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*Doctrinal Differences Between The  
Seventh-Day Church of God and the  
Seventh-Day Adventists*

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*A Bible Truth Tract*

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## DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SEVENTH DAY CHURCH OF GOD AND THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Since the Church of God (7th day) and the Seventh Day Adventists have many teachings in common and since they both keep the Sabbath, the question naturally comes, why are there two groups? What doctrinal differences divide them? And since members of the Church of God are often taken to be Seventh Day Adventists, it is proper that we publish this tract setting forth the vital doctrinal differences between the two.

We now list the ten general points of difference, and then will discuss each in turn.

1. The basis of faith and belief.
2. The purpose and place of church organization.
3. The Church name.
4. The Sanctuary and the Atonement.
5. The Judgment.
6. The Millennium
7. The Second Coming of Christ.
8. The time of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.
9. The time of observance of the Lord's Supper.
10. The Return of the Jews and other prophesies.

### **The Basis of Faith and Belief**

In the year 1844 many people who had believed the prophetic interpretations of a preacher named William Miller, were greatly disappointed when Christ did not come on the date appointed. Among these was a young girl by the name of Ellen Harmon, who had peculiar experiences in which she

claimed that God brought her direct revelations in vision. She soon became an outstanding leader of a group which organized into the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. The so-called "visions" continued through the years until her death ~~in 1882~~. They covered many subjects, such as interpretations of scripture and prophecy, additions to the information given in the Bible records, instructions on the organization of the denomination and the location of its offices and institutions, the dress and health of the people and messages for certain individuals. These "visions" are recorded in many books. Miss Harmon married James White and her writings are known as the works of Mrs. E. G. White. It was not long after these "visions" began until there began to be a sharp difference of opinion concerning them. In general it may be said that those who among the Sabbath-keepers accepted them as divine revelations, to be taken on a par with the Bible, organized into the Seventh Day Adventist denomination in 1860. Those who would not accept them remained independent and scattered until in 1863 a group of them began to publish the "Hope of Israel" at Waverly, Mich. This tended to unite them by a common bond. In 1867 the magazine was established at Marion, Iowa, and about 1890 it was moved to Stanberry, Missouri, where it continues to be published under the name "The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom," the organ of the Church of God (7th day).

The basis of faith and belief of the Church of God is the Bible and the Bible only. The sixty-six books of our common Bible, such as are embodied in the King James Version, are all taken to be the divinely inspired Word of God, miraculously preserved through the ages and still the pure

Word of God. Concerning the Old Scriptures, we believe that "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." ' 1 Cor. 10:11. And concerning the New Scriptures, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son." Hebrews 1:1, 2. And concerning what the Old and New Scriptures will do for us we read: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

These verses clearly teach that the Bible is a complete guide to salvation. With such verses in the Word, none will be condemned of the Lord for refusing to accept any other writings as inspired.

Most Seventh Day Adventists would say "Amen" to all of the above and they will tell us that the writings of Mrs. White are not to be taken as an addition to the Bible or in place of it. But it is the practice that counts and in practice, acceptance of those writings is a test of fellowship in that body. Quotations from the writings are an end to all discussion of any interpretation of Scripture. In regular services of Seventh Day Adventist Churches, the ministers use volumes of the writings along with the Bible and many of them preach mostly from what they term "The Spirit of Prophecy"—the writings of Mrs. White. But the Church of God believes that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) and the testimony of Jesus is found only in His Word, the Bible.

For further information on this point see the

tract entitled "The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White, Why the Church of God does not accept them as inspired of God," a copy of which may be had free from the publishers of this tract.

### **The Purpose of Church Organization**

Seventh day Adventists in common with a number of other denominations hold that their organization is especially recognized of God as being the True Church. They often refer to themselves as the "remnant people of God." They will admit there may be people saved who never became members of their organization, but in practice they hold that the organization is the "ark of safety" and that those who hear their message and have the opportunity to join, must do so to be saved. They hold that they are the only organization that God is directly leading and that their "movement" will go through to the Kingdom. They often compare their organization history to the exodus of Israel from Egypt to the promised Land. They reverence their organization and leaders with a devotion which is similar to that of Roman Catholics for their system. And the powers exercised by the Seventh Day Adventist leaders are often similar to those of the Catholic hierarchy. The Seventh Day Adventist belief is that their general conference in session is the "highest authority of God on earth." They have a strict test of fellowship and those who do not comply are excommunicated.

The Church of God (7th day) with publication offices at Stanberry, Missouri, considers that the Bible teaching of the "church" the "called out ones" or followers of Christ, goes much farther than the lines of any denomination. The call of Christ was to individuals to come and follow Him. "If any man will come after me, let him deny him-

self, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matt. 16:24. Christ did not establish anything such as we now know as an "organization" and membership in it is not and has never been a requirement of salvation. This being true it therefore follows that no "organization" is invested with any divine authority.

