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Wolves in Sheep's Clothing Part 1

Edwin R. Thiele

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How to Recognize

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

By Edwin R. Thiele, Professor of Religion and Philosophy, Emmanuel Missionary College

FROM time to time men arise within the remnant church whose self-appointed task is to criticize the church and to weaken confidence in its leadership. Often these persons band themselves together into offshoot groups in a concerted endeavor to undermine the church of which they may still be nominal members or from which they have become apostates.

Why do such groups exist, and what is their true nature? Jesus once told of a certain householder who had sown good seed, but in whose field tares appeared. Asked the reason for the tares, he replied, "An enemy hath done this" (Matt. 13:28). As we examine the words and works of these modern accusers we find that, in spite of their lofty pretensions and pious claims, they give evidence that they are not, at heart, with the people of God but against them, and that they are moved by the same spirit that prompts the enemy in his warfare against the remnant church.

Various individuals and groups are involved, and there are, as a result, differences from one to another. In general, however, they all exhibit certain distinguishing characteristics, a recognition of which will be of help in detecting those whose chief business is to tear down rather than to build up. These characteristic traits may be listed as follows:

1. *They fulfill prophetic warnings.* From ancient times, the people of God have been plagued by false Christs, false prophets, and false shepherds who have engaged in unceasing efforts to beguile and mislead. Repeatedly the Lord has warned His people against them. Said Jesus, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets" (Matt. 24:24). "Of your own selves shall men arise,"

wrote Paul, "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Declared Jeremiah, "Prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jer. 14:14).

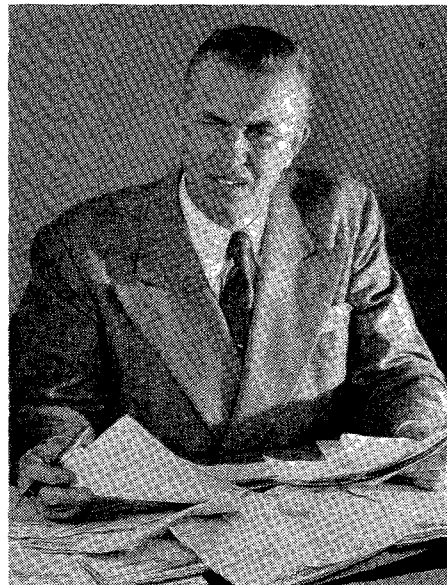
Similar warnings have come from God's special messenger to the remnant church: "Be on your guard; for as an angel of light Satan is walking in every assembly of Christian workers, and in every church, trying to win the members to his side. . . . Men may suppose that they have found a new way, and that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid. But this is a great deception. . . . Into the hearts of many who have been long in the truth there

has entered a hard, judicial spirit. They are sharp, critical, faultfinding. They have climbed upon the judgment seat, to pronounce sentence upon those who do not conform to their ideas. God calls upon them to come down and bow before Him in repentance, confessing their sins."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 294-299.

"Satan is instigating men to continue on earth the same work of jealousy and evil surmising that he commenced in heaven. . . . God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. . . . *The greatest harm to God's people comes through those who go out from among them speaking perverse things.* Through them the way of truth is evil spoken of. . . . *The worst enemies we have are those who are trying to destroy the influence of the watchmen upon the walls of Zion.*"—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 291-294. (Here and in the quotations which follow, emphasis has been added.)

2. *Their attitude toward the church and its leaders is harsh and critical.* In their inflammatory denunciations these apostles of dissension emulate the example of the "accuser of the brethren" (compare Zech. 3:1-5). It was he who caused the hypocritical Pharisees to hurl unceasing criticism against the Son of God. Jesus, on the other hand, refused to condemn the woman who was surrounded by her accusers, but sent her away to sin no more. Christ is at the right hand of God interceding for us, not against us (Rom. 8:33, 34). He who has the Spirit of God does not condemn God's people or His church.

"Beware of those who arise with a
(Continued on page 4)



A. DEVANEY

A harshly critical attitude is one sure mark of the misguided, self-appointed reformer.

Who Wants Sunday Laws?

By M. E. Loewen, Secretary, General Conference Public Affairs Department

THERE are several groups of American citizens militantly agitating for Sunday laws. It is interesting to review the personnel of these forces and note the parts they have played through the years.

1. *Protestants.* A generation ago it was Protestants who waged a militant campaign for the preservation of the sacredness of Sunday as a day of worship. Some organizations, such as the Lord's Day Alliance, supported by the Presbyterian Church, are still fighting for this objective, though not with as much backing as their churches gave them formerly. However, it must be clear to all that, of late, Protestants have been content in most cases to join with others in their efforts to secure Sunday laws. Their leading role has become a supporting role. Those with whom they have merged their efforts are the labor unions, businessmen's associations, and the Catholic Church.

