

The Reformer

WORLD WIDE REFORMATION

"He That Winneth Souls Is Wise"



THE BANNER

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ALFRED DUDLEY.....Editor
MRS. L. L. JOHNSON.....Associate Editor
A. C. CHATMAN.....Contributing Editor

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Office Address.....610 W. 36th Street
Telegraphic Address.....610 W. 36th Street
Cable Address.....Adventist, Savannah, Ga.

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WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES

The wresting of the Scriptures is a common thing and a stronghold with the enemy of all righteousness. It is bad enough to wrest one's words and make them appear in a different light from that intended, but to wrest the Scriptures is much worse. It is a matter directly between God and the individual, and God holds such individuals responsible for the results of such acts.

To wrest the Scriptures is to take it from its original truthful setting and place it in an entirely different setting, where it is made to teach quite a different thing. Christ gave a sign to the Jews that they might know that His testimony was true, by saying unto them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:18-21. (He here referred to His body.) And when on trial to be condemned to be crucified, nothing could be brought against Him, so a false witness bore the following testimony against Him: "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." This was the crowning testimony of the enemies that is recorded by the evangelist. Matt. 26:60-62.

God calls this a false witness. It was taking the words of Jesus from their proper setting and placing them so they would convey an entirely different meaning. This was wresting the words of Jesus; and one day

this false witness will have to meet this testimony and answer for its influence. It will be an unenviable position for him to occupy when this same Jesus will appear in glory, taking vengeance on them that know not God.

Peter, concerning Paul's writings, said: "In all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable west, as they do also other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

It is no small sin in the sight of heaven to wrest the words of God, and make them convey an entirely different meaning. And yet this is often done by modern professed Christians. How careful would we be of our words when speaking of the spirit of prophecy, if we realized they were written in a book of remembrance before Him. Mal. 3:16.

IT HAPPENED SO

Yes, it happened, but what invisible agent controlled the "happenings?" It did not come by chance; for God, who numbers the hairs of our head and watches the fall of every sparrow, does not forget His children.

One might say it happened that the fire did not burn the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace; but the Son of God was seen walking with them. Dan. 3:25. It happened the hungry lions did not eat Daniel when he was thrown into their den. Daniel explains how it happened: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lion's mouth, that they have not hurt me." Dan. 6:22.

About 2800 years ago another strange thing happened. A certain prophet was sent to King Jereboam with a testimony of reproof because of his sins, and when the prophet said the altar would be rent as a token that the testimony he had just given would surely come to pass, Jereboam was in a rage and reached forth his hand, crying, "Lay hold on him." But the king's hand was "dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him," and the altar was also rent be-

fore his eyes. Jeroboam then repented and begged the prophet to pray for his restoration, and he was restored.

The king then invited the prophet to come home with him and be refreshed. The prophet replied that the Lord had instructed him to "eat no bread, nor drink water" in that place. The prophet could refuse the wicked king, but a backslidden prophet that lived in the place came to him and said, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him." In the face of all the evidence the Lord had just given him of the truthfulness of the instruction given him and through him, he listened to the lie, turned aside and went back with the backslidden man, and disobeyed the Lord. This is what happened: "And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way."

This story is found in the 13th chapter of 1 Kings and is given as an object lesson of the result of being disobedient to the heavenly vision. It matters not what the conditions or circumstances may be, or how great claims an individual may present; if they give advice contrary to clear light from heaven, something will happen sooner or later to the one who is obedient and also to the one who disobeys. God is not mocked; whatsoever a man sows, that he will sooner or later reap. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15:4. All the happenings are providences of God, showing His approval or disapproval of the course we individually pursue. These providences are controled by an unseen agency.

It should always be remembered that God has over one hundred million angels, and everyone of them are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1:14. Rev. 5:11.

**LAUNCH OUT INTO
THE SEA, LET DOWN THY
NET FOR A DRAUGHT**

Day was breaking over the Sea of Galilee. The disciples, weary with a night of fruitless toil, were still in their fishing boats on the lake. Jesus had come to spend a quiet hour by the water side. In early morning He hoped for a little season of rest from the multitude that followed Him day after day. But soon the people began to gather about Him. Their numbers rapidly increased, so that He was pressed upon all sides. Meanwhile the disciples had come to land. In order to escape the pressure of the multitude, Jesus stepped into Peter's boat, and bade him pull out a little from the shore. Here Jesus could be better seen and heard by all, and from the boat He taught the multitude on the beach.