Mutual fellowship and co-operation, with brotherly love have always characterized the true followers of Christ. The first believers had all things in common—not because any council had so decreed, but because they desired to work together. The Book of Life is the record in heaven of all the members of God's true church. God adds the names to that record and membership or lack of membership in an organization here has no direct bearing on the record there. But an association of believers into an organization, the purpose of which is mutual help and working together to spread the gospel, is right and in accord with the Scriptures. The Church of God is such an association. It does not claim to have on its records the names of all of God's people in the world. But its work is to preach the true Gospel of the Kingdom, to as much of the world as it is able to cover and to encourage the fellowship and love of the believers and help them to build up in Bible faith. All who keep the "Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" are invited to fellowship with us.

### **The Church Name**

Seventh Day Adventists hold that their church name is appropriate because it is descriptive and proclaims their most distinguishing doctrines, the seventh day Sabbath and the soon coming of Christ. They are proud to be known simply as Seventh Day Adventists.

The Church of God considers that true believers and followers of Christ have no right to assume any descriptive name. God is particular about names and throughout the Scriptures the names of people, places and events all have a significance. In His great prayer in John 17, Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. . . ." V. 11. And the name "Church of God" was evidently used by the early church as may be noticed in Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 15:9; Gal. 1:13.

The name is not to be understood as denoting that the organization comprises all the people in the world who are God's. Rather it indicates that this organization is of the called out ones of God.

### **The Atonement and the Sanctuary**

The movement of 1844 was based on an interpretation of Dan. 8:14, which reads, "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." It was assumed that the "sanctuary" here spoken of was the earth and that this meant the second coming of Christ. Working out a supposed connection between this chapter and Ch. 9:24-27, a starting time was fixed for the 2300 days, taken as years and the end of the time was 1844. When Christ did not come at the expected time many of the believers revised their entire understanding of the prophecy. The Seventh Day Adventists however hold that all the interpretation was correct except the event. They decided that this referred to a heavenly sanctuary and that there is in heaven an arrangement like unto the tabernacle built by Israel. They decided that Christ went only into the outer compartment or "holy place" when He ascended after His ministry on earth, and that He remained in this "holy place" until 1844 and then entered the

"most holy place" to make the great atonement. This line of thought is filled with suppositions but it is a foundation stone of Seventh Day Adventist teaching.

Some of the early pioneers of the Church of God had been in the 1844 movement, but after the disappointment, they saw their entire build-up had been in error and they sought and found these errors.

The 2300-day prophecy of Dan. 8:14 was observed to read in the original "two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings" clearly indicating that it was to be counted as literal days and not years. The prophecy refers to a desolation of the temple at Jerusalem and was remarkably fulfilled.

The Seventh Day Adventist explanation of the sanctuary involves many points of interpretation. For instance, if the "sanctuary" refers to the outer compartment or "holy place" of heaven, and if it was "cleansed" in 1844, then it must have been defiled previous to then. In the sacrificial services of the temple before the time of Christ, sins were atoned for by the sacrifice. The Seventh Day Adventist prophet states, "The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and placed his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary." —Patriarchs and Prophets, page 354.

An examination of the Scriptures however will

show that the above quotation is not strictly true. The 4th chapter of Leviticus describes the offerings for sin. If a priest, or if the whole congregation of the people had sinned, then the blood of the sin offering, which however was a bullock, was sprinkled before the veil. But if any of the common people or even a ruler sinned and brought his goat or lamb, the blood was touched to the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and then poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering—outside the door of the sanctuary. Thus the sins were not transferred to the sanctuary and the annual “day of atonement” was never referred to as a “cleansing of the sanctuary.” It is true that the sins of the people figuratively accumulated during the year and were atoned for on the annual day of atonement when the high priest took the blood of a lamb and sprinkled it on the mercy seat, the cover of the ark in the most holy place. The work of Christ on the cross is compared to this annual ceremony in Heb. 9:25-28.

The teaching that the “cleansing of the sanctuary” referred to in Dan. 8:14 means a great atonement made in heaven by Christ as high priest, and that this event took place in 1844, disagrees with the Bible teaching that the atonement was made on the cross. Hebrews 9:25-28 clearly compares the death of Christ on the cross to the yearly atonement, showing that He then made the great atonement. And Rom. 5:11 says: “. . . we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

When Christ ascended to heaven after His earthly ministry, He took His place at the right hand of God. Stephen saw Him there (Acts 7:56) and this is the position where He is as mediator. Rom. 8:34. But if Christ went into a part of heaven

known as the "holy place," then the throne of God must also have been there and then must have moved in 1844 if that was the time Christ went into the Most Holy place to make the atonement. But how could any place ever be more holy than the very presence of God the Father? The inner room of the ancient temple was called "most holy" because it was there the presence of God was manifested. The high priest went into that room once a year to be in the very presence of God when he sprinkled the blood of the atonement on the mercy seat. Nothing in the Scripture speaks of God having to move His throne from one part of heaven to another.