It is noteworthy, in view of the prophecies that foretell a union of Protestant forces with the Roman Catholics, that when the Crown Kasher case was tried by the Federal District Court of Massachusetts, a joint brief was filed by the Lord's Day League of New England (a Protestant organization) and the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men. Such a partnership is unusual. In stating its opinion the court commented on this relationship, noting that it "let the cat out of the bag," so to speak. "Each organization," said the court, "has various aims and purposes, but has in common the purpose of preventing the further secularization and commercialization of the Lord's Day." Here is an example of Protestantism clasping the hand of Catholicism to support the papal sabbath.

Nearly a century ago the Lord's messenger to the church wrote:

"In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. . . . And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance. . . . It is the spirit of the papacy,—the spirit of conformity to worldly customs, the veneration for human traditions above the command-

ments of God,—that is permeating the Protestant churches, and leading them on to do the same work of Sunday exaltation which the papacy has done before them."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 573.

2. *Jewish Organizations.* Here a remarkable change has taken place. Formerly Jewish communities could be counted on to provide strenuous opposition to Sunday laws. Now this is the exception rather than the rule. True, there are certain organizations, such as the American Jewish Congress and some Orthodox groups, who will fight Sunday laws, but the business interests of some downtown merchants have caused many Jews to advocate Sunday laws. In New Jersey a group of Jewish businessmen organized a "Save Our Sunday" campaign, and every officer of the organization was a Jew.

3. *Businessmen.* The competition of suburban shopping centers has brought active and effective support for Sunday laws by business groups. So it is possible to find representatives of the chamber of commerce, of retailers' associations, and of other business interests standing before legislative groups pleading for more stringent Sunday legislation. In fact, one of the briefs filed before the Supreme Court in the cases just decided was by the National Retail Merchants Association. The interest of business is largely to control competition on Sunday.

4. *Labor Unions.* Professing a fear that the laboring man might be forced to work seven days a week, the labor unions have in many instances declared themselves solidly on the side of Sunday closing. In some cases union funds have been spent for the promotion of such laws, and in at least one instance a labor union has expressly declared in its constitution that one of its objectives is the closing of all retail establishments on Sunday. This is a development that was unknown a generation ago.

5. *Roman Catholics.* During the past decade the Roman Catholic Church has forged to the front in the drive for Sunday closing. Not too many years ago the Catholic Church manifested a lack of interest in Sunday-closing laws. Now it is not unusual to have a member of the Roman Catholic clergy appear before com-

mittees and commissions, or to have messages from the prelates of the church read to such groups, urging laws to protect the sanctity of Sunday as a family day and as a day of rest and worship. It is significant that this sudden interest on the part of Roman Catholics in drives for Sunday legislation parallels the participation of the labor unions.

A surprising turn has been the willingness of Roman Catholic bishops and priests to allow their names to appear with Protestant pastors in paid advertisements in the daily press urging Sunday laws. Previously, Roman Catholics had refused to appear in partnership with Protestants on any issue.

6. *Temperance Interests.* The temperance movement has nearly always advocated Sunday laws. We are told in *The Great Controversy* that many who advocate temperance also "put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called 'Christian sabbath,' and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society" (page 587). Pressure from this source has not appreciably increased during the past few decades.

7. *Satan.* Finally, Satan will come as an angel of light, professing to be Christ. He will claim Sunday as his day, and will order all to keep Sunday, obey Sunday laws, and attack the observers of another day. Read *The Great Controversy*, pages 624 and 625. This will mark the great final delusion. By this time the national Sunday law will have become a fact, and it will be enforced.—*Ibid.*, pp. 591, 592, 607, 608.

These are the forces working for Sunday laws. As Inspiration has foretold, their work is increasingly effective.

In the wake of the interest aroused by the recent Supreme Court decision approving Sunday laws, we can expect these forces to bestir themselves and to launch new drives for the stricter enforcement of existing Sunday laws, or for the passage of Sunday laws in communities that do not as yet have such laws on their statute books.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

(Continued from page 1)

great burden to denounce the church. . . . *The Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. . . . When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales, and begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you ma-*

know that God is not leading him.”
—ELLEN G. WHITE in *The Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1956.

3. *Their influence is on the side of the great deceiver.* Those who sympathize with the critics tend to draw together into groups that oppose the remnant church and that unite in a common voice echoing and re-echoing the theme of the enemy-opposition to God and His people.