What a scene was this for angels to contemplate;—their glorious Commander, sitting in a fisherman's boat, swayed to and fro by the restless waves, and proclaiming the good news of salvation to the listening throng that were pressing down to the water's edge! He who was the Honored of heaven was declaring the great things of His kingdom in the open air, to the common people. Yet He could have had no more fitting scene for His labors. The lake, the mountains, the spreading fields, the sunlight flooding the earth, all furnished objects to illustrate His lessons and impress them upon the mind. And no lesson of Christ's fell fruitless. Every message from His lips came to some soul as the word of eternal life.

Every moment added to the multitude upon the shore. Aged men, leaning upon their staffs, hardy peasants from the hills, fishermen from their toil on the lake, merchants and rabbis, the rich and learned, old and young, bringing their sick and suffering ones, pressed to hear the words of the Divine Teacher. To such scenes as this the prophets had looked forward, and they wrote: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, Toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,

The people which sat in darkness

Saw a great sight,
And to them which sat in the
region and shadow of death,
To them did light spring up."

Besides the throng on the shores of Gennesaret, Jesus in His sermon by the sea had other audiences before His mind. Looking down the ages, He saw His faithful ones in prison and judgment halls, in temptation and loneliness and affliction. Every scene of joy and conflict and perplexity was open before Him. In the words spoken to those gathered about Him, He was speaking also to these other souls, the very words that would come to them as a message of hope in trial, of comfort in sorrow, and heavenly light in darkness. Through the Holy Spirit, that voice which was speaking from the fisherman's boat on the Sea of Galilee would be heard speaking peace to human hearts to the close of time.

The discourse ended, Jesus turned to Peter, and bade him launch out into the sea, and let down his net for a draught. But Peter was discouraged. All night he had taken nothing. During the lonely hours he had thought of the fate of John the Baptist, who was languishing alone in his dungeon. He had thought of the prospect before Jesus and His followers, of the ill success of the mission to Judea, and the malice of the priests and rabbis. Even his own occupation had failed him; and as he watched by the empty nets, the future had seemed dark with discouragement. "Master," he said, we have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net."

Night was the only favorable time for fishing with nets in the clear waters of the lake. After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to cast the net by day; but Jesus had given the command, and love for their Master moved the disciples to obey. Simon and his brother together let down the net. As they attempted to draw it in, so great was the quantity of fish enclosed that it began to break. They were obliged to summon James and John to their aid. When the catch was secured both the boats were so heavily laden that they

were in danger of sinking.

But Peter was unmindful now of boats or lading. This miracle, above any other he had ever witnessed, was to him a manifestation of divine power. In Jesus he saw One who held all nature under His control. The presence of divinity revealed his own unholiness. Love for his Master, shame for his own unbelief, gratitude for the condescension of Christ, above all, the sense of his uncleanness in the presence of infinite purity overwhelmed him. While his companions were securing the contents of the net, Peter fell at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

It was the same presence of divine holiness that had caused the prophet Daniel to fall as one dead before the angel of God. He said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." So when Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord, he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." Humanity, with its weakness and sin was brought in contrast with the perfection of divinity, and he felt altogether deficient and unholy. Thus it has been with all who have been granted a view of God's greatness and majesty.

Peter exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man," yet he clung to the feet of Jesus, feeling that he could not be parted from Him. The Saviour answered, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." It was after Isaiah had beheld the holiness of God and his own unworthiness, that he was intrusted with the divine message. It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power, that he received the call to his work for Christ.

Until this time none of the disciples had fully united as co-laborers with Jesus. They had witnessed many of His miracles, and had listened to His teaching; but they had not entirely forsaken their former employment. The imprisonment of John the Baptist had been to them all

a bitter disappointment. If such were to be the outcome of John's mission, they could have little hope for their Master, with all the religious leaders combined against Him. Under the circumstances it was a relief to them to return for a short time to their former life, and unite their interests with His. Peter had accepted the call. Upon reaching the shore, Jesus bade the three other disciples, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left all, and followed Him.

Before asking them to leave their nets and fishing boats, Jesus gave them the assurance that God would supply all their needs. The use of Peter's boat for the work of the gospel had been richly repaid. He who is "rich unto all that call upon Him," has said. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." In this measure He had rewarded the disciples' service. And every sacrifice that is made in His ministry will be recompensed according to "the exceeding riches of His grace."