The place of the throne of God is heaven. Isa. 66:1. Solomon declared of God that "behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee . . ." 2 Kings 8:27. Heaven itself is the Most Holy Place and Christ entered there after His sacrifice of Himself on the cross. Rom. 5:8-10; Heb. 9:26.

### **The Judgment**

The Seventh Day Adventists believe that the Bible teaches three distinct times of judgment, as follows: 1st, an "investigative judgment" which they believe began in 1844; 2nd, an "Executive Judgment" when Christ comes in glory; 3rd, another investigative or review judgment during the thousand years when they believe the saved will be in heaven and go over the books and decide the amount of punishment the wicked must bear before being destroyed.

The Church of God (7th day) holds that the Bible teaches but one time of judgment for all who now have an opportunity to hear the gospel and who either accept or reject it.

The Seventh Day Adventist teaching of an "in-

vestigative judgment" is a direct outgrowth of the interpretation of Daniel 8:14, the 2300-day prophecy which they say indicates that Christ made the atonement in 1844 and went into a "most holy place" of heaven. Striving to find some passage which would uphold the thought of moving God's throne from one part of heaven to another and for Christ then coming to God, they apply Daniel 7 9-10, 13. This speaks of thrones being "cast down" which in the original meant "placed," and the "ancient of days" is seated, thus referring to a special placing of the throne of God. But in this same connection it states that "the judgment was set and the books were opened." They then go to verses 13, 14, which read, "I saw in the night visions and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Concerning these verses, the S. D. A. prophetess, Mrs. White says, "The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom which will be given him at the close of his work as a mediator."—Great Controversy, pages 479, 480. In other words they would contend that between the time Christ comes to God's throne, in v. 13, and the time the kingdom is given him, in v. 14, is from 1844 to the second advent. That would mean that Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to God, and it is one hundred years or more until He is given His

kingdom. We deny that these verses imply any such period of time.

The judgment pictured here in Dan. 7:9-14 is the great day of judgment of the glorious second advent of Christ to this earth. The key phrase to this is "came with the clouds of heaven." These are the special descriptive words used in many places in connection with the second advent in glory. See Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Rev. 1:7. Paul declares there is a set "day" of judgment and indicates that Christ will be the judge. Acts 17:31. That the time of the judgment is the second coming of Christ is clearly shown in 2 Tim. 4:1 ". . . the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." And the fact that this judgment will simply be a separation is shown in Matt. 25:31-46. Connecting this passage with 1 Thess. 4:13-17 we get the complete picture. The righteous are placed at His right hand as they ascend to meet Him in the sky. When the last trump sounds and the shout of the archangel is heard the "dead in Christ" shall rise. There will be no question as to who is included in that number. At natural death we either fall asleep in Jesus or we fall asleep in condemnation. A comparison of 1 Thess. 4:13, 14 reveals this truth.

The investigative judgment theory teaches in effect, salvation by works. It takes for granted that all the good deeds and evil deeds of mankind are actually recorded in books in heaven and that God must go over the records of these deeds to determine who is worthy of salvation. Mrs. White says, "The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment."—G. C. p. 480.

We do not find any record in the Bible that the Book of Life contains anything but the record of the names of the saved. They are recorded when people accept Christ (Luke 10:20) and may be blotted out (Ex. 32:32; Rev. 3:5). We would not understand that one's name would be blotted out every time he sinned. The prodigal is still counted a "son," but it is possible to sin away the day of grace and thus commit the unpardonable sin, which would surely blot out the name. A record of sins appears to be kept in the books of heaven, but these records are blotted out as soon as the sin is confessed and forgiven. Once God has forgiven us a sin, it is never again remembered. Isa. 44:22; Isa. 1:18; Psa. 103:12; Heb. 8:12. But sin which stands against us until the time of judgment will bring the "wages of sin" which is death. Rom. 6:23.

The "investigative judgment" teaching would also have all the good deeds recorded to be considered and have a part in determining if one was to be saved. Mrs. White adds directly to the Bible record when she says, "A book of remembrance is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of "them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven."—G. C. p. 481. The quotation implies that Malachi 3:16 upholds this teaching. But if you will read that verse carefully you will see that nothing is said about "good deeds" being recorded in that "book of remembrance."

It is the people that God remembers and the book contains their names. Mrs. White refers to Neh. 13:14 where the prophet says, "Remember me, O my God . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God." But

a study of the context will show that Nehemiah had been having trouble keeping the people faithful in supporting the temple service. In v. 7 he asked "why is the house of God forsaken?" And so in v. 14 he is praying that God would remember all his labors on the temple and not permit them to be "wiped out" by unfaithful people. The verse has no hint of reference to any books of records in heaven. When it comes to doing anything which would make us more worthy of eternal life we are told that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags. Isa. 64:6. Our righteous deeds have no saving power. The true Christian does not live a righteous life and do deeds of kindness in order to be worthy to be saved; he does such deeds because he is saved and desires to please the heavenly Father. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phi. 2:12) does not mean by good deeds, but rather by avoiding the temptations and bearing up under the persecution which the context of that chapter shows.