4. *Their work is destructive, not constructive.* That which God builds up, these apostles of dissension endeavor to tear down. The organization God has established is the constant target of their bitter attacks, which assist the enemy in his desperate endeavor to bring to nought the work of the Lord.

“There are little companies continually arising who believe that God is only with the very few, the very scattered, and their influence is to tear down and scatter that which God’s servants build up. Restless minds who want to be seeing and believing something new continually, are constantly rising, some in one place and some in another, all doing a special work for the enemy, yet claiming to have the truth. They stand separate from the people whom God is leading out and prospering, and through whom He is to do His great work.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 417, 418.

“Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies of God and the truth.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 51.

5. *Their influence is to weaken and divide, not to strengthen and unite.* One of the distinguishing characteristics of the people whom God has chosen to do His work is unity and strength. It is the determined purpose of the enemy to bring in disunity, disorder, and weakness. In their constant efforts toward disruption, offshoots are working with the enemy of God and against His people.

“Oh, how Satan would rejoice to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential. . . . We are living in a time when order, system, and unity of action are most essential. And the truth must bind us together like strong cords in order that no distracted efforts may be witnessed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 228.

“I warn the Seventh-day Adventist

Church to be careful how you receive every new notion and those who claim to have great light. The character of their work seems to be to accuse and to tear down. *Let the believers heed the voice of the angel who has said to the church, ‘Press together.’ In unity is your strength.*”—*The Remnant Church*, p. 53.

6. *They deal with side issues.* One of the favorite devices of the enemy is to bring in side issues to absorb the attention of God’s people, in order to keep their minds and efforts away from themes of the most vital importance. In their constant stress upon a multiplicity of diverse themes—one man this and another that—the offshoots are the unwitting tools of the enemy in his efforts to weaken and confuse, to disrupt and destroy the work of God.

“Let none be self-confident, as though God had given them special light above their brethren. . . . Brethren, as an ambassador of Christ I warn you to beware of these side issues.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 291, 292.

“I have been shown that it is the device of the enemy to lead minds to dwell upon some obscure or unimportant point, something that is not fully revealed or is not essential to our salvation. This is made the absorbing theme, the ‘present truth,’ when all their investigations and suppositions only serve to make matters more obscure than before, and to confuse the minds of some who ought to be seeking for oneness through sanctification of the truth.”—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 159.

7. *They shirk the task of warning the world and saving the lost.* The one great work committed to the people of God in the last days is to give

the last message of warning and hope before Christ’s return. Jesus commissioned His followers to go and preach the gospel to all nations, teaching them to observe all that He had commanded them (Matt. 28:19, 20). Furthermore, He declared that when this message has been “preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations . . . then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

This work the remnant church has been doing for more than a century. But while it has been doing this work, the so-called reformers have been standing on the side lines, not giving a message to a world lost in sin, but doing all in their power to hinder, harass, and disturb the true people of God in the work in which they are engaged. In such an endeavor they are inspired by the enemy of God—the enemy who would rather ruin than save.

“Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. Let them stop and consider what is the message to be proclaimed at this time. In place of working with divine agencies to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord, they have taken their stand with him who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 36, 37.

“When men arise, claiming to have a message from God, but instead of warring against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, they form a hollow square, and turn the weapons of warfare against the church militant, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials.”—*Ibid.*, p. 22.

(First of Two Articles)

My Favorite Text

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” *Psalm 32:8.*

Our Divine Teacher is speaking to us individually, as truly as if we could actually hear His voice. Furthermore, His promises are sure, for the honor of His throne is staked upon their fulfillment.

The Revised Standard Version makes this promise even more personal—“I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” This suggests eye guidance. Let me illustrate this with a personal experience.

For a number of years we lived in one of our Eastern cities. We had the good fortune to live on a quiet street. When our oldest daughter was able to go on short errands we were as happy and proud

as parents can be at a time like that. I well recall the first trip Nancy made to the corner store. My wife gave her the money, took her to the front door, and then watched every step she took until she reached the store. My wife really didn’t save herself any time, for she remained at the door until our little girl returned. And as for me, I was watching from the dining room window.

To me this illustrates the very personal interest our heavenly Father has in each one of us. His loving eye is upon us, and nothing that concerns us escapes His eye. His watchful care is over us every moment. He knows the dangers and temptations that lie before us, and is ever ready to “instruct” and “teach” us, lest we go astray. “I will guide thee with mine eye.” How precious is this promise! Let us by faith keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, and be quick to see and to follow His instructions.

J. W. BOTHE, President
Alberta Conference