During that sad night on the lake, when they were separated from Christ, the disciples were pressed hard by unbelief, and weary with fruitless toil. But His presence kindled their faith, and brought them joy and success. So it is with us; apart from Christ, our work is fruitless, and it is easy to distrust and murmur. But when He is near and we labor under His direction, we rejoice in the evidence of His power. It is Satan's work to discourage the soul; it is Christ's work to inspire with faith and hope.

The deeper lesson which the miracle conveyed for the disciples, is a lesson for us also,—that He whose word could gather the fishes from the sea, could also impress human hearts, and draw them by the cords of His love, so that His servants might become "fishers of men."

They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them. The Saviour did not despise education; for when controlled by

the love of God, and devoted to His service, intellectual culture is a blessing. But He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become co-laborers with the Man of Nazareth. In their bigotry they scorned to be taught by Christ. The Lord Jesus seeks the co-operation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. The first thing to learn by all who would become workers together with God, is the lesson of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not to be gained through education in the most scientific schools. It is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone.

T. D. A.

YOUR MOTHER

If you have an old mother, be good to her. Tell her that you love her. Kiss the faded lips. Hold in yours the work-knotted old hands. Scatter a few of the flowers of tenderness and appreciation in her pathway while she is still alive and can be made happy by them.

Don't wait to put all of your affection and gratitude and reverence for her into a costly ton of marble inscribed "Mother."

Don't wait to throw all your bouquets on her grave. Its very doubtful whether an angel in heaven takes any interest in cemeteries or gets any satisfaction from visiting earth and contemplating a flattering tombstone; but it is utterly, certainly certain that you can make your old mother's heart sing for joy by showing her, while she is alive, just one tithe of the love and appreciation that you will heap upon her when she is dead.

These words are written for you who read this page. I do not know your name, but I know your story.

You may be middle-aged, married, prosperous. You may be good, highly respected, and yet you haven't an idea that you are not doing your full duty by your poor old mother who may be living in your home, or somewhere else, although you support

her. You supply her wants. It may be that she eats at your table, is sheltered by your roof, is warmed by your fire, is decently clothed by your hands; but that is all.

You neglect her. You never say a word of affection to her. You never pay her any little attentions. When she ventures on opinion, you cut it short with curt contempt. When she tells her garrulous old stories, as old people will, you do not even try to conceal how much you are bored. In a thousand unintentional ways the old mother is made to feel that she is a cumberer of the ground, an impediment in the household, an old-fashioned and useless piece of furniture of which every one will be glad to be rid.

Under this coldness and neglect the poor old mother's heart is breaking, and in a letter, written in a trembling and feeble handwriting, she asks if I cannot say something that her son and daughter will read, and that may make them think.

Ah, if I only could!

If I could only say to you: "Son, daughter, give love as well as duty to your mother. Give her the wine of life as well as the bread. Don't forget the woman who never forgets you." Of course you will say, and true you are busy, overworked, care-burdened; that you have the claims of home, wife, and children upon you; that you are often irritable through sheer physical weariness and overstrain.

Granted. But your mother's life has not been easy. Your father was a poor man, and from the day she married him she stood by his side fighting the wolf from the door with her naked hands, as a woman must.

She worked not the eight or ten-hour day of the union, but the twenty-four-hour day of the poor wife and mother. She cooked and cleaned and scrubbed and patched and nursed from dawn until bedtime, and in the night was up and down getting drinks for thirsty lips, covering restless little sleepers, listening for croupy coughs. She had time to listen to your stories of childish fun and frolic and triumph. She had time to say the things that spurred on your ambition. She never forgot to cook the

little dishes you liked. She did without the dress she needed that you might not be ashamed of your clothes before your fellows.

Stop, and think what life would have been to you if she had treated you in your childhood as you are treating her in old age! Suppose there had been no warm, caressing mother's love? Suppose there had been no soft breast on which you could weep out your childish sorrows, no clinging arms to enfold you and comfort you when the things of your little world went wrong? Would it not take away from the memory all that is best and sweetest in life? Is there anything else so pitiful on earth as the little child that is motherless, that is an alien in a strange home, that has no one to love it?

Yes, there is just one other figure more forlorn than the little unloved child, and that is the old mother who is unloved by the children she reared, and who is doomed to spend the last years of her life in a glacial atmosphere of neglect, her devotion, her labors, her sacrifice forgotten. Remember them now while there is yet time, while she is living, to pay back to her love and tenderness some of the debt you owe her. You can never pay it all, but pay down something on account this very day.