The investigative judgment theory would give the thought that God does not know at the time one dies whether or not he is to be saved. The Seventh Day Adventist teaching is that "This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment."—G. C. p. 428 But did Paul say that his chance of being in the kingdom depended on the result of a future investigation? "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day . . ." 2 Tim. 4:8. He refers to the faithful who had died as then being "asleep in Jesus" and the "dead in Christ." 1 Thess. 4:14, 16. How could one be said to be thus if it had yet to be determined

whether or not he was to be saved?

The Bible teaching that the dead are all unconscious until the second advent of Christ and then and not until then, will receive either the "wages of sin" or the "gift of God"—death or eternal life, is generally agreed upon by both the Seventh Day Adventists and the Church of God. However, there is a difference of understanding of just what will happen when Christ comes and where the righteous will be after that time and these topics will be taken up under their respective headings.

Under the heading of the Millennium will be fully discussed the work and place of the saved. But we must notice that the Seventh Day Adventists hold that the righteous will be in heaven during that thousand years and will go over the books again during that time to investigate the lives of the wicked. Mrs. White again adds to the scriptures when she writes, "It is at this time that as foretold by Paul, 'the saints shall judge the world'." In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then that portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death."—G. C. p. 661. Where in the Bible do we find anything about a "book of death?" No such book is mentioned. Would the saints enjoy that thousand years in heaven while spending their time going over the records of sin, suffering, crime and all the horrors of this world? Perhaps names of their own loved ones would come up. Could they sing praises to God as they passed sentence on such?

It is true that the "saints will judge the world" and it means just that. They shall be priests of

God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. Rev. 20:5. "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. 5:10. Yes, the saints will be judges, or rulers during the thousand years, but not in heaven. They will judge the world. This will be taken up more fully in our later discussion of differences of belief concerning the Millennium.

The Bible teaches but one great judgment day for the wicked and the righteous, those who reject the gospel message, and those who accept Christ as their Savior and follow His teachings in life. The great day of judgment is coming and it will be a terrible time "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that . . . obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. But it will be a time of joy for those who have obeyed that gospel and they will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we . . . will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. 25:9.

### **The Millennium**

In the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation a special period of one thousand years of time is described during which Satan is bound. Of the righteous, we read, "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Vs. 4, 6. Those judged as wicked who died when Christ came at His second advent, ". . . . lived not again until the thousand years were finished . . ." V. 5. "And when the thousand years are expired,

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth . . . and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them . . .” Verses 7 and 9.

These verses briefly outline the thought of a coming period of one thousand years or millennium to immediately follow the second coming of Christ. Seventh Day Adventists and the Church of God agree that there will be such a period and that it will begin at the time of the second coming of Christ. But they disagree on the following points:

1. Where the saints will go at the second advent of Christ.
2. The place and occupation of the saints during the millennium.
3. The purpose of the millennium in the plan of salvation.
4. The condition of the earth during that time.

The question might be asked as to why this subject should be considered or the differences agitated, since it is a prophetic subject and no one's salvation will depend on their understanding or lack of understanding concerning it. In answer we may say that an understanding of this subject has a direct bearing on our conception of the plan of salvation and God's purpose in this earth. An understanding of the plan of God is a basis for faith. The more we understand God and His plans and purposes, the more we can believe in Him and His Word and the more we can trust Him in this dark and troubled time of world history.

We will consider the points named, one at a

time. First, the Seventh Day Adventists teach that at the second advent, Christ does not come all the way to this earth, but that the saints rise to meet Him in the air and then He returns to heaven, taking all the saints with Him.

The Church of God holds that at His second advent, Christ will come all the way back to this earth. The saints will rise to meet Him in the air as described in 1 Thessalonians 4, and having met Him, they will, with Him, descend to the Mount of Olives as described in Zec. 14:4. It should be self-evident that in order to have a second advent to this earth, it must be all the way to the earth. Jesus said, "If I go . . . I will come again. . ." John 14:3. He was on the earth then. He did not say He would come part way again. And in Acts 1:11, the angels declared that Jesus would come again, "in like manner." He left from Mount of Olives and Zech. 14:1-4 indicates that during the last great battle, Christ will come again to that same mount.

