realized. Observe these two statements written with a 22 year time gap, but with the same end result:

1888

A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people will be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in

1910

When the Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution; when the state shall use its power to enforce the decrees and sustain the institutions of the church - then will Protestant America have formed an image to the

regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin. (R&H, Dec. 18, 1888; 7BC:977)

You will observe that these two quotations are connected by the end result - national apostasy will be followed by national ruin. But in 1910, the base has been widened from a single issue of a law "enforcing Sunday observance" to the exercise of the power of the state "to enforce the decrees" of the church, and to sustain their "institutions." The picture calls for a union "with the secular power to sustain a false religion."

Why is this change of means indicated for the accomplishment of the same ends? Again it must be remembered that in 1901, Ellen White wrote:

We may have to remain here in this world because of in-subordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action. (M-184-1901)

To this might be added that because we have been in this world "many more years," we should now compound our present predicament by wrongly comparing "testimony with testimony" and giving a perverted picture of the Sunday Law question to further personal ends? God has given in the same testimonies a sign to look for, and He has clearly indicated the nature of a Sunday Law which will indeed be oppressive. Besides this, there is clearly suggested the fact that all will not be so apparent to perceive as we would hope, but rather will be more deceptive and far more difficult to combat.

Tragically, when the full force of the reality will become apparent, too many will be caught totally unprepared because they have been lulled into a fatal delusion by a mis-interpretation of the testimonies. Surface reading plus the siren calls of false "watchmen" will have produced tragic consequences. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; but it is knowledge they could have had if they would have but followed the rules given for understanding the Writings.

To be continued

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**ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP - Aug. 7-12**  
**Write Today for Information!**

papacy, and there will be a national apostasy which will end only in national ruin. (ST, March 22, 1910; 7BC:976)

"Amazing Facts" - from page 3

After listing a number of changes, such as "More contemporary music;" "More joyous worship;" and "More celebration;" but omitting "doctrinal changes;" the invitation continues: "You'll like the change! We'd like a chance to prove it to you. That's why we're inviting you to this short, quick-paced seminar..."

While in the Walla Walla area, my host took me to the Adventist operated hospital. He showed me the prayer and meditation room. As we entered, on the wall in front of me was a picture of Christ praying in Gethsemane. My host suggested that I look on the wall to my right. There was a crucifix! I was told the hospital was in financial stress while the competing Catholic hospital in the city was solvent. Another amazing fact. Upon my return home, I received a copy of a letter written to Elder Neal C. Wilson by David D. Dennis, regarding a Spring Council Action. He was not writing in his official capacity as Director of the Auditing Service, but called attention as a concerned individual to the action voted regarding the pay scale of Adventist Hospital Administrators. He wrote:

It did seem strange that, after admitting to serious financial failures and mounting debt far beyond accepted norms in the United States, these leaders should now ask for higher pay. Few businessmen could ever accept the assumption that if a manager is ineffective while earning an annual wage of \$75,000 he will somehow be successful if his salary is raised to \$140,000.

AMAZING!

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"Watchman, What of the Night?" is published monthly by the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Mississippi, Inc., P. O. Box 789, Lamar, AR 72846, USA.

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