T. I. Y.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

"I hope you'll have a pleasant time, son," I said, as the latter was starting out to spend the evening.

"Thank you, I always do; for I take it with me," was the reply.

And that is a great big secret. Most people wish to have a good time. And that's right. But so many of them seem to fail. Why don't they take it with them? They can; they should. The good time is in you. It lies with you as to whether you have good neighbors and find pleasant people everywhere you go. The glory of the heavens, the gorgeousness of the sunrise and the sunset, the sweetness of bird songs, the beauty of waving trees and blooming flowers, the very goodness of God itself—are all in you,

all depend on what you are, on what you have brought with you.

What kind of time do you want to have? It rests with you. Will you walk in clear light, or stumble along in the gloom? Will you be strong and joyous, or weak and sad? It rests with you.

TILL HE COME

Brethren, work! the field is large;

Gather the harvest home;
Go, sow and reap: that is the charge
Of Jesus—"till He come."

Brethren, haste! the time is short,

The work not nearly done;
The heathen dark must be taught
Of Jesus—"till He come."

Brethren, pray! for only so
Can precious souls be won;
To Jesus every moment go,
To Jesus—"till He come."

Brethren, come! the table's spread,

Jesus would have us one;
Drink of the wine, and break the bread,—
In memory—"till He come."

Brethren, hark! Catch ye the sound

Of trumpet's distant tones?
Brethren, watch! that ye be found
Ready, when Jesus comes.

"Perform good deeds, speak kind words, bestow pleasant smiles, and you will receive the same in turn."

THE MOON

The moon bears an important place in nature; it, like the sun, was created for signs and for seasons and for days and years.

In the Levitical service the new moon was celebrated by feasts, and on the new earth the redeemed of the Lord throughout eternity will assemble in the cit yof God, at the time of each new moon, and partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Isa. 66:22, 23; Rev. 22:2.

When we have a new heaven, an atmosphere from all impuri-

ties, the moon will be as bright as the sunlight on this earth. Isa. 30:26.

The moon was worshipped by the heathen from ancient time. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, mentions it. Job 31:26.

The moon should be an object of especial interest to the Christian; for God has established the moon in the heavens as a "faithful witness" of His everlasting covenant. Psa. 89:34-37. The sight of the moon in the heavens should remind us of the time when in the stillness of the night God "confirmed by an oath," to Abraham His willingness to fulfill His part of the everlasting covenant.

The ancients confirmed their oaths by deviding the body of some animal and both parties repeating as they passed between the divided body of the victim, "May I be divided as this victim if I fail to keep this oath."

When Abraham begged for some visible token as a confirmation of his faith, he was told to bring three animals used for sacrifices and divide their bodies and lay them a short distance apart. "This being done, he reverently passed between the parts of the sacrifice, making a solemn vow to God of perpetual obedience."

Abraham watched the divided bodies of the animals until night came, and then "a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, symbols of the divine presence, passed between the severed victims, totally consuming them." This was a wonderful event, God condescended to carry out the human custom of confirming the oath to satisfy a man who clung to His promise.

Well might the psalmist speak of the moon, as a faithful witness of the everlasting covenant, after it had witnessed that scene. When we see the moon rising in beauty, let us remember that night when God confirmed His covenant by an oath, and remember that every trusting child of faith is included in the covenant. Heb. 6:16-18; Gen. 15:8-18.

A pilgrim won't load up with toys.

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."

FREE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS PROGRAM

Our Program Is:

1st—A deeper consecration to do service in the vineyard of the Lord.

2nd—To do our BIT in preaching the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.

3rd—As a race, maintain self-respect, and do as Our Lord has said, “Occupy until I come.”

4th—To establish among Negro Seventh-Day Adventists, Negro Conferences with Negro officers— Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers and Bookkeepers.

5th—To establish schools for the training of our children and for workers in our organization.

6th—To establish a publishing house in which we may furnish employment to Negro Men, Women, Boys and Girls, as we strive to preach the truth of the Third Angel’s Message through the printed page.

An invitation is extended to all “INTELLIGENT” Negro Seventh-Day Adventists, those, with a vision, with moral courage, with backbone, those who are strong in the knees, in short, just common self-respect, who have the love of God in the heart, to join with us and help to put this program over the TOP, for over the TOP it must GO.

“Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” Acts 10:34. Therefore, we are determined to, “Stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us Free.” Gal. 5:1.