In many places in the Bible it is stated that the saints' reward is "reserved in heaven," "treasure in heaven," "laid up for you in heaven," etc. Jesus said He was returning to heaven to prepare a place for the saints — but immediately added that having prepared that place, He would come again "and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. There is no indication in any passage concerning heaven, that the saints will ever go there either to receive their inheritance, or to live there for any period of time. This earth was created to be the home of the human race. ". . . he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited. . . ." Isa. 45:18. "The meek shall inherit the earth." "The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not

inhabit the earth." Prov. 10:30. For a more complete study of what will take place at the second advent, see our tract, "The Second Coming of Christ (No 20).

The second point of difference is concerning the place and occupation of the saints during the millennium. The Seventh Day Adventists hold that the saints will be in heaven during this time and will go over records there of the lives of the wicked to determine how much punishment they must suffer. See reference to this with quotation from the Seventh Day Adventist prophetess, Mrs. White, in the previous chapter.

For a discussion of the Church of God position on this subject see the tract (No. 22) "The 1000-Year Reign With Christ." We may briefly state here that we believe the millennium has a very definite place in completing the great plan of salvation. The saints are to be "kings and priests" and to reign with Christ on the earth. Rev. 20:6 and 5:10. The purpose of the millennium is brought out in Acts 3:21 which states that Christ will remain as He now is, in heaven, until "the times of restitution of all things. . . ." There will be peoples on the earth during that time who will need "kings" or rulers, and "priests" or mediators. Some of these people are referred to in Zech. 14:16-21. There is now absolutely no salvation for anyone except by faith in Christ. Acts 4:12. But during this restitution or re-creating time there will be children. Isaiah 11:6 to 8; and 65:17-25. There will be people who will seek the Lord and He will hear them, and there will also be people who will be rejected.

During this glorious time Christ will reign as king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). During this time will be brought to completion the proph-

ecy, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight . . . and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed . . ." Isa. 40:4-5. And as the thousand-year reign comes to a close, all who have proven themselves enemies of God will be "put under his feet." "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." "Then cometh the end (of the 1000 years), when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all authority and power." 1 Cor. 15:24, 25.

The thousand years is a necessary link in the chain of restoring events from the fall, when Eden was lost, until the time when Eden will again be restored and God Himself will once more dwell with men as pictured in Revelation 21.

In the above we have also considered the third of the differences listed at the beginning of this chapter, as the purpose of the millennium is interlocked with the occupation of the saints during that time. We now wish to consider briefly the fourth point, which is also practically answered by the discussion already given. But we must notice that the Seventh Day Adventists teach that during the millennium this earth is to be a desolation, and "here is to be the home of Satan and his evil angels for a thousand years . . . it is in this sense that he is bound; there are none remaining upon whom he can exercise his power." Great Controversy, p. 659.

This subject is fully discussed in our tract The Destiny of the Earth (No. 13). We will but briefly mention that the Desolation theory is of course the very opposite of the restitution time taught by the Scriptures. It would certainly be to no advantage to have this wonderful earth, which

God created to be inhabited, remain a desolation for that long period of one thousand years. The texts interpreted to indicate such a time are found in Jeremiah 25:33 and Isa. 24:1-6. This latter passage is quoted in Great Controversy, the book by Mrs. White, on page 657. The quotation is deceptive in that a portion is left out without the omission being indicated. Isa. 24:6 reads, "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." The quotation in Great Controversy ends with the word "burned." But the phrase left out destroys the purpose for which they attempt to use it, for the desolation theory must have no men left. A study of the context in each case will show that Jeremiah 25:33 refers to the wars connected with Armageddon, and Isaiah 24 refers to the desolation which did come upon Israel and their land. But for complete discussion see our tract No. 13.

(The three tracts mentioned in this section will be sent free on request).

### **The Second Coming of Christ**

Both the Church of God (7th day) and the Seventh Day Adventists have always taught that we are in the period of time described in the Bible as the "last days" and that the second advent of Christ is near. Neither church believes in setting any date for that event, but rather in watching the "signs of the times," events in the world which fulfil prophecies of the second coming. Adventists however tend to speak of the coming as being especially near—just at any time. When the writer attended a Seventh Day Adventist school in 1925, it was often mentioned by the teachers and preachers that the second advent might be any

day and that at most we could not expect more than eight or ten years more of time. Certain prophecies of Mrs. White are partly the reason for this. Speaking of those who attended a certain special meeting of Adventists in 1856, Mrs. White wrote, "I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel, 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.'" Testimonies, Vol. I p. 131, 132. A few of that company were still living back in 1925. But it is now stated on good authority that all who are known to have attended that conference, including babies, are now dead.

The Church of God has never set any dates. Certain prophecies have been studied and their fulfillment watched, such as the lining up of the nations for Armageddon, and these things are taken to show that the second advent is drawing near.

Both the Church of God and the Adventists hold that the second advent will be literal, visible and glorious and will be seen by all the people who are alive upon the earth at that time. But as mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a difference of understanding as to where Christ comes to at that time, and of the events which take place then. Seventh Day Adventists hold that Christ will come in the clouds and come only near the earth, and that the righteous will be caught up to Him, and then He with them, will go back to heaven. They also hold, as we have discussed, that all the unsaved will be killed by the brightness of the second advent, and that the earth will be rendered desolate.

The Church of God believes that the Bible teaches that the second advent of Christ will be all the way to this earth. The saints will arise to meet

the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4). He comes from heaven with all the angels with Him (Matt. 25:31) and then after being met by the saints while still in the sky, He comes on to the earth with both angels and saints with Him. Compare Zechariah 14:4 with the last part of verse 5 and then notice verse 9. It is clear that the same coming is spoken of in each place. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth . . ." Zech. 14:9. This compares with Daniel 2:44 and Rev. 11:15. The Seventh Day Adventists hold that the second coming of Christ has for its purpose the coming of Christ to receive the saints and take them to heaven where they may go over the records of the wicked deeds of the wicked during the thousand years.

We believe that the Bible shows that the second advent has for its purpose the completion of the great plan of redemption, with Christ returning to earth to reign as King for a thousand years restitution age, with the saints assisting in that work, some as kings and some as priests (mediators). Acts 3:20-21; Rev. 20:5-6; Rev. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:25-28. Exactly who will be on the earth besides the saints, and whom they will reign over or act as mediators for, is not fully revealed in the Scriptures, for it is evident that it is not necessary for us to know. One thing is taught and that is that now is the day of salvation for all who hear the gospel of Christ and all those who reject that message in this world will never have another opportunity to accept it. And the work of all true Christians is to preach the true Gospel of Christ in all the world, giving as many as possible an opportunity to hear and to be among the saints when Christ comes. In 1844 many Adventists laid aside their work, sold their possessions and

sat down and waited to meet the Lord on the appointed day. But the Bible clearly teaches that we are to be faithful stewards and carry on the work entrusted to us, until the Lord actually comes. To those given the pounds, the Lord said, "Occupy till I come." Luke 19:13. This is evidently the same parable as the talents of Matt. 25:14-30. We must make use of what the Lord has given us to work with here, right up until the time of His glorious second advent which is described immediately after this parable. Let us be among the number to whom the King shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

### **The Time of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection**

One of the principle reasons given by many for the observance of Sunday is their belief that the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the grave upon that day and they believe it should be observed in commemoration of His resurrection. Seventh Day Adventists also hold the view that Christ was crucified on Friday and arose on Sunday morning, but they deny that this is any basis for the observance of this day instead of the seventh day Sabbath. The Church of God (7th day) holds that the Bible teaches that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, was put into the tomb just before sundown, and that he arose from the grave just before sundown on the Sabbath. And therefore we hold that there is no ground what-so-ever for observing Sunday as a holy day. For this reason we consider a study of the Bible Truth concerning the time of the crucifixion and resurrection, to be of vital importance. We will give here just a brief outline of the study of this subject. For a complete exposition of the subject, with answers to

all objections, we refer the reader to our tract No. 31.

The basis for belief in Friday crucifixion is found in Luke 23:54. The preceding verses describe the crucifixion of Jesus and His death, the request of Joseph for the body and his act of taking it down from the cross. "And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on." This verse taken alone would of course apparently teach Friday crucifixion. And in Mark 16:9 we read, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene . . ." And this text is believed to surely show that He arose on Sunday morning. But the careful student of the Bible looks at all the texts which bear on any one subject and seeks perfect harmony among them all. When asked for a sign that He was the true Messiah, Christ gave just one. We read, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matthew 12:39, 40.

No matter how one may count, it is impossible to get three days and three nights from Friday evening to Sunday morning. Christ stated definitely that He would be in the heart of the earth for the same period of time that Jonah was entombed in the belly of the whale — three full days and three full nights. There are two possible ways of interpretation. Some hold that only parts of days count for full days; and others that

the time is to be counted from the arrest of Christ in the garden. Neither of these finds any support from the Bible or history. The other way of interpretation would be to study other passages on the time of the crucifixion and resurrection and see if they shed any light on the subject.

We have read from Luke 23:54 that the "sabbath drew on" as the body of Christ was placed in the tomb. Let us look at the record of the same time in the gospel of John.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." John 19:30, 31.

This verse shows that that sabbath was a special day, a "high day." Verse 14 of the same chapter further explains. Concerning this same day of the crucifixion it says, "And it was the preparation of the passover." The passover would be eaten that night, and this would begin the "pass-over sabbath." The first day of the passover feast was a sabbath no matter what day of the week it happened to fall upon. Therefore it is easy to see that this time the preparation day could be any day of the week and not necessarily Friday. The fact that it could not have been Friday is shown by Luke 23:55, 56. After seeing the body of Christ placed in the tomb just before sundown, "they returned and prepared spices and ointments and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." Mark 16:1 shows that these had to be purchased. They would not have had time to purchase these before the Sabbath and certainly

no time to prepare them. The women evidently returned from the tomb, rested the passover sabbath, then purchased the spices and prepared them and then rested the weekly Sabbath.

Having shown that the crucifixion could have been any day of the week and must have been a day other than Friday, let us notice the record of the time of the resurrection. We have observed Mark 16:9, commonly thought to show that He arose Sunday morning. But if we look at the exact wording of the text we see that it says, "Now when Jesus was risen . . ." This is past perfect tense. It speaks of something which had already occurred, and then goes on to say that after that event He appeared early the first day of the week to the women. The text does not tell the time of the resurrection. And a study of the various references to the resurrection will reveal that only one does tell the time and that is Matthew 28:1, 2.

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it." This happened near the close of the Sabbath. In the Bible all days begin and end at sundown. "Dawn" does not necessarily mean morning, but rather means that the day approached. Near sundown on the Sabbath, the first day of the week is approaching or dawning, according to Bible reckoning.

Therefore since Christ arose just before the close of the Sabbath, we count back three days and three nights and we find that He was crucified on Wednesday, the passover sabbath was Thurs-

day, the women bought and prepared spices on Friday, rested the weekly Sabbath according to the commandment, and as it drew to a close some of them came to see the sepulchre for there had been a great earthquake (margin). At the same time of day that He was placed in the tomb, He arose from it, thus fulfilling exactly His one sign that He was the true Messiah.

Seventh Day Adventists are unable to accept this plain Bible teaching because their prophetess, Mrs. E. G. White records in one of her books that Christ was still in the tomb early Sunday morning. The Church of God believes in taking the Bible above every other authority, and in this case the true Bible teaching also is an added proof that the seventh day of the week is the true Sabbath of the Lord to be kept by Christians in this age.

We urge the reader to send for our tract No. 31, which explains in detail such points as "after three days," "the third day since," etc., and gives a chart showing clearly that order of events of the last week. A copy of this tract for study will be sent free to any address on request to the Church of God Publishing House, Stanberry, Missouri.

### **Time of Observance of the Lord's Supper**

On the subject of the Lord's Supper, the Church of God and Seventh Day Adventists agree on several points not commonly accepted by the popular churches. We agree that it is to be observed in memory of His death and that only unleavened bread should be used. We also agree that the ordinance of feet-washing should accompany this service, and that all followers of Christ should take part in this service. But the Church of God holds that the time of observance of this service is of importance and that it should be taken at the

right time. The Seventh Day Adventists consider that there is no certain time, and they usually observe it about four times a year in connection with their regular Sabbath services.

In the study of the Scriptures we find that all events connected with the ancient ceremonial services were at a certain fixed time. We also observe the Sabbath because we believe God is particular about that time, the seventh day of the week even as He originally gave it. One of the times of observance most carefully calculated was that of the passover. Many times the date of this feast is mentioned. See Exodus 12:6, 18; Lev. 23:5; Deut. 16:1. And the time of day is also stressed. The first passover was eaten at night, shortly after sundown. Deuteronomy 16 is very specific about when it was to be observed. “. . . thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.” V. 6.

Christ instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the passover and it was eaten in the evening, after sundown. Matt. 26:20; Luke 22:14. He was about to fulfill the meaning of the passover — to become that Lamb Himself. No longer would a lamb be slain to point forward to His death. And so He instituted different emblems to point back to His death — a memorial to be observed just as the passover had been observed in its appointed time. Because this new service took the place of the passover and because directions for the time of observance of the passover had been so precisely given, it was unnecessary to repeat those directions. However the apostle Paul in describing the Lord's Supper does specifically mention the time in 1 Cor. 11:23. Just as through the previous centuries they had often —

once every year, commemorated the deliverance from Egypt and looked forward to the great deliverance that Christ would make for them, so now with the Lord's Supper, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11:26.

We are baptized only once, at the start of our Christian life. But we are to commemorate the death of the Lord by partaking of these special emblems, often, yes, even once every year on the anniversary of that event and it is to be a night service, "the same night in which he was betrayed."

In view of these Bible thoughts, the Church of God observes the Lord's Supper and the feet-washing in a night service at the passover season once each year. For a more complete study of this subject see our tract No. 18, entitled "The Lord's Supper."

### **Differences in Prophetic Interpretation**

The Seventh Day Adventists regard themselves as special students of prophecy. It may be said that their denomination is practically founded on a prophecy—an interpretation of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8. There are many other prophecies on which the Seventh Day Adventist church takes a definite stand in regard to their exact interpretation. And since Mrs. White is regarded as a true prophetess by them, all prophetic interpretations given by her during her lifetime continue to be held.

The Church of God has also always been greatly interested in the study of prophecy. But unlike the Seventh Day Adventists the fundamental doctrines of the church do not depend on any prophetic interpretation. We believe that the fundamental purpose of prophecy is not to enable us to predict events of the future, but rather "I have

told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John 14:29. And therefore the church would be out of place in making any hard and fast interpretations and demand that all members adhere to those and cease further study upon them.

We agree with the Adventists that we are in the time known as the "last days" or the "time of the end" as shown by Daniel 2 and Daniel 12:4. We also believe in watching the "signs of the times" as directed by our Savior in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. We encourage all of our ministers and members to study prophecy as well as all the Bible. And without any "modern prophet" to "unify" the interpretations, it is remarkable how the Spirit of God has led in the understanding of the prophetic word.

Some differences in understanding of prophecy have already been covered in this tract, such as the second advent of Christ, and the condition of the earth and the place of the saints during the millennium. There is one other prophecy which the Church of God as a whole regards as having a wonderful fulfillment in our day, but which the Seventh Day Adventists do not recognize at all. That is the prophecy of the return of the Jews to Palestine as a sign of the second advent of Christ.

All Bible students are familiar with the fact that the Jews were several times disbursed and scattered from Palestine. The final scattering took place in 70 A. D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Through the middle ages and on into modern times, very few Jews lived in Palestine, it being estimated that at one time there were less than twenty thousand there. About the beginning of this century a Jew by the name of

Theodore Hertzl started a movement for the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine. Since that time they have continued to return there until in 1942 there were more than 550,000 Jews in Palestine, with modern cities and prosperous factories and agricultural settlements.

We can here outline only very briefly the prophecies which we believe those events fulfill. Ezekiel 36:17-24 speaks of the scattering of the "house of Israel" among the countries and of the fact that they failed to glorify the name of God — in fact they "profaned" the name of God by their actions in the countries of their dispersion. God then says that He will gather them out of the countries and bring them back to their own land, not for their sake but "to sanctify my great name." Verses 25-35 speak of a change to come upon the people after the regathering.

The entire second chapter of the book of Zechariah is upon this subject of the return. The first four verses foretell the expansion of Jerusalem. Verse 6 shows where most of them will come from and why. "Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord." Europe is north of Palestine. More than three-fourths of the Jews in Palestine have come as refugees from European persecution.

Some one may ask, are we to understand these verses to mean that all the Jews in the world are to return to Palestine? We will find an answer in Jeremiah 31:7-8. "For thus saith the Lord; sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the

earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither." Yes, only a remnant of all the people of Israel in the world, will be gathered there, but they will be a "great company," and surely the number who have returned may be so described, even up to this time.

In Psalm 102:16 we have a prophecy of Christ's second advent thus: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." But if the building up of Jerusalem was to be a sign of the advent of Christ it would seem that surely Christ would have mentioned it in His prophecies of His return. Yes, and He did mention this sign as we may find by a careful study of Luke 21. Verses 20-24 describe the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews to all nations. And then in verse 24 we read, "And . . . they shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Notice this carefully. The Jews were to be scattered as captives in the lands of the Gentiles and Jerusalem was to be in a condition of oppression until the times for the Gentiles to do these things would be fulfilled or come to an end. In other words, He tells that there would come an end both to the captivity and of the "trodden down" condition of Jerusalem, and He tells of this in the chapter devoted to signs of His second advent. For centuries Jerusalem and Palestine were held in subjection and oppression by the Turk. The one great result of the World War of 1914-1918 was the liberation of Palestine from the Turk and the pledge of fifty-three nations to give that land to the Jews as a national home. And since that time Palestine

and Jerusalem have been built up in a wonderful way. It is a wonderful sign that we are near the end, a sign being fulfilled before our eyes. More than fifty years ago Church of God publications declared that there would be a return of the Jews as a sign of Christ's coming and ever since then members and ministers of the church have watched for it and in recent years have observed the fulfillment. Many other texts could be given which refer to this, such as Jer. 16:13-18; 30:10, 11; Joel 3:1, 2.

### Conclusion

The Church of God and the Seventh Day Adventists both keep the seventh day Sabbath and both proclaim the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. There are also many other Bible truths which they hold in common, and both believe in living a holy life in obedience to the Bible teachings. We live in a most serious time of this world's history, a time when all who profess the name of Christ should do all that they can to spread the Gospel to those who know it not. And so this booklet is not issued with the idea of creating trouble or strife. Like Abraham of old we say, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren." Gen. 13:8. The thoughts in this booklet are presented, not for strife, but for information. Because of the differences here presented, we find that we cannot work together as a single association or organization. Those who are persuaded that our reasons are valid and Biblical are invited to work with us. But we will not be angry or have hatred for those who differ with us, but rather we will hope that they may do much good for the Gospel cause and also will continue to be open-minded, ever seeking for a greater knowledge

of the Word of God. God has committed all judgment unto Christ and before Him we all must stand. Let us seek to follow Him and His Word, to stand true to our convictions and "let brotherly love continue."